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GENDER POLITICS AND THE STATE:
A STUDY OF WOMEN IN KENYA AND ZIMBABWE

by

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ABSTRACT.

This is a study of the interaction between women and the state in Africa. It explores the relationship between a predominantly male African state and its female citizens. In an attempt to explain some of the root causes of women's subordination in contemporary Africa, this study undertakes an analysis of how prevailing structures of gender relations in Africa and state ideology have prevented women from moving into positions of social, economic and political power. It also considers the extent to which women's status has changed from their position in traditional society, through the Colonial period and into the post-Independence period, and the role of the state in this process.

The thesis begins by examining theoretical frameworks of analyses of women and the state. Four feminist perspectives are considered. Following this, the study takes on an anthropological and historical analysis of women's role and position, first in communal societies and then in the colonial capitalist society. The analysis shows that, in order to facilitate the growth of capitalism and to solidify patriarchal power, colonial states significantly altered gender relations largely to the detriment of women. In turn, foundations were laid for men to further control women and for African men to be the beneficiaries of state power.

The post-Independence period is then examined. This thesis explores women's ability to access the state and its

resources in the context of laws and policies passed by an overwhelmingly masculine state. It is found that not all women are similarly affected by these patterns of male domination. African women are not a homogeneous group and class lines divide them. It is concluded that the African state is not only gender-specific but class-specific and its actions are motivated by both patriarchal ideology as well as class interests.

This thesis concludes that the addition of a feminist dimension to an analysis of state helps expand on traditional political boundaries. It opens up new avenues for the further exploration of the complexities of state-society relations and the female experience within these relations.

TO BAPA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

This thesis intends to discuss the relationship between women and the state in Africa. This is a contribution to the literature on state and gender studies and explores the serious impact of state policies and actions on the lives of female citizens. In Africa, the state has been largely controlled by men and, consequently, men and women do not experience the state in a similar manner. African state processes reflect a male bias that translates into laws, policies and actions that continue to benefit men over women.

This thesis will explore how African state policies and ideologies help define gender relations and will examine the implications of male state control on women's lives. At the same time, it will argue that gender ideology is not the only force to influence gender relations in Africa, and that capitalist forces have also played their part in shaping present day gender relations. Women's overall position in Africa has been and is being influenced by both a gender ideology of patriarchy and by class relations; and this thesis explores how these forces have interplayed at the level of the state to negatively impact upon women.

The thesis tackles these issues on two fronts: it uses a theoretical framework, exploring several feminist perspectives in order to establish where issues of women and the state fit in, and following this, a gendered approach is employed to examine the available empirical evidence from two

1

African countries, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The aim is to draw connections between feminist explanations of women's subordination and the reality of African women's experience within African state and society.

Chapter One explores the relevant approaches to analyses of gender and the state. It examines liberal feminist theory, Marxist feminist arguments, radical feminist analyses and socialist feminist theories on women's subordination. The thesis concludes that socialist feminism is perhaps the best theoretical perspective to use in the context of state-gender relations in Africa, although it is by no means without its shortcomings. It purports that some of the conceptual mistakes of socialist feminism can be avoided if theory is matched with the empirical data. The subsequent chapters attempt to do this.

Chapter Two traces women's position in "traditional" pre-capitalist African society concluding that, in spite of patriarchal constraints, women held relatively high socio-economic status in relation to men in communal societies. The thesis then traces women's position within colonial society. It is concluded that the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa by male colonial administrators resulted in the further deterioration of women's position vis a vis African men. In fact, it is shown that a capitalist-patriarchal state collaborated with African male elders and patriarchs to institutionalise patriarchal ideology and render women

2

economically and politically dependent on men.

The next two chapters then discuss the connection between state-gender-class relations in contemporary Africa. Chapter Three evaluates the consequences of male institutionalization of power, pointing out that the modern African state is both gendered in its nature and origins, and thus, its policies are inherently biased towards one gender: men. Through an examination of laws and policies pursued by the Kenyan and Zimbabwean state, it is demonstrated that even when states pursue gender neutral polices, inherent biases within the state, ensured that women remain largely subordinate to men. At the same time, this chapter will explore the nature of women's participation in African state politics and will conclude that not all women are similarly affected by patterns of male dominance. Some women manage to use their class positions to protect their own interests and defend themselves against bias. The implications of this for all women will be discussed.

Chapter Four extends on the analysis of Chapter Three by exploring specific institutional initiatives in agriculture in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The agricultural sector is examined because the majority of African women work and live in rural areas. The role of women's groups in challenging the structures and policies that maintain women's subordinate status is examined as well. Participation in women's groups is perceived by both African governments and international

agencies as a means of alleviating African women's burdens and as a way of improving their overall socio-economic standing. This thesis will explore the validity of this perception in light of evidence that shows that some of these organizations operate as an extension of the state system itself.

Throughout all the empirical chapters it will be shown how women are engaged in a struggle against both patriarchal and capitalist forces in Africa and how their opportunities are shaped by these forces.

Several objectives are achieved in this study. First, it helps establish the need to address women and gender issues in studies of African state. In researching this thesis it was found that women's presence was largely ignored in many fields of African political studies, and when women were mentioned, it was largely in context of women in development.1 In attempting to raise questions about state-gender relations in Africa this thesis tries to develop a better understanding of the complexities of African politics. Adding a gender dimension to African state politics only helps broaden the scope for political exploration in Africa.

In addition, the thesis, in exposing some of the

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1. I want to acknowledge the works of Kathleen Staudt, Jane Parpart and Robert Fatton, Jr. who have been dedicated in their efforts to bring forward the study of women and the state.

intricacies of state-female experiences in Africa, shows some of the inadequacies of using existing feminist frameworks to understand the realities of women and the state in Africa. Subsequently, it explores some of the new directions in theoretical accounts of African women's oppressions.

Finally, the thesis also briefly offers suggestions for future research that could increase knowledge and understanding of the complex relationship between gender and the state in Africa.

CHAPTER ONE
THEORETICAL DEBATES ON GENDER INEQUALITY AND THE STATE.

Introduction.

To fully understand the position of women and the complexities of male-female relations it is imperative for a study to have a gender-sensitive approach to its work. The feminist approach makes gender analysis central to addressing issues of gender inequality and other forms of discrimination. Feminism not only challenges traditional academic theory but, at the same time, contributes to new academic thought and practice.

Feminist scholarship has long focussed on gender relations, but it has only now begun to attend to relations of the state and women in order to explain some of the inequalities between men and women. In so far as the African state, institutions and bureaucracies are dominated by men, and subsequent policies and programs reflect this gender bias, this thesis considers it imperative to undertake a feminist analysis of gender inequality/oppression and the state. There are four main approaches to the analysis of gender and state: liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism and socialist feminism. Through a critical survey of these four feminist frameworks, the thesis hopes to better explain issues involving gender-state relations in Africa and to address the question of women's disadvantaged and subordinate position in African society.

The foregoing perspectives are rooted in Western traditions and therefore I consider it important to evaluate these theories in light of the empirical evidence in two African nations and to assess the limitations and the contributions of these theories to Third World analysis. By testing these theories in light of available empirical evidence on African women and the state (see following chapters), the thesis hopes to add to what Alison Jaggar refers to as "socially responsible feminist theory"1 - theory that takes into account the available knowledge of African society and avoids the biases of Western conceptions in analyzing gender relations in Africa.

Liberal Feminism And Women's Subordinate Position.

Liberal feminism evolved out of the ideals of liberty, equality and rationality that were prevalent within the social contract theories of the Enlightenment. These theories were firmly based on liberal philosophical traditions of man's capacity to reason, the inherent rights of individuals and man's ability to maximize utility. Liberal feminists call for the equal application of these tenets to both men and women. They argued that since women held the same capacity to reason as men, they should also enjoy these rights. These arguments were clear in early feminist writings such as those of Mary Wollstonecraft, who in her <u>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</u> (1792), argued that although women had the full capacity to reason, they were denied the use of this ability since they were relegated to the domestic sphere and

lacked the education to fully realize their potential.2 Nearly a century later, John Stuart Mill in his On the Subjection of Women (1869) echoed these arguments in his claims that women had been denied the opportunity to develop their mental capacities.3

The goal of liberal feminism has been to extend liberal freedoms to women as well as men. Their argument has been that women have been historically relegated to the private sphere of family and home and have been systematically denied access to the public sphere of "industry, commerce, education and political office." Notable liberal feminists, including Betty Friedan, argued that the separation of the public and private and the confinement of women in the home is the root cause of women's social, political and economic marginalization.4 This under-representation in the public sector, liberal feminists argued, is the key factor in women's marginalization and liberal feminists maintained that their goal was to work towards the full integration of women in the public sphere and to ensure their equal participation in this sphere.

Liberal feminists have fought hard to free women from stereotypical gender roles such as those that justify women's pink collar positions in the work force. The focus is on the structural obstacles that deny women full and equal access to the public sphere. As more and more women enter the formal job market and the public world, albeit at the lower levels,

liberal feminists are concentrating their efforts on sexual discrimination and legal biases which work against women's equality. Liberal feminists call for the elimination of discriminatory practices. This they believe can be achieved through legislative actions, educational work and attitudinal changes about gender roles. Liberal feminists have spent a large amount of their efforts working towards these changes in society and are prepared to use the state in their pursuit of liberty, equality and justice for all. The state is viewed as a neutral arbitrator of conflicting social interests and is there to protect the rights of all its citizens. Through the state, laws can be regulated to ensure equal opportunity, address discriminatory laws - in education, hiring practices, work ethics, etc., so women can fully enter the public world, and once in it, they can fully exercise their economic and political rights.

Liberal Feminism in the Third World.

Liberal feminist writings on the Third World gained a public platform during the United Nations Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, and this school of thought finds its main supporters largely amongst middle class professional women - in particular those who support the Women in Development approach (WID). This perspective, with its roots firmly attached in the liberal tradition, argues that Third World women have far too long been confined to the private sector and the underpaid, undervalued informal sector, and that this has contributed to their marginal and subordinate

position in society. Writers such as Esther Boserup successfully argue that modernization will continue to disadvantage women unless they can be pulled out of the informal sector.5 Boserup's pioneering work inspired a substantial body of research that addresses women's positions and conditions in the Third World. Many of these studies exemplify Boserup's arguments, showing how modernization processes including the introduction of wage labour, education and technology are more readily available to men, who dominate the public sectors, while women have little access to these facilities and continue to be relegated to the less paid, less productive sectors of society.6

Liberal feminists in the Third World, like their counterparts in the industrial world, are gravely concerned about the processes that work to disadvantage women. Thus the objective of liberal feminists including WID supporters is to spread the benefits of the public sector to women. Existing inequality "can be largely corrected if women now confined to the domestic sphere are integrated into the public sphere as equals."7 To this end, they call for the elimination of discriminatory practices through legal and administrative means to assure Third World women equal access to the public world. In turn, they do not challenge the existing system but work within it to bring about changes. These changes, they feel, will not only address issues of traditional gender roles in Third World societies, but will also affect factors such as the family as an exploitative social and economic

unit. Liberal feminist objectives have been raised in various international conferences, declarations and legislation.8

Limits of Liberal Feminism and WID.

Liberal feminists and WID scholarship have certainly contributed towards understanding sexual inequality in the Third World. Nevertheless, there are limitations to this perspective. The basic premise that women are inadequately integrated into the public sphere has to be re-examined. In many Third World societies where women are the backbone of the agricultural force (in Africa they make up 60-80% of the agricultural work force contributing in commercial production as well as subsistence agriculture), the question cannot be one of integration per se. Women are central to family survival, they are visible participants in the Third World economy and are hence very much a part of the overall structure. Their work, even at the lowest levels of the structure, is crucial. As Asoka Bandarage argues in her analysis of liberal feminism, the question is not one of integration, "the question is, ... can women be integrated into more self-fulfilling forms of employment within the hierarchial political, economic and ideological structures ...."9

Liberal feminism also falls short of understanding gender inequality, for it does not address the issue of persisting patriarchy in society.10 Its critics argue that liberal feminists do not adequately address issues of gender

inequality, overlooking such factors as the origins of patriarchy and the reasons for the persistance of patriarchy, and therefore fall short of a complete analysis.11 Others point out that women's status has clearly not improved as women become "integrated" and argue that wage labour and entrance to the public world alone will not provide freedom, especially from patriarchal control.12 Sylvia Walby, in her works Theorizing Patriarchy and Patriarchy at Work, discusses various forms of patriarchal control, distinguishing between public and private patriarchy.13 Her argument is that women cannot really escape from patriarchy and that they simply move from an exclusionary/individual form in the private world to a collective/segregative and subordinate form in the public world.14 Liberal feminists have not fully understood this when advocating women's entrance into the public sphere.

Finally, liberal feminists tend to ignore both existing class cleavages in society and class distinctions that cut across gender lines. Women cannot be treated as a homogeneous group, especially in the case of Africa, where upper class women ally themselves with the ruling class, and ignore their less fortunate "sisters." These women hold a great degree of power and their position is quite different from that of the rest of Africa's women. Liberal feminist efforts have often concentrated on this particular group who have received the benefits of liberal changes, often by way of the strength of their own class. This lack of attention to class distinction severely limits liberal analysis in the Third World.

Liberal Feminism and the African State.

When it comes to gender and state, liberal analysis begins with the absence of women in the state apparatus and in powerful decision-making arenas. Jean O' Barr, in her survey of African women in politics, points to the fact that women's political participation pattern reflects that of a pyramid: a few women at the top and the majority of them at the bottom.15 Jane Parpart and Kathleen Staudt agree, pointing out that despite high organizational affiliation among women, African women remain outsiders in relation to the state, and occupy very few decision making positions.16 This inequality is a result of women being confined to the private sphere and to the less valued informal sectors, while men to a large extent have dominated the public sphere where they remain active partners of the modern African state. Kathleen Staudt's analysis of Kenya argues that the modern state artificially divided African society into a public/private sphere synonymous with the separate worlds of men and women, and that this process began with colonialism and the introduction of capitalism in Africa.17 The modern African state continued this public/private dichotomy, ensuring through its male authorities that decision-making would favour men as a group.

For liberal feminists the answer lies in integrating women into the public sphere through equalization of legal and educational opportunities and by changing attitudes within

the public sphere so that women will be able to fully participate in political activity. In all of this the African state has a large role to play, be it to perpetuate the status quo, or to ensure that discriminatory laws, policies and practices are avoided. Liberal feminists also argue that state polices would benefit women if more women were part of the decision making process, and hence propose that women's bureaus, and women's organizations be set up within state structures.

This thesis will argue that although some of the liberal feminist viewpoints on gender and state manage to identify some of the causes of women's marginalization and explain their subordinate status, especially in regards to the changes brought about by the colonization of Africa, one first has to question whether African women are really part of the private sphere. Africa remains a region where women are visible and active in the wider economy - in food production, in fuel management, in the marketing and distribution of goods, etc. Yet African women are often unable to own property, or to get access to capital, state services or resources. If women are to be integrated into existing economic and political structures, this integration must take place at a level where women can voice their opinions and use their collective power to get access to services and resources. This thesis argues that integration at the lowest level of the public sphere, with no real power as such, only adds to the "feminization of poverty."

Liberal feminist theory also falls far short of understanding gender inequality within the state because it does not fully address the issue of patriarchy. This thesis will argue that the African state and society are patriarchal and hence serve the interests of men in state/society and family structures, severely restricting women from gaining political and economic power. Finally, class differences cut across gender, an issue that liberal feminists ignore. This thesis will show how most women who participate in decision-making come from the upper class, thus their interests do not coincide with the interests of all African women or reflect the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

Marxist Feminism And The "Woman Question".

For Marxist feminists the "woman question" is tied to a general critique of capitalism, and class itself is a determining factor in understanding women's oppression.[18] Marx argued that "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles," and thus, Marxists argue that gender relations are also determined by the exploitative nature of class divisions in society. In a capitalist society, women's oppression becomes part of the structural feature of capitalism. Marx himself was quite ambiguous on the role and status of women and it is to Engels' Origin of the Family: Private Property and the State, that we turn for a comprehensive study of women's position in society.

Engels' central thesis argued that the roots of female subordination and subjugation were all contained within the origins of private property, the beginnings of class hierarchy and the start of surplus value.19   Marx and Engels both believed that all societies were characterised by a sexual division of labour. In the Origin, Engels argued that in primitive societies, these divisions were characterised by men being the providers of food and women working in the home. Both sexes in these societies were mutually dependent on each other for survival - "They are each masters of their own sphere."20   Engels further argues that the status of women in such societies was equal and at times more dominant.21

With the beginning of the change in the mode of production involving agricultural settlements and the domestication of animals, communal property gave way to private property; private property owned by men and able to be exchanged for other goods. As new technologies emerged, production increased and people were able to produce more than was necessary to sustain themselves and thus we see the emergence of surplus value. Eventually, commoditization and greater production required labour, and a slave owning group emerged since slaves were necessary and profitable to extract surplus. These changes, Engels argued, took place in the man's domain, and women, once considered equal in status, were now acquired for "exchange value." Women's labour began

to count for less and less, and men began accumulating more and more - "the latter [man] was everything, the former [woman] an unimportant extra."22

With this "economic shift in power," men began to dominate social and political relations. To ensure the continuity of this system and to bequeath property to his male heirs, the man "took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became a slave to his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."23 Constraints were put on women's sexuality to ensure paternity, and the family changed into a "monogamous, male dominated, nuclear unit." Engels writes about this transformation: "The first class antagonism that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between men and women in monogamous marriage, the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male."24

Engels in the Origin discusses how this antagonism develops through various historical stages and, in the 19th century capitalist family, conceives the man to be the bourgeoisie and the wife to represent the proletariat. Men with their stronger economic base have the superior position of earning a living and supporting their families whilst women are obliged to manage the private household as head servants with no real participation in social production.25

For working class women, Engels argues, the type of oppression was quite different. Working class women were already part of a labour force and therefore part of the public realm, like their male counterparts. Their oppression originated from the exploitation of their labour by the capitalist system itself. Working class men were in no real position of power to actually oppress their women. Engels believed that working class women were less oppressed than the women of the bourgeois class, and could use their common class interest, shared with working class men, to overthrow the capitalist system.26

For Marxists, the answer to the "woman question" lies in "bringing the female sex back into the public industry."27 By integrating women into the public realm, and by abolishing the various forms of monogamy that tied women to the home, the material base for sex specific oppression will end. Once women fully enter the public sector on an equal footing with men, they will no longer be on the sidelines of history and will be able to actively participate in the overthrowing of the wage labour system and elimination of capitalism. Therefore, they will be able to liberate themselves from the forces that have kept them as reproducers and homemakers in the first place. All first wave Marxists, including Lenin, Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg agreed, that the solution to the "woman question" was closely related to the social issue of capitalism and its demise.28

Contemporary Marxist feminists recognise women's incorporation into the public sphere, but argue that the public realm remains a "male preserve" and that the division of labour is in favour of men and is maintained by men to benefit capitalism. Women not only get incorporated into the lowest paying jobs, but they still remain largely responsible for housework and child care, which only adds to their exploitation -women end up working the double day shift: paid recognised work in the public sphere, and underpaid, undervalued work in the domestic sphere. Some Marxist feminists go on to argue that as long as women continue their reproductive roles of childbearing, nurturing, caring for the old and sick, men will be free "to work longer hours for capital and its pursuit of surplus value."29 Capitalism profits from, and is exempted from having to pay for, the reproductive labour force.

Eli Zaretsky, a contemporary Marxist, details in Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life how the growth of capitalism has transformed and systemised women's subordination, and has increased the divisions between the "economy" and "family." In pre-capitalist society, even though women held subordinate status, their work was valued and essential to overall production.30 Capitalism managed to move men into the heart of commodity production, and thus into the "worthwhile" public realm. Women ended up as second class citizens and underpaid workers. Zaretsky and other Marxist feminists point out that as long as the family is

identified with the woman, and is the primary institution by which women participate in society, "every woman will be subordinated whether she enters the work force or not."31 Hence, stereotypical family roles and gender roles are to be eliminated if women are to be liberated at all.

Since women's oppression originates from capitalist accumulation through private property, the solution obviously lies in breaking free of the capitalist economy. A socialist revolution is needed, one that proposes a radical change in the "material interests and social arrangements" at both the national and international levels. Women must then be brought back into public industry and domestic labour must be turned into a social industry with both men and women participating.

Marxist Feminism and the Third World.

Since Marxists view sexual and class inequality as being rooted in capitalism and the uneven development of capitalism, they are gravely concerned about the "exploitative nature of [Third World] women's incorporation" into the global capitalist system.32 Marxists such as Eleanor Leacock discuss how pre-capitalist, traditional societies gave women far more authority and autonomy, and how this changed with the introduction of private property and commodity production through colonialism.33 As the Third World entered into an unequal and exploitative relationship with the industrial world, Third World women become "an

20

extreme and telling example of this marginalization process of the periphery."34 The growth of capitalism exploited both men and women, but the exploitation has had a differential impact on men and women, and in many parts of the Third World women fare the worst.

Marxist feminists point to various examples in the Third World that exemplify how the exploitation of women serves the needs of capitalism. Maria Mies, a notable Marxist sociologist, shows how home industry for the global capitalist market economy has led to the pauperization and marginalization of rural women in India. Thus, she concludes, women's integration into the world economy actually leads to the deterioration of their lives and she warns that projects calling for the incorporation of women into the global economy, including those proposed by liberal feminists, have to be wary about the inevitable negative effects on women's lives.35

In exploring the exploitative nature of capitalism, Marxists also point out the exploitative nature of women's employment in multinational firms seeking cheap female labour within the Third World.36 These studies on women's employment in multinational corporations show that despite some social gain, many women remain grossly under-paid, overworked, and gain few marketable skills - in short they remain at the "mercy" of their employers throughout their work period. Marxists point out that despite this evidence of

exploitation, female incorporation into the world economy continues to be promoted by major organizations including the United Nations, the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development.

Marxist Feminism and the African State.

Unlike liberal theorists, Marxists do not view the state as an impartial arbitrator, but note that the state plays an active and dominant role in maintaining class relations within society. The state, they argue, is a reflection of societal relations and as such promotes and enforces the interests of the ruling class by pursuing policies that favour the dominant class, and punishing those who challenge this status quo.

Robert Fatton Jr. in his analysis of class, gender and power in Africa, claims that state power is class power: "the existence of the ruling class requires the existence of the state whose role is to reproduce the social, political and economic structures of ruling class dominance."37 Fatton argues that the African state is the ultimate organizer and defender of the ruling class and that being a male dominated state it works against the interests of the majority of women.

Marjorie Mbilinyi and Susan Jacobs, using a Marxist mode of analysis, show how, in the case of Africa, state and gender policies are part of the processes of class formation, and

22

how this relationship between gender/state and women/class, restricts women's access to critical resources.38 Women's politics become another dimension of class politics, where the political process [state] is used to put forth the interests of those already privileged.39 Women from the more privileged classes identify with their male counterparts and work together against the interests of their less fortunate sisters.

To date, Marxists argue that only a socialist transformation can end women's oppression. In the socialist state, the state will remain one of the key organizers of public life, and will be a crucial player in the construction of a classless and equal society. (This thesis will explore the relation between women and the state after the "democratic socialist revolution" in Zimbabwe and will ascertain if women are any better off under a "socialist" African state.)

Marxism has greatly contributed to our understanding of oppression, particularly through its focus on structures of oppression such as class, bourgeois state and society. In addition, Marxism remains the basis of other feminist frameworks including socialist feminism and cannot, in my opinion, be ignored in an analysis of women's oppression. However, in the context of Africa, this thesis questions whether Marxist analysis alone is sufficient in explaining African women's position within the state.

23

Marxist feminists have paid little attention to existing patterns of male supremacy and domination in the African household, society and state; they have also ignored the system of patriarchy which helps legitimize and institutionalize men's economic, political and social position. This thesis will trace how African state policies are framed through patriarchal eyes and hence state institutions reinforce male dominance over women's labour and independence. Thus, in light of the empirical evidence presented, the thesis claims that "economics" is not the only condition that determines female status in the African societies under examination. Even Marxists would agree that women's participation in economic production in itself does not guarantee higher female status or less oppression and as the evidence suggests, despite some advantages, women of the higher classes (economically) are also exposed to gender struggles based on notions of male superiority.

In addition, Marxist analysis does not adequately deal with pre-capitalist Africa, as some forms of gender inequality existed even within traditional African society and have continued into the "modern" Africa. This oppression and inequality of status stems from the patriarchal nature of African society. Historically, evidence also shows that in Africa, capitalism aligns itself with patriarchy and the two forces at moments have became "inextricably linked." Marxists' lack of attention to this relationship obscures

24

their analysis on gender relations and the state in modern Africa. Unless the patriarchal system, which is an integral factor in the African woman's low status and position, is also considered, women's oppression will not be fully appreciated.

Radical Feminism And The Oppression Of Women.

Emerging from the women's movement of the 60's and 70's, radical feminism is a relatively modern phenomenon when compared to the age old traditions of liberalism, and Marxism. This developing political theory, unlike liberalism which see the roots of female subordination in the unequal access and biased policies of the public sphere, and Marxism, which explains female oppression in terms of economics, views the root cause of women's oppression to be the unequal power relations between men and women which ultimately results in patriarchy or male dominance; "sexuality is the linchpin of gender inequality."40 And in turn, all radical feminists agree that women's oppression is based on men's control of women's bodies and men's control of fertility and sexuality.

Radical feminists also argue that women's subordination is the most primary form of oppression, and not a secondary factor of other types of oppression. They argue that women's subordination is not dependent on other forms of oppression such as a class society.41 In addition, radical feminists also point out that since women were historically the first oppressed group in society and since biological

characteristics are shared by all cultures, the subjugation/subordination of women is a universal phenomenon. Women's subordination is the most common and widespread form of subordination. It is found in almost every society and is so ingrained within individual and social practices that radical feminists assert that it is the worst form of oppression.

Radical feminists have presented various arguments on the origins and nature of women's oppression. One of the most important examinations of reproduction as the cause of women's oppression comes from Shulamith Firestone. In The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution (1970), Firestone begins with the statement "the sex class is so deep as to be invisible." Gender distinctions based solely on the biology of the sexes shape our reality and provide the "spectacles" by which we interpret and understand the world.42 Taking the biological division of labour as the material basis of oppression, Firestone, in a variation of classical Marxism, argues that reproduction, not production, is the basis of social organization - the basis from which all forms of oppression begin: "Beneath economics, reality is psycho-sexual."43 Throughout all "modes of production" the male/female/child division has persisted due to universal biological characteristics - women are for the most part weaker than men, and small children are totally dependent on adults. These biological relations have translated into social relations that have given rise to sexual and child-

rearing practices that support and justify male dominance. In Freudian terminology, Firestone explains how children develop "masculine" and "feminine" qualities at a very early ages, characteristics that are dependant solely on sex, and that these qualities persist throughout adulthood, "equipping men to win the psychological battle of the sexes ...."44

To end this "tyranny of the biological family" and this "sexual-class" system, women must seize the means of reproduction. Firestone believes that reproductive technology (contraception, sterilization, abortion) in this modern age has made it possible for "the revolution" to take place and for women to end all distinctions that define them solely by their biological makeup.45 Contemporary radical feminists including Margaret Atwood, Gena Corea, Andrea Dworkin and Robin Rowland have somewhat of a different view on this issue, arguing that reproductive technologies will not empower women but will in fact increase men's control over women - men in their need to control women's reproductive powers have "taken over" new reproductive technologies and have alienated women from their own bodies. Women must affirm biological motherhood, not forsake it for artificial motherhood.46

Some radical feminists believe that women are in fact a class - a class whose group identity is defined by their biological sex. Men as a class dominate and exploit women as

a class, and women's subjugation is the primary form of domination, from which all other forms of domination emerge. The ruling class is referred to as "the patriarchy", which is an all encompassing system of male domination - and as Mary Daly in her book <u>Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism</u> puts it, "Patriarchy appears to be 'everywhere'." Even outer space and the future have been colonised."47 Patriarchy or the "male dominant culture" finds legitimacy by perpetuating an ideology that implies the inferiority of women as a group. It portrays a certain reality in which men are seen as "'day', positive forceful, aggressive, dominant, objective, strong, intellectual, etc.," and women are defined as, "weak, 'night', passive, emotional, intuitive, mysterious, unresponsible, quarrelsome, childish, dependent, evil, submissive."48 Kate Millet in her book <u>Sexual Politics</u> (1970), further explains these arguments stating that patriarchal ideology is extremely powerful because the oppression of women has been conditioned through institutions, the church, the family, each justifying women's submissiveness and subordination through various means.49 Patriarchy restricts women to certain roles, and in turn these roles perpetuate male domination - they create masculine and feminine characteristics, which in turn perpetuate patriarchy.

Patriarchy condemns women into sexual slavery - if they are not mothers then they are sexual beings to be controlled. Using ideological, legal, economic, or physical means, men

control women. Women are continuously judged on their "sexual desirability" and any woman who challenges her "sexuality" (the sexual stereotype of what she should be), is considered a social misfit. Rape, prostitution, pornography, sexual harassment, are often legitimised (seen as normal) by the patriarchal society.50

Women's oppression is not rooted in the unequal access to opportunity in the public world, is not rooted in economics, instead women's oppression is rooted in the male control of the personal relations of reproduction and sexuality, a control that is both public and private. Women have to escape this control, and radical feminists suggest various proposals for "escape." Radical feminists argue that women must separate themselves from the institutions and structures that force them to be mothers, to be sexually possessed, to be prostitutes. Some radical feminists including Charlotte Bunch and Ti-Grace Atkinson state that women must give up on institutions such as heterosexuality and straight marriages- homosexuality and lesbianism are means of freeing oneself from patriarchal bondage.51

Other avenues to social change include setting up new institutions and structures run by women that allow women to escape from patriarchal control. Working in non-hierarchial, egalitarian communes and organizations will provide for women's needs and will avoid the exploitation that occurs in patriarchal run systems. Women must work together for women.

Women must also "confront patriarchy" through various physical and verbal means.52

Radical feminism has come under a lot of criticism, particularly in its shortcomings as a political theory and especially in its contemporary form where it finds expression in "new" poetry, drama, science fiction. Such forms of expression are often aimed to shock the reader/audience into understanding new forms of reality and to show "a counter-reality, a mutually guaranteed support of female experience undistorted by male interpretation."53

In addition, radical feminist's biological determinism has also come under various criticism. Alison Jaggar in a socialist feminist critique insists that human beings must be considered in terms of an environmental, cultural, biological interplay and sees no reason for believing in biological determinism.54 Jean Elshtain in <u>Public Man and Private</u> <u>Woman</u>, claims that the radical feminist mistake is to perceive men and women as two separate species, one evil, one good. This Elshtain argues can lead to the "trap of essentialism."55 Elshtain's critique of radical feminism also extends to the theory of global patriarchy. Elshtain questions whether it is possible to compare modern, complex societies to more simple traditional societies, and whether radical feminists such as Daly, in their "search for non-Western forms of patriarchy," are being ethnocentric in their analysis. (In 1980, African women walked out of a conference

in Copenhagen because of Western feminist lecturing on the barbarism of clitoridectomy -for African women, circumcision may hold a different meaning, such as a fundamental social rite of passage into womanhood.)

Thus, when it comes to Third World analysis radical feminists have often been accused of being ethnocentric, and attaching Western interpretations to Third World practices. At the same time, many black feminists and women of colour have pointed out that they endure oppression as a result of their sex but also like minority men they are oppressed because of their race. Hence, many black women and women of colour have pointed to the fact that they have experienced a different cultural history from that of white women and that radical feminists have often overlooked these factors.

However, I want to point out that two main issues raised by radical feminists, reproduction and patriarchy (the former based on the latter), are an important contribution to the overall analysis of sexuality and gender relations in society. Radical feminist insights on men's control of women's bodies and their understanding of the system of male-dominant institutions leaving women very few avenues of escape is important to the analysis of gender relations and therefore is relevant to this analysis.

Radical Feminism and the State.

For radical feminists, "the personal is the political" and

31

politics   refers to the power structured relations where one
group of people, namely men, "control" another group of
people, namely women:

> When one group rules another, the relationship
> between the two is political. When such an
> arrangement is carried out over a long period
> of time it develops an ideology (feudalism,
> racism, etc.). All historical civilizations are
> patriarchies: their   ideology   is   male
> supremacy.56

The state is part of the male structure of power - it is in
fact "an instrument of patriarchal domination", maintaining
its rule either by "force [or by] ideological hegemony."57 A
radical feminist study of violence towards women done by
Hanmer & Saunders (1984) focussed on the relationship between
women, male violence and the state. Men's brutality towards
women was seen as men's [inherent] desire to control women
and the non interventionist policies of the state as being
"part of the [internal] logic of the patriarchal system."58

In the African context, patriarchal traditions are often
found at the very core of societal values and the state is a
concentration of male power. Catherine MacKinnon argued:

> [The] state is male in the feminist sense. The
> law sees and treats women the way men see and
> treat women. The ... state coercively and
> authoritatively constitutes the social order in
> the interest of men as a gender, through
> legitimizing norms, relation to society, and
> substantive policies. It achieves this through
> embodying and ensuring male control over
> women's sexuality at every level,.... 59

This thesis explores the extent to which the African state is
patriarchal. However, the thesis questions whether the
ideology of patriarchy is the only determinant that explains

32

women's unequal and marginalized position in African society. A state united by an ideology of patriarchy would be a "monolithical entity," united in its "hegemony of a male world view." This thesis will argue that the African state is not only shaped by gender ideology but also by the processes of capitalist development introduced by European colonizers. Men in power are still struggling to bring about monolithic unity. This is not to deny that the African state is characterised by what Patricia Stamp describes as a "collaborative hegemony," where male dominated kin groups, male dominated bureaucratic structures and institutions and the state decision making apparatus are united by a gender ideology. Patriarchy helps perpetuate state interests and the interests of men, but, this thesis goes on to argue, other forces have also contributed to women's situation in Africa.

For example, the thesis will present evidence to show that in Kenya and Zimbabwe women of the upper class often ally with the men of the ruling class against women of the lower classes; as the thesis argues, radical feminists obviously cannot explain this phenomenon in terms of patriarchy. This thesis will also present evidence to show that in pre-colonial, pre-capitalist African societies, women were not completely powerless and will discuss how capitalist forces transformed and increased patriarchal practices to the detriment of women as a community. This thesis will show that historically the two structures, capitalism and patriarchy, have acted as close collaborators in discriminating against

women. Hence, despite radical feminists' insights to women's subordination and degradation, there are many cultural and historical realities that radical feminist writings haven't explored.

Socialist Feminism And The Subordination Of Women.

Socialist feminist theory locates itself within the historical, materialistic traditions of Marxism but recognising that Marxists cannot fully account for women's oppression, socialist feminism adds to Marxist analysis the concept of male dominance, specifically patriarchy. Developed as a theory in the 1970's, socialist feminism is a synthesis of Marxist tradition with radical feminist insights. It sees the struggle between men and women to be historically changing with the changes in modes of production. Women's subordination "must account for male dominance as structured into a set of specific, though variable, social and economic relations, with specific material effects on the relations of men and women."60 Socialist feminists consider women's oppression to be shaped not only by an individual's class, race and nationality, but also by a woman's experience of her own sex and gender.61 Ultimately, the aim of socialist feminism lies in developing an understanding of the different systems of oppression, examining how different systems relate to each other, so as to improve the lives of women.

