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Gender Studies

The classroom as curriculum

**- the contribution and relation of the Hidden Curriculum to
gender disparities in Community Day Secondary Schools in
Malawi**

M.A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The hidden curriculum is a concept that can be allocated within the Gramscian understanding of cultural hegemony. It refers to the covert norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that students learn unconsciously but effectively at school. It is mediated not only by teachers' activities, but also through organizational processes within the school. Hidden curricula can implicate how to behave in public, how to deal with authority figures, how to fit into societal expectations regarding one's social class, race, or ethnicity. Another significant element of the hidden curriculum and topic of this thesis is its role in conveying normative assumptions about gender. Although on biological terms, female and male bodies differ, gender is a construction that is communicated and reinforced by socialization processes. Since schools may not be aware of their contribution and do not intend to buttress harmful perception about gender, it is relevant to raise awareness and to investigate how the hidden curriculum may contribute and relate to gender disparities in schools. For this thesis, research on the hidden curriculum and its relation and impact on gender disparity has been conducted in two Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS), one in rural and another one in an urban setting in Malawi, southeast Africa. The thesis draws its conclusions from focus group discussions with female and male students and teacher.

Key words: hidden curriculum, cultural hegemony, gender disparity, Malawi, Community Day Secondary Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW	8
CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
2.1 Cultural Hegemony and Hidden Curriculum	12
2.2 Gender as an analytical concept	15
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY	18
3.1 Methodological tools	18
3.2 Focus Group discussions	20
3.3 Methodological choices	22
3.4 Conducting the fieldwork	23
CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS	25
4.1 Classroom social relations	25
4.1.1 Gender roles in a cultural context	26
4.1.2 Female inferiority and male superiority	27
4.1.3 Participation in the classroom	29
4.1.4 Role models	30
4.2 Implicit and effective teaching of norms and values	31
4.2.1 Behavior in society	31
4.2.2 Punishment in school	32
4.3.2 Learning chances and opportunities	33
CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	36
5.1 The hidden curriculum inside the classroom	36
5.2 The hidden curriculum outside the classroom	39
5.3 The hidden curriculum of Nongovernmental organizations	40
CONCLUSION	43
ANNEX	46
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES	50

“From me, I wish you good luck and we hope that studies like those can help out in two ways. One way is what my colleagues are saying that people [...] do something from abroad. But at the same time we too, should be doing something. You know with what is happening over here with me. I know I’m not senile, I think I can still teach, so that’s why I’m here and the two is that it can encourage when these studies come back, they can encourage maybe the officials in the ministry, officials and ... it can be read widely and say ‘alright this is what we found out’. So don’t just leave it for your Master’s. Yea, it is that kind of situation where you feed back to where this thesis comes from. When you go to school you know, the masters, the PhDs we know very well that they are coming back but for you it can remain over there in Germany and forget it, you know. But it shouldn’t be like that, it should still come back.” - Professor A.G. Phiri (Retired Vice Chancellor of The Catholic University of Malawi)

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Malawi identifies in its national gender¹ policy the “low attainment of higher educational qualification and training by women, girls and poor or vulnerable men, women and children” (Republic of Malawi, 2011:3) as a problem within gender equality. In order to address this obstacle, the government claims to encourage equal access to education throughout primary, secondary, and tertiary educational levels, to originate a gender responsive curriculum, educational materials, and tools, to reduce the dropout rates of both girls and boys, to promote and to strengthen the enrollment of girls in STEM² subjects, and to enable both women and men to have access to adult basic education (see *ibid*: 3). Therefore, the Republic of Malawi states to “[adopt] and [implement] policies and legislation aimed at achieving [...] gender equality” and “to provide adequate resources to the education sector and devise programmes [...]” (Constitution of Malawi, 2006). It guarantees “women [...] the

¹ The biological sex relates to people being born as (in most cases) male or female. Gender, however, is a societal construct that relates to “proper” behavior that is being taught to females and males (gender norms). This also influences the way female and males interact with each others within the household, communities, and workplaces (gender relations) and what is expected and presumed by society (gender roles) (WHO, 2018).

² Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

right to full and equal protection by the law, and [...] the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their gender or marital status”.

Although the points mentioned above make part of the constitution, gender equality and women’s rights are still undermined in practice. On the UN Gender Inequality Index (GII), Malawi ranked 145 out of 188 countries in 2015 (see UNDP, 2016). As in the majority of countries, existing gender roles hinder the practical implementation of the goals recited in documents such as the Malawian constitution. Although Malawian women are the primary force in socio-economic activities (see UNICEF, 2010), disparities between men and women become visible, for instance, on economic and social level, as women generally earn lower wages, are less likely to have claim upon land, and have less access to higher education (see Ndulo/Grieco, 2009:158). The unequal status of women in Malawi can be ascribed to various factors such as poverty, discriminatory treatment within the family and public life, and their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (see OECD, 2018). Moreover, the public opinion and beliefs about the responsibilities and roles of women and men are ingrained in religious and political structures, families, and schools (see Ndulo/Grieco,2009:158).

As seen above, the gender inequality that is visible in religious, political, and family structures has also strong visibility in education. Although the GPI³ in Malawi suggests that there is little to no gender disparity neither in primary nor in secondary school (see *ibid.*:15), school attendance drops alarmingly from the age fourteen onwards, which, eventually, results in a gap between female and male school participation - rising in favor of male students. An examination of the education trends and projections for the year 2018 predicts that only 38% of girls and 43% of boys will be attending lower secondary school (EPDC, 2013).⁴ When comparing quantitative research numbers of the attendance rate of boys and girls from age 15 on, girls are more likely to be out of school than their male colleagues.

³ A gender parity index (GPI) of 1 indicates parity or equality between the school participation ratios for males and females. A GPI lower than 1 indicates a gender disparity in favour of males, with a higher proportion of males than females attending that level of schooling. A GPI higher than 1 indicates a gender disparity in favour of females (Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, 2016:14).

