

## **Re-imagining gender equality and women empowerment using a decolonial feminist lens: a Zimbabwe case**

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### **Abstract**

Zimbabwe's post-colonial trajectory provides a nuanced way to examine the dynamics of gender relations and toxic masculinity. The chapter explores the interplay of gender equality and women empowerment in and through the national policies on gender as well as the initiatives on the ground. Drawing on a Decolonial feminist lens underscores the need to deconstruct inherited power structure and challenge the negative attributes of patriarchal masculinity which perpetuate gender inequalities. The chapter further explores how colonial legacies continue to shape and reshape gender norms, decision making and leadership in the economy, politics and other public spheres. A Decolonial feminist approach is adopted as this underscores the need to acknowledge and interrogate the impact of, ethnicity, class and power to capture the nuances of gendered oppression which affect women in the Global South. The chapter further explores how grassroots movements, local initiatives and indigenous epistemologies contribute to gender equality and women empowerment, challenge hegemonic structures and harness alternative futures. Using comprehensive literature, document analysis and interviews, the chapter presents case studies which demonstrate the need to amplify the voices of the marginalized and 'forgotten'. The chapter argues that the inclusion of cultural practices and community owned solutions are key in re-imagining a transformative gender just society to drive the gender equality mandate. The chapter concludes that solidarity building efforts, critical reflections, inclusive dialogues and an adoption of more transformative action lead to a just and equitable re-imagined future Zimbabwe.

**Keywords:** Decolonial feminist lens, gender equality, women empowerment, community owned solution