One method by which the theoretical synthesis of Marxism and radical feminism has taken place is through dual systems theory which asserts that "patriarchy and capitalism are distinct forms of social relations and distinct sets of interests, which when they intersect, oppress women ...."62 (These two systems have also been described as "mode of production" and "mode of reproduction" by some dual systems theorists.) Dual systems theorists offer various explanations for patriarchy and capitalism, and while all socialist feminists consider capitalism to be rooted in a historical mode of production, only some see patriarchy as tied to a material realm specific to historical sets of relations. Some dual systems theorists, such as Juliet Mitchell, provide a non-materialistic account of patriarchy, explaining it in terms of psychoanalytical and ideological structures that are independent of any historical and social relations. Patriarchy according to Mitchell is therefore universal in its characteristics, and women's differing circumstances can be explained as a result of particular modes of production interacting with universal patriarchy.63

In their theoretical approaches to the analysis of distinct systems of oppression (ie. patriarchy and capitalism), dual systems theorists have varied explanations. The debate centres around whether capitalism and patriarchy are inextricably linked or whether the relationship of these two interacting systems is contradictory and therefore unharmonious by nature. Zilla Eisenstein in Capitalist

Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism argues that in contemporary society, capitalism and patriarchy have become inter-related to the extent that they now operate as one system of capitalist-patriarchy. Both systems are mutually dependent on each other:

> This statement of mutual dependence of patriarchy and capitalism not only assumes the malleability of patriarchy to the needs of capitalism, but assumes the malleability of capital to the needs of patriarchy.64

Hence, she argues that capitalism needs patriarchy (which she describes as male supremacy based on a system of sexual hierarchy) to provide capitalism (or systems previous to it), the necessary order and control to function efficiently. In turn, capitalism allows for an economic system through which the pursuit of profit takes place and, to the extent that profit and societal control reinforce each other, "patriarchy and capitalism become an integral process."65

"Capitalism uses patriarchy and patriarchy is defined by the needs of capitalism," and, therefore, each system organises around the other so as to perpetuate itself, states Zilla Eisenstein.66 She is prepared to recognise the over-simplification of this "harmonious" relationship but it is to another dual systems theorist, Heidi Hartmann, that I turn in search for a less harmonious explanation of capitalism and patriarchy. Hartmann, like Juliet Mitchell is prepared to recognise the "analytical separation of capitalism and patriarchy" but unlike Mitchell, she does not see patriarchy in terms of the unconscious and ideological. Instead, she

argues that patriarchy is a "set of social relations between men which have a material base, and which, though hierarchial, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women."67 Men not only control women's labour and deny them critical access to resources but, men also control women's sexual and reproductive rights. Patriarchy is based in the private sphere (household) in which men control women, and capitalism is based in the public sphere (economic world) in which capitalists control workers.

Recognising a relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, Hartmann argues that this "partnership" is not necessarily a smooth one for each system has its own "laws of motion." There is a definite distinction between the two systems and this can be seen in the fact that patriarchy pre-dates capitalism and that men's control over women transcends capitalist society. Only a compromise would facilitate the necessary "partnership." In the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, Heidi Hartmann traces this historical struggle for an effective partnership concluding that men's need to control women is just as strong as capitalism's need to control workers and that patriarchal forces often win out.

Socialist feminist theorist Gayle Rubin has also added to dual systems analysis. Drawing from Freudian analysis on the ideological production of femininity and anthropologist Levi-Strauss' work on kinship systems and the exchange of women,

Rubin develops a theory of "the political economy of sex."68 She argues that an "overarching concept of patriarchy" is both confusing and inadequate:

> The term 'Patriarchy' was introduced to distinguish the forces maintaining sexism from other social force, such as capitalism. But the use of 'patriarchy' obscures other distinctions. Its use is analogous to using 'capitalism' to all modes of production.69

The thrust of her argument is that the relations between men and women are rooted in biological gender but are realised at the level of society in definite, historically specific ways. The subordination of women is grounded in a society's specific "sex-gender system" which she describes as "a set of arrangements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied."70 These arrangements (of which one can be patriarchy) are intimately related to, but are separate from, material production and reproduction and cannot fully be reduced to them. Rubin's analysis of kinship and family shows how these structures have their own historically specific set of social relations ("are themselves social products") which closely interact with the social relations of production, and thus help reshape social relations outside the kin and family. Patricia Stamp in her analysis of Africa has used Rubin's analysis to show that bridewealth sex-gender system is linked to the communal mode of production that characterises pre-capitalist society to its hoe technology.71 The sex-gender system is seen as a parallel concept in the realm of sex power to the system of production in the realm of class. Patriarchy is only one of a

number of sex-gender systems.

Limits of Socialist Feminism and the Dual Systems Theory.

Dual systems theory has had as many critics as advocates. Iris Young puts forward several arguments against socialist feminism and the limits of the dual systems theory, pointing out that any idea of a single universal form of patriarchy with a materialistic analysis of capitalism will give in to traditional Marxist bias:

> The theory of patriarchy supplies the form of women's oppression but traditional Marxist theory supplies its content, specificity, and motors of change. Thus, this version ... fails to challenge traditional Marxism because it cedes to that of Marxism theoretical hegemony over historically material social relations.72

Eventually dual systems theory becomes one theory - a theory which claims capitalism to be the fundamental oppressor of women.

Young also criticizes Heidi Hartmann's analysis for never really managing to separate the social relations of production belonging to patriarchy from those of capitalism, ie. Hartmann does not fully account for the different social relations that give rise to patriarchy as opposed to capitalism; Hartmann herself acknowledges the difficulty in isolating structures specific to patriarchy.73

Those "mode of separate-sphere" theorists who have attempted to tackle this problem have also failed, argues Iris Young. These theorists argue that the "history of

patriarchy" is the domain of the private sphere and the "history of class society" is part of the public sphere. In assuming that the family is the key patriarchal oppressor, they have neglected to account for the diverse kinds of oppression outside the family, for example, sexism in the modern work place.74 To make up for these inadequacies of dual systems theory's analysis of "gender-neutral capitalism" interacting with "gender-biased patriarchy" (the main problem of dual systems theory is that its explanations simply adds to class analysis rather than seeing gender relations as separate and independent of class relations), Iris Young offers dual theorists an alternative - a unified systems theory. Here she puts forward a theoretical framework that explains the root cause of women's subordination - gender-biased capitalism. The gender of its worker is important to capitalism, and as history shows, capitalism has used women to its advantage, and thus caused women to be marginalized in the process.75

Alison Jaggar is another dual systems critic who contributes towards a unified systems theory. Jaggar sees "alienation" to be the conceptual framework through which women's oppression can be fully understood: "To analyze the contemporary oppression of women in terms of the concept of alienation is to link that oppression inevitably to capitalism."76 Thus, Jaggar identifies women's oppression in modern society as a feature of male-dominated capitalism. Jaggar realises that not all forms of women's oppression stem

from capitalism, but argues that in abolishing capitalism, contemporary society's specific form of oppression will be eliminated. Socialist feminism must work towards abolishing class as well as gender and Jaggar's proposals for social change include reproductive freedom for women, wage equality, organizational independence for women etc.

Socialist Feminism and the State.

Gramsci has argued that the ruling classes maintain their control by presenting a particular social reality that favours the dominant class, and that this reality ends up being accepted by the majority of people as part of the natural order of things.77 Socialist feminists have argued that men, particularly capitalists, have a special interest in controlling women and therefore it is in their interest to project this social reality. One way in which this social reality is constructed is at the level of the state where capitalist and patriarchal interests have set up a variety of institutional structures and arrangements to perpetuate a system where men, especially bourgeoisie men, continue to dominate women.

Socialist feminists in their incorporation of Marxist tradition with radical feminist insights have developed their own interpretation of the state and its role in defining gender relations. Zilla Eisenstein has taken the ideas of the structural Marxist Nicos Poulantzas who argued that the role of the state apparatus is "to maintain the unity and cohesion

of social formation by concentrating and sanctioning class domination, and in this way to reproduce social relations ie. class relations."78 Eisenstein has put forward the idea of a capitalist-patriarchal state whose role is to provide the social order and cohesion for male capitalistic interests to flourish. (Capital and patriarchal interests are inter-dependent and they form the system of capitalist patriarchy where patriarchy provides order and control and capitalism provides the economic system to continue surplus and profit.) Patriarchal interests are represented via male capitalists, who as the ruling bourgeoisie, "run" a predominantly patriarchal state. However, Eisenstein pays little attention to patriarchal forces outside the realm of the bourgeoisie and to patriarchal forces in the family and overall society. These forces may also influence the nature of the state and define gender relations in society and therefore Eisenstein in her analysis falls short of understanding the independent nature of masculine dominance.

Varda Burstyn in addressing the independent nature of male dominance points out that the state is in fact gender biased as can be seen in all its policies. For example, in cases of marriage laws, divorce laws, inheritance laws, etc., the state favours the male. Burstyn also traces in her article "Masculine Dominance and the State" the various ways by which the state deliberately excludes women from fully participating in politics thereby denying them access to power.79 However, Burstyn like Eisenstein, sees a definite

connection between the changes in women's economic/material position and the politics of gender. In the end, both theorists assume that the logic of capital affects women's position in the work place and in the home, and therefore see this as an overall challenge to the nature of patriarchal relations.80

Sylvia Walby in her book <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> has attacked both Eisenstein and Burstyn for being too deterministic; "they place insufficient emphasis on the political level and upon gender relations, and too much emphasis on the capital labour dynamic."81 Thus, in her theory of gender and state, she conceptualizes the state not as a monolithic entity but as being both capitalistic and patriarchal. Patriarchal forces and capitalistic forces operate to some extent autonomously at the level of the state and the consequent "political struggle" determines the action of the state. Walby then goes on to show the changes in the state's policy towards gender, in the realm of employment, divorce, culture, sexuality, violence points to "a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests ...."82 In conclusion, she argues that although the modern state has facilitated women's entry to the public sphere, once there, it has done little to improve the lives of women. Women have moved from private individual patriarchal control to public collective patriarchal control.

In applying a socialist feminist framework in the context of the African state, it can be argued that the colonial

state was both patriarchal and capitalistic by nature. Marjorie Mbilinyi has pointed out, the "capitalist" colonial state was made up largely of men from patriarchal societies and therefore colonial administrators sought the aid of male chiefs and headmen in the pursuit of economic surplus without giving any recognition to the economic and socio-political status of women in the community.83 The "male" colonial state encountered a patrilineal society within which existed prevailing notions of male superiority, and, in its pursuit of capital accumulation, the state changed African household and kinship patterns so that these notions were institutionalised and power and decision-making were given to men. Thus women became subordinate to men politically, socially and economically (See Chapter Two - The Impact of the Colonial State on Women).

Kathleen Staudt has argued that the colonial state in Africa "did more than serve the interests of a newly emerging bourgeoisie; ..., it created the conditions deemed necessary for capitalist transformation."84 The colonial state increased male productivity by having them participate in the cash economy (men "forced" to work on plantations, in mines, in cities) whilst women were discouraged from doing so and were left behind in the rural subsistence sector to subsidize both men and capital. This was only possible by fostering a supporting gender ideology through churches, schools and administrative practices which maintained "men as the family breadwinners" and "women [as] property, controlled and

44

protected by men."85 At the same time it was necessary to have the help of "cooperating" patriarchs ensured that women would remain within the so called "private" realm and men would participate in the "public" sphere. Gender struggles between African men and women also helped shape the nature of colonial capitalist growth.

Socialist feminists would also point out that the state ended up compensating men over women in their pursuit of economic surplus. Therefore in the final analysis the colonial state ended up laying the moral and legal foundations for an independent "male" state to succeed, a state whose policies would invariably favour one gender over another.

The modern African state is the key player in the "extraction and distribution" of resources and in the structuring of gender and social relations. Robert Fatton has argued that in Africa "class power is state power; the two are fused and inseparable."86 State power is also very much male power and consequently women's access to political and economic resources (and therefore class power) is severely hindered by this system of male domination and by patriarchal traditions within African society.

In light of this evidence, socialist feminists would argue that in the context of the African state, both gender and class determines access to critical resources and that both

state gender ideology and class affiliation affect the overall position of women within the state. Socialist feminists would point to evidence which shows that despite the rhetoric of African governments on equal access to resources, the state continues to pursue policies that deny women as a community political, economic and social resources. This "gender bias" continues to keep women in the private and informal sectors where they also serve the long term needs of capitalism and men. Women continue to carry the burden of production and of social reproduction and continue to subsidize both men and capital. Patricia Stamp, extending on Gayle Rubin's analysis of sex-gender systems, claims that this subsidy started with the colonial state which shifted control of women's labour from lineages to individuals and male households, and that the contemporary patriarchal state continues to subvert and undermine women's rights.87 Socialist feminists would ultimately argue that in the case of Africa, the "male" state collaborates with the needs of capitalism to control women's labour to ensure a continuation of a male-dominated ruling class.

Theoretically, this thesis argues that socialist feminism is the most useful of feminist theories in understanding the root causes of women's subordination. Its importance is in the fact that it manages to overcome much of the limits of traditional Marxist feminist analysis which views women's oppression as based solely on class distinctions by incorporating into its analysis radical feminist insights of

male dominance as an independent site of women's oppression. This synthesis of Marxist and radical feminist elements has led socialist feminists to present a new social reality which interprets women's oppression as historically changing with the introduction of new modes of production and yet this social reality acknowledges that women's subordination must also involve an understanding of male dominance as a "set of specific, though variable, social and economic relations, with specific material effects on the relations of men and women."88 Its significance lies in its ability to present a more dynamic picture of the different forces of oppression such as capitalism and patriarchy which cut across and interact with each other to contribute to women's subordinate status.

Socialist feminists have provided the conceptual tools to analyze the historically changing relations between men and women and the specific social and economic orders that give rise to these relations. In relation to African women and the state, this thesis provides evidence that women's overall position in Africa is influenced both by gender ideology and class relations and that women's circumstances have historically been changing as different modes of production have come into play. At the state level women are affected both in terms of what class they belong to and by their sex. It can also be noted that women of the upper class align themselves with men of the upper and ruling classes to reap the benefits of the state, but that their position can be

somewhat precarious at times given the notions of male superiotirty within African state and society. Patricia Stamp's examination of the politics of gender and ethnicity in Kenya shows how the African state has an economic and ideological interest in controlling gender relations and women. She argues that a strategy of collaborative hegemony is used to promote an ideology that manipulates traditional motherhood and marital responsibilities. Stamp implies that in the long run this serves the interest of the neo-colonial state and the international political economy and male patrilineages.89

Socialist feminism, by providing an understanding of different forms of oppression, supplies the framework from which the complexities of gender relations within African society and state can be analyzed. Having provided the framework of analysis this thesis argues that gender relations in African societies can challenge Western classifications and that feminist theories including socialist feminism do not always explain the complexities of gender relations in Third World.

Much of the problem with socialist feminism lies in its Western catagories of class, of family, of "public" and "private" and socialist feminism's own understanding of the development of Western capitalism and its relation to African society and state. For example, capitalism has not developed in the same way in Africa as it did in Europe and North

48

America, and, pre-capitalist modes of production exist side by side with capitalist modes of production. Unlike in Europe where capitalism first drew on the labour of men, women and children, in Africa the capitalist transformation involved men rather than women, individuals rather than complete families. This had major implications for African women who were left behind in the subsistence economy, as their husbands were drawn of to urban areas to work for low wages. Even today a large majority of African women do not enter the capitalist labour force as working class women but as petty commodity producers. Hence, the structural site of their oppression may be different than that of their working class "sisters" in the West.

Therefore this thesis considers it imperative to match social feminist theory against the empirical evidence of gender relations in Africa. By historically tracing gender relations from pre-colonial to post-colonial independent African society, as well as looking at present state policies towards women the thesis will provide the empirical raw material needed to build on a more systematic social feminist theory - a theory that avoids the "hegemony of Western thought."

I now turn to Chapter Two to begin my empirical study of African women. I start off by briefly examining women's overall position in pre-capitalist traditional society; and then I move to the capitalist colonial state, the formation

49

of classes and the gendering of classes through the social and legal control of women. The theoretical evidence above will be analyzed in terms of the empirical material provided.

ENDNOTES

1. Alison Jaggar & P. Rothenberg, <u>Feminist Frameworks:</u> <u>Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Men and Women</u> (2nd. & 3rd. ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1984; 1993).

2. Mary Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," In Josephine Donovan, <u>Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism</u> (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1991) pp. 9-10.

3. John Stuart Mill, "On the Subjection of Women," In Alice S. Rossi, ed., <u>John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill: Essays on Sex Equality</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) p. 190.

4. Betty Friedan, <u>The Feminine Mystique</u> (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1963).; Betty Friedan in Asoka Bandarage, "Women in Development: Liberalism, Marxism and Marxist Feminism," <u>Development and Change</u> 15 (1984) p. 497. In her book <u>The Second Stage</u> (1981) Friedan argues against those who promote the stereotype that the home and family belong to the women's sphere and she advocates a balance between women's assimilation into the workforce and men's assimilation into the family.

5. Esther Boserup, <u>Women's Role in Economic Development</u> (USA: St. Martins Press, 1970).

6. These studies include: Mayra Buvinic, M. Lycette & W. McGreevey, eds., <u>Women and Poverty in the Third World</u> (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983); Melinda Cain & Roslyn Dauber, eds., <u>Women and Technological Change in Developing Countries</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981).; Barbara Lewis, ed., <u>Invisible Farmers: Women and the Crisis in Agriculture</u> (Washington, D.C.: Women in Development Office, Agency for International Development, 1981).; Irene Tinker, <u>Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).; Various articles by Kathleen Staudt (See Bibliography).

7. Asoka Bandarage, "Women in Development:...," <u>Development and Change</u> 15 (1984) p. 495.

8. These include the United Nations Decade for Women, Women's Bureaus within individual nation-states, Women in Development Offices. All these organizations to some degree or other, work towards the equal participation of women in the public sphere.

9. Asoka Bandarage, "Women in Development:...," <u>Development and Change</u> 15, (1984) p. 494.

10. Patriarchy - the original meaning was rule by father, or by paternal right. It can also be defined as a system of male domination and male practices that are oppressive and exploitative towards women. In this thesis it will be used to show a general system that pertains to "the control of women and management of gender relations" by men within African family, kin and societal structures.

11. Sylvia Walby, <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990).

12. Maria Mies's study of women in Andhra Pradesh, India exemplifies how women are "isolated and atomised" as they work in lace production for export. Maria Mies, <u>The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market</u> (London: Zed Press, 1982).; A growing phenomenon in the Third World has been women's employment in multi-national companies. Studies of women in these corporations reveal that women are paid very little, and are often exploited and left with few marketable skills.

13. Sylvia Walby in <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> describes six key patriarchal structures: patriarchal mode of production; patriarchal relations in paid work force; patriarchal relations in the state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions - including religions, media, education. She argues that depending on the situation, some "forms" are more important than others. Also See Sylvia Walby, <u>Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchy and Capitalist Relations in Employment</u>. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986.

14. Ibid., <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> p. 179.

15. Jean O'Barr, "African Women in Politics," in Margaret Hay & Sharon Stichter, eds., <u>African Women: South of the Sahara</u> (New York: Longman Inc. 1984) p. 152.

16. Jane Parpart & Kathleen Staudt, <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1989) p. 8.

17. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," in Irving Markovitz. ed., <u>Studies in Power and Class in Africa</u> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1987) pp. 193-208.

18. For Marxists, class is the key to understanding all social phenomena, and class is determined by the forces of production and the relations of production in any given society. The nature of an individual is dependent not only by the mode of production in a society, but by an individual's place in the class system of that society - individual characteristics reflect those of other members of the same class.

19. Friedrich Engels, <u>The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State</u> (New York: International Publishers, 1942). This book will be referred to as "Origin" due to frequent citations.

20. Ibid., p. 145.

21. Ibid., p. 43.

22. Ibid., pp. 147-148.

23. Ibid., p. 50.

24. Ibid., p. 58.

25. Ibid., p. 65.

26. Engels, In Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</u> (USA: Rowman & Allanhead Publishers, 1983), p. 66.

27. In pre-capitalist "traditional" society, this was not necessary as each sex had dominance over its particular "sphere" and as the work of both sexes was essential for family survival, women were respected and held in fairly high status.

28. Lenin's views on the "woman question" can be found in <u>The Emancipation of Women: From the Writings of V. I. Lenin</u> (New York: International Publishers, 1975). Lenin's work was first printed in 1934.

29. Mariosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, <u>The Power of Women and the Subversion of Community</u> (Bristol, England: Falling Wall Press, 1972) p. 34.

30. Eli Zaretsky, "Socialism and Feminism I: Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life," <u>Socialist Revolution</u> 3, 1-2, (Jan-April, 1973) p. 83.

31. Eli Zaretsky, "Socialism and Feminism III: Socialist Politics and the Family," <u>Socialist Revolution</u> 4, 1, (Jan-March, 1974) p. 87. Other Marxist Feminists who have contributed to the discipline include: Michele Barret, Johanna Brenner, Mariosa Dalla Costa & Selma James, Ann Foreman, Nancy Hol and Maria Romas.

32. See works of L. Beneria and G. Sen "Class and Gender Inequalities and Women's Role in Economic Development-Theoretical & Practical Implications," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 8, 1, (Spring, 1982) pp. 157-175.

33. Eleanor Leacock "Introduction," In Engels <u>The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State</u> (New York: International Publishers, 1975).; Eleanor Leacock, <u>Myths of Male Dominance</u> (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981).; Eleanor Leacock & M. Ettienne, eds., <u>Women and Colonization:</u>

Anthropological Perspectives (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980). Women's subordination has its basis in capitalist accumulation through private property (Engels, Origin 1942). Colonialism laid the basis for private property and capital accumulation and thus laid the foundation for class and social inequality.

34. Jane Jaquette, "Women and Modernization Theory: A Decade of Feminist Criticism," World Politics 34, 2, (Jan, 1982) p. 273. Dependency theorists back this argument stating that colonialism integrated Third World Countries into the world economic system, and that the terms of this incorporation was favorable to the industrial world - this asymmetrical relation between centre-periphery led to a system of "dependent development". See works of Dos Santos, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin.

35. Maria Mies, The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market (London: Zed Press, 1982) pp. 176-177. Her study involves the lace producers of Narsapur in Andhra Pradesh, India. Her work shows how rural women continue to be labelled as housewives despite their very productive contribution to the economy and that as a result of this, capitalists have managed to pay these women less, and deny them the labour rights that they are entitled to. Her analysis concludes that women's integration into the capitalist market economy has not improved the lives of these lacemakers, and in fact, their chances for survival have deteriorated.; Also see Maria Mies "Capitalist Development and Subsistence Reproduction: Rural Women in India," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 12, 1, (1980) pp.2-14.

36. See works of: L. G. Arringo, "The Industrial Workforce of Young Women in Taiwan," The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 12, 2, (1980).; B. Ehrenreich & A. Fuentes, "Life on the Global Assembly Line," Ms (January, 1981); Linda Lim, "Women Workers in Multinational Corporations," Occasional Papers in Women Studies, No. 9, (Fall 1978).

37. Robert Fatton, Jr., "Gender, Class, and State in Africa," In Women and the State in Africa pp. 47-64.

38. Marjorie Mbilinyi, "This Is an Unforgettable Business: Colonial State Intervention in Urban Tanzania," pp. 111-129; and Susan Jacobs, "Zimbabwe: State, Class, and Gendered Models of Land Resettlement," In Women and State in Africa pp. 161-184.

39. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Studies in Power and Class in Africa pp. 203-204.

40. Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence," in SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 8, 4, (1982) p. 529.

41. Alison Jaggar & P. Rothenberg, <u>Feminist Frameworks:</u> <u>Alternative Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men</u> (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1993) p. 120.

42. Firestone, In Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and</u> <u>Human Nature</u> p. 85.

43. Firestone, <u>The Dialectic of Sex: The Case of Feminist</u> <u>Revolution</u> (New York: William Morrow, 1970) p. 5. Firestone uses Freudian terminology to exemplify her point.

44. Firestone, In Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and</u> <u>Human Nature</u> p. 92.

45. For full discussion on reproduction as the cause of women's oppression See Firestone, <u>The Dialectic of Sex: The</u> <u>Case for Feminist Revolution</u>.

46. Margaret Atwood, <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> (New York: Fawcett Crest Books, 1985).; Genea Corea, <u>The Mother Machine:</u> <u>Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to</u> <u>Artificial Wombs</u> (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).; Andrea Dworkin, <u>Right-Wing Women</u> (New York: Coward - McCann, 1983).; Robyn Rowland "Reproductive Technologies: The Final Solution to the Woman Question," in Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli Klein, and Shelley Minden, eds. <u>Test-Tube Women: What Future for</u> <u>Motherhood?</u> (London: Pandora Press, 1984).

47. Mary Daly, <u>Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical</u> <u>Feminism</u> (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978) p. 326.

48. Barbara Burris In Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and</u> <u>Human Nature</u> p. 250.

49. Kate Millet, <u>Sexual Politics</u> (New York: Doubleday, 1970).; & Millet, In Rosemarie Tong, <u>Feminist Thought: A</u> <u>Comprehensive Study</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989) pp. 95-98.

50. See works of Kathleen Barry, <u>Female Sexual Slavery</u> (New Jersey: Prentince-Hall, 1979).; Susan Griffin, <u>Rape: The</u> <u>Power of Consciousness</u> (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

51. Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," In Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch, eds., <u>Lesbianism and the Women's</u> <u>Movement</u> (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1975) p. 36.; and Ti-Grace Atkinson, In Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and Human</u> <u>Nature</u> p. 272.

52. In "confronting patriarchy" small groups of women often use direct strategies - they attack bookstores and record stores which carry pornographic material, often these stores are targets of arson; they confront accused rapists and child-molesters; they stand outside "male-oriented" businesses and verbally abuse them of their "crimes". The nature and organizational structures of radical feminist

groups vary.

53. Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature p. 287. In the early days, the writings of radical feminists often resembled that of traditional political theory (especially Marxism) but in the 70's and 80's radical feminist writing has developed on its own - finding its form of expression in poetry and science fiction (The "theory" paradigm is laden with patriarchal influence and therefore cannot escape its own bias).

54. Ibid., pp. 286-296.

55. Essentialist arguments would reduce the relationship between men and women to mere biology, and would justify men and women's position since there is no use in tampering with nature. Elshtain saw this to be a dangerous position to take for it led nowhere. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981) pp. 204-228.

56. Kate Millet, Sexual Politics p. 111.

57. Marxist theorists Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci also make claims on the state maintaining power through ideological hegemony (the ruling class universalizes its interests.)

58. Jalna Hanmer and S. Saunders, Well-Founded Fear: A Community Study of Violence to Women (London: Hutchinson, 1984).; Hanmer and Saunders, In Sylvia Walby, Theorizing Patriarchy pp. 156-157.

59. Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence," SIGNS 8, 4, (1982) p. 644.

60. Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature p. 160.

61. Ibid., p. 134.

62. Rosemarie Tong, Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989) p. 175.; Tong points out that socialist feminists, in their attempt to link the analysis of patriarchy and capitalism to an analysis of reproduction and production, often quote from Marx and Engels The German Ideology, "According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a two-fold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined

by both kinds of production; by the stage of development on the one hand and of the family on the other". See Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, <u>The German Ideology</u> (New York: International Publishers, 1970) p. 49.

63. Juliet Mitchell, <u>Psychoanalysis and Feminism</u> (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) p. 409.

64. Zilla Eisenstein, ed., <u>Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Social Feminism</u> (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979) p. 27.

65. Ibid., p. 28.

66. Ibid. p. 28.

67. Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union," In Lydia Sargent, ed., <u>Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism</u> (Boston: South End Press, 1981) p. 14.

68. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the `Political Economy' of Sex," In R.R. Reiter. ed. <u>Toward an Anthropology Study of Women</u> (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975) pp. 157-210.

69. Ibid., p. 167.

70. Ibid., p. 159.

71. Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups" Toward an Understanding of the Relation between Sex-Gender System and the Mode of Production in Africa," In Claire Robertson & Iris Berger, eds., <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> (USA: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc., 1986) pp. 27-46.

72. Iris Young, "Socialist Feminism and the Limits of Dual Systems Theory," <u>Socialist Review</u> 10, 2-3. (March-June, .1980) p. 176.

73. Ibid., p. 177.

74. Ibid., pp. 179-180.

75. See Iris Young, "Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: A Critique of Dual Systems Theory," In <u>Women and Revolution</u> pp. 43-69.; and Iris Young, In <u>Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction</u> pp. 183-186. Young cites various examples to support her claim including the works of Esther Boserup on "marginalization of women".

76. Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</u> p. 317.

77. On the concept of Hegemony see Gramsci, <u>Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci</u> Edited and translated by Quinton Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

78. Nicos Poulantzas, <u>Classes in Contemporary Capitalism</u> (London: New Left Review, 1975) pp. 24-25.

79. Varda Burstyn, "Masculine Dominance and the State," <u>Socialist Register</u> (1983) pp. 45-89.

80. See Sylvia Walby's discussion on Eisenstein and Burstyn, <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> pp. 157-159.

81. Ibid., p. 159.

82. Ibid., p. 21. and pp. 159-172.

83. Marjorie Mbilinyi, "The `New Women' and Traditional Norms in Tanzania," <u>The Journal of Modern African Studies</u> 10, 1. (1972) p. 61.

84. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In <u>Studies in Power and Class in Africa</u> p. 194.

85. Ibid., pp. 193-208.

86. Robert Fatton Jr., "Gender, Class, and State in Africa," In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 48.

87. Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups: Towards an Understanding of Sex-Gender System and Mode of Production in Africa," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 39.; and Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya," <u>SIGNS</u> Summer 1991, pp. 808-845.

88. Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</u> p. 160.

89. Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno..." <u>SIGNS</u> (Summer, 1991) pp. 808-845.

CHAPTER TWO
CAPITALIST TRANSFORMATION AND GENDERED CLASS FORMATION IN AFRICA - AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE COLONIAL CAPITALIST STATE AND PATRIARCHAL FORCES.

Introduction.

In the last decade, opposing ideas have developed in regard to women's position in Africa. While liberal feminists have maintained that African women's subordinate position in society is largely a result of their confinement to the "domestic" sphere be it in non-capitalist or capitalist societies, Marxists have argued that gender relations were relatively egalitarian in pre-colonial society and that colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces have led to a decline in women's economic and political power. Seeing inequality of gender relations as a consequence of the "public - private" dichotomy, heightened with the advent of capitalism, liberal feminists have argued that this inequality "can largely be corrected if women now confined to the domestic sphere are integrated into the public sphere as equals,"1 particularly through the actions of an impartial arbitrator - the state. Marxist feminists, on the other hand, have argued that women's relative authority and autonomy in pre-capitalist traditional society have been distorted by the introduction of private property and commodity production during colonialism and argue that women's oppression stems from this capitalist accumulation through private property. As the organizer and defender of the ruling class, the African state (during colonial and modern times) promotes the interest of local and international capitalism maintaining exploitative

relations within society - once class distinctions and neo-colonial processes are overcome, women would be released from their oppression.

Another view of women's position emphasizes the oppressive nature of pre-colonial society with respect to women, arguing that although colonialism and subsequent class relations also oppressed women, this oppression was not new. Both radical feminists and social feminists fall into this category. Radical feminists, however, see women's oppression rooted in men's control of women's bodies - men's control of fertility and sexuality and they argue that this was true both in pre-colonial African society and during colonialism, and this oppressive feature in society still remains unchanged irrespective of the introduction of new patterns of social and economic relations. Radical feminists would argue that both the colonial state was, and the modern African state is, part of a male structure of power and both are therefore instruments of patriarchal domination. Socialist feminists, on the other hand, argue that women's overall position in Africa is influenced both by a gender ideology and by class relations, and that women's circumstances have historically been changing as new modes of production are introduced. Patriarchal forces during pre-colonial society affected women's situation and, with the introduction of colonial capital, class relations also had a specific effect on the relations between men and women. At the state level, social feminists would argue that women are affected both in terms of

their gender and their class position (class oppression shared by both men and women). They would view both systems as oppressive to women.

This chapter examines available empirical evidence so as to analyze these opposing views in light of the realities of the changing nature of gender relations in pre-colonial-pre-capitalist Africa and in colonial capitalist Africa.

Gender Relations In Africa: An Overview.

Despite great variations in African cultures, any analysis addressing African women's social, economic and political uses of power has to involve a historical dimension. Gender relations in present day Africa are shaped by past relations and the very interpretations of those past gender relations have also governed present relations.2 It is obviously difficult to draw generalizations that can extend to all Sub-Sahara Africa but as Karen Sacks points out in "An Overview of Women and Power in Africa," it is possible to see that "patterns of pre-colonial political economy [were] very different from those imposed by colonial rule, and from subsequent involvements of independent African nations in the international capitalist economy."3 Therefore, despite these diversities in African society, one can trace contrasting gender relations in various periods and recognise that certain unities emerge when studying women in Africa.

Gender, together with ethnicity, has become one of the

primary determinants of people's access to resources, whereas once age and membership in powerful lineage groups was the key. This chapter will examine the gender issue by exploring questions regarding the nature of social organization and gender relations in pre-capitalist African societies. It will also look at the effects of colonialism and the introduction of capital on gender relations. Much of this chapter relies on a synthesis of anthropological and historical materials to clarify debates on gender relations in Africa and to provide deeper insights into the linkages between the historical institutionalization of male power through colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa and the further economic, social and political subordination of African women.4

The first section explores gender relations in pre-colonial Africa, examining patterns of economic and social organization between men and women in traditional shifting hoe and pastoral cultures of Kenya and Zimbabwe. Due to the length limitations of this thesis and the fact that data on African societies is often scarce it is not possible to examine all the various cultures within Kenya and Zimbabwe. Therefore this thesis will rely on available anthropological, historical and political materials to explore women's position within a few African societies including the Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin and Masai societies of Kenya and the Shona and Ndebele societies of Zimbabwe.5 The studies presented include works of Nancy Folbre, Jeanne Koopman Henn, Bonnie Kettel, Susan Jacobs,

Regina Smith Oboler, Achola Okeyo Pala, Elizabeth Schmidt and Patricia Stamp and Kathleen Staudt. These works investigate individual case studies on kinship relations and communal modes of production in Africa and will help establish the fact that although a prevailing ideology of patriarchy contributed to women's subordinate status in pre-colonial-pre-capitalist Africa, patterns of authority and power were never fully institutionalised, and therefore women's social and economic status varied from one society to another.6 By focusing on several aspects of kinship societies, women's position within patrilineages and their essential role in agriculture and pastoralism, the bride-wealth systems and age grade systems of Africa, this section will explore how African women, despite patriarchal constraints, were neither powerless nor were they systematically denied free access to critical resources including land and labour.

The second part of this chapter will show how colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa significantly altered gender relations largely to the detriment of women. It will examine how colonial institutions and policies, in order to facilitate the growth of capitalism and solidify patriarchal control, "invoked" pre-colonial notions of power and dominance and transformed indigenous patriarchies so that power and authority was rendered to a particular group of men - "a patriarchal class." I will show that the colonial state was actually a "capitalist patriarchal state" and its male administration allied itself with other

men outside state structures to pursue policies to the detriment of women. This section will present several economic, social and legal policies pursued by the colonial imperial state in Kenya and Zimbabwe; policies that manipulated gender ideologies and created an idea of hegemonic masculinity, thus laying the foundations for men to control women as well as for African men to be the eventual beneficiaries of state power. In the end, I will conclude that gender dynamics in both Kenya and Zimbabwe were shaped by both capitalist, as well as patriarchal (in pre-colonial and colonial) relations and that these dynamics have been changing from one historical period to another.

Gender Relations In "Traditional" Society: Patterns Of Pre-Colonial Economic And Social Organization.

Traditional farming systems in Kenya and Zimbabwe were characterised by both the shifting hoe cultivation system and pastoralism with the "variation in productive specialization" ranging from absolute dependence on livestock and herding (East African plains) to high intensity horticultural cultivation (mountainous areas with highly fertile soils). Herding and cultivation often took place together as complementary activities. In shifting hoe cultivation systems women's tasks included tilling, sowing, planting, weeding, harvesting and distribution and trading of local products. Men's roles were confined to clearing and protection of the land and where there was livestock, men generally took care of animals. Examples of such societies include the Kikuyu of Kenya and the Shona of Zimbabwe. In the predominantly pastoral

64

systems, women were responsible for food production and household affairs including household building whereas men were the chief caretakers of livestock. Examples of pastoral societies included the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania and the Tugen, one of the many Kalenjin-speaking peoples of Kenya. In addition various societies existed where mixed farming, ie. both agricultural farming and pastoralism was practiced. Examples of these societies included the Luo and Nandi (Kalenjin speaking) of Kenya.7 In all these subsistence farming systems production was organised on the basis of a specific sexual division of labour where men and women performed particular tasks necessary for household, kinship and communal survival.