⁴ The education structure in Malawi is based on a 8-2-2 principal. The first eight years make part of primary education, secondary education is separated into two cycles namely lower secondary, which is composed of grades 9 and 10 and upper secondary, which is composed of grades 11 and 12.

School dropouts and low enrollment rates on secondary and tertiary educational level can be motivated not only by economic and cultural factors, but can also be attributed to the household level. These include, for example, tuition fees⁵ and costs of school supplies and the necessity for children and teenagers to assist their parents at home by helping with household chores or the care for younger siblings. Although both girls and boys can be affected by these factors, the biological sex and assigned gender play a fundamental role and, ultimately, influence gender disparities in education. For instance, parental investment, household chores, early marriage, pregnancy, and especially unquestioned cultural beliefs about femininity and masculinity affect a girl's possibility to continue her education after primary level. The effect these factors have on school enrollment rates, performance, and drop outs and which are mostly related to surroundings, settings, and circumstances outside the school environment are under investigation. However, school dropouts, low attendance, and absenteeism continue, and the gap between female and male students closes very slowly. Since students spend a great amount of their time in schools, which can be seen as "agents of socialization" (Giroux, 1978:148), it is relevant to pay attention to the matters and affairs that happen inside the classrooms. These often occur hidden and unconsciously and may function, relate, and impact gender disparities, particularly by reinforcing gendered norms, values, beliefs and attitudes. The concept that explores covert norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that are conveyed in the classroom is referred to as the hidden curriculum.

The present thesis seeks to shed light on the question of how the hidden curriculum relates and contributes to gender disparities in two Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) in Southern Malawi.⁶ It exemplifies how hidden norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs are often unconsciously taught in the school setting and how these might reinforce existing gendered structures inside school. The focus on the relation between gender, hidden curriculum, and cultural hegemony in Malawi can be justified by an existing gap in the research field. As will be outlined in more detail in the literature review, former attention and focus has been especially paid towards the relation of social class or race, the hidden curriculum, and cultural hegemony on the one side, and gender and academic performance in African countries on the other. Therefore, I am particularly interested in exploring how the

⁵ In 1994, primary education became free of charge, however, there are still fees for secondary education.

⁶ Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) have a lower standard than the National Secondary Schools and District Secondary Schools (MacJessie-Mbwebe, 2014: 82/3).

concepts of cultural hegemony, hidden curriculum, and gender disparities relate to each other, how they are being influenced by each other, and how they can be used in the context of CDSSs in Malawi.

Despite the efforts of exploring the relationship between gender, hidden curriculum, and cultural hegemony in CDSSs in Malawi, the small scope of the research will not allow to give a representative account of the overall situation students and teachers in Malawi face in relation to gender inequality. Instead, it seeks to provide a snapshot of the current situation in two different schools. It would be desirable to use a triangular approach in the use of methods in order to maximize objectivity, however, the time constrains during the fieldwork allowed the use of merely one method. Furthermore, my role as an outsider to the Malawian culture and my visible otherness also put limitations on my research as students and teachers may act and behave differently around me than they usually would.

Hence, the methodological choice to use focus groups discussions (FGD) as method of inquiry is motivated by a feminist point of research and tries to give agency to silenced or marginalized groups instead of speaking on their behalf. The FGDs that had been conducted in two CDSSs, one in a rural and one in an urban setting, will be used to identify on the one hand, “the norms and values that are implicitly but effectively taught in school” (Apple, 2004:78/9) and, on the other hand, “the classroom social relations that embody specific messages” (Giroux, 1988:10). Lastly, I will undertake an in-depth investigation, which allows firstly to unfold and comprehend inequalities driven by covert factors and lessons in an educational setting and secondly, opens possibilities to address, change, or take advantage of them.

CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender accounts as one of multiple factors that influence the academic performance of students. In a conscious, but also unconscious way, gender is used to describe and characterize people and leads to certain expectations, behavior, and communication. Gender identity does not only determine what is being taught, but especially influences the way something is being taught and how students learn. Although progress on gender equality, especially on primary level, has been made and no visible exclusion seems to persist in many countries, the classroom as curriculum remains and, therefore, influences and contributes to gender inequality. The body of research on so called hidden curricula and remaining gender inequality in classrooms shows the awareness of the problem and lays out strategies on how teachers may be able to adjust their teaching towards inclusion.

One of the organizations which provides teachers with a practical tool to address gender responsive pedagogy in the classroom is the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). In 2005, FAWE published the guide *Gender Responsive Pedagogy - A teacher's handbook*. The manual is divided in 12 units in which teachers are sensitized for gender inequalities. FAWE defines the "lack of gender skills for instruction" (Mloma et al., 2005:v) as the primary difficulty that teachers are confronted with nowadays and hence, the necessity to bring a gender responsive academic environment into being. For this purpose, the handbook intends to guide teachers by endowing them with knowledge, competence, and standpoints for gender responsive pedagogy, to empower them to originate and practice gender responsive methodologies and to facilitate school management to mainstream gender issues (see Mloma et al., 2005:v). Although FAWE does not mention the concept of the hidden curriculum in the handbook, it addresses, for instance, gender responsive teaching and learning materials, language, interaction and classroom setup and the relation to the hidden norms and beliefs that might be taught through these practices if not approached. Therefore, the handbook was helpful and guiding in the development of the questions for the Focus Group Discussions that were conducted in the CDSSs in Malawi.

When discussing gender disparity in the Malawian context, the focus of research is mainly on the vulnerability and risks women face in relation to HIV/AIDS. The relation between gender disparities and education, however, is only touched upon marginally. Nevertheless, in

the context of other Sub-saharan African countries, this issue has been addressed. One example is Nancy Abwalaba Owano's essay *Gender disparities in Kenya*, published in the *Journal of Research in Gender Studies*, in which the author explores the relation between gender inequalities and education. She attributes the gender gap on educational level "to a combination of socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and institutional factors" (Owano, 2014: 304) and discusses the benefits education has for women on a national level. When addressing higher dropout rates among girl children or young women compared to their male colleagues, besides poverty and socio-cultural factors, Owano also points out how gender inequality is reinforced by sex role stereotypes in the classroom by defining, for instance, "female behavior" (ibid.:206). She refers directly to these aspects as part of the hidden curriculum and its power to "reinforce gender identities among children" (ibid.:206). Notwithstanding, it is neither the focus of her essay nor does she give a detailed explanation or definition of the concept.

Another study on gender practices in the classroom has been conducted by PhD candidate of educational sciences Marielle Le Mat. Although her work focuses on female exclusion in educational sexuality programs in Ethiopia and not directly on the relation between hidden curriculum and gender disparities, her findings support the argument that gendered methods may lead to female and male disparity in educational programs. Le Mat (2017) claims that gendered practices and interpretations function as mechanisms that contribute to exclusion, on the one side, by gendered conceptions of what girls and boys need and, on the other side, by distributing information that assert the prevailing societal gender order through communication and interplay on classroom level (see 6). The author alerts to be cautious how a "dichotomous understanding of girls' and boys' needs reproduces stereotypical assumptions about sexuality and fails to question the role of gender relations and gender power in influencing the expectation placed on women and men" (ibid.:7). Despite the fact that the concept of the hidden curriculum is not mentioned explicitly, gender biases as contributing factor to inequality in education are acknowledged and under discussion.

Deevia Bhana is another scholar who addresses the hidden curriculum of schools, in a study about South African township girls' freedom in and out of school. Bhana draws attention to the relation between schools and the social context and culture which establish gender power relations and expressions of sexual violence. Accordingly, when researching gender

inequality, it is significant to understand that “schools are not immune from the social context in which they are located. While they are important places where young people can learn social values about gender equality, sexual violence and gender subordination may also be perpetuated there” (Harber, 2004; Wolpe et al., 1997 cited in Bhana, 2011: 353). Although she does not identify and name the hidden curriculum explicitly, Bhana’s statement about social values being learned in schools and their position in the social context relates directly to it.

An eminent representative for the research of the hidden curriculum is professor of social and educational policy Jane Anyon. Anyon conducted a research on students’ tasks in dissimilar social classroom settings and explicitly uses the concept of the hidden curriculum in her research. Scholars in the field of political economy and sociology of knowledge had stated that the access to educational experience and curriculum knowledge in public schools differed depending on social class. Anyon aimed to provide empirical support for this assertion. In her essay “Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work”, Anyon presents and interprets the observations she has made over the course of an academic year in five elementary schools. Her research compares different teachers’ approaches in a variety of disciplines and her findings show that whereas in the working-class and middle-class schools teachers concentrate on rote learning and follow strict school rules, the teachers in affluent professional and elite schools focus on creativity and student-orientated problem solving and are not restricted by stringent school or classroom regulations. Hence, Anyon concludes that “the hidden curriculum’ of schoolwork is tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way.” Furthermore, she draws attention to the ways in which the development of distinct cognitive and behavioral skills depend on curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices. Therefore, she argues that the qualitative differences in the classroom may also reproduce the unequal social relations outside the schools (see Anyon, 1980). Although Anyon’s research does not concentrate on how the hidden curriculum is a contributing factor to gender disparities, the teaching approaches may not only be influenced by social class, but also depend on the societal gender of the students.

Just as this research aims to present the relation between cultural hegemony, hidden curriculum and gender disparities, Michelle Jay (2003) draws attention to the triangular relation of the concept of cultural hegemony, hidden curriculum and race in her essay “Critical Race Theory, Multicultural Education, and the Hidden Curriculum of Hegemony”. The author

claims that “any research agenda would benefit from turning a critical eye towards the hidden curriculum, the ‘education’ it provides students, and its unintended outcomes for their learning” (ibid.: 8). Jay acknowledges the function of the hidden curriculum in reinforcing existing norms and beliefs in relation to race/ethnicity. However, she does not include gender in her analysis.

The reviewed literature explicates the ways in which specifically pedagogy contributes in to maintaining existing gender acts/roles and which measures are being suggested or taken in order to address prevailing beliefs or norms about gender. Furthermore, it displays that other authors have used hegemony as a tool for analysis of the hidden curriculum yet in relation to class and race. However, it becomes evident that there is a gap in the research field of how gender, the hidden curriculum, and cultural hegemony are entangled and hence, contribute to gender disparities in schools.

CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Cultural hegemony and the hidden curriculum

Schools as institutions and its educators play a fundamental role in the socialization process of gender differences and the construction of femininity and masculinity. Young people shape and question their identities especially during puberty when most students are enrolled in secondary schools. There they are exposed to ideas and the notion of who they aspire to be, what they are capable of doing and why. These messages are considerably influenced by, on the one hand, the images of masculinity and femininity that are communicated and distributed and, on the other hand, the way school engages with individuals and groups (see Paechter, 2007:112). However, identifying an act as either masculine or feminine demands to know “the substance of societal gender norms and/or ideologies to which people orient practice to ascertain whether it is (a form of) masculinity” (see Budgeion, 2014, 323). Therefore, the concept of the hidden curriculum and its relation to cultural hegemony should be investigated in order to unfold the ways in which constructed notions of females and males contribute to strengthening gender disparities.