Women's Position and Role within Patrilineal Households.

Social organization in shifting hoe and pastoral societies in East and Central Africa was largely based on a communal mode of production where "kinship [was] the basis of production relations." The majority of Sub-Saharan agricultural and all pastoral societies prior to the coming of colonialism were patrilineal, ie. they traced important kinship relations through the male line. Women were part of their husbands patrilineage through a fairly complex system of marriage based on bridewealth (See Below). In addition, within patrilineages, polygyny (plurality of wives) was widespread and polygynous households were often headed by one man, several wives and unmarried dependents, or headed by married brothers and sons with their wives.

In theory, all kin members in the communal mode of production are equal in relation to the means of production and share in political and economic decision-making.8 In principle, it has therefore been argued that prior to capitalist penetration the relations of production in communal societies were to a large extent non-exploitative rather than exploitative. In the communal mode of production there is a basic assumption that no member can be denied access to the means of production and there is subsequently no basis for exploitation or class. As Patricia Stamp's in her studies of the patrilineal horticultural Kikuyu peoples of Kenya states, "no group is free to appropriate and accumulate for its sole benefit the surplus produced by another group."9 This can be said of most societies that practiced a communal mode of production.

However, in the African context control of the means of production and decision-making power was regulated by seniority and patrilineage membership. African societies had differential access to power and property based on sex, gender and age. Patricia Stamp points out that:

> Among the Kikuyu, as elsewhere, elders were organized for the formal exercise of this authority by the age-grade structure. Male elders had privileged status and could largely appropriate the labour of women and younger men as well as make decisions on access to the corporately owned land. Thus, the elders exercised considerable control over the means of production.10

Susan Jacobs, in her work on the Shona and Ndebele peoples of

Zimbabwe, adds that in both these societies senior men/elders controlled the means of production and the labour of junior men and women, recruiting labour to the household through kinship and marriage.11

Despite "complementarily of economic activities" inequality existed between the sexes. This was especially true in patrilineal societies which were the dominant form of social organization. In these societies men were the inheritors of land, livestock and social positions by the nature of their membership in the patrilineage. Marriage also helped men acquire land and property. A woman's rights to property were largely indirect, based on the significance of her labour within a household and her seniority amongst the women of the household. Access was largely guaranteed through men, and women held usufructuary rights to land under the "ownership" of their fathers' and then their husbands' and adult sons' patrilineage.

It is often difficult to make generalizations based on lineage types due to the diversification of women's roles and as scholars such as Jeanne K. Henn explain: Women in patrilineal societies were in a more precarious position than those in matrilineal African societies, but even in matrilineal societies the basic principle of patriarchy prevailed - men controlled land, livestock, marriage, and to a large extent, politics.12 Other scholars such as R. A. Le Vine point out that some women's positions in patrilineal

societies may have been better "due to structural factors such as residence and property rights which are more important in status placement...."13 For example, within polygynous patrilineages such as the Kikuyu, each wife lived in her own individual home with a separate kitchen to which was often attached a small garden plot (the produce of which belonged to her). A woman's very separate place of residence and her ability to dispose of her "own crops" gave women considerable status and this was particularly true of a first wife who often had a bigger home (closer to a husbands place of residence) and a bigger garden plot. However, in both types of social organization sexual stratification resulted where the male, particularly the elder male, was considered superior. And when conflict arose between men and women the male point of view prevailed.

Some scholars have argued that, in actuality, a patriarchal mode of production prevailed in many pre-colonial traditional societies. Jean Koopman Henn explains:

> In a patriarchal mode of production effective possession of the means of house-hold based production is monopolised by a class of patriarchs.... The dependent class-wives, unmarried daughters, sons and junior siblings -is denied free access to the means of production on the basis of ideological and political criteria which allow the patriarch to set the terms on which women and dependent males get access to the means of production.14

However, it is important to point out that sexual stratification and inequality did not necessarily imply that women in African societies were completely powerless and had

no access to resources or decision-making power. Women should not be seen as totally at the mercy of a "patriarchal class" per se. Women, though often excluded from direct access to the means of production, were central to the economy and the lineage particularly in agricultural horticultural societies (such as those practiced by the Luo, Nandi, Kikuyu and Shona). Women were vital to farming systems since they were usually entirely responsible for food production (planting, weeding and harvesting), storage and preparation, water collection as well as being responsible for manufacturing household goods such as clothes, pottery and baskets. In addition, within patrilineages women's role was crucial not only in creating social and economic bonds with other lineages but, as wives and mothers, they were the key organizers of their lineage groups responsible largely for the caring, nurturing and feeding of future lineage members. In turn, a healthy progeny was a key determinant for a man's future social, economic and political status. Women's rights were clearly anchored in the critical role (as producers, wives and mothers) they played in the rural economy and the lineage.15

In her study of land rights and Luo women, Achola Pala Okeyo states that usufructuary rights to land were held by all women within the patrilineage and that no land allocated for subsistence production could in fact be alienated from men or women as a group - "individual women do not have the right to allocate land, but the principle of corporate land ownership, which proscribed the alienation of land, reinforced the

69

security of their use rights."16 Women also had considerable distributive power over their produce and the right to dispose of earnings from any "extra" food crops and from the selling of homemade products such as pottery. Women in this way often managed to acquire respect and power, as well as resources such as livestock.17

Karen Sacks points out that not all women as a gender have the same single and essential relation to the means of production. Her work on non-class and proto-class African societies shows that the relationship of wife/sister to the means of production differs and that women as "sisters" within a kin corporation had higher decision making power and were in more control of their sexuality. In turn a woman's relationship as a wife was more subordinate.18 Although Sacks is referring to societies such as the Ibo in Nigeria and the Pondo of South Africa, her analysis could be applied to various African societies, including the Kikuyu of Kenya, where a women's position vis a vis her natal lineage is higher than her position within her husbands lineage.

Sacks also points out that in Africa, the kin corporation has been an important guarantor of sisterhood and that in turn this has fostered a relationship of political, economic and personal/sexual equality of women - "while a wife was ideally subordinate to her husband and his kin, wives were often able to enforce something resembling sisterly autonomy when they carried out their daily tasks as part of a female

collectivity."19 For example, the system of polygyny allowed wives some leverage against a male descent system. The polygynous homestead gave wives relative independence from husbands since they could own their homes and grow their own crops. Also, it offered women the opportunity to time share household responsibilities with other co-wives including sharing in food preparation, fetching water, and taking care of children. This provided women with a basis for female solidarity and cooperation.20

The Bridewealth System.

Associated with horticultural and herding societies of Africa the bridewealth system is the most widespread form of marriage contract in non-Islamic Sub-Sahara Africa, found almost universally in Southern Africa and practiced by most societies of Eastern Africa and southern Sudan. Bridewealth systems are linked with the system of polygyny and involve some form of exchange by a potential husband or his senior relatives to a future wife's parents and relatives. Central to this exchange is the recognition that a woman's labour and childbearing capacities are valuable both to her husband and her own relatives who should be "compensated" for the loss of this labour. The transfer of "marriage payment" itself acts to ensure the legality of the marriage and the legitimacy of children born of the marriage.21 In many societies, particularly in the cattle-keeping ones, if the marriage were to dissolve than the payment itself was to be returned and, thus, it was normally in the best interest of both parties to

help maintain the marriage.22

Comparisons between different African peoples and localities show that the amount of payment varied from region to region with some societies allowing for more bargaining, and other societies having more of a fixed "rate". For example, the Gusii peoples of Kenya are far less flexible in the amount of "payment" due as opposed to the Luo, where "payment" fluctuated individually.23 The form of exchange also varied and could involve the exchange of goods such as hoes, cloth and spears or the exchange of livestock such as cattle. Exchange in some cases could involve a future husband offering his services to the girl's family or paying through differed installments. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all the different variations within the bridewealth customs 24, but it is important to point out that, depending on the social organization of a particular society, evidence shows that in some cultures women did participate in transaction negotiations.25

Some examples of different types of exchanges are presented below. In pastoral societies such as the Masai, a woman's labour could be exchanged for bridewealth, such as livestock, to a prospective wife's lineage, whilst amongst the Tugen (Kalenjin), women were rarely "purchased" but were exchanged for items of immediate consumption including milk and honey. However, a Tugen wife, at the time of marriage, was awarded "house-property" in the transaction of animals by her husband

and his patrilineage. In the above cases women's incorporation into a husbands lineage group was complete as soon as the transaction took place. The Ndebele of Zimbabwe exchanged women for a set "brideprice" (lobola) and if a man could not afford the brideprice of cattle, he would offer his services to his father-in-law for a given period of time. Within Kikuyu society, bridewealth was often paid in stages, first at the time of marriage and then when a child was born of that marriage. If the second payment was not made, the children (in theory) belonged to the wife's family. In many African societies brides were also exchanged for brides ie. a prospective husband could offer his sister/daughter in return for a wife. Within all these societies the bridewealth system served to legitimize women's position within a particular kinship structure and ensured the kin's future lineage line. As Achola Pala Okeyo points out "Women,..., are fundamental to the structure of segmentary lineages because their reproductive and productive activities combined to reproduce and sustain the development cycle... within the lineage system."26

It has been argued that the bridewealth system of Africa contributed to women's subordination, for marriage was a central institution through which men as a group controlled women as a group. Jeanne Koopman Henn, in her work on "The Material Basis of Sexism," extends this argument stating that control of marriage arrangements allowed for a "patriarchal class" to dispose of women's reproductive and productive

labour as they pleased, as well as giving "patriarchs" the means to control the labour of dependent males. This could be especially true of African societies where the patriarchal mode of production prevailed.27 However, it has also been pointed out that the bridewealth system could lead to a decline in the authority of elders for each bride-price paid for a dependent son, loosened an elders' (patriarchs) hold over him. This is because wives of dependents provided the means through their labour power for sons to become independent of their elders.28 In addition, marriage arrangements among both the pastoral and agricultural societies of Africa varied and this led to different ways in which women "exchanged" lineages - and this in turn led to differences in women's own powers to "influence" the marriage outcome.

Patricia Stamp points out that the bridewealth sex-gender system sometimes resulted in female subsidy whereby a woman's labour could translate into wealth and prestige for men. However, she also points out that the bridewealth system served as a "linchpin in a wide network of affinal kin relations - [this] provided women the opportunity to exercise political power and authority to make decisions."29 For example, a first wife could have a say in subsequent choices of wives since it was partly as a result of her labour that a husband could acquire another wife. Bonnie Kettel's work on the cattle-keeping Tugen also questions the analysis that women were "given away in marriage as if they were passive

74

objects of property to be transacted between men."30   Her studies show "wives were not purchased," "women, whose labour was central to household production, connected themselves through marriage..." and consequently, "women were independent social actors and not ...primordial pawns in the affairs of men."31   Thus, it follows that although marriage largely fell in the realm of male decision-making power, the degree of male or "patriarchal" control varied throughout different African societies, and women's formal and informal power influenced marriage arrangements and future lineage choices.

Women's Age Grade Systems.

The anthropological data on women's organizations including age grade systems is fairly scant but many scholars agree that the age grade system practiced by various African peoples often provided women with an opportunity to gain power and exercise their "public" rights. Women's age grade systems and women's councils were not necessarily as important as, or more important than, men's age grade systems or organizations since this was dependent on the nature of the social organization within a particular agricultural or pastoral society.32 But in many societies belonging to age grade systems and women's councils provided women with avenues to exercise power. For example, Katherine Staudt writes of the Kikuyu, "women's age-segmented organizations matched those of men's and performed a wide variety of functions, including judgement, mutual aid, initiation into womanhood, cooperative farm labour, religious ceremonies, and disciplinary action among women."33   In

addition, the age-grade system allowed for the control of younger lineage females (wives) and dependent males by elder women and allowed for the disposal of some of their labour. This in itself, explains Patricia Stamp, acted as a "counterbalance" against male-patriarchal control of women.34

In addition, scholars have yet to fully recognise women's socio-political contribution within African society and the few studies available point to the fact that age-grade systems and women's organizations made women "players" too. Finally, not all women were in the same position vis a vis men. For example as sisters and mothers they were often in a far better position than as wives; as elders they had considerable control over younger women and dependent males. This shows that gender relations in Africa were not homogeneous and that male-female relations were influenced by particular role that a woman was playing.(ie. sister, wife, producer etc.) Patriarchal control varied from society to society and therefore it was not a universal feature - each individual society had its own degrees of male control over women. There is no denying that an "ideology" of male dominance prevailed, but, nevertheless, these pre-colonial patterns of authority and power were not fully institutionalised within the fabric of everyday life.35 Through informal and formal means, women influenced gender relations.

Having looked at several aspects of economic and social

organization in various indigenous African societies, including women's role in agriculture, bride-wealth systems and age-grade systems, I conclude that African women prior to the coming of colonialism did not live in a egalitarian situation in relation to men, although it does not necessarily follow that African women were entirely at the mercy of a patriarchal class who controlled the means of production and lived off the surplus of women and dependent males. To conclude that women were the "primordial victims of patriarchy" would be to deny the significance of their essential economic and social role within society and would reduce their role to one based entirely on "ownership" and "non-ownership" of communal resources.36 Terms including oppression and exploitation in pre-capitalistic Africa cannot solely be explained in today's notions of oppression and exploitation, for women's central productive and reproductive roles in themselves ensured their status. Men's rights to property and resources are not the only way of defining gender relations (as many Western scholars assume) and analysis of male-female relations must also include social and individual relations between men and women as well as women's position in the larger society.

There is I believe enough evidence to show that despite a prevailing ideology of patriarchy, relations within communal society were not solely based on exploitative, competitive relations between men and women. Neither was there a public-private dichotomy that each gender "belonged" to a specific

sphere. Women (especially within a household) were affected by a belief that the male is "ideally" dominant and the female subordinate. However, this did not change women's semi-autonomous roles as producers and distributors of goods. Women's essential role as producers and reproducers gave them indirect leverage against men. Irrespective of who owned the means of production, access to means of production were never really systematically denied to women and children and women in turn used these accesses for their own benefit as well as the benefit of their lineage group. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that men as a group, as a patriarchal class, were always in a position to appropriate women's labour power and the products of that labour. The degree of patriarchal control varied from society to society and household to household.

This chapter now goes on to show how colonists "manipulated" and even "invoked" pre-colonial notions of power and dominance to promote colonial self-interest and in doing so distorted gender relations to such an extent that authority and power was rendered solely to a particular group of men-"a patriarchal class." It examines how the male colonists, supporting male values and biases, assumed the role of capitalists and fostered a colonial state machinery whose policies ended up not only restructuring indigenous economies and changing traditional household and kinship patterns but also helped facilitate male control over women.

The colonial goal of capital accumulation was at the

forefront of all the policies the colonial states pursued, but as we see below, their policies had a differential impact on African men and African women. This difference in experience is a result of the "gendered nature of class formation" under the colonial capitalist system.37 Ultimately this difference has affected the very nature of gender relations between the modern African state and women and has resulted in a patriarchal class in power and, therefore, I consider it important to explore the relationship between gender and class formations in colonial Kenya, and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). This thesis will discuss British rule since both countries were ruled by the British.

Patriarchy, Capitalism, And Class Formation In Africa - An Alliance Between The Colonizer And The Colonized?

Characterised by both ambivalence and contradiction, colonial rule led to a willingness to accommodate certain traditional patterns of power and authority (including individual patriarchal authority within households) as long as it served the colonial goal of capital accumulation and helped promote social control within the colonies.38 Whereas in traditional society patriarchy had not fully been institutionalised, thereby allowing women some control of their political, economic and social status, the colonists ensured that family responsibility and female accountability would be rendered solely to men. African elders and individual patriarchs were willing to accommodate the loss of control over some members of their populations (ie. wage earning juniors) as long as the colonists helped them maintain and

solidify control over certain groups within kinship structures, particularly women.

The colonial administrators were men - the products of a late Victorian era - and they brought with them European biases of male superiority, of men being the bread winners, of women being confined to the private realm of the home. Consequently, imperialist goals largely concentrated on men. The wage labour force was largely made up of men often "forced" to enter the labour market through taxation. Men were trained for the commercial economy and civil service; land entitlement when awarded was given to men; education and technology was male biased; and men's farming was subsidized at the expense of women's. The consequences of such policies led to the male proletarization process in which male labour was appropriated for capitalist goals and a marginalization of women's traditional economic basis.39

This section of the chapter examines this process arguing that the colonial state and the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa not only eventually distorted traditional structures but subsequently helped consolidate patriarchal control over women and their economic and social resources, at both an individual and at a state level. In the end, the relationship between indigenous and European patriarchal forces and European introduced capitalist structures ended up exposing women to new forms of oppression and domination not found in previous African societies.40

To bring Africans into the colonial socio-economic structure, the colonial state in both countries set about reforming African land usage and tenure systems. In over half of Zimbabwe and in the highlands of Kenya (the white highlands) the colonists simply expropriated the land, evicting its inhabitants and commercializing the land into white owned farms run on the labour of the land's previous owners - the Africans. Various methods ranging from the passing of legislative acts through colonial courts to administrative measures involving coercion, were used to ensure that Africans moved out to less fertile and sometimes barren reserves that were especially set up for them.41 The reservation system was largely required for the creation of a class of stable laborers, mainly male, to work on colonial capital enterprises. By imposing taxes, including the common hut (head) and poll taxes (men were taxed almost universally), colonial administrators, sometimes through coercion,42 assured male entrance into the colonial wage economy whilst confining women to rural subsistence agricultural sectors.

The introduction of a gendered capitalist division of labour side by side with traditional divisions of labour had a profound impact on African peoples. It resulted in male out migration in search of wage earning jobs in various towns, in mining areas and on commercial farms. Women were not actively encouraged to seek employment and remained behind in the traditional subsistence sectors. The colonists paid individual

81

wage earners extremely low wages and the burden of raising and
sustaining the family fell increasingly on the subsistence
sector and on women.43 For the colonial capitalists this
system ensured a steady supply of future cheap laborers and
thus they became increasingly aware that to continue the
subsidization of male wages, women had to be confined and
controlled within the subsistence sector.

European racial and gender prejudices also contributed to
ideas on women's appropriate roles in the colonies. As one
state administrator remarked, "to any observer of the native,
it is immediately apparent that their women are
extraordinarily inferior to the men," and another claimed,
"The women, ..., are many centuries behind them [men] in
civilization and absolutely unfit to be granted any measure of
freedom for the present as their instincts are purely
animal."44 With such sexist attitudes it was readily
"reasoned" that women should become subordinate to and be
controlled by men. In this endeavour, colonial administrators
sought the support of various chiefs and male elders to
promote social control of women and to ensure that "junior"
men were systematically brought into the public sector whilst
women remained in the firm control of the kin group.45 In
turn, as chiefs and elders began to collectively lose control
over younger men, many were willing to "collaborate" with
colonial administrators to tighten their control over female
labour. Those that did not cooperate were individually
replaced by headmen and chiefs appointed by the colonial

government.

Despite an effort to regulate and control women's
movements, many women managed to accompany their husbands to
cities and mining towns.46 In towns, women often found "off
the books" work and employed themselves in petty trading
activities including beer brewing and the selling of cooked
food and local crafts. For many the earnings from these
informal economic activities were meager and they were forced
back to the rural areas. In some cases women managed to
accumulate enough cash particularly through the lucrative
beer-brewing and prostitution trades to purchase property and
become "landladies in the African side of town."47 However,
these activities were largely disapproved of by the colonial
administrators who self righteously considered such activities
immoral and punishable behaviour:

> [The woman] who submits to the gay life of
> mining compounds and leaves her lawful husband
> at the kraal [homestead] should be forced to
> pay the penalty for her immoral pursuits. When
> old age overtakes her and she no longer
> attracts the opposite sex, she should not be
> rewarded for her behaviour by judicial
> leniency. By no means should she be given
> custody of her children. Raising the status of
> the African woman by permitting her to own
> property would only encourage in her a state
> of independence and lead her to dishonour and
> ruin.48

For these reasons, as well as for the need to cash in on
lucrative local businesses such as beer brewing, the
administration ensured that these were the first businesses to
be appropriated by the state. In many towns including

Bulawayo, Rhodesia (1911) and Nairobi, Kenya (1921) the colonial state simply established official beer halls, proclaiming illegal the brewing and selling of beer anywhere near the vicinity of the halls. In turn, such actions restricted women's ability to earn independent income, although they continued to brew beer illicitly.[49] At the same time, colonial administrators continued to use sexist ideology to control women's economic independence, making it very difficult for women to survive without partaking in such "illicit and amoral professions." For example, Elizabeth Schmidt's study of colonial Zimbabwe shows that officials declared women to be the legal minors of husbands and fathers and therefore, as minors, they were without access to independent land, housing or wages. With women having so few means of earning money, it was only through beer brewing or prostitution that women could acquire enough cash and maintain some independence.[50]

Ultimately, women in towns were disapproved of and considered a liability by both colonial officials and African men who viewed women's labour to be of far greater importance in the rural areas. In the majority of cases, African women continued to experience the "highest rates of unemployment and the lowest wages" and continued to be exploited by the colonial state, capitalist forces and also by African men, particularly spouses, who were threatened with the possibility of women gaining some independence in towns and cities (their actions were largely motivated by the traditional perception

that women's foremost role was to look after them).

As the cash economy solidified its hold, male household heads (ie. the patriarchs) sought to gain tighter control over family resources both of male dependents and females. Husbands were even more determined to keep women at home and prevent them from moving out or earning cash - the fear being that they would became independent and start initiating divorces, paying back their own bridewealth, etc. George Chaunsey also explains that elders realized that women's mobility represented "a fundamental challenge to the structural basis of their power" since women were the primary producers within the lineage.51 As well, absent migrant farmers would lose land rights if wives did not remain behind. Hence, both elders and migrant husbands sought help from the colonial administrators to get the situation under control. Subsequent colonial laws and regulations, including those involving marriage, mobility, land, taxes, inheritances and agricultural practices all supported the control of female labour power in the hands of senior men and facilitated the firm control of cash and land in the hands of the individual male heads of the household.

Female migration from the rural areas continued to be a source of concern to both black patriarchs and white colonial officials. In Rhodesia and Kenya chiefs and elders sought through the Native Courts, to assert their claims on women and to enforce their powers to control women's movements. These

were Courts set up by the colonial administration to address matters of the "Native." The colonial policy of indirect rule 52, ensured that, in theory at least, the British administration would recognise and encourage customary rules of tribal society and thus, they supported the claims of chiefs and elders whom they saw as the rightful holders of power. Native Courts often intervened in favour of chiefs and elders, thus legitimating their claims, even though in traditional village society their legal rights over women and their judicial activities were not as "clear-cut" since the realm of public and private were not as distinct. For example, Martin Chanock in his analysis of "Making Customary Law" shows how British officials when coming across a chief:

> ... intended to invest him retroactively not only with a greater range of authority than he had before, but also with the authority of a different type... , and chiefs and headmen presented at times a form of retroactive fantasy in which they acted in the normal course of events as judges in all cases.53

Chiefs and elders cited tradition and "customary law" in their favour and it was partially through the creation of the Native Courts, that "tradition" was codified and control over women was transferred to chiefs, elders and individual men as heads of households.54

During the early years of colonial state formation, women had managed to take advantage of new opportunities, provided as a consequence of the introduction of new modes of production, to struggle against kinship patriarchal domination by, for example, initiating their own divorces, moving to

cities and buying their bridewealth back, etc. Subsequently, it was found that more and more women were opting out of traditional marriage structures by refusing to marry "appointed" partners, opting for informal liaisons instead.55 Many women were also taking flight to rural areas in order to resist physical abuse by their husbands. In the 1920's and early 1930's as the colonial state consolidated its authority it became increasingly aware of the incidence of "marital breakdown and sexual undiscipline" including widespread adultery. Officials were especially irked by what they considered women's arrogant and indifferent attitudes towards their husbands and fathers. Male elders had also became gravely concerned about the situation and were venting their anxieties to colonial officials. The colonial administration soon perceived these incidences as a threat to the carefully constructed social order of the colony. As one native commissioner in Rhodesia proclaimed:

> ... if adultery continued unchecked, African
> men would begin to resent the inability of the
> white government to deal properly with
> adulterers. Ultimately, the problem threatens
> to upset the peace of the natives races under
> our control. Unless the government supported
> African men in exercising their rights over
> wives, not only the family but the whole
> existence of a nation could be placed in
> jeopardy.56

Arguing that African women's wanton and immoral tendencies had to be controlled, the male administration sought to gain control of women and return them to the legal guardianship of their husbands and fathers.

The male dominated Native Courts were given jurisdiction

over marital cases, and since these courts remained one of the few means by which Africans could press their social claims on the colonial structure they were used to full advantage by male Africans.57 The Courts ended up not only enforcing a husbands's marital rights over his wife but also, at the insistence of village elders, all marriages, both rural and urban, now had to be contracted and registered in rural areas, thus binding women more strongly to the rural areas and to their marriages. Simultaneously, capitalists also began recognising the importance of women's presence in the mining belts since laborers were healthier if women were there to tend them, and consequently they allowed miners to bring wives along. Single women were denied the same freedoms of movement and consequently women were forced into marriages by the needs of colonial capital.58 In the end, the colonial administration's "marriage laws" legitimised and strengthened "customary female subordination" and this was done with the full knowledge and support of African male authorities.

At the same time, the introduction of a capitalist mode of production, continued to weaken kinship structures, and it became increasingly difficult for elders and headmen to control the movement of junior men and women. Colonial capitalism provided junior men new opportunities to exert their independence from elders, particularly in influencing the bridewealth system - a wage earning son could now accumulate enough of the bridewealth to secure a wife all on his own by paying cash. Bridewealth now became a part of a

cash transaction and women became commodities to be bargained for and a means through which wealth was passed on from one generation of men to another. Consequently, women as a group lost a traditional base of power and authority, whereas men, particularly dependent males, gained easier access to securing wives and subsequently, to gaining female labour power. This in itself facilitated their entry into a patriarchal class whereby they could control and dispose of women's labour. Prior to colonialism, many women had moved back and forth between lineages creating social ties and reciprocal relations between different groups and were never considered the absolute property of one man.

Margot Lovett points out that such colonial actions and subsequent African patriarchal actions resulted in the control of young men being moved from the kin group to the state and the control of women to kin patriarchs.59 In effect, an implicit agreement was reached between the colonial state and capitalist forces and African patriarchs. Such agreements ensured the colonial goals of capital accumulation while maintaining social control on the African population through headmen, elders and chiefs. In the rural areas the colonial state in both countries continued to maintain and solidify the principle of patriarchy and, in turn, managed to appease a potential adversary - African men.

Women in rural areas became responsible not only for their own tasks but also for those tasks previously carried out by

men. Wives of migrant workers were left to take care of the children, the animals, and the farm with little or no help from men. And, even though they were in essence the head of the household due to the absence of their migrant husbands, they were rarely recognised as such. In addition, since their work remained largely subsistence, women's farming was not valued with the same rewards as wage work or cash cropping , and as Kathleen Staudt in her analysis of the colonial state and the imposition of the public-private distinctions points out, "[women's] productive activities, once recognised as work, eventually were regarded as not quite economic."60

In response to declining European production and in an attempt to maintain colony exports, the colonial state particularly after World War Two, began directly intervening in indigenous land tenure systems replacing traditional systems with individualised land and market production. The state was also motivated by the hope of creating "African middle peasantry" or "a kulak class" and a rural market base. Colonists wanted to ensure that there would at least be a market for European goods and commodities, particularly in the rural areas, and this could only be achieved if there was a class of people who had the money to buy the "goods".61 Colonial planners felt that an efficient agricultural system would only be achieved if peasants moved away from cooperative ownership and owned their own land and so became personally responsible for its development and well-being.62 The British government acted accordingly by surveying land and allocating

plots. In many areas those assisting in the adjudication of land remained male - men who saw the inheritance of land title-deeds as being similar to customary rules of inheritance of cattle, and other property.63 The British, reflecting their male bias and total lack of appreciation of Africa's "female farming system par excellence," felt that men would make better farmers and since they were the heads of the household, title-deeds should be distributed accordingly.64 With such actions, the capitalist state helped individual patriarchs consolidate control over women and their produce which now technically belonged to men.

Women's usufructuary rights which had "previously benefitted from the flexibility and multiplicity of rights in corporate landholding" were considerably undermined as land became exclusive male property. Achola Pala Okeyo's study of Luo women shows that such policies not only led to uncertainty as to the legal status of women's usufructuary rights but led to tensions between men and women within households in relation to the control and disposition of produce - produce that men now legitimately saw as "their property."65 This was the case for many African societies. Furthermore, land title deeds could be used as collateral for loans and this only fostered further inequities between men and women. By transferring land from lineage "ownership" to individual ownership the colonial state allowed for a future class of patriarchs to decide the terms on which women and dependent males could utilise a means of production (land) and dispose

of its produce.

This direct intervention in traditional agricultural systems led to inequities in the distribution of resources and the development of class proletarization amongst the African peasantry, which in turn had a profound impact on women. Land individualization resulted in the more successful peasants accumulating and appropriating land from less entrepreneurial farmers which in turn, fostered the beginnings of class antagonism amongst lineage groups. Appropriated land was largely used for commercial crops for export and thus women lost out on subsistence land and food production. Many men who could afford land were often absent working elsewhere and thus, the labour of wives and children sustained cash crop production. Consequently women's burden increased as they participated in food production as well as growing cash crops for their husbands. Husbands were now able to legally appropriate women's produce and profits. Land individualization undermined women's social and economic rights with regard to land usage and disposal of "extra crops" and created further divisive and exploitative rifts between men and women rights.

The colonial desire for the colony to "pay for itself through agriculture" created an emphasis on cash crop production, as opposed to food production, and led to a situation whereby men's commercial farming was subsidised over women's subsistence farming which was largely ignored by the

state. Men, as the traditional heads of households were thought to be better able to cope with the new technological innovations introduced by the colonists. Males were also targeted because of the sexist notions that women couldn't handle the new technology. An example of such prejudice is this official statement released by British authorities:

> It is contrary to native custom and to general practice for native women to be employed at all, except in the transformation of domestic necessities and in ... agricultural pursuits on tribal or on individual native lands.... The native woman at her present stage of mental development is totally unsuitable for partaking in any industrial undertaking involving mechanical knowledge.66

Men were taxed in the form of crop quotas to enter into commercial activities and thus "persuaded" to take what little land there was out of food production and into commercial farming. In turn, African males in their desperate need for cash also justified their position as primary earners in the name of "custom" to exclude women from the commercialization process (for example cattle were traditionally "owned" by men and therefore ploughs should naturally belong to men too).

Subsequently the colonial state, with the aid of influential male elders and chiefs and the church, made sure that men were given the technological know-how, training and practical experience to participate in capital accumulation. They were also motivated by the patriarchal belief that men, with "superior" technical aptitude, would make better farmers. Women were systematically denied such access and thus ended up concentrating their efforts on food crop production. These

kinds of policies had a devastating affect on the status of women as important contributors to the economic and social well being of their lineages. Despite the continuing importance of their labour-power and their central role in agricultural production, women lost their traditional status as producers. Production now fell in the newly created public realm of wage employment and cash-crop cultivation, whilst women's roles largely remained in the subsistence sphere - the realm of the private. In the end, the colonial state ensured that cash-crop cultivation would be controlled by men and that women would maintain the "proper" place in the private realm of subsistence, where they would not only remained subservient wives, but where they could also continue to serve the needs of capitalism as a low-skilled reserve labour force.67

Janet Bujra explains that not all women were "confined" to the subsistence sector since cash remittances from absent males were often minimal and irregular and therefore women were forced to enter petty commodity production and petty commerce (such activities went well with child rearing responsibilities) to generate income including offering their labour for casual work on neighboring farms.68 In some cases men's cash remittances were used by their wives to appropriate land. Wives of well-off migrant workers ended up hiring the labour of other women to grow cash crops on the additional land; thus they managed to reduce their own labour input and concentrate on commercial activities while their poorer counterparts had to contend with the double burden of

indigenous agricultural production as well as working as wage labour.69 Women's entrance to the wage labour force, largely as a consequence of men's entrance to the labour force, was marked by increasing social and class differentiation amongst women, a situation quite different from traditional society. Whereas once "sisterhood" networks had been a source of strength and power for women as a group, the class relations that ensued with the introduction of capital forces now divided women and set "sister" against "sister" for the sake of economic survival.

Work on plantations and farms remained rare for women and was largely based on seasonal work limited to women living in nearby areas.70 Women were used as a reserve of casual labour and were exploited as such.71 The patriarchal notion of the male wage being the primary source of income prevailed, and led to women being paid a far lower wage than their male counterparts. In areas where labour shortages prevailed, women were compelled to work on European farms and plantations, partly as a result of a demanding poll tax system. In many cases women had little control over their wages, their working conditions and had little means of addressing their problems.72 A.K.H. Weinrich, in his analysis of women and the effects of economic changes in Rhodesia, writes that women during the colonial era of capital introduction were in fact exploited both as people and as workers, an exploitation quite unknown in traditional African systems.73 Women's overall earnings in the petty sectors of agricultural production

remained far less than the meager earnings of their male counter-parts working on rural farms, plantations and factories.74 In the end, this process served the needs of capitalist forces, colonial patriarchal administrators, who believed women's place was in the home, and of African men who gained substantial power as a group as women became more and more dependent on men for access to land and for cash requirements.

There is little doubt that colonial rule and the imposition of a capitalist political economy subordinated and impoverished African men as well as women.75 Newly introduced political, economic and social relations were to have a profound and detrimental affect on both indigenous men and women. However, this process in both countries, as in most of Sub-Sahara Africa, remained largely male and the whole process of bringing "junior" men into the labour market was only possible with women's subsidizing this process. Women were the unpaid laborers from which a upcoming colonial bourgeois class could maintain and justify the cheap wages it paid to its male workers. Not only did such economic realities, as we see above, lead to a severe decline in women's traditional economic and power bases, but colonial policies also ensured the maintenance of women's labour, mobility and marriage in the firm control of men, thus, increasing the relations of domination and subordination between men and women. However, it would be shortsighted for analysts to assume that subsequent women's subordination was solely based on the needs

of capitalism to ensure a cheap pool of labour. African men also played their part in controlling women, their labour and mobility and their access to critical resources. And in the final analysis, African men joined forces with European structures of patriarchal control to also help shape these new gender realities for women.

Conclusion.

This chapter was an attempt to understand, through a synthesis of anthropological and historical materials, the linkage between the historical institutionalization of male power and the further economic, political and ideological subordination of women. In order to establish this connection, the first section of this chapter undertook an analysis of patterns of gender relations in pre-colonial economic and social organization. Studies on various aspects of African communal societies were presented, including women's social and economic roles within lineages, the bridewealth systems and age grade systems. It was shown that although sexual stratification and sexual inequality existed within these societies and notions of male dominance and male superiority influenced gender relations, women were neither powerless nor were they systematically denied access to critical resources including land, labour and decision making. In the end, this section concluded that despite patriarchal constraints, women still held relatively high socio-economic status within "traditional" pre-capitalist African society.