Although not identified as hidden curriculum, French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1961) concluded in his book *Moral Education* that students learn and are being taught more than “objective” knowledge from their textbooks (see 148 cited in Kentli, 2011). In the 1960s, Philip W. Jackson (1998) coined the term hidden curriculum in his piece *Life in Classroom* in order to explain how behavior is regulated through schools and classroom structures. Jackson attributed school institutes a collaborating role in the reproduction of inequality, injustice and prejudice (see 20). In order to act in a satisfactory way in school students learn, often unconsciously, how to cope with the hidden expectations, values, and beliefs. Those students who do not manage to learn and cope with the hidden curriculum often do neither meet the teachers’ nor the institutional expectations and hence, get punished. Many of the rewards and punishments that seem to depend on the basis of academic success or failure in fact relate more closely to the domain of the hidden curriculum (see *ibid.*: 73/4).

Two notable scholars who defined the hidden curriculum based on Jackson’s work are educational theorist Michael Apple and cultural critic Henry Giroux. Apple (2004) characterizes

the hidden curriculum as “the norms and values that are implicitly but effectively taught in school and that are usually not talked about in teacher’s statements of end or goals” (78/9). Henry Giroux’s definition of the concept of hidden curriculum remarks that “the hidden curriculum (...) refers to those classroom social relations that embody specific messages which legitimize the particular views of work, authority, social rules, and values (...). The power of these messages lies in their seemingly universal qualities” (10). Both Giroux and Apple (2004: 4) attribute schools the role as “agents of cultural and ideological hegemony” as they play a fundamental role in maintaining social and cultural norms and, therefore, make use of Gramsci’s understanding of cultural hegemony.

Usually, the concept of hegemony is put in context with the inquiry of economic and ethic-political systems, it does, however, play a fundamental role in terms of the social and cultural spaces in society and the dynamics of the power relations between the dominant and the subordinate class. Hence, the hidden curriculum can function as a hegemonic apparatus with the objective of acquiring and maintaining a position of power for the dominant class (see Jay, 2003:6). The intellectual framework of the hidden curriculum can be allocated in the concept of cultural hegemony of the Italian Marxist, philosopher and politician Antonio Gramsci. The principle of his concept of cultural hegemony is based on the assumption that “man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas” (Bates, 1975:351). Gramsci designated ideas the purpose of maintaining the “ideological unity of a whole social bloc” (Feuer, 1995: 26 cited in Bates, 1975: 351). In other words, dominant ideologies are transmitted, reinforced and normalized through social institutions such as education, family, religion, politics, and law, which leads to the dominant social group having the power to spread their beliefs and interests and, eventually, to control the subordinate groups which will accept these beliefs and norms as given.

Gramsci puts significant emphasis on the educational component within his understanding of hegemony. In his *Quaderni de Caceri* he states:

Every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations. (Q10II, §44; SPN: 350 cited in Mayo, 2017: 37)

In accordance with Gramsci's theory about "hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of society", Michael W. Apple (2004: 4) states that "hegemony [...] refers to an organized assemblage of meanings and practices". In this context, Apple sees schools functioning "as agents of cultural and ideological hegemony" (ibid.: 5). In order to understand the critical role Apple attributes to schools in the creation of hegemony and, so as to counteract, it is necessary to investigate "the formal corpus of school knowledge" and "the covert teaching that has and does go on" (ibid.: 77). Apple claims that schools intend to appear neutral and distance themselves from political process and ideological argumentation. However, through norms and values that are taught seemingly unconsciously, as to say by the hidden curriculum, schools are substantial in the process of political socialization (see ibid.: 78/9). Apple argues that evidence of hidden teaching of consensus can be found in the teaching of social studies. He declares:

An examination of much of the literature in social studies points to an acceptance of society as basically a cooperative system [...] This orientation stems in large part from the (perhaps necessarily unconscious) basic ideological assumption that conflict, and especially social conflict, is not an essential feature of the network of social relations we call society. More often than not, a social reality is pictured that tacitly accepts "happy cooperation" as the normal, if not best way of life. (86)

Giroux (1978) looks at schools as "agents of socialization" (148) and claims that the lessons students receive at school depend more on the hidden than on the official curriculum.⁷ He characterizes schools as political institutions inseparably connected to control and power relations of the prevailing society and puts the focus on the ways in which schools as institutions impart, legitimate and, eventually, yield social and cultural relations of class, race, and gender of the dominant society. Just as Micheal Apple, Giroux turns his attention towards Gramsci's concept of hegemony in order to explain the "pedagogic and politically transformative process whereby the dominant class articulates the common elements embedded in the world view of allied groups" and to clarify how hegemony "represents more than the exercise of coercion: it is a process of continuous creation and includes the constant

⁷ Even if the official curriculum will not be investigated in this research, it is key to examine in which ways the academic curriculum plays a role in the construction of identities and gender. School subjects, for instance, are strongly seen as by either being considered masculine or feminine. This is based on a normative assumption on gender and reinforced by repetitive acts and a stereotypical view of what girls and boys favor (see Paechter, 2007:120).

structuring of consciousness as well as a battle for the control of consciousness” (Giroux, 1983 :31).

Critical thinker and researcher Jean Anyon (1980) not only looks at how social reproduction develops through the incorporation of the social organization of the school, but also draws attention to the power relations between teachers and students. The idea that pedagogical approaches teachers use do vary between social classes and make part of the hidden curriculum, as Anyon claims, can also be expanded and put into relation to the treatment students experience depending on their gender. It is likely that pedagogical approaches also fall prey to normative assumptions about gender and fortify the conception of femininity and masculinity in specific ways. In addition, the ways in which knowledge and reality are depicted, for example in textbooks, may conduce in sustaining gender stereotypes and, ultimately, strengthen gender disparities in schools. Hence, instead of lecturing that male and female students are essentially distinct one from another, the normative assumptions about gender acts should be challenged (see Paechter, 2007:120).