The latter section of this chapter focused on the impact of colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces on gender relations. The chapter presented evidence to establish a correlation between women's inequality and the semi-proletarization process and class formation that occurred during the colonial period. It discussed how colonial administrators, in order to achieve a secure and stable rule, sought the help of male elders and chiefs, whom they saw as being at the apex of power and authority, to regulate the movements of populations, particularly the movement of women. Consequently, the male administration successfully managed to ignore women's informal bases of power in traditional society. The colonial state viewed the maintenance of social control of African populations as an absolute necessity in order to create a stable environment for capitalist accumulation to grow unhindered.76 This chapter showed that the colonial state, intervened in behalf of capital forces and collaborated with African men, particularly elder men, to control labour migration in the colonies. Those who resisted colonial policies were quickly replaced by the colonial government. Elders and chiefs willingly cooperated, and in many cases exaggerated the extent of their authority, since the capitalist pull had weakened their kinship bases and threatened their hold over male dependents, and therefore they were eager to retain as much control as possible. Individual men also favoured this policy since they could go off and work in the wage sector, whilst retaining control over rural production. In the end, both capital and patriarchal logic

worked together not only to restrict women's participation in the wage economy, but also to increase women's domination and oppression. Capitalism also exploited patriarchs but individual patriarchs, with the help of the colonial state, managed to pass much of this burden on to women.

Colonial administrators and their lawmakers were influenced by European values of the time and awarded individual men control over property rights. The colonial state promoted a gender ideology which portrayed "men as the 'family breadwinners' and women [as] part of the private sphere, controlled and protected by men," to justify their policies.77 Subsequently, corporate land ownership was individualised and kinship patterns severely changed in order to facilitate a husband's ownership rights over his household, and over all the labour of that household in contrast to traditional pre-capitalist society where ownership rights were not as well assigned and relationships between men and women were not solely based on property rights. This individualization of property rights, together with the introduction of a wage economy, had a profound impact on African society. It initiated class antagonism amongst Africans, since some Africans managed to accumulate enough property and wealth to then exploit other Africans, and it also paved the way for wives of successful men to hire the labour of their less fortunate "sisters".78 This resulted in a significant alteration of previous relations between women, creating class divisions among them.79

In the end, gender ideology was manipulated to facilitate the development of both capitalism and patriarchal power. Foreign capital and the state benefitted through the pursuit of specific gender ideology in transferring the responsibilities of "sickness, unemployment, old age, the reproduction of the next generation of wage workers" to the rural subsistence sectors and to the urban ghettos, and thereby to women. Male elders, chiefs and individual African patriarchs also benefitted by getting direct control of female labour and appropriating this labour power for their own personal gain rather than for collective benefit. Migrant husbands also participated in this exploitative relationship since they remained in the eyes of the colonists women's legal guardians, and used their position to enhance their own class position through the surplus labour of their wives, particularly in the rural areas. As Cheryl Walker has pointed out, "In this alliance the respective gender ideologies of colonizer and colonised converged."80 Therefore, it can be successfully argued that a gender ideology of patriarchy interacted with a materialist mode of production - capitalism and that the subsequent collaborative relationship resulted in further economic, political and ideological subordination of women; a kind of exploitation they had not necessarily suffered from in pre-capitalist, pre-colonial society.

The significance of this "alliance" lies in the fact that the colonial state thereby laid the moral and legal

foundations for an independent "male" state to succeed it. As Kathleen Staudt states, "Colonialism thus set the stage for state structures manned to solidify female subordination."81 In the next chapter, I discuss this gendered nature of the post-colonial state and the impact of male-dominated states on women's socio-economic and political situation in independent Africa. Chapter Three also examines the nature of the collaborative relationship between patriarchy and capitalism at the state level and its impact on overall gender relations in Africa.

ENDNOTES

1. Asoka Bandarage, "Women in Development: Liberalism, Marxism and Marxist Feminism," Development and Change 15 (London: 1984) p. 495.

2. For example, colonial administrators and missionaries alike believed that African women would be liberated from oppressive patriarchal structures, such as polygamous marriages, if they (the colonizers) introduced new modern social systems such as the nuclear family. However some African scholars have questioned this belief. Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya's first President) attacked such views as European assaults on African cultures claiming that these attacks on African traditional life were purely for European interests.

3. Karen Sacks, "An Overview of Women and Power in Africa," In J. O'Barr, ed., Perspectives On Power: Women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Durham, N.C.: Centre for International Studies, Duke University, 1982) p. 1.

4. By placing this chapter in a historical context, ie. by examining gender relations in pre-colonial Africa and then in colonial Africa, it is necessary to include the use of anthropological materials in this analysis particularly since right up till the 1960's questions regarding women's roles and position in African family and kinship structures was dealt chiefly through ethnographic studies carried out by anthropologists. Many early historians simply assumed that since sub-Sahara Africa had little indigenous written history they had little history to tell. It was not until the late 1950's and 1960's that various other social scientists began to chronical African women's lives and, consequently, scholars on African women's studies have had to rely on anthropological data, often controversial and a-historical data, for their sources of early African women's lives. African women's studies in general tends to be interdisciplinary and consequently many studies cited are difficult to classify under one discipline and are often a synthesis of various social sciences. For further information on the origin and methodology of African women's studies See Claire Robertson, "Developing Economic Awareness: Changing Perspectives In Studies of African Women, 1976-1985," Feminist Studies 13, 1. (Spring 1987) pp. 97-130.

5. It is important to point out that anthropological data on Africa is often scarce and contradictory and has had its own limitations. Early anthropological studies, like many other social sciences of the time, tended to see indigenous societies from a male perspective and were androcentric in their approach to the study of African societies. Also, anthropologists in the field carried with them Victorian middle class stereotypes that led to an ethnocentric bias in their analysis. Consequently, many early anthropological writings on pre-colonial and colonial African societies

largely refer to men as social and political actors and view women as passive beings, only to be referred to on issues concerning marriage and family relations. In the 1970's the discipline of anthropology itself began to recognise many of its own previous shortcomings and there has been a rethinking of old catagories and assumptions on African societies. The publication of Esther Boserup's Women's Role in Economic Development (1970) largely contributed to the change in attitude towards African women's studies. For further information See Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds. Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives (USA: Praeger Publishers, 1980) pp. 1-5. and Footnote No. 4.; Despite flawed studies early anthropological work on Africa remain useful and are cited by many scholars on African women.

6. Since early material on individual African societies still remains scarce and contradictory, particularly information pertaining to the pre-colonial era, in this Chapter I cite works on cultures that have been well documented in the past.

7. For an overview of the various agricultural and pastoral societies of Sub-Sahara Africa and a understanding of the economic and social organization of these communities See Edna Bay, ed., Women and Work in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982). For information on the specific societies discussed within the text, please see various individual works pertaining to specific societies mentioned in the Endnotes of Chapter Two and the Bibliography.

8. Karen Sacks. Sisters and Wives: The Past and Future of Sexual Inequality (Westport, Conn.: Illinois University Press, 1979) p. 115.

9. Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups," In Claire Robertson and Iris Berger, eds., Women and Class in Africa (London: Africana Publishing Company, 1986) p. 36.

10. Patricia Stamp, Technology, Gender and Power in Africa (Ottawa, Ontario: International Development Research Centre, 1989) p. 78. Age grade systems are rites of passage based on age. They vary amongst both agricultural and pastoral societies and are particularly significant amongst the cattle-complex societies of East Africa.

11. Susan Jacobs, "Women and Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe," Review of African Political Economy (Special Issue) 26-28, 1983. p. 33.

12. Jeanne K. Henn, "Women in the Rural Economy: Past, Present, and Future," In Margaret Hay & S. Stichter, eds., African Women South of the Sahara (USA: Longman Group Ltd, 1984) p. 8.

13. R. A. Le Vine, "Sex Roles and Economic Change in Africa," Ethnology 2, (April, 1966) p. 186.

14. Jeanne K. Henn, "The Material Basis of Sexism," In S. Stichter and J. Parpart, eds. <u>Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and Workforce</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 37-38.; Also see Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchal Social Relations in Zimbabwe," In <u>Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and Workforce</u> pp. 61-77. Folbre like Henn applies the patriarchal mode of production to social formations in Zimbabwe.

15. Ironically, despite the fact that African women today continue to play the same central role in food production and reproduction as they have done in the past many of the customary rights they once held as important lineage members in pre-colonial societies have been eroded. Institutional structures and kinship relations that once protected and recognised women's critical role and multiple rights have been weakened and transformed both as a consequence of colonialism and as a result of the wage economy. African women no longer have the same security as lineage members as they did in the past. For example, the shift from communal land ownership to individual male land ownership in Africa has jeopardised women's customary usufructuary rights. In addition, women's work in food production and reproduction has been relegated to the "private sphere" and is no longer perceived to be as valuable or as important as the work performed in the male dominated public sector (this can be observed in many modern societies as well). This chapter will trace how African women's rights and status have been jeopardised through the introduction of new relations of production and the enforcement of patriarchal ideologies by the nation-state.

16. Achola Pala Okeyo, "Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers," In E. Leacock & M. Etienne, eds., <u>Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives</u> (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980) p. 195.

17. C. Clark's work on women and power in nineteenth century Kikuyu points to the fact that despite an ideology of male dominance, "Kikuyu women emerge as actors with control over resources....." C. M. Clark, "Land and Food, Women and Power in Nineteenth Century Kikuyu," <u>Africa</u> 50, 4, (1980) p. 368. However as scholars such as Susan Jacobs explain it is important to note that this did not necessarily mean that women's "subordinate" position to men was always altered with the acquisition of lineage respect and resources. Susan Jacobs, "Women and Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe," In Jane Parpart & Kathleen Staudt, eds., <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1989) pp. 161-184.

18. Karen Sacks, "An Overview of Women and Power in Africa," In <u>Perspectives of Power: Women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America</u> pp. 2-3.

19. Ibid., p. 3.

20. Although there were problems between co-wives, many studies report the economic and political benefits of polygyny particularly in allowing women some autonomy. See Patricia Stamp. <u>Technology, Gender and Power in Africa</u> p. 77.; Christine Obbo. <u>African Women and Their Struggle for Economic Independence</u> (London: Zed Press, 1980) pp. 34-35.; Esther Boserup. <u>Women's Role in Economic Development</u> (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970) p. 43.

21. Although in many African societies the bridewealth exchange is referred to as "marriage payment, it is important to note that "payment" in pre-colonial societies was not a price and was largely a non-commercial transaction.

22. Lucy Mair. <u>African Marriage and Social Change</u> (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1969) p. 5.

23. Ibid., p. 51.

24. For a comprehensive survey of the different bridewealth customs See Lucy Mair. <u>African Marriage and Social Change</u> (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1969).

25. Bonnie Kettel, "The Commoditization of Women in Tugen (kenya) Social Organization," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 55.

26. Achola Pala Okeyo, "Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers," In <u>Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives</u> p. 194.

27. See Jeanne K. Henn's work on the patriarchal mode of production and its relevance to the analysis of patriarchal societies in pre-colonial Africa. Jeanne K. Henn, "The Material Basis of Sexism: Patriarchal Social Formation in Zimbabwe," <u>Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and Workforce</u> pp. 27-59.; Jeff Guy in his analysis of "Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's Pre-Capitalist Societies" echoes these arguments. Jeff Guy, "Gender Oppression in Southern Africa's Pre-Capitalist Societies," In Cheryl Walker <u>Women and Gender in Southern Africa</u> London: J. Currey, 1990) pp. 33-47.

28. A.K.H. Weinrich. <u>Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia</u> (Paris: UNESCO, 1979) p. 92.

29. Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 36.

30. Bonnie Kettel particularly questions the analysis of Llewelyn-Davies whose work on another cattle-keeping peoples the Masai, leads her to conclude that Masai women "were given away in marriage as if they were passive objects of property to be transacted between men." (Llewelyn-Davies, "Two Contexts of Solidarity Among Pastoral Masai Women," In P. Caplan & J. M. Bujra, eds., <u>Women United, Women Divided</u> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979) p. 331. Kettel questions this

interpretation pointing out a general a-historism in Llewelyn-Davies arguments and putting forward the idea that women's commoditization was an artifact of contemporary capitalism. Bonnie Kettel, "The Commoditization of Women in Tugen (Kenya) Social Organization," In Women and Class in Africa pp. 52-55.

31. Ibid., Women and Class in Africa p. 55.

32. For example, in cattle complex societies such as the Barabaig of Tanzania, elder women acting as judicial bodies often regulated the social relations of the sexes and even handing out fines to men who violated women's rights. However, in another cattle-complex society, the Masai, women were not members of age-sets and age-sets may have contributed towards perpetuating the inferior status of women. For further discussion on the Masai see works of Llewelyn-Davies.

33. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Irving Leonard Markovitz, ed. Studies in Power and Class (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 195.

34. Patricia Stamp, Technology, Gender and Power in Africa p. 79.; Male elders still appropriated large amounts of women's labour but women were not entirely subordinate to men especially elder women of the kin.

35. Patricia Stamp. Technology, Gender and Power in Africa p. 80 & pp. 75-84.; Karen Sacks, "An Overview of Women and Power in Africa," In Perspectives of Power: Women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America pp. 2-5.

36. "Ownership" in African kin-based societies did not necessarily mean that one individual owned the property since there was in communal society no such thing as exclusive ownership. Property rights usually rested with the corporate group rather than the individual and when one individual did inherit the means of production for example, men inherited land from their fathers, lineage members were never systematically denied access to the means of production. In addition, in traditional African societies if elders appropriated wealth they were expected to share this wealth with lineage members through important kinship and associational obligations. Hence, "ownership" has different implications in communal societies than it does in contemporary class based societies.

37. Various studies on class and gender analysis in colonial Africa are available including works by Margot Lovett, Marjorie Mbilinyi, Susan Jacobs, In Women and the State in Africa; Jeanne Koopman Henn, Nancy Folbre, In Patriarchy and Class; Patricia Stamp, Kathleen Staudt and Cora Ann Presley In Women and Class in Africa The above studies are rooted in different theoretical perspectives.

38. See Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation, and the Colonial State in Africa," In Women and the State in Africa pp. 23-46.

39. It must be pointed out that the colonial imperialist goal impoverished both men and women, politically and economically subordinating them. However because the proletarianization process was largely male, men as a group did not suffer the degree and intensity of this marginalization process as women as a group did.

40. There is no denying that European imperialism affected both men and women but men and women suffered differently under this subjugation. Colonial political, economic and social hierarchies were detrimental to both men and women and both men and women were affected by the subsequent class relations that were created. However, this chapter will show that the colonists in invoking and codifying patriarchal control in the name of "tradition" often provided men avenues to "buf'er" their own subjugation through the further control of wome˜ and their labour. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State and Gender in Colonial Africa," In S. E. Charlton, J. Everett, & Kathleen Staudt, eds., Women, State and Development (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989) pp. 66-85.

41. Individual polices varied from country to country and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss them all and therefore I will discuss the general policies used by the colonial state with regard to land and land reform and use individual examples from the two countries to elaborate my point. For a full impact on colonial policy and its affects on African relations one must best see in context of looking at individual communities within the regions. Some of the detailed studies include works by Regina Smith. Women, Power and Economic Change: The Nandi of Kenya (California: Stanford University Press, 1985).

42. In Kenya, for example, men often had to be forced to leave the reserves and "volunteer" their unwilling labour and consequently, as Lonsdale and Berman in their work "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya" state: "[this] held the potential of generating African resistance and threatening the basic framework of colonial administration". J. Lonsdale & Bruce Berman, "Crises of Accumulation, Coercion and the Colonial State: The Development of the Labour Control System in Kenya, 1919-1929," Canadian Journal of African Studies 14, (1980) p. 81.

43. African women living on the reserves not only had to contend with growing food on unproductive lands but they took full responsibility of the young and the old as men became increasingly absent.

44. See Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," <u>SIGNS: Journal of Women and Culture in Society</u> 16, 4. (1991) pp. 735 & 736-737.

45. See Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation & the Colonial State," In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 28.

46. Widows and single women also sought to go to the modern urban sectors in order to "escape" patriarchal control.

47. Marjorie Mbilinyi, "Colonial State Intervention in Urban Tanzania," In J. Parpart and K. Staudt, eds., <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> pp. 114-115.

48. See Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," <u>SIGNS</u> 16, 4. (1991) p. 739.

49. Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation and The Colonial State in Africa," <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 35.; Also see Marjorie Mbilinyi, "This is an Unforgettable Business: Colonial State Intervention in Urban Tanzania," <u>Women and State in Africa</u> pp. 116-122; and Janet Bujra who has also done extensive studies on early women entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Kenya in Colin Sumner, ed., <u>Crime, Justice and Underdevelopment</u> (London: Heinemann 1982).

50. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," <u>SIGNS</u> 16, 4. (1991) pp. 746 -747.

51. The colonists were well aware of these anxieties and recognised all too well that the availability of male labour power was largely dependent on the viability of continued rural and homestead production. George Chaunsey, Jr. "The Locus of Reproduction: Women's Labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927-1953," <u>Journal of South African Studies</u> 7, 2, 1981. p. 152. Although Chaunsey's analysis was based on Norther Rhodesia (Zambia) similar processes were taking place all over British Africa.

52. Indirect rule was the type of system that the British used in their colonies to carry out colonial policy. In brief it was a system that maintained indigenous authorities for eg. village chiefs and headmen and then used these authorities to help implement colonial policy. Various scholars have shown that the colonial authorities were well aware that indirect rule could only survive if the chiefs and headmen that the colonial state relied on to maintain order, particularly in the rural areas, still managed to retain their patriarchal control over women. See Jane Parpart, "Class and Gender on the Copperbelt: Women in Northern Rhodesia Copper Mining Communities, 1926-1964," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 143.; and Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchal Social Formations in Zimbabwe," In <u>Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce</u> pp. 67-68.

53. Martin Chanock, "Making Customary Law: Men, Women, and the Courts in Colonial Northern Rhodesia," In Margaret Jean Hay & Marcia Wright, eds., African Women & the Law: Historical Perspectives (Boston: Boston University Press, 1982) p. 59.; Kathleen Staudt adds that former female-managed political responsibilities (such as judicial functions) were removed from their [women's] hands, only to be replaced with the male controlled administrations and male-run Native Courts and that such actions further defined what was the "public realm" and what was "private realm". Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Studies in Power and Class in Africa pp. 196-197.

54. Various articles have been written on the creation of "customary" law in colonial Africa so as to allow men to regain control over women. These include the works of Martin Chanock, "Making Customary law: Men, Women and the Courts in Colonial Northern Rhodesia" In African Women and the Law"Historical Perspectives pp. 53-67.; Elizabeth Schmidt in her article "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe also discusses the creation of "customary" law by the Rhodesian colonial state to allow men to reassert control over women. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe" In SIGNS 16, 4, (Summer, 1991) pp 732-756.; Margot Lovett also discusses how chiefs and headmen justified claims under customary law to control people's movements, although she does point out that many of these efforts to keep women in rural areas were unsuccessful. Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation and the Colonial State," In Women and the State in Africa pp. 28-31.; K. England also does an excellent analysis on the collaboration between the Native Affairs Administration and tribal patriarchs on restricting the movement of women in his article "A Political Economy of Black Female Labour in Zimbabwe, 1900-1980," and is quoted extensively by Nancy Folbre in "Patriarchal Social Formation in Zimbabwe" In Patriarchy and Class pp. 69-70. England agrees with Lovett that such policies often did not succeed and a number of women still made it to cities.

55. See Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," In SIGNS (Summer, 1991) pp. 746-750. Women often sought to enter into temporary liaisons with migrant laborers who having left their families behind could "entice" local women, often offering them better living conditions than their own husbands.

56. Ibid., p. 742.

57. For detailed accounts of the struggle between women and Native Courts see Martin Chanock, "Making Customary law: Men, Women and the Courts in Colonial Northern Rhodesia," In African Women and the Law: Historical Perspectives pp. 53-67.; and Martin Chanock. Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial experience in Malawi and Zambia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Elizabeth Schmidt provides a overview

of sexist attitudes of colonial officials in Zimbabwe which subsequently translated in laws and punishments against women. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe," SIGNS 16, 4, (Summer, 1991) pp. 732-756.

58. Jane Parpart, "Class and Gender on the Copperbelt: Women in Northern Rhodesian Copper Mining Communities, 1926-1964," In Women and Class in Africa p. 142,

59. Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation and The Colonial State in Africa," Women and the State in Africa p. 28.

60. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Studies in Power and Class in Africa p. 196.

61. However, colonists wanted to ensure the basic interest of European settlers was not threatened by this move and hence, Africans were systematically denied "better" pastures and more lucrative agricultural opportunities.

62. For example, the 1954 Swynnerton plan of Kenya titled "A Plan to Intensify the Development of Agricultural Policy in Kenya" suggested that traditional land tenure systems made it impractical for farmers to efficiently utilize modern farming practices and therefore all "high agricultural potential" land should be consolidated and registered giving the title deeds to individual household heads. In Kenya this included "all of Central Province, including Embu and Meru, all of Nyanza Province and Kericho, Nandi, Elgeyo, and West Suk and the Taita Hills." See Anne King & R.M.A Van Zwanenberg. An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800 - 1970 (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1975) p. 49.; In Northern Rhodesia a similar plan was enacted under the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. Susan Jacobs explains that "Since the preservation of customary land tenure had been intended to ensure a migrant labour force which retained its rights in land, the obverse was to replace customary tenure by providing persons with individual titles to land creating a rural land market." Susan Jacobs, "Women and Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe," Review of African Political Economy (Special Issue, 1983) p. 36.

63. However, in traditional society amongst both the agricultural and pastoral societies land was so closely tied to women's activities that there was no real ideological concept that the land was male property as cattle was male property. For further information on the process and impact of land individualization by the colonial government, See Achola Pala Okeyo, "Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers: Colonization and the land rights of Luo Women," In Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives. pp. 196-202. In matrilineal societies, where land usage rights were passed through one female generation to another, colonial authorities sought to change this in the name of "progress". See works of

Esther Boserup and Karen Sacks.

64. Esther Boserup, <u>Women's Role in Economic Development</u> pp. 58-59.

65. Achola Pala Okeyo, "Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers: Colonization and the Land Rights of Luo Women," In <u>Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives</u> pp. 208-209.

66. Janet Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble Their Efforts ...," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 131. Although this statement was issued in colonial Tanganyika, such attitudes persisted throughout British colonial Africa.

67. See works of Margot Lovett and Kathleen Staudt on the gendered nature of capitalist transformation of Africa.

68. Janet M. Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble their Efforts...," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp.125-127. Women's motives for entering wage labour force was impelled by their need to supplement family income and fulfill the obligations of feeding and clothing children - obligations that husbands were increasingly failing to fulfill). Petty commodity production and commerce was an area where women did not compete with men and paid less than men.

69. Gavin Kitching has done an excellent study on the increasing social gap between Kenyan peasant farmers as a consequence of the male migratory system. Gavin Kitching, <u>Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite Bourgeoisie 1905-1970</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) pp. 106 & 241; Also see Janet Bujra "Urging Women to Redouble their Efforts...," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 127.

70. Jeanne K. Henn, "Women in the Rural Economy: Past, Present and Future," In <u>African Women South of The Sahara</u> p. 15.

71. For example, R. Feldman in her study of employment problems of rural women in Kenya, exemplifies attitudes of company employers citing Brooke Bond as the culprit - The company's assumption was that women only worked on the plantation as wives of male employees, who were the ones who were "seriously" involved in employment. Nevertheless, they conceded that some women came to work independently from neighboring reserves, and did not live in the camps. R. Feldman, <u>Employment Problems of Rural Women in Kenya</u> (Addis Ababa: International labour Organization, 1981) p. 44.

72. For an excellent study of colonial labour policies and the impact it had on women's lives see Cora Ann Presley's work on laborers unrest among Kikuyu women in colonial Kenya. This study examines changes in Kikuyu women's lives as a result of being forced to work on European coffee farms. It explores changes in Kikuyu women's work lives which were introduced

with the creation of coffee agribusinesses in Kenya and the abuses of colonial labour policies, and the strategies women developed to adapt to, and protest against, the new labour systems. Cora Ann Presley, "Labour Unrest Among Kikuyu Women in Colonial Kenya," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp. 255-273.

73. For example, he points out that many Shona and Ndebele women ended up supplementing their incomes through prostitution since casual and temporary work wages remained so low. A.K.H. Weinrich. <u>Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia</u> p. 33.

74. It has been argued that the process that led men into the wage labour force increased women's work in subsistence agriculture and also led them into production for the market- it was their labour both domestic and in petty production and petty commerce that sustained the continuous reproduction of a (male) wage labour force, provided cheap agricultural commodities, cheap consumption foods for men etc. See Janet Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble their Effort...," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp. 117-140.

75. Karen Sacks points out that imperial subordination was in fact "half the impetus for anti-colonial and revolutionary movements, the history of which dates from almost the beginning of colonial rule." Karen Sacks, "An Overview of Women and Power in Africa," In <u>Perspectives of Power: Women in Africa, Asia and Latin America</u> p. 8.

76. It should be noted that the imposition of new capitalist economic and social relations obviously threatened to breakdown stability as the African population became alienated from their traditional land and were forced to work in new systems of production.

77. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In <u>Studies of Power and Class in Africa</u> p. 194.

78. Within communal modes of production there were situations where one group of people could take advantage of another group. For example, because of unequal relations between elders, women and dependents, elders had the authority to appropriate the labour of women and junior men. However, pre-colonial societies were fundamentally classless societies, and no one person was free to appropriate and accumulate surplus entirely on behalf on him/herself and most of what was appropriated was shared within the kin or lineage group.

79. I point this out because these divisions become extremely important in analyzing the relationship of gender and the state in post-colonial Africa for it helps explain why some women, despite being "oppressed" by patriarchal structures, still ally themselves with men of the upper classes. Gender as well as class defines women's position in the modern African state.

80. Cheryl Walker, "Gender and the Development of the Migrant Labour System 1850 - 1930: An Overview," In Cheryl Walker, ed., <u>Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945</u> p. 196. Although Walker's analysis is pre-1930 this alliance was maintained well into colonial rule.

81. Kathleen Staudt, "The State and Gender in Colonial Africa," In <u>Women, the State, and Development</u> p. 172.

CHAPTER THREE
POLITICS, GENDER AND THE MODERN AFRICAN STATE.

Introduction.

In the last section, it has been shown that the colonial state with some help from African men reinforced inequality between the sexes and institutionalised female subordination. The increase in female subordination was not only a consequence of the introduction of a capitalist economy in Africa but also a result, as some have argued, of the imposition of economic and ideological values that laid the foundations of African women being relegated to the "private sphere" and African men being brought into the "public sphere," allowing for a situation quite different from indigenous African political economy.1 A gender ideology ensured that, morally and legally, African men were to be the "official breadwinners" and in dominant control of women and their interests. Chapter Two attempted to show that this gender ideology helped shape men's and women's experiences of the colonial state in different ways. The different relationship of men and women with the colonial state affected the formation and nature of the newly independent states we are studying. By and large, at the time of independence African men were the beneficiaries of state power. Colonial legal, economic and social policies had successfully ensured that women be marginalized from economic and political life. Decolonization had resulted in a post-colonial state that was firmly in control of men.

114

This chapter is an attempt to analyze the relationship between a predominantly "male" African state and its female citizens. It is an attempt to investigate in what ways the "male" character of the state makes its actions discriminatory and what impact does this have on overall gender politics. Do prevailing structures of gender relations and state gender ideologies prevent women from moving into positions of political and social power vis a vis men? To what extent do African state practices and structures reflect societal values of female subordination and are these values used to legitimate the perpetuation of male self-interests? Why have some women managed to acquire substantive political influence, despite gender constraints, within African society?

Evidence will be presented to show that state-gender relations are characterised by what Patricia Stamp describes as a "collaborative hegemony."2 Here male dominated kin groups - "that state within a state," male dominated bureaucratic structures and institutions and state decision making apparatus unite in their ideology of patriarchy. It will be shown that in both Kenya and Zimbabwe, irrespective of political or economic orientation, state structures and policies often reflect this male bias - a bias which ultimately translates into state laws and policies that continue to benefit men over women. Even when the state actively pursues "gender neutral" policies, these underl'ing ideological biases work to the disadvantage of women.

115

This chapter recognises that not all women are similarly affected by these patterns of male domination. Class lines divide African women and African women are not universally disadvantaged vis a vis the state. Although all women suffer from patriarchal constraints some women manage to ally themselves with powerful men within the ruling classes and have used their class position to pursue policies that benefit their own interests and the interests of their male counterparts. Hence, this essay will give careful consideration to both gender and class position in order to determine the nature of the relationship between women and the African state.

In order to establish the importance of the state when looking at gender relations in Africa, it is imperative to carry out a brief analysis of the nature and characteristics of state in the contemporary African state system together with its close associations with the colonial state. Analyzing some of the strengths and weaknesses of the state in shaping the lives of its citizens, this chapter will include a discussion on class and political domination in Africa and will take a look at the unhegemonic characteristics of the state power and some of the policies the ruling classes pursue in order to bring about hegemony. The works of Thomas Callaghy, Patrick Chabal, Naomi Chazan, Robert Fatton Jr., Irving Markovitz, Patricia Stamp, and Kathleen Staudt will be examined.

At the same time, this section will examine the development of state policy when it comes to the "empowerment" of women. Both Kenya and Zimbabwe have repeatedly called for the equality of women and emphasised their commitment to improving women's position. By examining some of the actual policies the states pursue with respect to women's rights, including women's rights in marriage, a widow's right to her husbands property, anti-prostitution policies, and the context in which these policies are undertaken, this section will trace how committed the Kenyan and Zimbabwean states are in challenging the forces that keep women subordinate and some of the factors that hinder this commitment. In the end, it is hoped that this section will provide a general framework for understanding the conditions in which African women often interact with the state and how their lives and opportunities can be molded by these formal structures of political power.

The second part of this chapter will elaborate on women's access to state structures and decision making positions. It will involve a closer examination of women's rights to political participation and the structures that constrain women's ability to penetrate the upper echelons of political power. How does the male component aspect of state leadership influence women's political opportunities? At the same time it will be pointed out that there is a strong correlation between class position and the ability to participate in decision making processes. It will be shown that those women

117

that have influence at high levels of state decision making bodies often reflect the dominant ideology of the state and do not really represent the majority of African women. Included will be a brief analysis of the effectiveness of women's organizations and bureaus in furthering women's political and economic causes.

The Post-Colonial African State And Gender Relations

Much theorizing has been done about the contemporary African state. One early approach which followed the first years of independence was to view the state in terms of government and the type of political system in existence. The liberal pluralist conception of the state fell under this category whereby the government was seen to be democratically elected and accountable. The Marxist approach saw the nature of the African state in terms of class struggle in which economically dominant classes controlled the state for their own interests. Class struggles in turn, Marxists argue, are influenced by the state's position in the international economic order. Some have argued for the concept of the overdeveloped state - a Leviathan, albeit a weak one at that.3 In this approach the African state is seen as an dominant actor in political and social life and those that hold the reigns of power become the most privileged members of society. The nature and workings of this type of state are determined by the following elements: centralised executive authority which is often personalised; the leaders position is legitimised by complex and shifting blends of charismatic,

patrimonial, and legal-rational doctrines; the personal ruler
is supported by personal officials and new state
administrative cadres whose positions rest in large part on
political loyalty to the ruler and patron-client networks;
and these officials control an inherited colonial
administrative apparatus.4 In this type of state one's
political, economic or social success' or failures are
determined by one's position vis a vis the state. This
concept of the overdeveloped patrimonial state has had its
critics and for the most part the critics do not attack the
Leviathan model per se, but questions are directed towards
the centrality and importance of the state.5

This thesis maintains that whatever the approach to the
concept of the contemporary state in Africa, one thing is
clear; political power remains one of the fundamental sources
of providing economic opportunity and determining the nature
of social stratification within African societies. Class
relations are closely linked with one's ability to access
political privilege. As Henry Bienen notes, "Elites in Africa
derive their power from the control of the state, not from
private property or large-scale organizations."6 Be it
"patrimonial administrative in its form"; be it
"capitalistic" or "socialistic" in its economic orientation;
be it "hard" or "soft" in its capacity to administer
policies; or be it "overdeveloped, overextended, swollen and
heavy handed,"7 - the African state in its historical or
contemporary form has been the key focus for the

institutionalization of power. "The control of the state brings ability to reward and to coerce."8 It was and remains the ultimate organizer and distributer of class power and resources in Africa. And for the most part the majority of African women's experiences of the state, past and present, can be described as those of "exclusion, inequality and neglect."9 This, despite the fact that in many African states, at least on paper, all gender groups and ethnic groups supposedly enjoy equal rights and status. In order to fully understand this discriminatory relationship between African women and the state it is important to carry out a gender analysis of the modern African state, looking specifically at those factors and aspects of the state's nature and characteristics that have shaped women's experiences within the state and have led to their depressed status.

To begin with, at the time of independence the post colonial state in Africa was very much linked to its past counterpart. In fact, it has been argued that the unitary colonial state became the unitary nationalistic state.10 This can be argued true for Kenya and to some extent for Zimbabwe as well. Unfortunately it is impossible to consider, within the scope of this thesis the full extent and implications of colonial state legacy in structuring and molding the foundations of post-colonial African states.11 However, in order to understand the nature of gender relations within modern African state structures I feel it

necessary to look at those aspects of the colonial state legacy that have been extended onto the post-colonial state and have in turn helped shape gender relations.

Colonial state efforts had been directed towards African men, and colonial officials worked with local authorities to bring women under the authority of husbands and male state officials. Many African men had taken part in this process and had used colonial laws, policies and ideology to solidify their own position vis a vis women (See Chapter Two). The subsequent gender struggles that occurred between African men and women had left African men in a better strategic position than their female counterparts within individual colonies. This was the case for both Kenya and Zimbabwe. And in the end, the historical extension of economic and subsequent political participation to men, through male authorities, had ensured that at the time of independence the stage was set for men to occupy positions of power in large numbers.

The impact of male domination in structures of power has enormous implications for gender relations, yet many studies done on the African state often ignore this in their analysis. Kathleen Staudt has argued that gender distinctions created during colonial rule whereby men became public actors and women were relegated to the apolitical domain of the household where they were to be protected, were gradually imprinted on people's consciousness and on political participants' agendas.12 This gender ideology perpetuating

121

women's subordinate and inferior status was passed onto Africans and future political participants through colonial educational institutions, law and policies.

Despite the fact that in both Kenya and Zimbabwe women participated in the nationalistic movements, evidence shows that soon after independence women still faced enormous discrimination at the state level. As John Harris notes on Kenya:

> Independence that was meant for all the people turned out to be a transfer of power from the British male elite to the Kenyan male elite. Women were equal only on paper, and often not even there. Government speeches flattered them in the vague idealistic rhetoric of "African socialism," touting their importance to "development" and "nation-building". But the facts say they've been left out.13

This thesis contends that African elites shared with their male colonial counterparts similar ideological views on men's greater social value and women's subordinate role and hence, they continued to support and perpetuate patriarchal prejudices and sexist ideologies at the same time that they were establishing women's bureaus and women's ministries in their new governments. In fact, African states managed to institute both constitutional equal rights and male privilege simultaneously, with the result that states often pursued contradictory policies, one promoting female empowerment and the other encouraging female dependency.

Contradictions in Post-Colonial Policy: The Case for Marriage, Bridewealth and Prostitution.

Catherine MacKinnon has stated:

> [The] State is male in the feminist sense. The
> law sees and treats women the way men see and
> treat women. The ... state coercively and
> authoritatively constitutes the social order in
> the interest of men as a gender, through its
> legitimizing norms, relation to society, and
> substantive policies.... Substantively, the way
> the male point of view frames an experience is
> the way it is framed by state policy.14

I point out that even though at the time of independence both
countries enacted legislation to ensure equality between men
and women, the reality of male domination of state structures
has often directly translated into contradictory policies and
the promotion of male interests and the discrimination of
women particularly with regard to laws and policies.