Last but not least, when situating the concept of the hidden curriculum one should take into account the difference Jane Martin (1976) makes among two types of hiddenness. On the one hand, she describes hidden in the sense of “unknown”, on the other hand, she identifies hidden in terms of intended yet concealed (144). For instance, Apple’s description of schools “as agents of cultural and ideological hegemony” (Apple, 2004: 5) indicates his understanding of the hidden curriculum as intentional yet concealed. Anyon, however, emphasizes how covert factors such as schoolwork and teachers’ instructions, which seem to be unknown to educators and learners, influence the learning outcomes of students. Nevertheless, those hidden factors might often be unknown, unintended, or simply not questioned or challenged. Especially, the normative assumptions about gender are often not put into question and, therefore, should be examined.

2. 2 Gender as an analytical concept

Schools are key in the endorsement of identities, what accounts as masculine and what is seen as feminine (see Paechter, 2007: 111). Philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (1999) claims that “gender proves to be performative - that is, constituting the identity it is

purported to be [...] gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed” (33). Although the body in its physicality is being ignored, it is often regulated and ascribed to a certain gender act, for example, by school uniforms, which highlight the distinction between male and female students. Imposing gendered acts on students make “the body [suffer] a certain cultural construction [...] in the tacit conventions that structure the way the body is culturally perceived” (Butler, 1988: 524).

Gender as an analytical concept has been successful in demasking unquestioned “differences” between females and males that have been used in order to interpret and legitimize women’s limited access to social assets (see Budgeon, 2013: 317).

In the social construction of gender, it does not matter what men and women actually do; it does not even matter if they do exactly the same thing. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is perceived as different. (Lober, 1994: 26 cited in Budgeon, 2013: 318)

According to Judith Butler (1988), “gender is not passively scripted on the body and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy” (531). Gender as a structure giving dogma encompasses cultural meanings and material relations (see Budgeon, 2013: 319). Instead of being a natural fact, French philosophers Merleau-Ponty and Beauvoir suggest that the body represents a historical condition by performing and reproducing a historical situation (see *ibid.*: 521). Therefore, the body evolves into its gender through the repetition of acts and undergoes a cultural construction, which leads to a certain way in which the gendered body will be perceived (see *ibid.*: 523/24). Hence, “the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives” (*ibid.*:526). Butler’s understanding of gender and performativity⁸ is helpful when investigating gender roles/act in schools and how they might contribute to gender inequality. She claims that “[g]ender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural

⁸ Butler distinguishes between the notions of gender as performed and performative. She says: “It’s one thing to say that gender is performed and that is a little different from saying gender is performative. When we say gender is performed we usually mean that we’ve taken on a role or we’re acting in some way and that our acting or our role playing is crucial to the gender that we are and the gender that we present to the world. To say that gender is performative is a little different because for something to be performative means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman.” (see Big Think, 2011).

sort of being” (1999: 43/44). Her claim that “gender is [...] a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame” suggests that the individual interacts, repeats and reproduce widespread norms and beliefs. This goes hand in hand with the concept of hegemony as prevailing believes and norms dictate which kind of behavior of women and men is expected and (un)acceptable in society.

Given these points, although hidden curricula in education do not per se have negative effects, it can be argued that they often contribute to sustaining and replicating disparity among students form different social classes, ethnicities, races, and gender. Therefore, my research aims to investigate the relation between hegemony, hidden curriculum, and gender to reveal disparities that originate from covert factors and lessons in an educational setting. Hence, “once revealed, the hidden curriculum becomes negotiable and visible to all participants [...] allowing for remediation, change, defense, improvement, and informed dialogue” (Anderson, 2002:117 cited in Cotton et al, 2013: 195).

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

As this research intends to be built upon a feminist point of view and in order to motivate action for change, it has to take a critical stand and confront hegemonic knowledge and norms produced in schools. In accordance with this, Hesse-Biber (2007) suggests that “feminist thinking and practice require taking steps from the ‘margins to the center’ while eliminating boundaries that privilege dominant forms of knowledge building, boundaries that mark who can be a knower and what can be known” (3).

The methodological decisions that have been made for this research are based on the theory of Standpoint Feminism, which will be further explained in the course of this chapter. In order to inquire the hidden curriculum, qualitative research methods that originally have been evolved and implemented in the field of social sciences such as sociology and anthropology are being used. Due to the complexity of the concept of the hidden curriculum, Cotten et al. (2013) draw attention to the necessity for researchers to concentrate on specific aspects of it and its specific context (see 200). Therefore, I decided to concentrate on what Martin (1976:) identifies as “the hidden curriculum of schools” (35/6) and how it relates and impacts gender disparities in CDSSs in Malawi. The fieldwork took place in two CDSSs in southern Malawi one in an urban and one in a rural setting. Although I observed many classes during my stay at the school, those observations do not make part of my further analysis, but supported on the one hand, my understanding of the challenges the schools face and, on the other hand, allowed me to adjust the questions for my main method of research. The qualitative research method I used had been focus group discussions.

3.1. Methodological tools

When researching the relationship between the hidden curriculum and gender inequalities, three different areas might be investigated. Firstly, the formal curriculum⁹ is of importance. The selection of what is covered and what has been left out from teaching influences the hidden curriculum, especially the teachers’ opinions and standpoints matter in this context as they make decisions on what will be included and excluded (see Cotton et al,

⁹ “The formal curriculum is the planned programme of objectives, content, learning experiences, resources and assessment offered by a school. It is sometimes called the ‘official curriculum’ “ (UNESCO, 2010)

2013: 198). Secondly, the methods and activities of teaching have influence on the hidden curriculum. In this context, it is not so much what teachers include or exclude based on their attitudes and beliefs, but rather the way they express these beliefs and attitudes that affect their students. Last, what occurs outside the classroom, but also in the school environment, might either stand in contrast or adds to what students are formally taught and therefore, impacts the hidden curriculum (see *ibid.*: 199).

Due to the small extent of my research, I decided that I would not investigate the formal curriculum as it is on the one hand, already under investigation and, on the other hand, a matter of state policy to change it. Although in the beginning of my research I had considered doing a semiotic analysis of school books, in discussions with the teachers and observation of the classroom in Malawi, it became evident that the schools are not equipped with enough school books and, therefore, barely use them. This accounted for both the rural and urban school. Besides, even if there were enough school books for all students, teachers explained that it is a risk to give them to students since many of those who dropout would not return them. Consequently, I chose instead to concentrate on the societal level in which the norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes are often unconsciously learned by students from their teachers, but also by students from their fellow students and which motivate a disparate learning experience between female and male students. I gained an understanding on this matter during the Focus Group Discussions I conducted in both CDSSs of my research.

In order to give an insight how the hidden curriculum works within schools and how it can be used to provoke change, and hopefully reduce gender disparity, it is necessary to start research from the social practices and narratives of the teachers, students and the school since norms, values, beliefs and attitudes are linked to lived experience. Conforming Feminist Standpoint Theory, which has strongly been influenced by theorists such as Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway (1988: 592), “situated knowledges requires that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a ground or a resource” and “to produce knowledge that can be for marginalized people [...] rather than for the use only of dominant groups in their projects of administering and managing the lives of marginalized people” (Harding, 1993: 56). However, all kind of knowledge is location bound (situated) and biased and, hence, applies to the participants just as much as to myself as a researcher.

3.2. Focus Group Discussions

Although the observation of the classroom does not make part of my further analysis, I find it necessary to mention that, in order to modify my focus group questions, I depended on these observations. In this context, it is important to take into account that my presence may have disturbed and influenced the behavior and interaction of the students as much as of the teachers. Notwithstanding, my observations later allowed me to pick up on certain issues during my discussion groups and ask more detailed questions. Furthermore, in dialogue with both students and teachers, I learned a lot about the “Malawian reality”, challenges of each school, gender specific cultural beliefs and gender issues. Consequently, although not part of my analysis, I find those conversations very valuable since, on the one hand, they gave me a better understanding of the Malawian culture and, on the other hand, they made it a research not about but with the students and teachers.

As stated before, I decided to use Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as qualitative research inquiry. In comparison to interviews, FGDs allow to gather information of a wider scope than would result from one-to-one interviews (see Hennick 2007:4). As a result of the multi-vocal narrative that focus groups offer, they are one of the major types of interviews utilized by feminists (see Hesse-Biber/Leavy, 2007:185). Therefore, from a feminist point of view, focus groups are a helpful research tool as they provide the researcher with the possibility to access subjugated knowledge. As focus groups allow the participants to convey and express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their own words and through their own perception of reality, this method of inquiry is effective in obtaining an understanding of the attitudes, feelings, and experiences of groups that are being subjugated or have been quietened by society (see Hesse-Biber/Leavy, 2007: 173).

Group work ensures that priority is given to the respondents' hierarchy of importance, their language, and concepts, their frameworks for understanding the world ... Everyday forms of communication ... may tell us as much, if not more, about what people “know”. In this sense focus groups “reach that part other methods cannot reach” - revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by the more conventional on[e]-to-one interview questionnaire. (Kitzinger, 1994:108/9 quoted in Hesse-Biber/Leavy, 2007:173/4)

Although thoughts and ideas may be expressed in spoken language, it is important to pay attention to nonverbal communication as well (see Reinharz, 1992: 20). According to Cotton et al. (2013:196), “observing tutor and students’ tasks is a crucial source of evidence in revealing both manifest and hidden curricula”. In relation to my research, I was sensitive and observed the atmosphere of my group discussions and how it changed depending on who was speaking, what was spoken, and what was left unsaid.

Focus Group Discussions do not aim to reach general agreement on the deputed topics but instead to animate a wider scope of answers which allow to gain “a greater understanding of the attitude, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issue” (Hennick 2007: 6). Furthermore, FGDs only look closely at a delimited number of issues in order to provide participants with the possibility to discuss in detail. Therefore, groups whose participants are composed homogeneously and who are used to interact with each other are promising to give an insight into their values, attitudes, and reality (see Seale, 2007: 69). Leavy suggests, as a feminist strategy for maximizing homogeneity, to segment the groups based on gender as it allows to examine the different positions within a culture on a comparative basis (see Hesse-Biber/Leavy: 2007: 184).

The questions that are used in FGDs aim to incite the discussion and hence, have to be developed with caution to resemble spontaneity and conversation. In addition, these questions are designed through “considerable reflection and piloting” (Hennick, 2007: 6). Although I was not able to pilot my questions before my research journey to Malawi, a member from the Malawian NGO counterchecked them for cultural appropriateness and comprehensibility. Furthermore, I modified the questions after the first focus group discussion. The interviewer or moderator decides the level of moderation within the FGDs. In order to access hidden knowledge, it is recommendable to restrain the level of moderation to a low degree (see Hesse-Biber, 2007: 184). In comparison to most social research, which deal with the past, most focus groups aim to anticipate the future for the purpose of finding out how to operate in the future (see Seale, 2007: 76). In the focus group discussions I conducted for my research, I made the experience that giving an example in a certain context helped making my questions comprehensible. Furthermore, the students were more likely to share their experience when they felt that I was frank and shared some of my own.

3.3 Methodological choices

I had chosen to conduct six FGDs, which were composed by six to eight participants.¹⁰ As suggested by Leavy (2007), I had asked the principal of each school for single sexed student groups with members who felt comfortable speaking to one another and to express their opinions. Although not requested, besides one female teacher, only males participated in the teacher groups. In the urban school, a former professor present (SMTH IS MISSING IN THIS PHRASE). I decided to limit the amount to six focus groups on the one hand, due to time constraints and the mass of qualitative data and information six groups of six to eight members per group would generate, on the other. Besides few alterations I made after my first FGD, I posed the same set of questions to the student groups. However, some questions needed further explanation or phrasing, and were discussed more broadly than others, or interpreted differently by the students. The questions I had posed to the teacher groups were similar to the ones I had asked the students. Notwithstanding, they were adjusted to the context of them being teachers.