For example, Zimbabwean black women had fought side by side
their black brothers in the liberation process in the hope of
freedom, not only in terms of racial and political
oppression, but also in terms of freedom from gender
oppression. Given the role that women played in the
liberation struggles,15 the new government from early on
advocated women's active participation in the new state's
development. Soon after independence the Zimbabwean
government initiated programs to demobilise thousands of
female ex-combatants. Many of these women were highly
politicised during the war and were quite eager to take on
new roles in order to help build a Zimbabwe. However, as far
as the government was concerned demobilization for women
meant channeling them back to the traditional fields reserved
for women. Policies put forward included programs of teaching
women to read, type, cook and sew: programs that were

remarkably similar to those under the old regime and which were domestic in leaning. Those women who remained in the army, even those who were trained in non-traditional women's roles during the war, had to put down their arms and were to be retrained as clerical workers and cooks.16 These choices of post-war programs offered to women combatants shows that despite rhetoric about women's new place in socialist Zimbabwe, the government, from very early on in independence, was far less willing to take on new challenges on behalf of women that went against traditional gender ideologies and roles.

Other examples of contradictory government policies also include the case of laws governing marriage and property in Zimbabwe. In 1982 the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) was passed to change women's legal status as minors and give them full contractual capacity when they reached the age of eighteen, previously they had been considered minors under the legal guardianship of first their fathers and then their husbands. (The main motive behind this Act was to allow both men and women the right to vote at the age of eighteen.)

However, despite this change in legal status women were/are still constrained in exercising their rights as adults. For example, under the African Marriages Act,17 prior to marriage, women are still required to go through the procedures of obtaining consent for the marriage from their male guardians, including obtaining an "enabling certificate"

indicating that the lobola (bride-price) has been settled. In short, despite being granted majority status under LAMA, Zimbabwean women found that the procedures they had to follow under the Marriages Act simply reinforced the fact that at the time of marriage women revert back to minority status and are incapable of entering into contractual relationships on their own.18

In October 1984, when the Supreme Court (Katekwe vs. Muchabaiwa) decided to resolve this issue by advocating that women be able to enter legal relationships and marry of their own accord, with or without the lobola being finalised, Zimbabwean politicians reacted swiftly and quite regressively. Robert Mugabe, the President himself, announced in Parliament that the Court's views did not necessarily reflect those of the government and that provisions of the Legal Age of Majority Act had to be reconsidered.19 His actions were largely interpreted to be an attempt to quiet the voices of outraged fathers and other male guardians who were in an uproar about the court's decision. Many men considered such new laws to be a potential threat to their own power as men over women, as well as, a threat to their social and economic position, particularly when it came to property rights. Until the late 1980's women still had problems marrying under their own accord.

A related example of government contradiction in national policy towards improving women's rights and status has to do

with the issue of lobola itself. In the early 1980's, the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA), the ministry in charge of women's issues, took up the cause to challenge the lobola system itself on the grounds that under capitalism this system is fundamentally oppressive to women.20 What followed was a complete backlash from male Zimbabwean politicians who in speeches in Parliament and articles in newspapers vehemently accused the MCDWA of succumbing to cultural imperialism and Western feminism. Arguing that the lobola system was fundamental to Zimbabwean societal relations, politicians openly declared that outlawing the lobola would "legalise prostitution" [because] "a woman for whom lobola would not be paid could easily move to another man."21 Faced with such vehement prejudices and opposition from their own co-ministers in Parliament, the Minister in charge of MCDWA, Ms. Nhongo, had little choice but to have her Ministry back away from the whole issue. Soon afterwards it was made quite clear, by the Minister of Justice, that no new bills introduced in Parliament pertaining to women's rights would affect the lobola system, which was to remain intact.22

I point out that from the onset of independence an overtly gendered state was/is much more willing to succumb to the attitudes of male supporters and the traditionalists within society, in order to maintain its own integrity within the realm of Zimbabwean culture and family. In fact, the state has yet to address the patriarchal prejudices that have

contributed to African women's subordinate positions. These examples only exemplify how the Zimbabwean government, despite its own legislation, sees women as dependents of men and thereby continues the long standing patterns of male domination/female subordination. In turn, the state manages to impose stricter control over gender relations, despite its own repeated calls for gender equality.

Even when the government has pursued legislation that is to be beneficial to women, the government has had little success in combating discriminatory attitudes within various government structures. For example, despite "progressive" legislation, Zimbabwe's court system, especially at the local levels, is extremely biased and judges and male officers are in their actions and decisions still openly discriminatory towards women. For example, The Maintenance Act (1987) which enables single mothers and divorced women child support has in reality come "under seige." Court officials regularly lose women's files; It can take up to five years to process a case; women who seek maintenance are regularly taunted by male officials who view them as prostitutes.23 Other specific examples of discriminatory court practices include the fact that when women have taken the initiative to set up their own marriages, marriage officers, particularly at the Primary Court level, have "screened" the cases and have asked women to come back with their male guardians and have in effect, actively discouraged women from taking their cases to court.24 It is important to note that such discriminatory

practices affect nearly all black women in Zimbabwe, irrespective of what class they belong to. Finally, it has to be pointed out that little has been done to educate Zimbabwean women themselves on their rights under new laws and therefore women are often ignorant of the laws that grant them rights and protection. Studies carried out by the Women's Bureau of Zimbabwe in the 1990's indicate that fewer than ten percent of Zimbabwean women have actually taken advantage of these new laws.25

Various government policies have also negatively impacted on women's rights to achieve independent economic status. African women for many years have been challenging state authority through their participation in the informal sectors of the economy. All over towns and cities in Kenya and Zimbabwe women engage in self-employment and petty enterprises, including food vending, operating beer halls and running brothels. Many of these activities operate outside the "formal" sectors of the economy and compete with male operated businesses and state run enterprises. The fact that women have taken advantage of contradictory capitalist penetration in Africa, to accumulate resources outside the state poses a significant threat to African men who see women's success as a threat to their own economic and social position. As Christine Obbo observes:

> Fear and frustration in personal or
> professional relationships with individual
> women lead men to lash out at all women,
> particularly in wage employment. Any attempt at
> self-reliance and economic independence is
> interpreted as a challenge to male juridical

supremacy and, therefore, bad for African society.26

Women's actions also pose a challenge to the power of the state itself which is often in direct competition with these women.

Subsequently, governments have attempted to control and regulate the informal sector and in this endeavour have actively pursued actions that have targeted women as a group. An example of such actions are those taken by the Zimbabwean government in early 1982 to close down all unlicensed bars, which were largely under the control of women, and government "clean up" campaigns at the end of 1983.27 Directed at "urban prostitutes" the campaigns indiscriminately rounded up, arrested and detained thousands of women through the emergency clauses of the Vagrancy Act on orders made at the cabinet level. Many were released only after the production of a marriage licence.

What is unique about these campaigns is that they were directed entirely against one particular gender group, irrespective of their fundamental rights including their rights under the Age of Majority Act. Susan Jacobs in her analysis of this situation has argued that although women of all classes were arrested the campaign was particularly harsh towards those women that "appeared to be beyond "traditional" patriarchal controls;...."28 The government of Zimbabwe simply choose to ignore the involvement of male customers in prostitution, and it refused to recognise that in many

cities, urban prostitution and beer brewing was one of the few independent means by which black women could support themselves and their families.

In closing down unlicensed bars, government actions appeared to be a response to the call of those in society who felt threatened by urban women who were beginning to make inroads within newly created employment opportunities in these areas.29 Since early colonization African men have seen women as a "class competitors" in crowded urban markets. In addition, government actions in the "clean up" campaigns were also seen as an attempt to reassure Zimbabwean men who were feeling insecure with the introduction of the Age of Majority Act. Many of these men viewed this particular Act as an affront to their manhood and their ability to control their own women.

State actions also reassured traditional elements in society that the state was there to protect and strengthen family life in Zimbabwe. Many "traditionalists" felt a need to "purify" society of these "evil" women whom they blamed for the breakdown of family life in Zimbabwe. These groups included patriarchal elders and kin groups, as well as many rural women, who all blamed these "urban socialites" for taking money from their "unsuspecting" migrant husbands.30 Heather Hill explains that in Zimbabwe, with its long patriarchal heritage, society often considers a woman not under the control of a father or husband, a prostitute.31

Consequently, in such a social climate it is not surprising that many women, particularly rural women, did not see the gravity of government actions on their own gender and showed great support for the round-up operation. In effect, the Zimbabwean government by invoking state patriarchal control had successfully assured those patriarchal elements in Zimbabwean society that it was not in the business of challenging existing gender hierarchies.

On a side note, participation in the informal sectors, no matter how precarious the situation, provides women one of the few means to combat both patriarchal and state oppression, and therefore, many Zimbabwean women continued to operate their businesses despite the threat of government retaliation. These "clean up" campaigns are also carried out in Kenya.32

In Kenya, evidence also shows that when bills pertaining to women's concerns have been introduced before Parliament, they have been revoked or defeated by male-dominated governments. The Law of Marriage and Divorce Bill, granting women more equal status had been defeated twice prior to November 1987. The Law of Succession Act allowing surviving widows to administer a husband's property is constantly being challenged under customary law and judges are continuously over-ruling women's rights under common law by citing the application of customary law (See Otieno Case Below). Discriminatory laws such as those that deny married women

housing allowance in public service and practices such as government directives (1986) ensuring that pregnant teacher trainees refund government money spent on their education are still in effect thirty years after the Kenyan state declared its intentions to abandon all forms of discrimination.33

Hence, I point out that in both Kenya and Zimbabwe government policies aimed at improving women's positions have worked well within the existing framework of gender relations set up by the colonists and thus even as governments have enacted policies to ease the burden for women, they have done so without challenging existing gender hierarchies. Lacking the will to challenge existing structures that subordinate women, governments have largely left it to women to pull themselves out of their "subordinate" situation. Despite making initiatives to improve women's position evidence, shows that state efforts are often contradictory and inconsistent. Little has actually been done to change the social institutions that perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality.

In the end, I conclude that in both countries, state actions are largely motivated both by a gender ideology grounded in patriarchal prejudice which ultimately sees women as dependents of men, as well as by a desire for the emerging petty bourgeoisie class to protect their own economic positions by colluding with other groups in society; groups who also have a stake in maintaining gender stratification.

This male collusion has continued from the onset of colonialism and has had grave repercussions on gender relations in Africa. On the one hand, modern African governments continue to affirm their commitment to end women's subordination, whilst on the other hand, the reality of state actions/non-actions often reflect deep rooted biases and discriminations when it comes to the issue of committing to new state-gender relations.

The Ruling Class and Gender Politics

Another important factor that has had an impact on the relationship of state and gender has to do with the nature of the ruling class itself. In Africa, where the economy is dominated by international capital and full capitalist transformation has yet to take place, there exists a very small African class, who are not yet "capitalist bourgeoisie proper."34 However small and however weak, in terms of indigenous bourgeoisie power, there is within Africa a definite ruling dominant class. In <u>Studies in Power and Class In Africa</u>, Irving Markovitz has defined this ruling class as "organizational bourgeoisie":

> ... the top political leaders and bureaucrats,
> the traditional rulers and their decedents, the
> leading members of the liberal professions, the
> rising business bourgeoisie, and the top
> members of military and police,... who are
> located at pivotal points of control in those
> over arching systems of political, social and
> economic power... - the nation state and
> capitalism.35

Markovitz goes on to explain that over time these

leadership elements change as coalitions shift. In examining Kenya and Zimbabwe, it can be argued that the ruling elites are usually from these groups although the influence of one individual leader in each country has carried a lot of weight in determining who and what these coalition elements involve. What is important to note is that few individuals have an independent economic base and their power lies almost entirely in controlling the state apparatus. As Robert Fatton explains, "Class power in Africa is fundamentally dependent on state power. Capturing the state is the best and perhaps exclusive means of acquiring and generating the material wealth necessary to become a ruling class."36 And since class power is state power, it is also male power, given the fact that this political apparatus in both states is dominated by men.

Women have not entirely been denied entrance to the ruling classes, but their inclusion is often dependent on male patronage (Discussed Below). Women, by virtue of their sex, have largely been in a less dominant class position and have often gained access to upper class positions through male association. What is important to note is that since women's class power is largely determined by male class affiliation, men and women are not always equal within the same class. (This is obviously not always the case but to a large extent true.) In addition, when women become part of the ruling class they often defend the interests of that class often to the detriment of other poorer women. (This female collusion

with the upper political strata will be discussed at length in the next section.)

In as much as "power, prestige and capital" are acquired through the capturing of the state apparatus, it can be argued that Africa's ruling elites lack any real form of real hegemony.37 Ruling classes have yet to penetrate all sectors of society, and to legitimize their intellectual, moral and material interests so that these interests become the interests of subordinate groups in society ie. the masses. Concerned about maintaining their stronghold over the state apparatus (to be outside the state results in subordinate status), often in pursuit of selfish short-term interests including enriching themselves, handing out favours and building patron-client relationships, those in power act accordingly; often ruling through the use of "coercion, rather than persuasion, domination rather than leadership, and corruption rather than legitimacy."38

In light of this situation, the state itself often ignores the interests and needs of those that the ruling class wants to subjugate and dominate - including peasants, political and ethnic rivals, women etc. And in as much as the state is composed of male dominated ruling classes, and carries with it inherent patriarchal biases, it often overlooks and does not always account for the interests of women. Also, as Robert Fatton points out, "Rooted in male dominance, African states have used women as scapegoats in an effort to mask

their own illicit political practices."39

Lack of ruling class hegemony and the often repressive and arbitrary attempts by the state to control the general population has contributed to what is known as the phenomena called "Exit." "Exit" is referred to the specific actions of subordinate groups, who react towards a coercive, corrupt state by opting out of the public and political sphere, preferring to totally withdraw their support and interaction with the state rather than deal with the state through confrontation.40 Many women, marginalized and neglected by formal politics, when finding themselves facing an increasingly hostile and repressive regime, have preferred to opt out of the political arena. Kathleen Staudt has noted:

> With both their marginality in conventional
> politics, and the depolitization of their
> issues, it is not surprising that many women
> withdraw or are alienated from contemporary
> politics, preferring instead to manage what is
> left of their own affairs autonomously. While
> the ability to remain autonomous suggests the
> still limited power of the state, women's
> autonomy also magnifies gender participation
> gaps in conventional politics and thus women's
> continued marginality in those politics.41

Patricia Stamp points out that the African state does not entirely and continuously rule by repression alone. In order to maintain some legitimacy and build hegemonic power, the governing regime often allies itself with other powerful elements in society. She argues that this is done by the use of ideological domination in order to maintain a vital link between state power, the realm of culture, and family.42

136

Stamp characterises this relationship as a "collaborative hegemony" by which the male-dominated kin group, 'the state-within-a-state', is given patriarchal power in the service of the state."43 African elites invoke male self-interest through various avenues including the manipulation of African cultural traditions that reinforce sexist and patriarchal prejudices, as well as through fueling the economic fears many African males have over female competition and independence in the labour market. In this manner they often act exactly like their colonial predecessors did before them.

Extending this analysis, this thesis wants to point out that in as much as the ruling class are composed mostly of men, and given the historical legacy of state-introduced gender stratification, ruling classes in Africa use gender ideology not only to legitimize their rule but also to maintain the support of other men in society (one can argue that under certain circumstances, patriarchy can transcend all other differences between African men). In this way, ruling elites are in the process of constructing hegemony.

Perhaps the most prevalent examples of the presence of a male collaboration has been with the "invoking" of customary laws governing the legal status of marriage, divorce and inheritance, particularly in the rights of a widow to her deceased husbands property.44 One of the most famous cases coming out of Africa has been the case of a Kenyan widow,

137

Wambui Otieno, who was taken to court by her husband's family to contest burial and inheritance rights.45   What is significant about this case is that it highlights the nature of the struggle between African politics and the debate over "tradition" and women's place that is taking place all over "modern" Africa.

Wambui Otieno, a Kikuyu by birth, and the wife of a prominent and wealthy Luo lawyer, was taken to court by her husband's clan, the Umira Kager, in order to stop her from burying her husband in Nairobi (traditionally Kikuyu territory) where he had lived most of his life. The widow's refusal to hand over the body had been interpreted as an affront to Luo manhood, - as the lawyer of the Umira Kager stated, "Wambui was nothing but a woman of the streets, a bossy whore."46   The clan's actions were also largely prompted by the hope of gaining access to Otieno's estates and wealth (according to Luo custom these should be redistributed to the lineage, with the wife accepting the decisions of her brother-in-law and her sons). In Africa where class position is extremely important in accessing and redistributing wealth, many elite families are under great pressure from their lineages to ensure that their good fortune is shared all around the extended family.

After several separate court actions (which were fraught with government involvement), the Kenyan Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Otieno's Luo clansmen on March 1987. Thus,

138

Otieno's body came to be buried in Western Kenya, Otieno's birthplace. This despite the fact that upon his inter-tribal marriage, the tribal clan had ostracized him for over twenty four years and Otieno had forsaken all Luo tribal customs for a modern life and had rarely visited Luo land in his adult life.47 Wambui's lawyers had argued that rather than customary Luo burial laws, common law should apply in Otieno's case given his non-Luo lifestyle, his Christian marriage and the wishes of his widow and children.48 However, in the courts opinion, "The wishes of a widow and her children are relevant if consistent with custom, otherwise they are irrelevant."49 In their one sided judgement the courts reflected their belief in the greater authority of customary law:

> The elders who are the custodians of African
> customary law, assisted by the intelligentsia,
> by the church and other organizations owe it to
> themselves and to their communities to ensure
> that customary laws keep abreast of positive
> modern trends so as to make it possible for
> courts to be guided by customary law.50

This "battle for the body" or rather the struggle between common law and customary law, raises several questions with regard to the control of gender relations in Kenya and the relationship between women and the state. The case had enormous implications for other patrilineal groups that too are seeking control of lineage wives in light of competitive nature of post-colonial capitalism and in the climate of shrinking economic prosperity. In her analysis of the "Otieno Burial Saga," Patricia Stamp explores how easy it was for a

particular clan to master and manipulate the language of the "tradition" to their own legal advantage.51 In Stamp's view this outcome was facilitated by the relationship between the governing regime and other powerful elements in society, a relationship that she characterises as a "collaborative hegemony." She argues that the ruling regime in the hope of controlling and directing ethnic or clan politics in Kenya also compensates these same ethnic groups in order to maintain its own legitimacy. One way of compensation is not to dispute the traditions of "motherhood" and "wifely responsibilities" that traditional patrilineal systems manipulate to their own interest (Wambui, in not acknowledging her husband's patrilineality, fell from "wifely virtue"). At the same time, Stamp notes that Wambui's lack of support from her own Kikuyu clansmen and political leaders could be viewed in terms of their "discomfort with her [Wambui's] challenge to patriarchal values and practices."52

The government of Daniel Arap Moi was also involved. This involvement was largely motivated by a hope of humiliating the Kikuyu and maintaining a supportive alliance with the Luo. Moi, who at the time was facing potential challenges from Kikuyu factions, could not afford a Kikuyu - Luo alliance since together the two tribes constitute a third of Kenya's population and they could have been strong enough force to topple Moi's regime and throughout the case Moi played his tribal balancing act.53

What was most surprising about the case was the ineffectiveness of the women's movement in Kenya in defending the rights of the widow. The implications for the Kenyan women's movement in this affair will be briefly discussed below, but suffice to say women's groups in Kenya had major difficulties in putting their agendas forward and were in effect "put in their place" by the Kenyan state.

All over "modern" Africa customary laws invoking traditional values and custom are being manipulated by patrilineal clans to further their control over women. And in this matter the courts, aid and abet by using customary laws to interpret matters of a personal nature even though such laws decisively overlook the rights women held in pre-colonial societies. And there is often little objection from the state despite the fact that concurrent, more favorable written laws (constitutional and common) may exist that protect the rights of individuals against such discrimination.54

The African state cannot be considered a monolithic entity and those that rule it are still in the process of consolidating a hegemonic rule. Consequently African state rule is often repressive and brutal as ruling classes attempt to impose domination by force. One means by which it has been possible for the male-dominated state to achieve some form of hegemony is through the use of gender and the use of male "ideological domination." This section has shown how gender

ideology is often manipulated in the interest of those who govern in order to achieve/maintain legitimacy. In turn, those who rule are male and therefore it is possible for them to use this ideology to seek support from other males and other "traditionalists" outside the boundaries of the state. Therefore, it is the opinion of this paper that despite the weaknesses within the ruling classes, a unifying male ideology helps shape alliances between African state institutions and patriarchal family and kin structures to perpetuate customary traditions that support the subordinate status of women.

By examining the impact of various state laws, policies and actions this section has attempted to show that policies aimed at improving women's overall position in society, have done little to change existing gender relations in Africa and work well within the gender boundaries set up during colonial rule. In both Kenya and Zimbabwe, the evidence reflects that state policies are often contradictory and are still reluctant to challenge the social structures in society that reinforce gender inequality. Even when governments have made efforts to alleviate women's subordinate status the social, economic and political context under which laws and policies operate ensures that, for the large part, women's traditional "subordinate" roles go unchallenged and in some cases even defended. In addition, African men, for the most part, have not been asked to participate in the process of improving the lives of women.

As a consequence of colonial state legacy and due to a lack of ruling class hegemony, the state is often seen collaborating with various sub-national structures and groups to co-opt gender relations. Therefore, one has to question the full commitment of the state in both Zimbabwe and Kenya in easing the situation for women. Having looked at the evidence, I argue that the modern African state and other sub-national institutions and groups have both a patriarchal and economic interest in maintaining hierarchial gender relations and controlling women. Patriarchal ideologies brought forward from colonial times often serve the interests of class politics within the contemporary state. In the end, I conclude that as long as the evidence shows that African state policies are fostering and mobilising certain groups through ideological and material efforts, then, African men will continue to benefit over women in the state process.

This thesis now goes on to analyze the impact of women's participatory role in the state and the impact of gender on making one's voice count. As numerical data on African women's political participation is scarce, I will provide only a few figures to elaborate on my points. This section is largely concerned about which group/class of women actually participate at the level of state politics and the positive/negative impact of this participation on overall gender relations.

The Exercise Of Political Power: A Question Of "Empowerment" Or "Marginalization"?

Jean O' Barr, in her survey of African women in politics points to the fact that women's political participation pattern reflects that of a pyramid: a few women at the top and the majority at the bottom.55 Although the situation may not be better for the ordinary African man, when women and men are equally denied political opportunities, women have far worse participatory records than men. Few women in Africa have as yet managed to penetrate the upper echelons of powerful decision-making arenas and remain the "true outsiders" in state politics. Here, it is important to note that democratic processes are still weak in Africa and the right to freely elect governments is a recent phenomena.56

Women's Representation at the National Level.

A few women have been elected or appointed at both local and national levels in both countries but their numbers are small.57 (The below statistical data and information is largely provided by Inter-Parliamentary Union unless otherwise stated.58) At the national level in Kenya, as of 1990, there were only 2 women out of 171 elected members of Parliament which constitutes 1.16% of the total membership. After the 1992 multi-party election, this figure did improve with six women legislators making it to parliament,59 but women still find it difficult to participate at the national executive level of ruling and opposition parties.60

In Zimbabwe, where the ruling party has its own Women's

League (set up to increase participation levels among women, politically educate women and improve their overall status), and, until very recently a specific Ministry for Community Development and Women's Affairs (now transferred to the Ministry of Political Affairs so as to allow women to advance through party structures) both working to increase women's political awareness, there has been only a marginal increase in the number of women elected at the national level – 14 women out of 150 member legislative house as of March 1990. It is important to note that women politicians in Zimbabwe have a higher posting within the government than their female counterparts in other African governments.61

Women also participate at various levels of national politics, including participation in governmental bureaucracies and in political parties. It is beyond the scope of this paper to broaden the analysis to include all the levels of governmental participation but I do want to point out that within individual bureaucracies and within party structures very few women occupy key policy and decision making positions.62 Women also participate in women's organizations, of which some are affiliated with state governments and others are not. These were largely set up after independence to facilitate women's entry into the political arena and to educate women and to foster development and equality for women. Those affiliated with the government include organizations such as the Kenyan Maendeleyo Wa Wanawake set up in 1952 to represent the needs

of rural women and which developed as an independent lobby for women. It is seen as a provider of political opportunities at the national level. In Kenya there is also the non-governmental National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) an umbrella organization that coordinates various women's groups. This group is often responsible for mobilizing feminist action, particularly calling for legislative action on behalf of women, and often faces the wrath of the Kenyan government in its efforts. In Zimbabwe there exists the Women's Bureau, a non-governmental organization set up to address issues concerning women from all walks of life, particularly rural women.

It is important to point out that in Africa, where there is a high degree of organizational affiliation amongst women, strongest participation numbers are seen within the numerous organizations that exist outside state boundaries per se. These organizations that work towards enhancing women's economic, social and political interests and their actions are often in direct confrontation with the state policies. These organizations vary from decentralised voluntary agencies such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which in both countries promotes women's interests in the both the social and political arena by providing services such as training on various issues such as networking and citizenship, to more centralised agencies such as the Harare-based Women's Action Group (WAG) which fights for women's rights in that region and through it's publication "Speak

Out" educates women on political and civic issues. It was set up after the "clean-up" campaigns in the early 1980's.

The Structure, Nature and Impact of Women's Political Participation.

Kathleen Staudt argues that the modern African state has artificially divided African society into public/private spheres synonymous with the separate worlds of men and women. Since men dominate the public sphere they remain active partners within the modern state and are more likely to participate in politics.63 Evidence shows that women in patrilineal/patriarchal African societies still see themselves existing within the realm of the home and their desire to participate outside that sphere conflicts with their traditional obligations.64 Hence, many women are more willing to see their political aspirations achieved by supporting male candidates.

This thesis postulates that what is significant about women's participatory figures in crucial state decision-making positions is not only the low numbers but the fact that the few who make it to government may do so because of their socio-economic status. In fact, studies undertaken by Bessie House- Midamba, Kathleen Staudt and M. Tamarkin on Kenya, all argue that women's politics is basically class politics.65 As Tamarkin postulates, African politics is often conducted in terms of patron-client relationships and this hierarchial relationship of citizen and power brokers is often dependent on what citizens have to offer in return for

147

political influence. As a result, present governments are often supported by those who have benefits to offer in exchange for political favours - "Individual who possess little personal wealth would find it difficult to run for a Parliamentary seat."66 Consequently, mostly women already belonging to elite class are in a position to vie for political influence.

Bessie House Midamba's study in 1985 analyzing women's participation in Kenya reveals that women's political participation is largely a consequence of educational achievement, family and class background and participation in women's groups and activities.67 And her studies suggest that it is more likely that elite women have higher education and that it is more likely that these women have access to the state because they already have family in public life. She also points to the evidence that those who participate in the political arena are already members of women's organizations.68 Even in Zimbabwe, with its more socialist orientation, it is found that women who participate in the upper echelons of politics are well known in elite circles. For example, Terri Ropa Nhongo, who became the first minister for the MCDWA was a former combat leader and a political appointee and Dr. Naomi Nhiwatiwa, the first black woman to be part of Zimbabwe's civil service was the head of several women's organizations before she became a deputy minister.69

Expanding on Bessie House-Midamba's data, this thesis

points out that women's access to political power in Africa, can also be dependent on male patronage, particularly in countries such as Kenya where until very recently, politics is/was extremely personalised. As Jane Parpart explains:

> Women employ an age old strategy to increase their leverage over the state - aligning with powerful men. This solution is more readily available to elite women, who are often either related to or married to influential men. But even poorer women can gain some entree to state power through associations with more powerful male members of their ethnic or regional communities....70

Hence, certain women can directly find themselves in strategic positions through which they can exert political pressure. For example, women like Mama Ngina of Kenya, the wife of the late president, had enormous political influence over his presidency. In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe's wife Sally was the head of the Women's League of Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU -PF) until her death, as well as a member of ZANU's executive bodies, the Central Committee and the Politburo.

This thesis argues that the nature and structure of political participation has enormous implications for gender relations. First of all, the under-representation of women results in few women's voices being heard at the national level of politics. With such few numbers actually participating, male dominated state organs continue in their sexism.71 Furthermore, if political aspirations are achieved through supporting male candidates, policies that improve the status of women are much less likely to be on the political

agenda. Also, when women use powerful familial/social affiliations to gain political power, it is unlikely that they will challenge the view points of their beneficiaries, particularly those ideas that might jeopardise the interests of existing structures of power. For example, on September 22nd 1990, at a meeting on the future of Zimbabwe's political system, the strongest supporters of Robert Mugabe's desire to legally ban competing political parties and maintain a one party system was the Women's League, which was at the time headed by Mugabe's wife Sally.[72]

African women are not a homogeneous category. As the evidence shows, class lines divide women to the extent that women of different socio-economic groups have different opportunities. When it comes to political advantage, those who have money, education and have better social ties are the ones who are most likely to benefit from participation, particularly as members of women's organizations. In Africa, "women's politics is another dimension of class politics, wherein the political process [state] is used to advance the interests of those already privileged."[73] Elite women do not share the same interests as those women in subordinate groups and therefore there can be a lack of substantial political contribution on their part to improve strategic gender relations for all women. In fact, this thesis argues that, in many cases, elite women may even encourage and pursue policies that maintain the class differences amongst women and hence the status quo.

There is plenty of evidence to support these arguments.74 In Kenya, the Maendeleyo Wa Wanawake the largest women's organization, has often been accused by many scholars as a means for satisfying middle class political aspirations. Factors such as its leadership component made up of women "from the developing middle class - professional, commercial, and civil services sectors," who are often related to influential government members, and its close ties with governments right form the colonial days fuel such accusations.75 In fact, in 1987, following internal wrangling, Maendeleyo became affiliated with Kenya's ruling party KANU, and in October 1989 "male politicians took over the running of Maendeleyo's elections, ensuring that their relatives and allies were nominated for leadership positions."76

Judging by some of its speeches and actions, Maendeleyo has done little to promote critical gender issues on behalf of rural women and less fortunate "sisters." Speeches, including those that argue that a woman should "lay more stress on her domestic role", "no husband would like a dirty and lazy wife" and "Kenyan women should stop gossiping and do something useful,"77 divert responsibility on to poorer women who are supposed to work harder in order to move ahead in life. Such idealised versions of "womanhood," in full support of male government ministries, exemplify a colonial, Victorian morality that does little to improve the overall status of

women in modern Kenya.

Even in Zimbabwe, where women's groups take on a more aggressive stance on women's concerns, speeches made by leaders of organizations such as the MCDWA often reflect a deep lack of understanding of the problems rural women face. Women are continuously called to pull themselves out of subservience, whilst men are rarely called upon to help end gender inequality. For example, Minister Nhongo the head of women's affairs was heard making this statement at one particular rally, "Women should help their husbands by getting involved in self-help projects which generate extra income for the family rather than spending most of their time basking in the sun or drinking beer" and "Marriages will break up if women do not help their husbands."78 The fact that a Zimbabwean woman can work up to 16 hours a day to feed, clothe and take care of her family, largely without the help of her husband was completely overlooked by the Minister.

Evidence also shows that organizations such as Maendeleyo with full government backing, put their money into numerous rural centres that support activities such as sewing, knitting, cooking and thus, reminding women of their domestic obligations and encouraging them to maintain their traditional wifely roles. Janet Bujra and Marjorie Mbilinyi both indicate in their analysis that such state actions are largely an attempt to curb and control women's activities,

particularly those women that may venture out of paternal control.79 At the same time, when organizations set up services including opening up petty entrepreneurial cooperatives, nursery schools, extension training services etc., to improve the lives of women, many poorer women simply do not know of them, let alone manage to pay entry fees for some of these available services. In this manner, only well off women benefit and hence, class divisions are maintained.

This thesis argues that to the extent elite women identify with the position of their male counterparts in politics, and work towards protecting this class position, any analysis of gender relations in Africa has to account for class. At different class levels, gender differences express themselves differently. Therefore, gender studies have to account for these often conflicting differences amongst women themselves that in the end have enormous implications for women's relationship with the state.

Finally, any analysis of women and the state has to ask that when women do successfully participate in politics, how powerful and legitimate (in the eyes of African women themselves) are these political voices and do they count in the same manner as their male counterparts do. I bring this up in light of the evidence that shows that women's political organizations can by coopted into the state apparatus and hence "forced" to moderate their opinions. If they do not moderate their tone, these organizations can be accused of

importing Western feminism into the African scene and thus loose credibility. For example, both the Ministry of Community and Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA) in Zimbabwe and the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) have faced this problem. When the former challenged the lobola system in Zimbabwe, it faced angry opposition and had to tone down their challenge considerably, in the face of accusations of betraying Zimbabwean culture and importing Western feminism (See Section One). The NCWK, faced similar opposition when it defended Wambui Otieno's rights as a widow and challenged succession laws in Kenya.80

Even when women are elected specifically to represent women, they are often caught in a dilemma since they also have to represent their male constituents who may not feel that gender issues should be in the forefront of a politicians agenda, as was the case for Grace Ogot during the Otieno saga. In their efforts to support Wambui Otieno, the NCWK set off a campaign to collect millions of signatures for a petition to call for better legislative rights for spouses, particularly those regarding burial. In order to legitimise their campaign they endorsed a speech given by Grace Ogot (one of the two women MP's at the time and from a prominent Luo family) in which she had spoken out for better gender relations and women's rights. Ogot was furious about NCWK's use of her name and her speech, and she had the Kenyan police not only remove all the NCWK posters displaying Ogot's picture but two volunteer signature collectors were also

arrested. In analyzing Ogot's behaviour, Patricia Stamp has argued that Ogot's predicament is faced by many women in formal politics. On one hand these women are often elected into office so that they can put forward women's interests, and on the other hand they are expected to serve their constituencies, particularly the ethnic interests of patrilineal lineages.81 As a member of a powerful Luo lineage group, Ogot chose to support her Luo constituency.

In the end, this thesis stresses the need to analyze women's exercise of power by understanding the structure and nature of that participation, and its implications for gender relations. This paper acknowledges the danger of over generalization, and agrees that each country deserves individual attention, but I believe the data provided above holds true for both countries. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, only a small group of women have actually been "empowered," so to speak, and those that are, are often unable to challenge existing gender relations within individual countries. Upper class women may help address issues of sexism, but they still have problems transforming patriarchal and class hierarchies. When they have made an attempt, the state has ensured that the politics of co-option are in order. In the meantime, the majority of African women still remain outside the state and remain "marginalized" from the political process. Even when women, successfully participate in key political institutions, their voices are often very weak in the "male dominated political game." Consequently, they often appear

divided and vulnerable when it has come to challenging mechanisms that keep women subordinate and on occasion they may further contribute too this "marginalization" process. In the final analysis, this paper still questions whether the further incorporation of women into existing male dominated, class differentiated government structures will really make a difference on improving the overall status of all African women given the present nature of women's exercise of political power.

At this point, this paper wants to acknowledge that it has largely concentrated on political participation at the state level and recognises that distinctions have to be made between female participation at levels that affect the political hierarchy in Kenya and Zimbabwe, and those which might not.82 Outside the state level and at a more individual levels, women have far more influence, although translating this influence into actual political power has been difficult for cultural, as well as, economic reasons. In addition, in withdrawing their political presence through "exit" and by "using" males to put forward their views, African women do participate in less conventional levels of politics. However, I argue that this participation is still not at a level that will significantly alter the political hierarchy in Kenya or Zimbabwe, or will actually transform the relationship between women and the state in Africa as it exists today.

<u>ENDNOTES</u>

1. See works of Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Irving Markovitz, ed. <u>Studies in Power and Class</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 193-208.; Also See Chapter Two.

2. Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya," In <u>SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</u> 16, 4, (1991). p. 812.

3. See Thomas Callaghy, "The State as Lame Leviathan: The Patrimonial Administrative State In Africa," In Zaki Ergas, ed. <u>The African State in Transition</u> (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987) pp. 87-116.

4. Ibid., pp. 89.; and Thomas M. Callaghy, "Politics and Vision in Africa: The Interplay of Domination, Equality and Liberty," In Patrick Chabal, <u>Political Domination in Africa</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) p. 36.