At this point it should be mentioned that my research does not attempt to depict a representative account of overall gender disparities in CDSSs in Malawi, but instead tries to provide a snapshot of the current situation in two CDSSs, which receive financial and professional support from the Dutch-founded international NGO Edukans and the Malawian NGO Education Expertise Development Foundation (EEDF) and to motivate further research on the basis of its findings.

The choice of the schools in which I conducted my research was made by Edukans and EEDF. This had practical reasons as the NGOs had an insight which schools would be best accessible for me and also possible to visit in the few weeks I spent in Malawi. The first school I visited, Namiwawa CDSS, is located in Blantyre, one of the biggest cities of Malawi. The other school, Mthumba CDSS, is located in rural Chikwawa.

In order to maximize objectivity as much as possible, the researcher is coerced to reflect and consider their position as a researcher's "culturewide (or nearly culturewide) beliefs function as evidence at every stage in scientific inquiry" (ibid.:69) and therefore, affects their

¹⁰ The total account four participants amounts to 39 individuals.

research. This requires an explicit positioning statement of my background and location within the point in question.

Hence, before I will describe my fieldwork, I want to position myself. I am a twenty-five years old, white, female researcher from an upper middle-class family with a German nationality and therefore, on national, social and cultural level an outsider. Since I was seventeen, I have been living in the United States, Colombia, Brazil, and the Netherlands. I am not familiar with neither the Malawian culture nor the environment, however, I believe that my experience of living in other cultures allows me, on the one hand, to be aware of my European mindset and appearance, but also to be sensitive to cultural differences and peculiarities. Although English is an official language in Malawi and also the language of instruction in secondary schools, most students speak Chichewa with their families, communities, and peers. This results in a limited amount of vocabulary use and must be taken into account not only during the discussions but especially in the following analysis.

3.4 Conducting the fieldwork

This research aims to shed light on hidden factors that are behind gender disparity in Community Day Secondary Schools and to raise awareness for those hidden elements so that schools themselves, NGOs that work on educational programs, and potentially also policy makers may address them and use them to their advantage. Therefore, it is important, on the one hand, to view teachers and students as participants who are producers of knowledge and not as mere objects and, on the other hand, to use the findings of this research in favor of the participants and not in order to reinforce existing power structures.

As the content of the FGDs is confidential and in order to protect the identity of the participants, I am not going to use any names, but refer to the students and teachers solely as either male or female student or teacher. I had ensured them that I would not use their names in my thesis and asked for their consent before recording the FGDs.

The fieldwork in Malawi was conducted in May 2018. The arrangements for my research, such as FGD guides, the schools I visited, research about Malawi as a country etc. had been made before my departure in May. For the purpose of avoiding culturally unacceptable questions, one member of EEDF in Malawi revised the questions I was going to

ask during my FGDs. I spent three full school days at each school. In the mornings, I watched and observed classes independently on the subject being taught. In the afternoons, I conducted the planned FGDs. The groups were arranged, according to my request of homogeneity and confidentiality among the students, by the principal of each school. The students' age varied between 14 to 23 years. Due to the unavailability of rooms, the discussions took place in the open. During breaks and in between classes I talked to both students and teachers about what I noticed in the classroom. Their answers often allowed me to specify my questions during the FGDs and to get a better understanding of the cultural context. In order to analyze the material I first transcribed the FGDs and then used Philipp Mayring's (2002) method for qualitative content analysis. In this common method, the existing data is categorized (see 114), assigned to specific text passages and then, guided by scientific rules, interpreted (see Mayring, 2008: 19).

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

In this chapter of the thesis, I will outline the most important results of each of the questions I posed in the Focus Group Discussions. For this purpose, I am going to present the answers in relation to the definitions of the hidden curriculum given by Giroux and Apple. Furthermore, I will distinguish between the rural and the urban school, depicted in bold letters, since the answers often differed notably depending of the school's setting. In Malawi, 85 % of the population live in rural areas (UNDP, 2018). Electricity and therefore independent access to information is especially limited in rural areas, which promotes a rather traditional mindset. Although the urban areas are also affected by power cuts, they face less difficulties in getting access to news and information than the part of the population that lives in rural areas. The participants' silence and search for words will be displayed by using brackets {...}. Theoretically, the language of instruction up to standard¹¹ four is Chichewa, from standard five on until they finish secondary school students are taught in English (SateUniversity, 2018). Next to English, Chichewa is an official language in Malawi and predominantly spoken in the homes of the children who attended the school I went to. Therefore, their English often is by far not as good as their Chichewa, which leads to a mix of languages in class or even the absence of the English language in discussions. Furthermore, the students sometimes faced difficulties phrasing their thoughts in English and hence, sounded harsher than they intended. However, in order to represent my participants in an authentic way, I decided to stick to their choice of words and their difficulties to express themselves and, therefore, will not correct grammar mistakes. Furthermore, I decided not to paraphrase their answers but to quote them as often as possible. Their answers will in quotation marks and in italics.

4.1 Messages in the classroom social relations

Giroux (1983) attributes the hidden curriculum to "the classroom social relations that embody specific messages which legitimize the particular views of work, authorities, social rules, and values (...). The power of these messages lies in their seemingly universal qualities" (10). In this context, the answers to the questions one, four, five, and six of the student guide were insightful, so were the answers to questions one, two, and three I had

¹¹ In the Malawian school system, grades one to eight are referred to as "standards". In secondary school, the years comprise of a number between one to four and are called "form".

posed to the teachers (see Annex 1 and 2). However, sometimes questions were put in relation to each other and the answers overlapped.