5. Patrick Chabal, <u>Political Domination in Africa.</u> (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp. 111-116.
Some critics have further argued that the African political state is not really founded on African political communities but a product of colonial history and therefore it lacks any sense of "deep legitimacy." In reality the state is soft and weak in its foundations vis a vis the community. Consequently, the ruling elite are constantly attempting to maintain their political and economic hegemony albeit often unsuccessfully, and thus further weakening the state and putting doubt on this all powerful entity. See works of Patrick Chabal, Robert Fatton.

6. H. Bienen, "State and Revolution: The work of Amilcar Chabral," <u>Journal of Modern African Studies</u> XV, (1977) p. 555.

7. "A Patrimonial Administrative State" refers to a highly centralised state which is often run through personalized rule and is backed by a large state administration inherited from the colonial administration apparatus. Patron-client networks are the main method of maintaining legitimacy and power. A "Soft" state is one that has few roots and lacks any real legitimacy or power to control its people. A "hard" state refers to a state that has considerable power to rule over its population and its politics are often those of authoritarianism, dictatorial rule and tyranny.

8. H. Bienen, "State and Revolution: The Work of Amilcar Chabral," <u>Journal of Modern African Studies</u> XV, (1977) p. 555.

9. Naomi Chazan, "Gender Perspectives on African States," In Jane Parpart & Kathleen Staudt eds., Women and the State in Africa (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989) p. 186.

10. Patrick Chabal, Political Domination in Africa p. 32. Also See Patrick Chabal, Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation (London: The Mcmillan Press Ltd., 1992) pp. 68-81.

11. For further information on the impact of the colonial legacy on state structures look at the works of Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, Donald Rothchild, eds., Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1988) pp. 40-44.; Also see the works of Patrick Chabal.

12. Staudt argues that this helped facilitate the conditions by which a colonial bourgeoisie was maintained and set up the necessary conditions to support capitalist transformation in Africa. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, The State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Studies in Power and Class (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 193-208.

13. Joan Harris, "Revolution or Evolution", p.30. in Africa Report (March-April, 1985).

14. Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence." SIGNS 8, 4, p. 644.

15. Zimbabwean women took part in the nationalistic struggles by tending the wounded and sick, supplying food, shelter and ammunition, participating in crucial reconnaissance missions and fighting side by side with their male comrades.

16. Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: Post Independence Struggles," Feminist Studies 10, 3, (1984) p. 433.

17. In Zimbabwe, two systems of law operate, one based on common law which addresses criminal and civil matters and the other based on customary laws usually reserved for matters dealing with marriage, property rights, custody issues etc. Zimbabwean women marry under customary or civil law, although even when they can marry under civil law their rights can be constrained by customary laws. For example, the African Marriages Act preserved traditional rights of property in marriage and is often used by male judges and marriage officers to deny women rights that they have gained under laws such as the Legal Age of Majority Act.

18. See Rosalind Thomas, "The Law in Southern Africa: Justice For All," Africa Report (March-April, 1985) pp. 60-61.

19. Ibid., p. 61.

20. The organization's line was that with the onslaught of capitalism, brideprice had become too high and wages of parents too low, and consequently, women were forced to marry when they were still young, often being sold as commodities. Subsequently, if they had problems with their husbands, they were often informed by their spouses that they had been bought and therefore were to put up with whatever their husbands said and did to them. See Gay Seidman, "Women In Zimbabwe: Post Independence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) p. 432.

21. This particular statement was made by the Minister of Home Affairs. Similar statements by various parliamentarians were issued and published in the <u>Harare Herald</u> between June of 1981 & June of 1982. See Gay Seidman, "Women In Zimbabwe: Post Independence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) footnote 29.

22. Ibid., p. 433.

23. See Ruth Ansah Ayisi, "Protect the Widow," <u>Africa Report</u> (May-June, 1989) p. 67.

24. Rosalind Thomas, "The Law in Southern Africa: Justice For All," <u>Africa Report</u> (March-April, 1985) p. 60.; On a side note: As a consequence of such prejudices, more and more Zimbabwean women are now appearing in court with female friends and relatives so that they can press their point forward and have their voices heard.

25. B.J. Kelso, "The Fight for Equal Rights," <u>Africa Report</u> (September-October, 1993) p. 38.

26. Christine Obbo, <u>African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence</u> (London: Zed Press, 1980) p. 9.

27. Susan Jacobs (1986), Gay Seidman (1984) and Rosalind Thomas (1985) have all written about these campaigns.

28. Susan Jacobs, "Zimbabwe: State, Class, and Gendered Models of Land Resettlement," In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 168.

29. It is important to point out that some women have done very well for themselves within the informal economies or black-market economies, particularly in urban areas such as Nairobi and Harare. They are in fact beginning to create their own wealth and becoming members of the petty bourgeoisie without relying on men for their economic base. These black-market economies (or magendo economies as they are known in East Africa) appear to exist outside the direct control of the state but are often tolerated if the state has a stake in these economies. However, these economies are in a precarious way in that they are still dependent on the whims and fancies of those who hold power and overnight the police can come and raid women's businesses if the correct

"payments" are not provided.

30. See Susan Jacobs, "Zimbabwe: State, Class, and Gendered Models of Land Resettlement," In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 169.

31. Heather Hill. "The Widow's Revenge," <u>Africa Report</u> (March-April, 1983) p. 64.

32. See Rayah Feldman, "Women's Groups and Women's Subordination: An Analysis of Policies Towards Rural Women in Africa," <u>Review of African Political Economy</u> (Special Issue, 1983) p. 74.

33. For further information on legislative actions in Kenya, See Bessie House-Midamba, "The United Nations Decade: Political Empowerment or Increased Marginalization for Kenyan Women?," <u>Africa Today</u> (1st Quarter, 1990) pp. 44-46.; Africa Rights Monitor "A Woman's Right to Political Participation," <u>Africa Today</u> (1st Quarter, 1990) pp. 59-60.; Maria Nzomo, "The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya," <u>Issue: A Journal of Opinion</u> XVII, 2, (1989) pp. 9-16.

34. Janet Bujra refers to this class as the petty bourgeoisie since this group is still struggling to control the national economy or are acting as intermediaries for foreign capital. Janet Bujra, "Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Claire Robertson & Iris Berger eds., <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> (USA: Africana Publishing Company, 1986) pp. 120-121.

35. Irving Markovitz, ed., <u>Studies in Power and Class</u> p. 8.

36. Robert Fatton Jr., "Gender, Class, and State in Africa," In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> pp. 56-57.

37. Hegemony as defined by Gramsci:
     The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
Antonio Gramsci, <u>Selections from a Prison Notebook</u> (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) p. 12. Hegemony also extends to moral and intellectual leadership and relies on consent, integration and co-optation of the subordinate classes rather than domination, exclusion and suppression. See Robert Fatton Jr.. <u>Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992). pp. 19-40.

38. Robert Fatton Jr. In <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> p. 63.

39. Robert Fatton Jr., <u>Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa</u> p. 92.

40. The phenomena of "Exit" is often a reaction to state corruption, lack of public trust, state incompetence, and government violation of constitutional laws etc. For further information on this see the works of Goran Hyden on the "uncaptured peasantry" in Africa. Goran Hyden, <u>Beyond Ujamma in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and the Uncaptured Peasantry</u> (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).; Goran Hyden, <u>No Short Cuts to Progress</u> (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).

41. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In <u>Studies in Power and Class in Africa</u> p. 207.

42. Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya," In <u>SIGNS</u> (Summer, 1991) 16, 4, p. 812.

43. Ibid. p. 812.

44. Customary laws were set up by the British and subsequently used by post-colonial states to settle disputes mostly of a personal nature. They are based on the traditions and customs of lineage groups.

45. For an in-depth analysis of the Otieno Case See Blaine Harden, <u>Africa: Dispatches From a Fragile Continent</u> (Great Britain: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990) pp. 95-129.; Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya", <u>SIGNS</u> 16, 4, (Summer 1991) pp. 808-845.; & John W. Van Doren, "Death African Style: The Case of S. M. Otieno," <u>American Journal of Comparative Law</u> 36 (1988) pp. 329-350.

46. Ibid., Harden, p. 106.

47. Ibid., p. 100.

48. In the Otieno case both the Constitution that over-rules any form of discrimination based on gender and The Law of Succession Act where a surviving spouse has administrative control of the property, could have been applied.

49. Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno ...," In <u>SIGNS</u> 16, 4, pp. 825-826.

50. Eugene Cotran, <u>Casebook of Kenya Customary Law</u> (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Professional Books; Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1989) p. 336.; Also See. John. W. Van Doren, "Death African Style: The Case of S. M. Otieno," <u>American Journal of Comparative Law</u> 36 (1988) pp. 329-350.

51. No independent experts were allowed to refute clan arguments which were in essence both of a patriarchal and one dimensional nature and did not truly reflect the complex gender relationships amongst the Luo, including women's very important structural role within a lineage. In addition, no Luo elders were called to refute the claim that women did not feel any hardship and pain over such discriminatory laws. See Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno...," <u>SIGNS</u> 16, 4, (Summer, 1991). p. 826.

52. Ibid., p. 822.

53. For further analysis of Moi's involvement, See Blaine Harden, <u>Africa: Dispatches From a Fragile Continent</u> pp. 95-129.

54. In Kenya, sources of laws include i) The Constitution, ii) written statutory laws, iii) The Common Law, iv) Customary Law (when one or more parties are subject to it). These four sources work according to the hierarchy presented. John. W. Van Doren, "Death African Style: The Case of S. M. Otieno," <u>American Journal of Comparative Law</u> 36 (1988) pp. 329-350.

55. Jean O'Barr, "African Women in Politics," In Margaret Hay & Sharon Stichter, eds., <u>African Women South of the Sahara</u> (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1984) p. 141.

56. In 1992 Kenya moved from a one-party to multi-party statehood with "free" elections taking place; Zimbabwe has yet to undergo this "democratization" process although it has been under great internal and international pressure to change this. Robert Mugabe has indicated that in 1995 Zimbabwe will undergo multi-party elections.

57. This thesis is only going to provide figures from the national level given the lack of statistical data coming out of Africa and given length constraints of this paper. Women fare better at local levels of government but there have been very few statistical analysis on women's influence and their numbers vis a vis men at local governmental levels.

58. This statistical data looks at the number of women in the legislative assemblies and is available from the Inter-Parliamentary Union <u>Women and Political Power: Survey Carried Out Among The 150 National Parliaments Existing As Of 31 October 1991</u> Series "Reports and Documents," 19. Geneva (1992).

59. <u>Daily Nation</u> (Nairobi: Kenya, Thursday September 23, 1993) p. 6.

60. With the opening up of the democratic process in Kenya, and the failure of the opposition parties to unite in their effort against President Moi's regime, prominent Kenyan women are attempting to politically mobilise so as to become an effective political force. On February 20th 1993, women activists came together to discuss the possibility of

162

standing a woman candidate for the 1997 presidential elections. This was reported in the _Daily Nation_ (Nairobi, Thursday, September 23, 1993). p. 6. However, the meeting went largely unnoticed by the general public.

61. In Zimbabwe, 3 women head ministries and 6 women are deputy ministers. Heads of Ministers include: Ministers of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Community Development and Cooperatives, Education and Culture; Deputy Ministers include: Deputy Ministers of Labour, Employment and Planning, Social Welfare, Environment and Tourism and three Deputy Ministers of State and Political Affairs (June 1991). Source provided by Inter -Parliamentary Union, _Women and Political Power_ Series "Reports and Documents", 19 (Geneva-1992) p. 160.

62. This thesis wants to acknowledge that the nature of women's participation varies at different levels of the state, including different governmental levels where women may hold substantial political influence but since this paper focusses on women and the state at the national level, it will not elaborate on women's political activity at various other levels. For further analysis See David Hirschmann, "Women and Political Participation in Africa: Broadening the Scope of Research," _World Development_ 19, 12, (1991) pp. 1679-1694.

63. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In _Studies in Power and Class in Africa_ pp. 193-208.

64. See Bessie House-Midamba, "The United Nations Decade: Political Empowerment or Increased Marginalization for Kenyan Women?," _Africa Report_ (1st Quarter, 1990) p. 45.

65. Bessie House-Midamba, "The United Nations Decade: Political Empowerment or Increased Marginalization for Kenyan Women", pp. 37-48.; Kathleen Staudt, "Stratification, Implications for Women's Politics," In _Women and Class in Africa_ pp.197-215.; Kathleen Staudt, "Class and Sex in the Politics of Women Farmers," _The Journal of Politics_ 41, (1971) pp. 492-512.; M. Tamarkin, "The Roots of Political Stability in Kenya," _African Affairs_ 77, 318 (July 1978) pp. 312 -313.

66. Ibid., M. Tamarkin, p. 212.

67. Bessie House-Midamba, "The United Nations Decade: Political Empowerment or Increased Marginalization for Kenyan Women," _Africa Today_ (1st Quarter, 1990) p. 41.

68. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

69. Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: Post Independence Struggles," _Feminist Studies_ 10, 3, (1984) p. 431.

70. Parpart, In <u>Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa</u> p. 94.

71. For example, Kenyan Parliamentary records on marriage law debates indicate revealing discriminatory statements made by male politicians. In the case of a 1979 bill discussion corporal punishment and polygamy, one male member of parliament was observed to state; "It is very African to teach your wife manners by beating them.... If this legislation is passed, even slapping your wife is ruled out." Such statements it is assumed would certainly have raised several counter arguments had more women been in the Kenyan Parliament. Joan Harris, "Evolution or Revolution," <u>Africa Report</u> (March-April, 1985) p. 31.

72. Andrew Meldrum. "A New Wind of Change," <u>Africa Report</u> (November-December, 1990) p. 37.

73. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In <u>Studies in Power and Class in Africa</u> p. 203.

74. It is not the intention of this thesis to put down all women's organizations and I acknowledge the contributions some of these national organizations have made, particularly the extensive research work done by these groups on women, and the campaigns and awareness programs carried out on behalf of women etc. However, this paper wants to point out that there are significant problems in the way women participate in politics which have a definite impact on overall gender relations. In addition, although this paper generalises, it can be argued that in both Kenya nd Zimbabwe there are similarities in the way women participate in and conduct politics.

75. Janet Bujra, "Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 136.

76. Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno...," <u>SIGNS</u> (Summer 1991) p. 831.

77. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In <u>Studies in Power and Class in Africa</u> p. 204.; and Janet M. Bujra, "Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 136.

78. Quoted in the <u>Harare Herald</u>, July 16th 1982. See Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: Post Independence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (1984) p. 436.

79. See Janet Bujra, "Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp. 135- 137.; Mbilinyi, In Janet Bujra, "Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation," <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 137.

80. In fact, the NCWK was severely criticised for having being influenced by foreign women's organizations, specifically the American Women's Association. See Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno...," <u>SIGNS</u> (Summer, 1991) p. 830.; Stamp also makes a good analysis on the failure of the Kenyan women's movement in defending Wambui Otieno. Ibid., pp. 827-833.

81. Ibid., pp. 829-830.

82. See David Hirschmann, "Women and Political Participation in Africa: Broadening the Scope of Research," <u>World Development</u> 19, 12, (1991) p. 1691.

CHAPTER FOUR
GENDER AND STATE RESOURCES: A CASE OF MALE BIAS?

Introduction

Chapter Three analyzed the relationship between a predominantly "male" African state and its female citizens; it was an attempt to see whether the modern African state has had a positive influence on women's opportunities or whether its predominantly "male" character has rendered the state patriarchal in nature, thereby affecting women ability to move into positions of power. Chapter Four is a continuation of this analysis and it examines how state structures and personnel, in both Kenya and Zimbabwe, may in fact pursue policies that continue to benefit one gender's economic and social position over that of another.

The African state plays a crucial role in the allocation and distribution of resources and, through subsequent policies, the state has actually helped shape the nature of social relations within Africa. In effect, state policies in the control and distribution of resources have had a definite impact on gender relations, particularly on women's economic role and social position vis a vis men. In light of this, it important to briefly analyze women's needs and interests in state policy considerations.

This chapter attempts to analyze whether the state has been discriminatory in its policies towards one particular gender and the extent to which its own internal "male biases" have

166

played a role in this process - Do African state institutions and personnel perpetuate patriarchal biases and consequently, monopolize resources in the interests of men? To what extent do these policies help male accumulation and help maintain gender differentiations in society, whereby women provide a cheap labour source to help foster capitalism? This is particularly important in light of the fact that in both Kenya and Zimbabwe, capitalist forces have emerged side by side with communal modes of production, which have, in turn, resulted in the transformation and destruction of the more "equitable" gender relations found in pre-capitalist African society. (See Chapter Two.)

The first section will analyze how state policies, particularly those on land and agricultural services, have affected women's economic and social position vis a vis men and how even when states have actively pursued "gender neutral" policies, women have been disadvantaged. Due to length constraints, this paper concentrates entirely on various government policies towards the rural sectors of Zimbabwe and Kenya, where over 80% of the female population live and agricultural pursuits remain the mainstay of the economy with women playing a key role in the production process. Studies by Susan Jacobs and Rayah Feldman on land resettlement and reform policies, and studies by Kathleen Staudt on inequities in agricultural services, will be examined in order to help establish some of the inherent biases of state policies undertaken by male dominated

governments.

Subsequently, the following section will explore women's opportunities to advance socio-economically given the nature of policies towards them. This section of the paper will explore whether all African women have similarly been disadvantaged. It will be shown that some women have been able to take advantage of their class position to avoid policy discrimination and neglect. Analysis by Kathleen Staudt and Janet Bujra will help explain the implications of such gender stratification for African women. In addition, this paper will examine the role played and measures taken by women's groups and women's bureaus to improve the lives of women. In the end, it is hoped that this chapter will illuminate both the overall discriminatory nature of state policies towards women in agriculture and the neglect of women's interests in policy making, and the subsequent implications of this for overall gender relationships in Africa.

Women's Access To State Resources: Are Male Dominated African Governments Biased In Their Policies Towards Women As A Group?

When it comes to the allocation of state resources evidence shows that most women have invariably been neglected and their interests overlooked, even when the state has not deliberately set out to pursue policies that "exclude" women. State policies aimed at improving the lives of the general population may in fact have contradictory results for women.

There is evidence to show that African states may in fact, enact policy initiatives that help displace female labour power, increase further disparities between the sexes, and in some cases even render women totally dependent on men. This thesis argues that this is as much a result of the inherent patriarchal bias of a male dominated state, which often sides with a gender biased society to the detriment of women, as it is a consequence of the nature of capitalist penetration and growth in Africa. We begin by looking at several policy initiatives directed towards the agricultural sector that have had an impact on all peasant populations, but particularly on women.

To begin with government initiatives on land reform and distribution in Africa have only reinforced existing gender hierarchies to the detriment of women as a group. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, both of which had large white settler colonies, efforts were undertaken soon after independence to ensure the resettlement of displaced African populations. Both countries actively pursued policies to consolidate and register land into African hands not only to regain "lost lands" but to facilitate the entry of an emerging black petty bourgeoisie.[1] However, several studies show that in many of the redistribution and registration schemes, men as heads of households were targeted and male ownership rights were stressed (See Below).

Kathleen Staudt in her analysis of women's politics and the

state argues that a gender ideology institutionalised during colonial times through educational, legal and economic programs ensured that women belonged to the private sphere where their labour "began to subsidize men and capital" (See Chapter Two). She points out that this male-female dichotomy of public-private spheres, where men are part of the extra-household affairs and women are part of internal household matters, was extended onto and continued by the modern African state and male authorities. Men as part of the public sphere were to control and represent women. Staudt concludes that the newly independent African states pursuing such gender distinctions honored men as the "family breadwinners" and therefore, continued to form and follow policy with the assumption that men as the legitimate heads of households should represent women in public affairs.2

Susan Jacobs in her analysis of land resettlement in Zimbabwe points out that government policy with regard to land has tended to marginalize women. The Zimbabwean government pursued these schemes in order to redistribute land from white owned large-scale capitalist farmers to farms owned by black commercial farmers. Her data on several models of resettlement shows that the government deliberately ignored women's individual demand for land and left it to their families to provide them with access to land. For example, in one resettlement program, the government initiative of assigning land permits to household heads immediately resulted in the exclusion of all married women.

In addition, in the case of a divorce, a woman would lose any right to stay on the land scheme.3 Jacobs adds that even if officials did not directly stipulate that heads of households must be male, there were already existing social expectations and the state did little to challenge these expectations.4 In some cases the state even went as far as to provide application forms only to men, prompting bitter responses from women:

> Why is it that only the names of men who have taken courses and have qualifications are being taken for resettlement? We women have also taken some courses but (resettlement officers) are not taking our names. So it means that we women are not counted in any development activities undertaken by Zimbabwe. We struggled much to win Zimbabwe, but it seems that our Government has forgotten that, and it is not interested in women's development and needs.5

Women's "de facto" access to land was and still is determined by the widely held patriarchal belief (both within African society and state structures) that since women were subordinate to men they should be dependent on them to represent them. Governments have been unable and unwilling to challenge attitudes that land is male property, and have easily succumbed to the opposition to women owning land. For example, in 1980 the Succession Act of 1972 underwent amendment in Kenya's Parliament. One section which was to give girls equal rights to inherit property with their brothers, faced such vehement opposition that the issue went no further. As Dr. Eddah Gachukia, a former Member of Parliament explained, many leaders objected to such clauses, pointing out that since "girls would get married and go off

171

to their husbands' households", why should they inherit land.6 So ingrained are these attitudes that it is often simply assumed by politicians and leaders that as wives, sisters and daughters, women's usufructuary rights land would be guaranteed by men.

However, Rayah Feldman, in her analysis of land and policies towards rural women in Kenya, points out that if land is concentrated in the hands of men on the basis of private property, there is no longer a guarantee of automatic rights of access to women.7 For example, under communal allocation rights women could readily access and use land and could dispose of any "extra crops" grown on that land the way they saw fit. However, with land belonging to individual men, women's social and economic rights to use that land and to dispose of "extra crops" grown on that land become unclear. Women's security of tenure is considerably undermined when land becomes exclusively male property, particulary if husbands/fathers dictate the terms of production and have power over wives and children in relation to the disposition of produce - produce that can now legally be appropriated by men. In fact, in Zimbabwe land individualization has created such great tension between men and women that words such as "exploiters" and "bloodsuckers" have been regularly used by women to describe men's behaviour in controlling land.8

Such governmental responses can also be further questioned in light of demographic trends in many southern African

172

countries which indicate that many rural households are actually headed by females.9 As Africa's economic reality becomes more stringent, men are more likely to search for off farm employment opportunities (men have a greater chance of being hired in long term wage work, men do not have the domestic responsibilities that keep them on the farms) and therefore, women and their children find themselves carrying the double burden of food and cash crop production. Rural women have increasingly ended up producing food crops as well as crops for sale (ie. petty commodity surplus) to meet household needs. This "double exploitation" is not only a consequence of existing sexual divisions of labour but a result of male out migration and women's position in the capitalist economy itself. Some research suggests that women receive very little aid (financial or otherwise) from their husbands, whilst other research points to the cash contributions that absent migrants make to rural households.10 However, in the final analysis, as more families become dependent on the cash economy, the burden of raising and sustaining the family falls increasingly on the subsistence sector and on women; women find themselves not only feeding and clothing the family but are forced to take on men's agricultural pursuits.

This thesis acknowledges that employment opportunities for rural men are often limited even in urban centres and this is a cause for great frustration amongst men. However, this factor only compounds women's burden since they receive even

less monetary support from their husbands and they are forced to support families on their own. African men still do not view everyday agricultural work as their responsibility and see it as "women's work" and are therefore reluctant to work regularly on farm production unless they receive cash payments in return. Evidence also shows that the low wages that African men receive for their wage labour adds to women's burdens since many men use up their wages and then rely on their wives to support them.11

If the means of production (land, cash etc.) is firmly in the hands of men, women's labour and earnings can be easily appropriated by the heads of the household and the proceeds not shared. Within African households there are separate male-female interests, and it cannot be taken for granted that internal household redistribution occur. Evidence suggests that men are often motivated by personal wealth with their own personal needs coming first. For example, research done by Philip Raikes on savings and credit in the Kisii area of Western Kenya, shows that men rarely contribute to any form of household investment, since a large part of their income is used for personal usage, particularly on alcohol consumption.12 Raikes adds that it is not uncommon for men to use up their months wages in a week and then depend on what their wives produce to survive the rest of the month.13 Although African women accept that men have certain formal rights and privileges, many women are beginning to resent the fact that men by way of "male authority" can easily control

the cash income of the family. As one woman in Kisii, Kenya remarked:

> Men are irresponsible. If they earn money, they spend on themselves. They drink the money up and they come to us when they have no more. We're left to take care of both them and of ourselves. What will become of the children? They have no one to look up to.14

Even though rural women's responsibilities and workloads have increased as they take on the growing burdens of sustaining families, many women can no longer rely on the economic or labour support of men to help them. And since women play such a crucial role as family providers, they end up making decisions on their own. This, some scholars have noted, gives women a certain degree of self-worth and independence, particularly vis a vis many African men who still struggle to earn meager earnings in the wage economy.15 However, as Patricia Stamp, Janet Bujra and Kathleen Staudt have noted: as long as women continue to receive smaller wages and less cash in their roles as petty commodity producers and social producers, and the fruits of their labour can be readily appropriated, women's labour input will continue to subsidize the needs of both men and capital in the accumulation process.16

Gay Seidman has argued in her analysis of Zimbabwe that governments have been unwilling to challenge existing family structures and sexual divisions of labour that tie women to the household.17 Seidman provides the following example. In the early 1980's, when an attempt was made to end the

practice of paying bridewealth, since it was seen by many women as a symbol of male domination over daughters and wives, the government was unwilling to go through with its own recommendations made by the ministry in charge of women's affairs and abolish this system.18 Another example Seidman presents has to do with government policies over contraception and the fact that the government has been slow to provide Zimbabwean women with control over their sexuality and reproduction. Abortions remained illegal well into the post-independence era, irrespective of the mother's health situation. In fact, several abortionists have been jailed with government officials calling for even heavier sentences for illegal abortions.19 Therefore, it can be argued that in not challenging such structures that tie women to the home and keep them under the control of their families, government policies invariably foster male accumulation and male privilege, since women remain under the firm control of men and their labour can be readily appropriated.

African governments overlook women's inherent patriarchal constraints within households (women are in a subordinate position), and ignore women's double burdens of production and social production. In policy considerations, governments obscure the realities of internal household cleavages between men and women, and subsequent policies directed in favour of male heads of household help solidify men's control over women and their income. In denying women independent access to resources such as land, the Kenyan and Zimbabwe states

176

have directly or indirectly served the needs of patrilineages who, faced with the harsh circumstances of post-colonial capitalism, were/are trying to increase their control over lineage wives. Government policies have in effect rendered women dependent on men for access to the means of production. This, in turn, has considerably undermined women's ability to expand their independent economic base.

In addition, due to the nature of capitalist growth in Africa (men were captured into the wage economy far earlier than women, and the majority of women still remain in low paying and subsistence sectors) many women in the rural sectors are still lacking in terms of substantial employment opportunities and independent resources to purchase land. Topped with Africa's continuing land shortage problems, unmarried women and divorced women are in the least likely position to acquire land.20 The effects of such differential rights to land have enormous implications on gender relations. First of all, it continues to perpetuate women's dependency on men for access to critical resources, but even more, it undermines women's own ability to compete in light of increasingly harsh economic circumstances. For example, women are unable to use land title deeds as a collateral for credit and loans, resources that are critical in competing with better off commercialised farmers.21

Government measures to increase agricultural productivity remain male oriented, despite efforts to improve women's

177

opportunities. Studies show that government programs, particularly in Kenya, disproportionately transfer extension, credit and training to men. And although governments have in recent years attempted to correct some of the biases against women farmers (in light of the current agricultural and food crisis in Africa and the international/national recognition of women's invaluable contribution in improving the food crisis) - evidence still suggests that women as a group continue to be discriminated against.

The most detailed empirical data regarding women farmers and inequities in agriculture and the differential impact of policies on the sexes come from Kathleen Staudt, who has conducted numerous case studies in Kenya to document the problems, problems which have parallels all over Africa.22 Her 1975 study of 212 small scale farm households in an administrative location in the Kakamega district of Western Kenya, provides empirical data to establish the extent of discriminatory practices and the consequences of this discrimination.23 Staudt's studies have been ongoing since then and indicate that in the provision of agricultural services by the agricultural administration (farmers are entitled to services which include visits by agricultural extension workers, the creation of Farming Training Centres (FTC's) to provide valuable services such as information on loan applications, weekly demonstration plots to show new farming techniques etc.), there were/are considerable inequities between farms that were managed by women alone and

those that had a man present. Preferences were/are clearly given to men.

Specific examples of this bias include the fact that training instructors, the majority of whom are male,[24] plan their visits according to the presence of a man being at home -- this despite the fact that in some areas over 40% of the farms were female managed.[25] Long standing prejudicial attitudes against women by administrative staff help explain this behaviour. For example, many of the extension workers feel that it is a woman's job to speak to other women and that since men are the authority of the household, they are the ones who should be provided with innovative information. As one agricultural staff member put it, "In the African way, we speak to the man who is the head of the house and assume he will pass on the information to other household members. Being men, of course, it is easier for us to persuade men."[26] This attitude prevails despite evidence that shows that husbands do not necessarily pass this information on to their wives.

In addition, even though wealthier farms are more likely to get administrative services, wealthier women have access to fewer services than do lower income farms with a man present.[27] Having a man present on the farm becomes a key indicator for the availability of services. For example, Staudt's data indicates that having a man present at home seems to have a great drawing power for agricultural staff

making home visits. Also farms with a man present are more likely to be part of a "government communication network", and therefore are more likely to be aware of particular services available (for example, when the next demonstration plots are etc.). Staudt concludes that sexual discrimination affects women as a community.28

Although a more recent case study done by the World Bank on "Kenya - The Role of Women in Economic Development 1989" shows that government efforts in the last ten years have significantly improved women's access to regular visits, it also confirms that many of the problems associated with visits, such as accessing information and resources still remain. The Report concludes that, "women's productivity remains constrained in several ways. Women still have more limited access than men to information, credit, and complementary resources," and that "women face particularly strong barriers compared to men ...."29

Staudt and other scholars have also indicated that when extension staff visit women, instructors do not necessarily concentrate on improving women's farming techniques. Such problems are compounded by the fact that both women farmers and women extension officers attending local Ministry of Agriculture Farm Training Centres (FTC) for training, are in fact more likely to be enrolled in home economic courses. Consequently, instead of carrying technical farming expertise and information on their visitation rounds to their female

clientele, many trainees focus on issues of welfare, cookery, nutrition etc.

Such policy leanings are in fact a consequence of the British colonial heritage which saw women as mothers and "housekeepers" and have been carried on by the Kenyan government. As Staudt points out, the overall assumption is that "women's needs are identical to household needs and that benefits to a household head "trickle down" to household members."30 Gay Seidman in her study of Zimbabwe confirms this attitude, pointing out that field workers are often patronizing towards the women they work with, considering them incapable and ignorant of technical farming skills and are unwilling to challenge women's role outside motherhood and homemaking.31

Other indirect examples of inequities in agricultural services include the targeting of scarce resources towards more "progressive farmers" ie. those farmers that are willing to undertake innovations, particularly in commercial agricultural enterprises.32 Not all agricultural staff members automatically assume that men are "progressive" and exclude female farmers, but given the community social context that men have authority over the household and address matters of government, men often receive the information.33 For example, in villages all over Kenya government technology and agricultural demonstrations are held weekly. Plot announcements for this are nearly always

made at open air "political meetings" (bazaars) where men are most likely present since they attend to matters of government and are consequently the beneficiaries of important information. Women are also under greater time constraints and are less likely to attend bazaars or demonstrations which are often miles away from their farms.

In addition, since a larger proportion of female farmers are involved in self-employed food production and in the subsistence sector, policies concentrating on export oriented farmers invariably discriminate against them. Studies of women in the peasant situation in Zimbabwe exemplify the consequences:

> Women are left with the residues of underproductivity in agriculture: seeds left over from the previous year's crops rather than hybrid variety; systems of renewing soil fertility rather than artificial fertilizers; hoes rather than ploughs, ox-drawn ploughs rather than tractors.34

In this way, a large number of capable women are neglected by the agricultural bureaucracy who in turn subsidize male farmers as well as a few wealthy female farmers, thus indirectly helping in increasing both gender and class gaps.35

Governments are reluctant to challenge women's traditional roles particularly within the structures that subordinate them. Statements such as those made by Minister Nhongo of the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs in Zimbabwe exemplify this point: "Women should help their

husbands... rather than spending most of their time basking in the sun and drinking beer," and "Marriages will break up if women do not help their husbands."36 These "sex-stereotype" leanings (based on the patriarchal notions of male superiority) by state authorities help marginalize women, confining them to low paying sectors of the economy or to domestic and subsistence spheres where their "subordinate" status as "homemakers" and "child-keepers" is further reinforced.

If women are expected to pull themselves out of "subservience and defer nce" it has to be through their own initiatives and within the realm of the family and traditional sensitivities. And, even as African women "pull themselves out" they are still confronted with "patriarchal" bias by authorities in national bureaucracies who continue to disproportionately transfer state resources to one group, and do little to actually confront the structural reasons for women's discrimination. In the final analysis, this paper argues, women have to deal with both an internal patriarchy within households as well as a public patriarchy existing within state policies.

Issues of Class, Gender and Politics in the Distribution and Delivery of Services.

As it was shown in Chapter Three, class lines divide gender relations, and one's class position impacts on one's opportunities. Hence, although policy discrimination and neglect has resulted in the further economic marginalization

of women and consequently increased economic and social gender gaps, not all African women have been similarly or adversely affected. A few women have been able to use their class position and political influence to their own advantage in relation to discriminatory policies.

Evidence shows that not only sex discrimination but class discrimination affects the process of resource allocation and distribution in Kenya and Zimbabwe. Although Staudt in her earlier analysis indicated that wealthier women are not likely to get more services than lower income farms with a man present, her analysis also indicates that when comparing elite and non elite women farm managers, "women's access to services increases as their economic standing increases."37 Elite women are more likely to have knowledge of loan application procedures than their poorer counterparts; they are more likely to have attended demonstration plots; and more receive training at the Farming Training Centre compared to less wealthy female farmers.38

This has been explained partly by the fact that elite women are viewed as part of the "successful" farm category and therefore are targeted for scarce administrative resources; wealthier women have larger land holdings to their advantage and are more likely to be engaged in high income generating farming projects.39 Extension workers are also aware of the political clout that elite women carry with them - these women are in a material position to take advantage of linking

themselves with a particular politician (economic wealth correlates with political influence, See Chapter Three) and therefore, extension staff are more willing to deliver services to this group.

The implications of such stratification and differential access are in fact enormous for all African women. To begin with, differential access not only detracts from the needs of poorer women, but also from women's common interests. This issue is extremely important in light of the fact that wealthier women are in a material and political position to influence policy making and articulate needs for all women. Elite women shape policy demands on behalf of their poorer "sisters" despite the fact that they are less conscious of sex inequities in government policies, and they do not share the same experiences as poorer women. Finally, elite women have a stake in continuing and preserving some of the discriminatory leanings of government agricultural policies, to protect and serve their own class interests and, therefore, avoid confronting gender based discrimination.

Janet Bujra has argued that "In Africa petty bourgeois elements flourish by exploiting or oppressing direct producers either via the state or via mercantile or petty capitalist enterprises," and this intention is often disguised by an "ideology of concern for the poor."40 Bujra and other scholars provide evidence by pointing to the fact that various organizations that have been set up to promote

the redistribution of resources and help the poor are in actuality promoting the class interests of one particular small group of women. For example, Bujra has noted that in Kenya many elite women through associations, such as the Kenyan Women's Association, involve themselves in "Philanthropy" ie. they are involved in well publicized donations to government sponsored charities including giving money to hospitals in a particular politicians home area etc. Rarely do these organizations extend their donations to help women in rural branches. Consequently, Bujra claims that these associations "play a role of social control on behalf of [their] class," since charity is often a way of keeping the poor in their place and is a means of creating social distance between the well off and the not so well off. She concludes that in actuality elite women and their associations do little to transform the position of poorer women.41

Katherine Staudt's studies on the administrative services of Western Kenya shows that it is largely women of the local elite who lead groups to the MP's houses' to request services and are the ones who articulate "women's demands."42 They often see "women's needs" in terms of government policy orientations, particularly those that promote domestic goals and re-enforce women's obligatory roles within families. It is largely elite women who support and benefit from home economics classes set up by FTC's and who support the building of women's centres that are associated with sewing

and knitting clubs, cooking classes etc. These programs are neither relevant nor practical (particularly in terms of time-usage) for the majority of rural women whose main concern remains securing better agricultural services from policy makers. Staudt also notes that the reluctance of many women elders and elite leaders to question traditional authority structures and advocate the redistribution of resources "suggests that leaders' interest in organizational survival may deter them from seeking basic restructuring of political and economic power."43

In the end, elite women find it a better strategy to ally themselves with the material and ideological interests of family and class, particularly if their political and economic fortunes are so closely tied to this factor. In turn, this paper argues that it is these women who have become the beneficiaries of scarce and critical resources, which in both Kenya and Zimbabwe can only be distributed so far. Unfortunately, these women, in internalising the interests of their class, have only further perpetuated the gender ideology that helps tie them and other women to households and economic dependency.

Marxist-socialist scholars on Africa indicate that it is in the best interest of the African state and the ruling classes to control women, particularly elite women.44 If elite women were to recognise the interests of their particular gender and start demanding better services and distribution of

resources, the subsequent consequences for both the state and the ruling class would be enormous. Hence, the control of this group of women comes about by way of a patriarchal ideology that promotes women's domestic and wifely responsibilities and through class and ethnic interests that bind women's economic and political fortunes to family relations. As Gramsci has noted, the ruling classes defend their interest by ensuring that those interests "become the interests of ... subordinate groups."45

The Role Of Women's Group's In Challenging Structures And Policies That Perpetuate Subordination - A Mixed Blessing?

In both Kenya and Zimbabwe there are a number of women's groups and rural women's networks, especially in areas where male migration is high, that exist to assist women with the increased challenges and competition they face in a market economy. Many of these rural associations have been part of the general push for a national development strategy in both countries and have been co-ordinated by government bureaus, including the Kenyan Women's Bureau and MCDWA, as well as by international organizations including UN agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations.

Africa is also "a world region with the most extensive female solidarity organizations, an indication of the importance among women of ties outside household boundaries."46 As women's responsibilities have increased and as they become further marginalized by the "commercial process," memberships in various groups have also

increased.47   Women have come together in informal self-help groups, sharing interests and pooling their collective interests and resources to create survival tactics independent of both male house-hold heads and governments.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the full implications of women's participation in various types of rural associations. However, it is important to briefly describe the role of women's groups in alleviating women's problems, particularly those problems exacerbated by continuing discriminatory policies and sexist attitudes, and more importantly, to analyze the role groups play in addressing issues of women's subordination and the redistribution of resources. This is particularly important in light of the fact that both national and international development planners view involvement in women's groups as vital for the general improvement of women's social and economic position in rural areas. This is because they see women's groups as having an active role in the process of integrating women in development, and both African governments and international organizations agree that the lack of integration is one of the main causes of high unemployment and poverty amongst women.48   Subsequently, there has been considerable interest in the role of women's groups in addressing problems of gender gaps in Africa. Unfortunately, due to the lack of documentation available on rural women's groups in Zimbabwe, most of the evidence below will be provided from Kenya.

Analysis of women's groups shows that they have had various levels of success in affecting women's opportunities and improving women's access to labour, credit, capital and information, especially at local levels. Barbara Thomas in her recent study of women's participation in Kenya's rural associations points to the considerable impact women's groups have had in the provision of income generating opportunities for women; in increasing women's ability to have access to extra-household labour through women sharing labour during critical farming seasons; in giving women opportunities to save and invest cash through fund-raising schemes; in providing lending and investment opportunities within group saving schemes; in helping facilitate access to markets, particularly for women's handicraft production by supplying transport, etc.; and in enabling women to acquire limited information on farming techniques that otherwise would not be available to them.49

Overall, Thomas concludes that women's groups and networks seem to be beneficial in addressing the mutual needs of women under difficult circumstances, particularly in improving household access to critical resources when dealing with shortages of cash and labour. And in turn this has helped increase women's decision-making power vis a vis other household members, particularly men.50 In fact, evidence shows that women's groups in many areas are becoming an increasing cause of male anger and irritation within

households, with men feeling considerably threatened by the activities of collaboration and mutual support that allow women to appropriate some of the products of their own labour.51

Patricia Stamp, in an earlier study on the impact of rural groups from Mitero, an area of the Kenyan Highlands rich in women's farming cooperatives and networks, also cited similar mutual aid experiences through women's groups.52 Stamp views the significance of self-help groups in terms of providing women with strategies for "coping with change," and she sees women's groups as "vital organizations for resistance to exploitation."53 Her arguments are based on data which show that women channel cash from the sale of "extra" crops into self-help organizations, cash which otherwise may well be appropriated by husbands, and that women use groups to accumulate cash and capital, thus protecting themselves against stringent economic situations and improving their weak financial position within households. Stamp states:

> ... women's choices in disposing of their labour time and channeling their earnings into self-help groups may be seen as a form of peasant resistance. Specifically, it is resistance to the appropriation of their product by capital through the agency of their husbands, and as such it is a resistance to the dual exploitation, by the sex-gender system on the one hand and the underdevelopment of capitalism on the other.54

She concludes that the existence of women's groups provides a source of active consciousness for women and that precisely for this reason, the African state attempts to contain and co-opt women's activities within groups (Discussed Below).55

191

This paper agrees with Thomas and Stamp in their argument that women's participation in self-help groups is an important factor in improving women's position, especially with regards to access to critical resources such as cash and labour. However, in evaluating the effectiveness of women's groups in transforming women's "subordination," this paper also examines evidence which shows that women's groups do not necessarily address matters concerned with women's subordinate relationship to men in African society, which in turn, has resulted in the continuation of their subordinate social and economic position. Women's groups do little to challenge traditional, patriarchal constraints within African society and family, nor do they necessarily question the patriarchal nature of discriminatory state policies which assumed women's dependency on men.

Some scholars have even gone as far as to argue that women's groups help maintain and perpetuate the status quo of women's subordinate position, as well as help reinforce the interests of bourgeoisie and the African state. Rayah Feldman in her analysis of women's groups and women's subordination has suggested that although women's groups assist "some women to generate extra income.... Seldom indeed do their projects, even when successful in terms of profitability, approach the requirements for fundamentally altering the condition of subordination of rural women."56 Feldman argues that in order for rural groups to have a substantial impact on

women's position in society, it is necessary, for example, to ensure that women have access to land on terms equal to men (thus breaking down constraints that historically have allowed men access to unpaid labour), that women are assured of equal opportunity to raise loans, and that women are taught farming techniques as opposed to domestic skills. However, she points out that since both the Kenyan government and the Women's Bureau see women's lack of integration as the key constraint to women's poor economic showing they concentrate all efforts on providing programs of training and income generation to solve the problem, without examining the underlying structures (including gender relations which assume men's superiority) that actually subordinate women.57

Although income generating programs are designed to improve women's cash earning capabilities and increase women's access to local markets, these programs have come under some criticism both in Kenya and in Zimbabwe. Critics argue that projects set up by women's groups concentrate far too heavily on handicraft production, leading to "cottage industries." Such industries are increasingly susceptible to market fluctuations, competition etc. and this keeps women well within the low-paying margins of the economy.58 The ability of women's associations to provide access to information has also come under scrutiny, particularly since many studies show that women receive very little information on improving agricultural performance and many of these programs simply concentrate on domestic science, nutrition and child-care

issues (See Previous Section). Even in Zimbabwe with its socialist leanings, where women's groups are more aggressive in their approaches to addressing gender stratification, evidence shows that women's groups, particularly those with national backing, concentrate their efforts largely on income generating projects and home science programs.59 Finally, income generating programs actually do very little to give women vital control of resources such as capital, markets and technology.

Unfortunately, due to length constraints it is not possible to enter a full discussion about the contributions and failures of such approaches. However, it should be pointed out that by focusing on income generating programs and educational training programs through women's groups, African governments have managed to successfully gain access to international funds for aid. Since the early 1980's there has been a concerted effort by international agencies to "forcibly" insist on a women's component in "aid" packages, and African states have had to accept this "women in development" approach.60 The existence of these groups has also improved Kenya's image abroad. Unfortunately, programs channelled through the state and supported by national state efforts, often succumb to the biases that exist within state bureaucracies themselves.

In the short term these approaches may significantly improve women's overall day to day economic position as

Barbara Thomas and Patricia Stamp have argued, but in the long run such efforts have yet to address fundamental issues of gender stratification and redistribution of resources.

Rayah Feldman's data on Kenya also shows that women's groups are far too geographically concentrated in a few provinces of the country, and therefore most women are actually ignored in terms of women's programs, particularly if the Women's Bureau works mainly with existing groups. Many women's groups tend to have "better off" "older" women as clientele, with poorer women excluded from membership because of financial and time constraints.61   In fact, only a small number of Kenyan women belong to an officially registered women's groups. In 1987, out of eleven million Kenyan women, only about one million belonged to a woman's group or organization, and single and poorer women are highly under-represented, particularly due to the high financial membership requirements imposed by organizations. In this way organizations effectively excluded sixty per cent of eligible women in Kenya.62   In the end, the most marginalized and most powerless women in Kenya do not belong to women's groups.

Hence, for the most part women's groups and organizations, particularly ones that are nationally supported, rarely speak for the interests of all women. Furthermore, many of these organizations expose a clear class purpose supporting the dominant government ideology that emphasises values such as women's traditional obligations and domesticity - all values

which only help to put the onus of sex disparities on the shoulders of the women themselves rather than men and governments (See Chapter Three & Previous Section). Both Kathleen Staudt and Janet Bujra have written extensively on the effects of class politics within these groups (See Previous Section), and Bujra states:

> The existence of women's groups in Africa is not, ... to be equated with a the existence of any specifically feminist consciousness, or any desire to transform the class or economic structures of postcolonial society. Women's liberation is disruptive in its challenge to male prerogatives; organizations such as these [national women's groups] reinforce the status quo. They serve petty bourgeois class interests more than they serve women.63

Arguments have also been made that the existence of women's groups in Third World countries serve the interests of international capitalist forces, for these groups provide easy access to cheap organised labour force that can readily exploited for profit maximization.64

While some groups have made an attempt to challenge fundamental issues of women's subordination, including the redistribution of resources, it is interesting to note that many groups have been co-opted by male authorities or have ended up representing the interests of a few women, these women's interests often lie in maintaining the status quo. Kathleen Staudt's study on the effectiveness of women's groups in addressing redistribution of resources, particularly in Western Kenya, shows that a sub-location wide mobilization process know as Umoja, carried out by local chiefs and several women's organizations, collapsed soon

196

after women began making significant achievements in the distribution process. One of the main reasons cited for Umoja's collapse was that the symbolic and concrete changes in distribution patterns threatened the interests of male elders and women leaders.65 Maria Nzomo, in her analysis of government policies and programs for women adds that in Kenya women's organizations:

> ... are required to operate strictly according
> to set government policies. Those that fail to
> comply or make "unreasonable" demands for
> changes in existing policies and laws, are not
> promoted and hence diminish in national status
> and influence among women. In this regard,
> hardly any distinction seems to exist between
> governmental and non-governmental women's
> organizations in their ability to influence
> change in Kenyan society, as they face similar
> structural constraints.66

However, it should be noted that projects carried out by smaller more localised women's groups, independent of government and party assistance, tend to have far greater success in teaching women techniques of improving farming and marketing methods. For example, Gay Seidman explains that, since independence, many women's clubs and cooperatives have sprung up in Zimbabwe. These groups are highly localised and the projects they pursue for women, such as setting up irrigation systems for individual farms, introducing schemes for marketing agricultural produce, etc., tend to go further than the programs offered by the government sponsored groups through the MCDWA. The latter, although operating in the same region, tend to concentrate on income-generating programs and programs teaching domestic science courses, etc.67

197

Unfortunately, projects not sponsored by governments often face financial obstacles. However, this is a good indication that African women are organising themselves to address their problems, without any state influence or interference.

This paper concludes that although significant efforts have been made to improve women's economic position in meeting everyday challenges, women's groups, particularly those with a national base, have yet to address the fundamental structures that keep women subordinate and to question the existing inequalities within African society and state. Women's groups have not yet been concerned with the wider issues of land, discriminatory state policies and laws, ideology of male superiority etc. And to the degree that women's groups conform to the overall development strategy and pose little real threat in challenging their overall status quo, individual African states and their bureaucracies have fully endorsed these groups. Even Barbara Thomas admits, "From the bureaucrat's and the politician's point of view, women's associations constitute a "safe" commitment, as long as they stay within the acceptable boundaries defined by an extension of traditional female roles."68

Women's groups have provided women with the avenues to "earn, save and invest" as well as control their own income, and this has considerably improved women's ability to deal with difficult socio-economic conditions of everyday family and community life. However, if women are to fundamentally

alter their social and economic conditions, they have to begin by challenging existing power relations and gender hierarchies within African society and state. They have to be able to present a united stand on issues that affect all women. Rural women's association have this potential. In the final analysis, this potential will only be realised if women's groups are willing to provide a forum for all women to come together and speak out against those who feel that they alone are entitled to the rewards of the state.

ENDNOTES

1. In Chapter Two it was shown how the colonial state began
to directly intervene in indigenous land tenure systems by
individualising land registration to heads of households
(colonial governments were motivated by the hope of creating
an "African middle class peasantry" and creating a rural
market base). The British colonists reflecting a male bias
and a total lack of appreciation of Africa's "female farming
system par excellence" distributed title deeds to individual
patriarchs ie. to men, with grave consequences for women's
traditional land rights.

2. Kathleen Staudt, "Women's Politics, the State, and
Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Irving Markovitz
ed., Studies in Class and Power in Africa (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1987) p. 194.

3. Susan Jacobs, "Zimbabwe: State, Class, and Gendered
Models of Land Resettlement," In Jane Parpart & Kathleen
Staudt, eds., Women and State in Africa (Boulder: Lynne
Rienner Publishers, 1989) p. 171.

4. Susan Jacobs, "Women and Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe,"
In Review of African Political Economy 26-28, (Special Issue,
1983) pp. 30-50.

5. Ibid, p.41. Susan Jacobs also points out that in many of
the resettlement schemes she studied, her samples showed that
because of the social expectation that men are the household
heads, women simply did not feel that they could apply on
their household's behalf. Susan Jacobs, "Zimbabwe: State,
Class, and Gendered Models of Land Resettlement," In Women
and the State in Africa p. 172.

6. Joan Harris, "Revolution or Evolution?," Africa Report
(March-April, 1985) p. 32.

7. Rayah Feldman, "Women's Groups and Women's
Subordination: An Analysis of Policies Towards Rural Women in
Kenya," Review of African Political Economy 26/28 (Special
Issue, 1983) p. 74.

8. See Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchal Social Formations in
Zimbabwe," In Sharon Stichter & Jane Parpart, eds.,
Patriarchy and Class p. 75.

9. Female headed are households where the spouse is absent
for long periods of time or is deceased, and women not only
satisfy domestic but all the income needs of residing family
members. Both Zimbabwe and Kenya have high percentages of
female headed households both as a consequence of the
colonial legacy and because of the nature of capitalist
growth in Africa where wage employment is concentrated in

cities and mining towns and consequently men leave for periods of time and women remain on the farms. The rates of divorce are also increasing in Africa. Data in the 1980's showed that over 24% of Kenya's rural farms are female headed households and yet only 5% of women own land in Kenya. Rayah Feldman, "Women's Groups and Women's Subordination: An Analysis of Policies Towards Rural Women in Kenya," <u>Review of African Political Economy</u> 26/28 (Special Issue, 1983) p. 71.

10. Margrethe Silberschmidt, "Have Men become the Weaker Sex? Changing Life Situations in Kisii District, Kenya," <u>The Journal of Modern African Studies</u> 30, 2, (1992) p. 247. It must be added that other research contradicts these arguments, pointing out that absent migrants do send back important cash contributions to rural areas to help in household expenses. Lisa A. Cubbins, "Women, Men, and the Division of power: A Study of Gender Stratification In Kenya," <u>Social Forces</u> 4, 4, (June, 1991) p. 1069.

11. Ibid., Silberschmidt, pp. 246-247.

12. Philip Raikes, "Savings and Credit in Kisii, Western Kenya," <u>Centre for Development Research</u> Copenhagen, (1988) Working Paper No. 88.7. p. 34. Quoted In Margrethe Silberschmidt "Have Men Become the Weaker Sex? ...," <u>The Journal of Modern African Studies</u> 30, 2, (1992) pp. 247-248.; Silberschmidt's own analysis confirms this Raikes conclusions.; Patricia Stamp also explains how in communal modes of production, male heads of households were motivated by the well-being of their household but with the coming of the capitalist ideology of personal wealth, men are more interested in private accumulation. See Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups," In Claire Robertson and Iris Berger, eds., <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 39;

13. Ibid., Raikes, p. 34.

14. Margrethe Silberschmidt "Have Men Become the Weaker Sex? ...," <u>The Journal of Modern African Studies</u> 30, 2, (1992) p. 249.

15. Ibid., pp. 237-253.

16. See works of Stamp, Bujra and Staudt In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u>.

17. Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: PostIndependence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall 1984) pp. 419-439.

18. Ibid., p. 422. & pp. 435-436.

19. Ibid., pp. 435-436.

20. This thesis acknowledges that land shortages in Africa affect all peasant populations but wants to point out that the impact of such shortages affect men and women differently. Government land allocation responses, by overlooking/ignoring conflicting claims of traditional land usage and ownership patterns puts particular groups of women such as widows and divorcees in even more venerable positions, particularly if access to farmland can be dependent on one marital status.

21. There are exceptions and recently governments are recognising the fact that because many men work outside their farm areas, they are not available to act as guarantors of loans, and therefore agricultural banks are beginning to give loans directly to women. An example would be the Zimbabwe case, where small scale farmers the bulk of which are women acquire loans directly from banks. Janice Jiggins, "How Poor Women Earn Income," World Development 17, 7, (1989) p. 558.; Such actions are still relatively few.

22. Staudt has written extensively on this subject and her data is quoted by other scholars examining rural women's positions in agriculture. See Kathleen Staudt, "Women Farmers and Inequities in Agricultural Services," Rural Africana 29 (Winter, 1975-76) pp. 81-91.; Staudt, "Agricultural Productivity Gaps: A Case Study of Male Preference in Government Policy Implementation," Development and Change 9, (1978) pp. 439-57.; Staudt, "Administrative Resources, Political Patrons, and Redressing Sex Inequities: A Case for Western Kenya," The Journal of Developing Areas 12, (July 1978) pp. 399-414.; Staudt, "Class and Sex in the Politics of Women Farmers," Journal of Politics 41, 1, (1979) pp.492-512.; Staudt, "Uncaptured or Unmotivated? Women and the Food Crisis in Africa," Rural Sociology 52, 1, (Spring 1987) pp. 37-55.; Other analysis on extension and women in Africa include works by Jennie Dey, Rayah Feldman, David Hirschmann, and the World Bank.

23. Kathleen Staudt, "Women Farmers and Inequities in Agricultural Services," Rural Africana 29 (Winter, 1975-76) pp. 81-91.

24. In the Kakamega area where Staudt conducted her original research, it was found that only 2% of field workers were women.

25. Kathleen Staudt, "Administrative Resources, Political Patrons, and Redressing Sex-Inequities: A Case From Western Kenya," The Journal of Developing Areas 12, (July, 1978) p. 409. Female managed refers to the fact that no husband exists or if so, the man is absent for a particular length of time. In Zimbabwe, female-headed households are even more common than in Kenya.

26. Kathleen Staudt, "Agricultural Policy Implementation A Case Study from Western Kenya," In Case-Studies Series, Women's Roles and Gender Differences in Development (West Hartford, CT. : Kumarian Press, 1985) p. 37.; Rayah Feldman in her analysis of extension and training points to her interviews with District Agricultural Officers who confirm that there is a basic assumption to communicate extension to male farmers and only to talk to women if men were absent. Rayah Feldman,"Women's Groups and Women's Subordination: An Analysis of Policies Towards Rural Women in Kenya," Review of African Political Economy 26/28, (Special Issue, 1983) p. 75.

27. Kathleen Staudt, "Administrative Resources, Political Patrons, and Redressing Sex Inequities: ...," The Journal of Developing Areas 12, (July, 1978) pp. 409-410.

28. There is some evidence to suggest that Zimbabwe women fare better particularly with regard to both agricultural extension service and agricultural loans. This is partly a consequence of the fact that due to high male out-migration, in many areas over 50% of farming households were headed by women and the government has little choice other than to work with women to ensure the success of small scale farmers. See Jennifer M. Adams, "Female Wage labour in Zimbabwe," World Development 19, 2/3, (1991) p. 165.; Janice Jiggins, "How Poor Women Earn Income in Sub-Saharan Africa and What Works Against Them," World Development 17, 7, (1989) p. 558. However, when men are present women are continuously discriminated against and female-headed households tend to be poorer than those headed by men.

29. World Bank, "Kenya: The Role of Women in Economic Development," A World Bank Country Study (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1989) p. 1 & p. 29.

30. Kathleen Staudt, "Administrative Resources, Political Patrons, and Redressing Sex-Inequities: ...," The Journal of Developing Areas 12, (July, 1978) p. 404.

31. Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: PostIndependence Struggles," Feminist Studies 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) p. 431.

32. It must be pointed out that African governments in turn are influenced by outside policy prescriptions. For example, both Kenya and Zimbabwe are influenced by The World Bank Report of 1981 "Accelerated Development in Sub-Sahara Africa: An Agenda for Action", which calls for "export-oriented progressive farmers" to be singled out for his willingness to produce and sell. This attitude has been changing particularly in the last 5 years but such sentiments still prevail, particularly since those in charge of the planning process are often unaware on indifferent to the fact that given a chance women with their agricultural know-how would make excellent commercial farmers.

33. Kathleen Staudt, "Agricultural Productivity Gaps: A Case Study of Male Preference in Government Policy Implementation," <u>Development and Change</u> 9, (1979) p. 444.

34. Angela Cheater, "Women and Their Participation in Commercial Agricultural-Production: The Case of Medium-Scale Freehold in Zimbabwe," <u>Development and Change</u> 12, (1981) p. 351.

35. This thesis recognises that rural women, particularly in female headed households are also significantly involved in wage employment, albeit in low income casual work, to meet daily cash requirements. However, this is often overlooked by planners, who subsequently ignore female wage laborers and their needs when making policy. See Jennifer M. Adams who has written her Phd. dissertation on rural women as wage workers in rural Zimbabwe. She explains how poor female wage workers have few advocates in formulating policy to improve their social and economic situation. Jennifer M. Adams "Female Wage labour in Rural Zimbabwe," <u>World Development</u> 19, 2/3, (1991) pp. 163-177.

36. Gay Seidman, "Women in Zimbabwe: PostIndependence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) p. 436.

37. Kathleen Staudt, "Class and Sex in the Politics of Women Farmers," <u>The Journal of Politics</u> 41 (1979) p. 503.

38. Ibid., p. 502.

39. It should also be pointed out that elite women have the capital to invest in better technology and are in a position to hire other women to work on their farms to carry out every day chores and hence they are better able to be involved in income generating farms.

40. Janet Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble Their efforts...," In Claire Robertson & Iris Berger, eds., <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 136.

41. Ibid., p. 136.; Patricia Stamp has also done an analysis of women's associations and her research shows that district-wide organizations in Kenya use fund raising events to transfer money from self-help groups in the countryside to urban areas. This obviously is not to the benefit of the majority of women who live in the rural area. See Patricia Stamp, <u>Technology, Gender, and Power in Africa</u> p. 103.

42. Kathleen Staudt, "Administrative Resources, Political Patrons and Redressing Sex Inequities:...," <u>The Journal of Developing Areas</u> 12, (July, 1978) p. 403.

43. Kathleen Staudt, "Stratification: Implications for Women", in Claire Robertson and Iris Berger, eds., <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 210.

44. See works in <u>Women and Class in Africa.</u>

45. Antonio Gramsci, <u>Selections From a Prison Notebook</u> (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) p. 181.

46. Kathleen Staudt, "Stratification, Implications for Women's Politics," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 199.

47. Barbara Thomas, "Household Strategies for Adaptation and Change: Participation in Kenya's Rural Women's Associations," <u>Africa</u> 58, 4, (1988) p. 414.

48. See Rayah Feldman, "Women's Groups and Women's Subordination:...," <u>Review of African Political Economy</u> 26/28, (Special Issue, 1983) pp. 67-85.

49. Barbara Thomas, "Household Strategies for Adaptation and Change: Participation in Kenya's Rural Women's Associations," <u>Africa</u> 58, 4, (1988) pp. 401-422.

50. Ibid., pp. 413-414; Also see Margrethe Silberschmidt, "Have Men Become the Weaker Sex?...," <u>The Journal of Modern African Studies</u> 30, 2, (1992) pp. 237-253.

51. Ibid., Silberschmidt, p. 248.; And Patricia Stamp, "Kikuyu Women's Self-Help Groups," <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p. 41.

52. Ibid., Stamp, pp. 39-43.

53. Ibid., p. 39.

54. Ibid., p. 41.

55. Ibid., p. 42.

56. Rayah Feldman, "Women's Groups and Women's Subordination...," <u>Review of African Political Economy</u> 26/28, (Special Issue, 1983). p. 67.

57. Ibid. p. 73.

58. See Works of Rayah Feldman (1983), Marjorie Mbilinyi (1984), Gay Seidman (1984.; Also See Maria Nzomo (1989) analysis on women's groups and income generating projects.

59. Gay Seidman, "Women In Zimbabwe: PostIndependence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) p. 435.

60. Marjorie Mbilinyi, "Research Priorities in Women's Studies in Eastern Africa," <u>Women's Studies International Forum</u> 17, 4, (1984) p. 290.; Maria Nzomo, "The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya," <u>Issue: A Journal of Opinion</u> XVII/2 (1989) pp. 9-11.

61. Rayah Feldman "Women's Groups and Women's Subordination:...," <u>Review of African Political Economy</u> 26/28, (Special Issue, 1983) pp. 77-79.

62. Maria Nzomo, "The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya," <u>Issue: A Journal of Opinion</u> XVII/2 (1989) p. 12.

63. Janet Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble Their Efforts...," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> p 137.; Also See Kathleen Staudt " Stratification: Implications for Woman's Politics," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp. 197-215.

64. Maria Nzomo, "The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya," <u>Issue: A Journal of Opinion</u> XVII/2 (1989) p. 15.; Also See Maria Mies, <u>Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour</u> (London: Zed Books, 1986).

65. Kathleen Staudt " Stratification: Implications for Woman's Politics," In <u>Women and Class in Africa</u> pp. 209-210.

66. Maria Nzomo, "The Impact of Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women In Kenya," <u>Issue: A Journal of Opinion</u> XVII/2 (1989) p. 11.

67. Gay Seidman, "Women In Zimbabwe: PostIndependence Struggles," <u>Feminist Studies</u> 10, 3, (Fall, 1984) p. 437.

68. Barbara Thomas, "Household Strategies for the Adaptation of Change: Participation in Kenya's Rural Women's Associations," <u>Africa</u> 58, 4, (1988) p. 418.

CHAPTER FIVE
FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP AND AFRICAN WOMEN.

Introduction.

It is imperative that analysis of the state no longer avoid issues of gender for, as Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and R. W. Connel report, "gender is ... a major feature of the state."1 The modern state which is "quintessentially of the public realm,"2 is also overwhelmingly male in its composition and its workings. Nowhere do women occupy central positions of state power and everywhere the state elite is largely male. The state is not only gender-specific, but its actions are gender-specific. One's ability to access state power and state resources is significantly influenced by gender. As Janet Bujra and Kathleen Staudt explain, "Through their ideological, legal, and material efforts states foster the mobilization of certain groups and issues. This mobilization benefits men rather than women."3

Recognising the importance of the African state in shaping the lives of its citizens, this thesis attempted to bring "gender politics" into the study of the African state and society. Concerned with masculinization of the African state and the overall implications for gender relations, this work examined, from a feminist perspective, the connection between an overtly "male" African state and the state processes which work to the advantage of men and the disadvantage of women. What role, if any, has the African state played in increasing sexual inequality and promoting patterns of gender

stratification within African society? As well, the modern African state has been historically shaped by the introduction of capitalist forces in African society and economy and therefore, this paper included an analysis of the class dynamics that cut across and interact with gender politics in Africa.

The aim was not only to develop a better understanding of the patriarchal nature of the African state but also to analyze the role of capitalist penetration in Africa in molding the gender-structured character of the state and its policies. Subsequently, it was possible to explore some of the complexities of women's experience with the African state. The thesis tackled the central question, that of women and the African state, from two levels: from a theoretical point of view looking at four main approaches to analyzing issues of gender and state; and from an empirical level, examining practical evidence and case studies from Kenya and Zimbabwe.

From The Theoretical To The Practical Level: A Summary Of The Four Chapters.

Feminist theories, in an attempt to fully comprehend women's subordination, offer various conceptual alternatives to explain why men and women have different experiences of the world. Feminist theories attempt to understand the relationship of women's subordination to other forms of domination, for example, that of men's power over women. Whilst some feminist theories simply add the "woman question"

to traditional older theories, other more contemporary feminist theories attempt to overcome the shortcomings of earlier theorists and present new explanations for understanding women's subordination.

Considering that the more recent perspectives build on the problems of the older theories, and that each theory attempts to provide the theoretical and practical tools to understand, transform and overcome women's subordination, I felt it necessary to carry out a critical survey of several alternative feminist frameworks to understand issues of gender and the state in Africa. Therefore, this paper began with an overview of four feminist frameworks; liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism, as well as a brief assessment of the limitations and contributions of individual theories.

Chapter One first looked at early as well as contemporary liberal writings on the root causes of women's subordination. It traced liberal feminist analysis of the structural impediments that keep women in the home and deny them full and equal access to the public sphere. Chapter One also explored Marxist feminist contributions to the "woman question" and the way in which these contributions are tied to a general critique of capitalism with class being the determinant factor in understanding women's oppression. Radical feminism argues that women's subordination and the inequality of the sexes is based on male - female biology.

Subsequently, Chapter One's discussion of "Radical Feminism and the Oppression of Women" focussed on various writings exploring the biological roots of women's oppression and men's control over women's bodies. It explored arguments that women's subordination is the fundamental and most widespread form of domination, preceding and not dependent on other forms of domination, including class.

Finally, Chapter One ended with a discussion of socialist feminism which I considered the most useful of the theoretical frameworks in accounting for women's subordination, particularly because it addresses the gender limitations of traditional Marxist theory and class omissions of radical feminism (Detailed Account to Follow in Conclusion Below). This section was a presentation of various socialist feminism arguments on how women's subordination is connected to sex/gender and their interaction with class analysis.

Following a discussion of alternative theoretical accounts, the second part of this paper was devoted to examining geographically, historically and culturally concrete relations of power between women and the state in Africa. Hence, the second section concentrated on looking at empirical evidence from single African states, in specific periods. Chapter Two was an attempt to understand, through a synthesis of anthropological and historical materials, the linkage between the historical institutionalization of male power and the further economic, political and ideological

subordination of women. I believe that a historical analysis of the changes that have taken place in gender relations better explains the processes of women's subordination.

To establish this connection it was first necessary to undertake an analysis of patterns of gender relations in pre-colonial economic and social organization in order to show that despite patriarchal constraints, women still held socio-economic status within "traditional" pre-capitalist African society. Colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa significantly altered gender relations, largely to the detriment of women. Evidence was presented to show how colonial imperial states, in order to facilitate the growth of capitalism and to solidify patriarchal power, manipulated gender ideologies and created an idea of hegemonic masculinity, laying the foundations for men to control women as well as for African men to be the eventual beneficiaries of state power.

The following chapters were an attempt to analyze the relationship between a predominantly "male" state and its female citizens. Chapter Three examined women's access to the state in Kenya and Zimbabwe, specifically with the intent of exploring how the gendered nature of state and class formation in Africa had prevented women from moving into positions of social and political power. Chapter Three established that despite the lack of real hegemonic power within the ruling classes, a "collaborative hegemony" was

achieved through the use of gender ideology, whereby male dominated kin groups, male dominated bureaucratic structures and institutions were united in their ideology of patriarchy and worked towards initiating state laws and policies that benefited men over women. However, Chapter Three also noted that not all women were similarly affected by these patterns of male domination, with class lines dividing African women. It also pointed out that some women do have access to resources outside the realm of the state, within the informal sector, and that this is often perceived as a threat to the power of existing state. In the end, this chapter questioned whether it is possible, given the patriarchal nature of state-women relations in Africa, for African states in their current form to genuinely address issues of gender and provide solutions for the "woman question."

Chapter Four was a continuation of Chapter Three's analysis, showing how male dominated states secured resources largely in the hands of men. In effect, this chapter traced the ways in which state structures and personnel, in both Kenya and Zimbabwe, pursued policies largely in the economic and social interests of men. In order to establish the discriminatory nature of the state in the management of resources, this chapter examined government policy initiatives in the agricultural sector. The chapter also looked at the role of women's groups in challenging the structures and policies that perpetuate women's subordination, concluding that although women's groups have

significantly helped some women improve their economic position in meeting everyday challenges, on the whole these groups have largely adhered to government ideologies, doing little to challenge the existing "patriarchal" family structures and sexual divisions of labour which help perpetuate women's subordinate position. Overall, this chapter argued that African women deal with both an internal patriarchy within the household and an public patriarchy existing within the realm of society and state. I conclude that this, as well as the nature of capitalist penetration in Africa, has helped shape women's subordinate position in African society.

This thesis now concludes with a final analysis of how connections can be drawn and questions raised between the theoretical accounts of women's subordination and the empirical evidence presented here.

Feminist Scholarship And The Case For African Women.

The feminist debate on gender realities in Third World societies has led many to question earlier "reductionist and one dimensional" arguments about the nature of gender inequality, particularly in regard to matters of the state. Feminist analysis looks beyond narrow political science explanations of gender subordination, including those offered by traditional liberal and Marxist theory, and examines the broader structures of oppression and exploitation in society. Both liberal pluralism, which views states as neutral

arbitrators taking care of the interests of many different groups and people, and classical Marxism, which explains state actions in terms of ruling classes controlling the state and using it for their own interests, have not adequately addressed the "woman question."

I have noted that both liberal feminist and to a lesser degree, Marxist feminist theories have been one directional in their response to the question of women and the state in Africa. Despite liberal feminism's contributions to the concept of the public-private dichotomy, I argue it has done little to add to the broader conceptual issue of male dominance and gender subordination in African society. In light of the empirical evidence presented above, liberal feminists, who have significantly contributed to the empirical data available on Africa, have done little to explain those structures in African society that perpetuate a gender ideology of female subordination. In short, they have ignored the type of oppression derived from a gender ideology of patriarchy, which, as the evidence shows, was instrumental in the institutionalization of male control over women, both within the private realm of the family as well as the public realm of the state.

I have shown that a patriarchal system existed within many African kinship systems well before colonialism. In fact, colonialism and the introduction of capitalist forces only served to enhance these gender differentiations based on the

assumption of male superiority, and introduce new forms of gender subordination. This not only resulted in a form of "closure" whereby women were excluded from the wage economy but also eventually led to men becoming both economic and political public actors. In the end, it led to the establishment of a predominantly male state in power. Liberal feminists who argue that women, who are now are confined to the domestic sphere, should be integrated into the public sphere fail to understand the patriarchal workings of the public sphere.

In addition, liberal feminist analysis tends to ignore the significance of class cleavages in African society that cut across gender lines. The evidence indicates that African women are not a homogeneous category and hence liberal efforts to involve women in public office and integrate them in income generating projects etc., only end up helping a few African women - those who already have the backing of their family ties and social class. The evidence presented on the role of national women's organizations suggests that these women actually help maintain existing gender ideologies as well as perpetuate the exploitative nature of elite class interests. I argue that for a vast majority of African women, being integrated into existing economic and political structures under present conditions will not necessarily lead to their having any greater voice or collective power, and will at best continue to perpetuate the status quo.

Contemporary Marxist feminist writings on the Third World have, I believe, managed to overcome some of the problems of applying a simple materialistic mode of production analysis to the "women question." All reflect the necessity of analyzing women's subordination in light of the new class systems introduced by colonial and neo-colonial structures. The empirical data presented above reflects this position and the works of African scholars such as Janet Bujra, Susan Jacob's and Marjorie Mbilinyi show that there is a definite correlation between women's inequality and the "semi-proletarization" process and class formation that started with the colonial process. I do not dispute Marxist feminist arguments but argue that such analysis falls short because, ultimately, its explanation of men's dominance over women and women's subordination, is still fully submerged with that of capital's domination over labour, and the exploitation of one economic class over another.

However, the evidence from pre-colonial Africa shows that even in relatively egalitarian societies, notions of male superiority and domination still prevailed, and that this was not solely determined by the expropriation of surplus value, but that non-economic aspects of female subordination were also significant. I argue that gender inequality cannot be reduced to capitalism and that the changes brought about through colonialism and the introduction of capitalism were to the detriment of women not only because they benefitted the international capitalist economy, but also because they

benefitted local ruling groups headed by male chiefs and male heads of households. Gender dynamics played a role in these changes. The studies presented in this paper show that gender struggles intercept with class formations and that women's lack of economic and political resources is both a result of the nature of capitalist growth in Africa and a consequence of women's relationships with men.

I do not fully accept Marxist arguments that the state acting solely as an "agent of capital" acts to subordinate and control women because it is a necessary for the function of capital. In fact, the African state pursues not only class interests but male interests as well. As Catherine MacKinnon has argued, "[The] State is male in the feminist sense. The...state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender, through its legitimizing norms, relations to society, and substantive policies."4 I have shown that African state policies are often framed through patriarchal eyes and hence state institutions reinforce male dominance over women, and even in Zimbabwe with its more socialist agenda, the path of women's emancipation is still curtailed by patriarchal discrimination. In addition, the African ruling classes are still fragile and are using gender ideologies to construct their hegemony and gain support from males of the subordinate classes so as to achieve hegemonic interests.

Since class dynamics have historically interplayed and

interacted with gender in the formation and continuation of the African state as the evidence from Kenya and Zimbabwe confirms, I argue that any analysis of women and the state in Africa has not only to include questions such as "is the state capitalistic or patriarchal," but has also to look more closely at these different social structures in the African context, in order to understand how they connect and interact at both state and society levels to influence gender relations.

Therefore, I felt it necessary to work within a theoretical framework which made less formidable the task of understanding women's subordination, particularly in terms of different systems of oppression and how they relate to each other. Locating itself within the theoretical materialistic traditions of Marxism, but recognising that Marxists do not always adequately account for women's oppression, socialist feminism adds to Marxist analysis the concept of male dominance as an independent site of oppression. It introduces radical feminist insights of patriarchy to class analysis.

Socialist feminism, as a relatively new theoretical framework, is still defining its boundaries, particularly with regard to merging Marxism and feminism in its theoretical and political goals. In the course of providing a complete explanation of women's oppression, socialist feminists have presented us with numerous and varied arguments on how best to view women's subordination.

Therefore, in this paper I draw my analysis from various and diverse socialist feminist writings to address and explain the empirical evidence presented on women and the state in Africa.

I begin by re-stating that socialist feminist arguments have provided us with the conceptual tools to recognise the struggle between men and women to be historically changing with the introduction of new modes of production, and yet, allows us to acknowledge that women's subordination must also involve an understanding of male dominance as a "set of specific, though variable, social and economic relations, with specific material effects on the relations of men and women."5 In Chapter Two, I presented empirical data that showed that even in communal modes of production, sexual stratification and sexual inequality existed, leading some scholars to argue that a patriarchal mode of production prevailed whereby male elders extracted resources from wives, children and "junior" men.6 However, as I have pointed out, within pre-colonial patterns of organization, despite these patriarchal constraints, women were not entirely denied socio-economic powers, due to the critical role they played within lineages. Nevertheless, notions of male dominance and superiority did influence gender relations. The significance of this is that it was precisely these notions of male superiority that the colonial male state manipulated and institutionalised in order to control gender relations.

With the advent of colonialism and the introduction of the capitalism, evidence showed that structures and policies were put in place to ensure this control; "Junior" African men were brought into the wage economy, African women were placed under the control of men, and women were "encouraged" to remain in rural sectors so as to complete the subsidization of male wages. Such policies by the colonial state, as I have illustrated, facilitated the growth of capitalism and ensured a method of retaining social order in the colonies by appeasing older African patriarchal authorities and thereby providing a "safe" environment for capitalists to operate under.

African women underwent "patriarchal closure" and this was not only a consequence of capitalist needs, but also of their own struggle with African men who sought the aid of European patriarchs and a male administration to regain control of women. The empirical data analyzed above points to the fact that gender dynamics in African societies were historically shaped by capitalism as well as the patriarchal relations of pre-colonial and colonial Africa. By presenting evidence showing that a gender ideology of patriarchy interacted with a materialistic mode of production - capitalism, and that the subsequent collaborative relationship resulted in increasing social, political and economic inequalities between men and women in Africa, I have successfully used socialist feminist arguments in my analysis.

Although socialist feminists provide various explanations of the relationship of different systems of oppression, some, such as the dual systems theorists, believe that "patriarchy and capitalism are two distinct forms of social relations, which when they intersect, oppress women in particularly egregious ways," whilst others, including the unified systems theorists, argue that "capitalism is no more separate from patriarchy than the mind is from the body."7 In my analysis I have largely applied the dual systems approach. My argument is that in the African scenario patriarchal notions pre-dated capitalism but intersected with colonial capitalist forces to reinforce and create new forms of oppression for women that did not exist in pre-capitalist times.

When theorizing about the African state and gender I also felt it necessary not to look at the state in relation to gender or to class in isolation. I have attempted to pose the question "does the African state and its ruling classes act in a patriarchal manner or do they operate in the interest of capitalism?" From the beginning my premise has been that class and patriarchy as two distinct social structures can be present at the same time and under similar situations. The exercise was to understand the connections and relationships between these two different structures working at the state level and how they historically impacted on overall gender relations in Africa.

I begin by referring to the work of dual systems theorist Zilla Eisenstein, who has argued has argued that:

> Capitalism needs patriarchy in order to operate efficiently... male supremacy, as a system of hierarchy, supplies capitalism (and the systems previous to it) with the necessary order and control. This patriarchal system is thus necessary to the smooth functioning of society and the economic system...., patriarchy and capitalism become an integral process; specific elements of each system are necessitated by the other.8

Using Eisenstein's framework, I have shown "the interdependence of capitalism and patriarchy" in the form of the colonial state in Africa which I argue operated as a capitalist-patriarchal state, its role being to provide the social order and cohesion necessary for male capitalist interests to flourish. The colonizers being both capitalists and patriarchs set up a symbiotic relationship of capitalist-patriarchy at the state level to maintain the "smooth functioning" of the system.

However, I also point out that Eisenstein has formulated her ideas by exploring class power and patriarchal power in well established capitalist societies of the West and therefore, her arguments cannot fully explain the historically complex set of relations in the African context. Throughout her analysis Zilla Eisenstein has paid very little attention to patriarchal forces outside the realm of the state and in the African case it becomes obvious that the colonial social order was also maintained with the help of a group outside the realm of the colonial bourgeoisie, elder African men. In fact, in compensating African men over

222

African women, colonial state policies helped aggravate traditional notions of gender subordination and laid the ideological foundations for a "patriarchal" state to succeed - an independent "male" African state that would inherently give preferential treatment towards men.9

In addition, it has been argued that Eisenstein's formulations imply a relation of hierarchy whereby capitalism takes precedence and is simply serviced by patriarchy.10 As the evidence presented on Africa shows, this is not necessarily the case. In the African scenario, this relationship has not been smoothly functioning and under certain situations men's interests in dominating women have clashed with capitalist interests. For example, I have shown that when Africa was first colonised, the introduction of a new mode of production initially allowed African women to take advantage of new opportunities and "escape" from patriarchal control. This resulted in a struggle between African men and women which subsequently led to the male colonial administration and African elders working together to suppress women's rights. In this case it can be argued that the interest of patriarchy won against the interest of capitalism in determining gender relations in Africa.

Heidi Hartmann has argued for a "less harmonious relationship between capitalism and patriarchy."11 Stating that men's need to control women is at least as strong as the need for capital to control its workers, she points out that

throughout modern history the interests of patriarchy have struggled with the interests of capitalism, with the interests of patriarchy often winning.12   For Hartmann there is a clear analytical distinction between the two systems with patriarchy pre-dating capitalism and men's need to control women transcending different modes of production and for her only a compromise facilitates the necessary "partnership."

Using Hartmann's analysis, I have argued that, within the short history of the modern African state, patriarchal forces have "struggled" with capitalist forces and evidence shows that when this "partnership" has been achieved at the state level it has been through a collaborative compromise. The ruling classes in attempting to maintain their interests ally themselves with powerful patrilineage groups as well as with males of the lower classes who are seeking control of lineage wives. The case of the "Otieno Burial Saga" in Kenya and the cases of the "campaign roundups" in Zimbabwe presented in Chapter Three, both illustrated how the fear of both economic competition as well as women's autonomy have driven "traditionalists" to seek control of lineage wives and property through the help of the ruling classes.

I conclude that in the short run, the male dominated African state often works solely in the interest of men and may actually hinder capitalist growth by stopping women's successful participation in the labour market. These actions

are undertaken in order to appease African men who are losing their traditional patriarchal control over women and who increasingly are viewing women as source of competition in a shrinking market. The relationship of capitalist-patriarchy at the state level is not always smooth and given that the African ruling classes often invoke a gender ideology to gain legitimacy and achieve hegemonic power, African patriarchal interests may well win over capitalist interests. This helps explain some of actions pursued by the Kenyan and Zimbabwean state such as obstructing and limiting women's access to resources such as land, capital and credit.

Many socialist feminist theorists, particularly dual systems theorists, in their search for isolating the specific structures that give rise to patriarchy have leaned towards the Marxist "model of separate spheres." Capitalism introduced the separation of domestic from economic productive activity and this led to "two spheres of social life"; the sphere of the home, where one kind of production, that of women, usually takes place and the sphere outside the home, where men's productive activity largely occurs. The "domestic sphere" of the family and home are seen as the primary sphere of patriarchal relations - "The history of patriarchy will be constituted in the history of relations in the "domestic" sphere, while the history of class society will be constituted in the "public" sphere ...."[13] Therefore, it follows that women are oppressed because of their gender within the home and are oppressed as workers

225

outside the home.

However, as Iris Young, another socialist feminist has
argued, the "model of separate spheres" overlooks the
character of women's oppression outside the family.14 While
the empirical data examined in this paper show that
patriarchal traditions were in existence within pre-
capitalistic as well as post capitalist African family
relations, I have shown that in Africa patriarchal relations
exist as well outside the realm of the private. In fact, much
of the evidence presented above is aimed at showing that the
Kenyan and Zimbabwean states are structured in a way that
makes them patriarchal thereby making their actions and
policies in the interests of men rather than women.

I also point out that theorists should be cautious in
basing analysis of women's situation on any one particular
sphere. I argue this in light of the fact that the colonial
state and the modern African state have artificially created
public-private distinctions and forged new gender ideologies
in Africa so that men have become the "public actors." This
process has resulted in the diminishing of women's previously
held indigenous political authority within kinship family
relations as more and more women are now identified within
the private sphere of domesticity and "non productive
activity" for the benefit of capitalism. In communal modes of
production, the domain of women was separated from the domain
of men through a specific division of labour, but women were

not relegated to a domestic sphere. All lineage members, including women, openly participated in the everyday activities and decision-making structures of village life in order for the community to work as a whole. Public-private distinctions have been deliberately created to serve the long term interests of both men and capitalism. Therefore, one should be cautious of accepting and basing analysis on these distinctions.

As the evidence shows, African women contribute heavily in labour and resources to sustain their families, often entirely on their own. I argue that women's work in Africa, albeit largely in the subsistence or informal sectors, is valuable work and should be allocated the same worth as the work that takes place within the formal public sectors of the economy. However, public-private distinctions have distorted the value of work carried out within the private sphere, as this work is considered less important than work undertaken in the public sector. I argue that African women continue to play a central role in the economy and the value of their work has not really diminished simply because of women being relegated to private sphere status. The issue of women's subordination can not simply be viewed in terms of the public sector being favoured over the private sector, but a consideration of the issue has to address the fact that men as a group have been favoured over women as a group and consequently, men's work, which is largely in the formal public sectors of the economy, has been awarded more worth

and rewards. Socialist feminists who use "separate sphere" arguments should be careful not to identify women's situation with the sphere of domestic relations since a capitalist male ideology has deliberately identified this sphere to be that of women. As Iris Young explains, "Precisely because the separation of domestic from economic life is peculiar to capitalism, use of that separation as a basis for the analysis of women's situation in contemporary society may play right into the hands of bourgeois ideology."15

Conclusion.

Socialist feminism's belief that a woman's life experience is shaped by her sex and gender as well as her class has, in my opinion, provided me with a framework from which the complexities of gender relations and state in Africa can be analyzed. However, I want to point out that one of the problems of using a socialist feminist framework throughout this thesis has been that its analysis is largely limited to one single type of society, the fully developed capitalist society. The study of gender relations in African societies challenges both socialist feminist understandings of the nature of class relations in African societies as well as many of the Western classifications and categories used by feminist theorists, including socialist feminists, to understand gender subordination.

Capitalist penetration in Africa has been different from that in the Western hemisphere and class divisions have not

necessarily developed in the same way as those in Western capitalist societies. African economies are not yet fully developed capitalist economies and capitalist modes of production exist side by side with other "traditional" modes of production. With capitalist industries concentrated in certain sectors and dominated by foreign capital, there is in Kenya and Zimbabwe "a very small indigenous capitalist bourgeoisie class" and proletarization is limited and incomplete."16 Ruling classes in Africa have yet to achieve proper bourgeois status and state rule is often characterised as brutal and authoritarian. Ruling classes continue to arbitrarily use the state to pursue policies and spending patterns that are contrary to the short term interests of the international bourgeoisie. As Janet Bujra writes on this group:

> While they retain the security of salaried positions, they launch into entrepreneurial ventures "on the side." The success of such petty capitalist elements may create divisive tensions within the ruling class because they develop interests that may be antithetical to those of foreign capital.17

In addition, non capitalist modes of production continue to exist not only because they serve the needs of capitalism, but also "because they are strongly defended by those [people] who find in them alternative modes of survival that do not entail total subordination to capital."18 For example, Africa's workers are also members of peasant households who can rely on the land to provide "alternative modes of survival." Unlike the "proletariat" of the West,

these Africans still own their means of production and therefore have the ability to avoid some of the pressures imposed by capitalism sometimes by retreating back into a kin based economy. This is not to say that there exists no great pressure for peasants to produce raw materials or to provide a labour force for capitalist enterprises or that peasants can indefinitely avoid international capitalist pressures, but nevertheless, the fact that non-capitalist forms of production exist allows for some groups, including some women engaged in low level subsistence farming, to resist complete subjugation to capitalism.

Since capitalism has yet to penetrate every aspect of daily African life, I will argue that African people are not necessarily governed by the forces of capitalism in the same way as people in developed capitalist societies and do not always share the same exploitative experiences. For example, because Kenyan and Zimbabwean women engaging in the subsistence sector are still reliant on traditional kinship and ethnic obligations for their well being, they do not experience the same type of exploitation as their female counterparts in capitalist societies. African women rely heavily on traditional sisterhood affiliations (See Chapter Two) to help them in their daily chores of looking after the young and sick, fetching water and collecting firewood etc. However, these relationships are based primarily on familial and kinship obligations and not on monetary obligations. These social networks provide African women with a source of

resistance and power against exploitative forces that women in capitalist societies do not necessarily have. I point out that socialist feminist scholarship in attempting to project a Western developed analysis of class and working-class histories on African societies may fail to account for different sites of oppression and resistance for women which are indigenous to the African political economy.

The evidence also showed that a large majority of African women are not always directly drawn into the capitalist work force as their female counterparts in the Western world and male counterparts in Africa are (This explains the lack of a full analysis on the exploitative impact of capitalism in rural women's everyday lives in this paper). I would like to point out that women's work in the subsistence sector does provide rural African women with some form of protection against direct wage labour exploitation which their "sisters" in the West and their male counterparts in Africa experience. However, their burden arises when African men and children leave rural areas in search of wage employment in towns and cities, leaving women behind to sustain families on their own. Subsequently, as they struggle to take care of families they too are drawn into petty commodity production and petty commerce by the need to supplement family incomes.

In my opinion, feminist writings based in the West have often failed to understand the significance of specific historical, social and cultural factors when addressing

issues of Third World women's oppression. Chandra Mohanty, a Third World feminist trained in the United States, who has written extensively on Western scholarship on the "Third World," accuses Western feminist movements of being culturally imperialistic and shortsighted in their analysis of women in the Third World. She argues that Western feminist writings often construct images of the vast majority of Third World women as a "homogeneous 'powerless' group often located as implicit victims of particular socio-economic systems," without recognising that women are also individual subjects of their own specific histories, locations and cultures.19 In her essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, another scholar whose works are directed at understanding Third World subjectivization within Western discourse, has written extensively on Western images, stereotypes, and representations of the indigenous woman and has also pointed to the "sanctioned ignorance" of Western intellectuals when it comes to understanding the conflicts and contradictions amongst various struggles of women in the world.20 As Mohanty points out there is a need to challenge any mode of feminist analysis which in "homogenizing and systemising the experiences of different groups of women..., erases all marginal and resistant modes of experiences."21

I argue that although socialist feminist scholarship recognises different sites of women's oppression they still need to develop theoretical accounts of Third World women's

oppression that move away from Western rooted experiences and that represent historically concrete views of Third World peoples. For example, unless we acknowledge in our analysis the importance of kinship ideology within African societies, we will not recognise that the practice of everyday kin and familial relations may provide African rural women with relative power and autonomy from capitalist and class oppression as it did in pre-colonial times (See Chapter Two). However, when judged by Western standards, African kinship and familial relations often appear to be "traditional", "paternalistic", "exploitative" and therefore, their significance as a point of resistance and solidarity against total subordination to capital may be overlooked.22

Realising the shortcomings of earlier analysis, feminist scholars are only now beginning to introduce new frameworks of analysis that take into consideration these diverse realities of women's situation and experiences.

At the same time, it must also be noted that women's realities are also interconnected. The conditions of both men and women in Africa are situated in a global socio-economic reality. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, Africans who work outside their subsistence farms end up working largely on behalf of international capitalism, growing cash crops and working in mines for the benefit of international markets. Since the beginning of the century, African men have been leaving their traditional livelihoods in search of meager wage employment, leaving women behind to rear children and reproduce the

labour force needed by capitalism. African women have often ended up as a reserve of cheap labour, harvesting crops such as tea, coffee, fruits and producing luxury items for multi-national companies such as Brooke Bond, Del Monte and Bata. In Africa the home market for these products still remains small due to the high levels of subsistence farming and low incomes as well as the fact that many of these products are exported. In light of such realities, one can argue that women in the Western world actually contribute to women's subordination in Africa, since it is specifically for their societies' consumption patterns that such forms of imperialism and neo-colonialism exist.

Maria Mies in her analysis of "patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale" has argued that capitalism through the International Division of Labour (IDL) has divided the world up into consumers from the metropolis, and producers largely from ex-colonies.23 Capitalism has ensured that women in the West have become the key consumers of products that Third World women produce without really knowing much about these women at all. She notes:

> The Western housewife is totally oblivious of
> the female labour power, the working
> conditions, the wages, etc., under which the
> things she buys are produced. She is only
> interested in getting these things as cheaply
> as possible. She, as most others in Western
> countries, attributes the overabundance in our
> supermarkets to the "productivity" of Western
> workers.24

Mies goes on to point out that women in the Third World are defined as housewives rather than workers in the

international division of labour, and their work is defined as supplementary work to that of men. The economic logic behind this is that "housewification" reduces labour costs and allows women in the West to purchase goods as cheaply as possible.25 This "ideology of the housewife" has often been achieved with the help of specific patriarchal forces at family, local, state and international levels. In the end, Mies concludes that both groups of women are exploited by capitalism albeit differently: one group of women is destined to produce goods that are of no real use value to themselves, and the other group is forced to consume these goods since they are, through advertising and other techniques, linked to the market for satisfaction of their basic needs.

Many feminists, including socialist feminists, when undertaking analysis of and providing solutions to women's subordination, neglect the significance of these powerful connections especially by overlooking the way capitalism operates globally to divide women in structurally different ways. There is a strong case for the "interconnectedness of exploitation" of First World women and a large number of African women. Therefore, it is imperative that studies of women also use a global approach in order to understand the inseparable connections between the oppression of women in one part of the world and the demands of women in another part of the world. In the end, the solution to the "woman question" for one group of women may not always be that for another group of women. We cannot attempt to universalise any

aspects of women's situation, unless we first recognise the circumstances and conditions that divide them.

As women's lives in advanced capitalist nations improve and they acquire a level of reproductive freedom the burden for reproducing future cheap labour forces is, I believe, being shifted to Third World women. For example, as the birth rate in advanced capitalist societies falls, industrial nations such as those in Europe are filling their labour needs by allowing male workers from ex-colonies to come and work for temporary periods of time, after which they are expected to return home. This "invitation" is rarely extended to women. In addition, multi-national companies have relocated their factories in Third World areas of high unemployment and cheap labour. As Alison Jaggar comments, a system like this allows advanced industrial nations "to exploit the labour power of less-developed nations without having to pay for the full costs of producing that labour power."26 Such systems only serve to increase racial and sexual divisions amongst peoples of the world and feminist analysis has to include a detailed understanding of the connections between racism, capitalism and sexism and the profit and power of the industrialised and richer world. Also, it has to be remembered that systems of domination based on race and class always manifest themselves in ways that are different for men and women.

Socialist feminism has provided a framework to examine the problem of women's subordination in reference to these

different types of oppression including gender, class, race etc. It is also important to see how these different types of oppression relate to each other. Both racial politics and ethnic politics have played a role in defining gender relations in Africa. Unfortunately, due to length constraints it was beyond the scope of this paper to fully explore these issues. However, I feel it important to note that ruling regimes in both Kenya and Zimbabwe have at various points in their histories attempted to direct politics on the basis of deep rooted social divisions based on race and ethnicity, which in turn have impacted gender.

For example, British colonial rule in Africa used sexual, as well as racial distinctions to create symbolic and physical distances between the rulers and the "natives". In turn, British authorities consolidated and legitimised their rule through the separation of the races and ideological introduction of the imperial ruler as white, male, devoted, self disciplined, full of fidelity, protector of women and morals etc.27 White masculinity was constructed to be the norm and racial and sexual boundaries were fully regulated and enforced throughout colonial Africa to ensure smooth rule between the "legitimate rulers" (the English gentleman) and their "child like subjects" (the Coloured man). One method of regulation was in the form of unwritten rules of conduct that White administrators and officers were not to consort with native women or they would lose their authority in the eyes of the Native.28 I want to point out that male colonists,

motivated by their need to extract economic surplus consolidated their rule through the institutionalization of racial and sexual differentiations as well as by transforming already existing inequalities within African societies (notions of male superiority) and it is important to recognise this when examining gender/state analysis in Africa.

In modern Africa, ethnicity has also affected gender politics. The ruling regimes of both Daniel Arap Moi in Kenya and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe have sought to control ethnic and kin politics but have also to work with these structures in order to maintain their legitimacy. This has often resulted in the manipulation of both gender and ethnic politics. For example, In the "Otieno Burial Saga" (See Chapter Three), President Moi made concessions to male Luo clan members by collaborating in the court proceedings and he was motivated by his need to maintain ruling legitimacy through a Luo alliance against Kenya's other major ethnic group - the Kikuyu of whom Mrs. Wambui Otieno was a member. On the other hand, the Luo clan members were motivated by their need to control the power and rights of lineage wives so as to keep resources within the clan. If a widow of a powerful lineage member were to withhold these resources, it would be at a great loss to the clan (resources are normally redistributed within the lineage), especially in light of Kenya's harsh economic climate.29 Hence, collaboration by Moi's regime and gender manipulation by a powerful Kenyan

ethnic group ensured that the rights of all Kenyan women and their freedoms were overlooked in the interest of state and ethnic politics.

In light of this kind of evidence, I recommend that future research on African women, both at an empirical and a theoretical level, take into account factors such as the politics of ethnicity and racism. In accounting for these forces in Africa it will be possible to expand our feminist knowledge to show how, at various points in African history, women struggle against capitalist and patriarchal forces and how these struggles, at the level of the state, often take on racial and ethnic dimensions. In the end, I believe that this kind of inquiry will help us further comprehend the structural realities under which women and the state interact.30

In the 1990's new feminist theories are developing as mainstream feminists from the West begin to acknowledge that the concerns of black women, women of colour and "Third World women" can no longer exist on the sidelines of feminist analysis. Mainstream feminist movements have far too long been composed of white, middle class women whose often ethnocentric experiences do not reflect the realities of black women, women of colour. Black academics, writers, intellectuals, activists such as Bel Hooks, Audre Lorde, Deborah King, are bringing to attention the realities, concerns and analysis of black women's experiences that

differ from white women's experiences.31   As Bel Hooks explains in <u>Sisters of the Yam</u> these concerns centre around the fact that although as women we share common experiences, just as important are our differences, differences which should not be ignored for the sake of "forging sisterhood."32 For example, Hooks reminds white feminists that for many women of colour the family remains a key site of protection and resistance against racism, and hence, the black family cannot always be the central focus in accounting for women's subordination as may be the white family.33 Gender and class divisions are not always the fundamental source of social inequality since for many women of colour race may be more important. Feminists cannot ignore the fact that for many black women (in the West as well as in Africa), issues of gender are interconnected to race and commitment to feminism will always exist side by side with the desire these women share with all black men, that of racial justice.

Black women and Third World women are releasing their own stories about their experiences of "multiple oppression" and "interrelated exploitations" including those based on racism/ethnocentrisism, sexism homophobia, and classism. As Andree Nicola McLaughlin building on Deborah King's analysis of "multiple jeopardy", has stated:

> ... the oppression of women is compounded by various structural inequities which have their origins in colonialism or feudalism, differences of religion and ethnicity, the contradictions of region, caste, social class and colour. Even as the bases of these structural inequities are being undermined by political revolutions, new ones are being

produced by the globalization of capital and labour. To the extent that multiple structural inequities dictate human existence, they also define the experience of Black women.34

Having acknowledged the importance of socialist feminism in providing me a conceptual framework from which I could undertake my analysis I believe that new theoretical directions also have to be incorporated into when exploring issues of women in Africa. In fact, one of the findings in this project is that traditional feminist scholarship, although important to addressing women's issues, has often ignored the cultural and historic specificity of gender practices in particular areas. Therefore, I suggest that future research on African women pay more attention to these new emerging Third World feminists arguments, arguments which concentrate on women's issues involving multiple and simultaneous oppressions, as well as focussing on the everyday struggles, conflicts and achievements of women in the Third World.

Since oppression is not identical for all women, and the circumstances it exists in are changing all the time, I believe it is extremely important that African women themselves be provided avenues to determine the relative importance of their own experiences of subordination. They have to set their own unique priorities to these experiences, including those involving gender and state. This requires an active effort on part of African and non-African academics, scholars, and writers to bring forward the voices of African

women from all walks of life so that these women themselves can define and represent their own priorities and diversities of interests and needs. The voices of all women have to be heard when building responsible feminist political theory.

On a concrete level, this involves a more focussed and sensitive investigation of individual African communities. If African knowledge is to be expanded and broadened to include the everyday life struggles of African peoples then it is necessary to have more detailed empirical accounts, which avoid ethnocentric bias, on how Africans participate in their local communities. I also believe that narrower studies will help further clarify the many pre-conceptions we already have of African women and will help us move away from Western based knowledge about the nature of African society, and women's situation within these societies. For example, notions of family and household have different meanings in specific localities. Within African households there are not only competing interests between men and women but in reality many households are actually headed by women who are the "breadwinners" (See case of Kisii women showed in Chapter Four), and therefore, an African household unit may not work in the same way as a unit in the West does. However, it is only from the "inside" that such truths emerge. Therefore, I recommend that research make itself available to such "inside truths" by focussing on more detailed localised studies coming directly out of Africa. In the end, the significance of collecting more empirical data lies in the fact that

political and theoretical knowledge that does not repeatedly test itself against hard data is prone to fault.

On an empirical level of study, new directions of research have also to be employed when analyzing women and the state in Africa. One of the recommendations I make is related to the changing nature of African politics and state-society relations. The "democratization" of many African states is a relatively new phenomenon. In December 1992 Kenya underwent its first real experiment in pluralism moving from decades of one-party rule to an elected multi-party system. Zimbabwe, though on paper a multi-party democracy, has always operated as a de-facto one party state and is now under great internal and external pressure to "democratise."35

Although in Kenya the aftermath of the elections has led to greater state-sponsored violence and ethnic clashes as President Moi attempts to gain ethnic support and divide the opposition parties,36 the opening up of the political system in Kenya is a process which may have the potential of allowing ordinary Kenyan's, including women, to have a far greater say in government and politics. Representing fifty two per cent of the vote, Kenyan women have an opportunity, albeit unexplored, to politically mobilise for the first time. In fact, as early as February 1993, various women's groups were getting together to try and send a candidate to the State House in 1997.37 In addition, rural Kenyan women are now more likely to be openly canvassed for their vote by

different political parties, and this vote may lead male politicians and male candidates to give in to some of women's needs and demands.

It is still too early to gauge the full impact of the new political changes taking place in some areas of Africa, but I want to point out that "political pluralism" in many African countries is already changing the equation between African state and society. In turn, I see this factor as having some impact, on the future relationship between women and the state. Although I still question the further incorporation of women into male-dominated state structures which are only there to serve particular class interests, I do believe that in countries like Zimbabwe, where women's groups tend to be more active and more organised, the transition to "democracy" will have considerable impact on the fight against state tolerated sexist bias. Therefore, I feel that it will be important for future research to take into account these new forces that are beginning to shape politics in the African continent and whether they will have a positive impact on women and state relations in Africa.

In the end, I hope that this study has helped bring forward the centrality of gender issues when analyzing African state politics and has been helpful in explaining some of these complexities of the relationship between gender and the state in Africa.

ENDNOTES

1. Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and R. W. Connel, <u>Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State</u> (U.K.: Polity Press, 1989) p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

3. Janet Bujra and Kathleen Staudt, eds., "Women and the State in Africa," <u>Women and the State in Africa</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989) p. 6.

4. Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence," <u>SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</u> 8, 4, (1983) p. 644.

5. Alison Jaggar, <u>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</u> (USA: Rowman & Allanheld Publishers, 1983) p. 160.

6. See works of Jeanne Koopman Henn "The Material Basis of Sexism: ....," & Nancy Folbre "Patriarchal Social Formations in Zimbabwe," In Sharon Stichter and Jane Parpart eds., <u>Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce</u> (London: Westview Press, 1988).

7. Rosemarie Tong, <u>Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction</u> (Boulder: Colorado, Westview Press, Inc., 1989) p. 175.

8. Zilla Eisenstein, <u>Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism</u> (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979) pp. 27-28.

9. Varda Burstyn has put forward an important argument on the state's commitment to masculinity but like Eisenstein she ultimately believes that material forces guide this relationship between gender and the state.

10. See Sylvia Walby. <u>Theorizing Patriarchy</u> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) pp. 158-159.

11. Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union," In Lydia Sargent, ed. <u>Women and Revolution</u> (Boston: South End Press, 1980) pp. 1-41.

12. Ibid., pp. 1-41.

13. See Iris Young, "Socialist Feminism and the Limits of Dual Systems Theory," <u>Socialist Review</u> 50, (1980) p. 178.

14. Ibid., p. 179.

15. Ibid., p. 178.

16. Janet Bujra "Urging Women to Redouble Their Efforts: Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Women and Class in Africa p. 120.

17. Ibid., p. 121.; One example of how African ruling class interests have clashed with that of international capitalism has involved IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs intended to generate more competitive and productive growth through privatization and the opening up African markets to international trade. These programs are a definite threat to the ruling classes's ability to extract income from its citizens for their own selfish interest and, hence, is one of the reasons why they have been resisted so vehemently. See Robert Fatton Jr., Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1992) pp. 119-140.

18. Janet Bujra "Urging Women to Redouble Their Efforts: Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," In Women and Class in Africa p. 120.

19. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, & Lourdes Torress, eds., Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) pp. 56-57.

20. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics (New York: Methuen, 1987) pp. 197-221.

21. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," In Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) pp. 72-73.

22. Middle-class African scholars also tend to make such sweeping judgments about their rural and working-class sisters and base these assumptions on middle class norms.

23. According to Mies the IDL describes the structural division and vertical relationship that existed between colonial powers and their dependent colonies and continued well after colonialism was over. Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1986) p. 112 & p. 120.

24. Ibid., p. 121.

25. Ibid., p. 119.

26. Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature, p. 345.

27. See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Catagories of Struggle Third World Women and The Politics of Feminism," In <u>Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism</u> pp. 15-17.

28. For example, in 1909, the confidential "Concubinage Circular", was circulated by Lord Crewe to all colonial officers in Africa the moral objections against and consequences of consorting with native women. Ibid., p. 17.

29. See Patricia Stamp's Account, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya," <u>SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</u> 16, 4, (1991) pp. 808-845.

30. Patricia Stamp has incorporated both ethnic and gender politics into her account of the "Otieno Burial Saga" and her effort has allowed for a clearer understanding of the relationship of gender and the state in Kenya.

31. Bell Hooks, <u>Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Discovery</u> (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1993); Bel Hooks, <u>Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre</u> (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1984).; Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," In <u>Sister Outsider, Essays and Speeches</u> (New York: Crossing Press, 1993) pp. 114-23.; Deborah King "Multiple Jeopardy: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," <u>SIGNS</u> 4, 1, (Autumn, 1988) pp. 42-72.

32. Bell Hooks, <u>Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Discovery</u> (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1993).

33. Bel Hooks, <u>Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre</u> (Boston: Mass., South End Press, 1984).

34. Andree Nicola McLaughlin "Black Women, Identity, and the Quest for Humanhood and Wholeness: Wild Women in the Whirlwind", In Alison Jaggar & Paula Rothenberg, eds., <u>Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Men and Women</u> (New York, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1993) p. 274.

35. See Andrew Meldrum, "Uniting in Opposition," <u>Africa Report</u> (March-April, 1992).

36. See Binaifer Nowrojee, In <u>Africa Report</u> (Jan-Feb, 1994) pp. 40-41.

37. See Joakim Buwembo "Time is Ripe for Kenya's Women to Form a Party," <u>Daily Nation</u> Nairobi (Thursday, Sept 23, 1993) p. 6.; It is likely that if a women's party or coalition is formed in Kenya, it will be made up of elite women based in Nairobi, and whose interests are not those of women in the countryside. However, I feel that this kind of mobilization will only help draw more women into the political process itself. In addition if women candidates have their own female support base than they will be less likely to succumb to a male-dominated Parliament and society.

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