4.1.1 Gender roles in the school and the cultural context

The beliefs and attitudes about gender roles in the cultural context and in the school-environment were especially discussed by the students in the **rural** school. A female student stated that *“they (boys) expect us to be quiet while the boys are speaking [...] and they expect us to behave best than boys”*. However, another female student added that *“the boys, they have this negative mentality that these girls can’t do it, they are inferior”*. Another female student interposed that *“the teacher do encourage us to work hard”*. According to a further female student, these encouragements included study circles, individual study sessions after school and the teachers’ optimism and support for them to go to university. A male student explained that *“the school is expecting a boy to behave like a boy”*. According to the student that included *“[being] like a gentlemen in the future”* and *“[being] full responsible of themselves.”* Characteristics that were mentioned that the school expected from both their female and male students were humbleness, hard work, courage, and the belief in themselves.

However, the social relations of the classroom are often even more apparent in the family and community environment. Also, in the **rural** school, this was discussed. A female student stated that *“we do experience different cases or different conditions because [...] we are trained to be tomorrow’s mothers. [...] So we are given a lot of household chores.”* A male student also mentioned the unequal distribution of household chores stating that *“our culture hinders the girls to have more experience by giving them tough work in homes and allow boys to have some participation in some groups of education.”* Furthermore, one student approved that culturally, female and male children and adolescents had unequal opportunities which *“may affect in their future because they only be socialized to the house [...] while boys they may be not affected.”*

One of the teachers also mentioned the cultural setup that *“sometimes is transferred to school”* and *“due to some [...] beliefs in our communities [...] maybe some parents they give more work to these girls than the boys.”* Moreover, another male teacher explained that *“we have subjects where we are talking about gender [...] to create a society where at the end of the day each one is equal as an individual [...] so it would be a contradictory to distribute activities in the school based on the gender.”* In order to address this disparity and in order to

give equal chances to both female and male students *“we thought it wise to have [...] study circles by the school [...] we keep both students busy studying and sometimes we do supervise them and check their progress.”*

Although the topic was not discussed broadly in the **urban** school setting, a male teacher pointed out the change in the mindset of communities and families, claiming that *“in our days [...] they (girls) were not being supported. Neither at school and neither back home.”* Furthermore, the professor underlined the fundamental role the parents play in the cultural context. With respect to that, he stressed *“the parents have to be encouraged, empowered [...] it’s really on the duty of the parents to make sure that everyone goes to school.”* Moreover, one male teacher elaborated that *“the pressure comes from parents. For their daughters to get married.”* In this context, another male teacher drew attention to the challenges relating to open-mindedness students face depending whether their school is in an urban or rural setting.

4.1.2 Female inferiority and male superiority

One of the persuasions within the social relations of the classroom is related to female inferiority and male superiority.

In the **rural** school setting, the belief about the biological superiority of men over women was addressed. A male student explained *“boys are fit to what {...} fight [...] to fighting what {...} their problems.”* Long distances and menstruation were issue that were discussed in relation to the inferiority of the female body. One male student mentioned that *“in terms of monthly period, it’s too hard to manage for them [girls] to be here [at school].”* A female student indicated that *“it is not easy to be a girl in school simply because naturally we experience monthly period that means by distance we get confused: Can I go to school? So it’s not easy to be in school.”* Furthermore, students were convinced that females are mentally inferior to males. One female student suggested that *“people think males are somehow superior than females”* and that *“they [people] do take them [boys] as the one who got [...] intelligence.”* A female student affirmed that *“naturally [...] we girls are born with weak minded.”* When asked where this idea generated from she further explained *“it’s in the bible that women are weak, it’s like we are created after the men, meaning to say the men are better than us.”* Not merely the female students expressed this view but also their male

colleagues. One male student announced that *“they [girls] are weak in mind so this makes them that they cannot do anything positive.”*¹²

The same was discussed in the FGDs in the **urban** schools. It was stated from a male student that *“boys [...] are biologically stronger than girls. So they can withstand the distance from home up to here.”* Another male student mentioned that *“girls are weak somehow, they cannot avoid pregnancies, drop out...dropping school.”*

Male superiority and female inferiority was put in clear relation to the financial and material support female students received from (non)governmental organizations.

In the **rural** school, one male student drew attention to the competition those projects generated since *“almost all girls they are under bursaries while boys they are only few [...]. But the amazing thing you find after exams there are only boys who had managed to do better.”* Another student explained that *“there is a competition but you can’t see with naked eyes but in mind there is a competition [...] if you (girls) are taken by the bursary and my parents is my bursary, we will see after exams, is where the competition deploys.”* Furthermore, the male students showed frustration about their exclusion from those projects. *“They (girls) are given everything, exercise books, bikes, whatsoever shoes, why boys, boys we are excluded to that chance.”*

The relation between female inferiority and (non)governmental projects was also described in the **urban** school. A male student explained that *“so many organizations [...] most of them they are sending girls. Why? Because of their weakness somehow, just to help them, just to like train them {...} to promote them. [...] So many organizations are wanting to help them but to help the girl child which is not educated that’s our own challenge.”* One female student also drew attention to the bursaries and programs that almost exclusively support girls. She indicated that *“there are more programs concerning girls at school than boys.”* However, she did not put this in the context of females being weaker than males.

¹² In relation to this statement, I want to remind my readers that often the students struggled expressing themselves in English. During the discussions, the students often had to search for words and hence, tended to express themselves often harsher than they might have wanted.

4.1.3 Participation in the classroom

The social relation in the classroom and its specific messages are also connected to the unequal participation of female and male students. In all four groups the students claimed that males would participate more in class. Again, the belief behind the unequal participation was rooted in gendered differences between females and males.

One explanation the students gave related to the shyness and lack of confidence of the female students. In the **rural** school, a male student stated that *“girls, they don’t believe in what they are. [...] boys they don’t have a shyness spirit on them.”* One female student commented that *“naturally, girls are less minded that’s why more boys are active in class than girls.”* This statement was supported by one of her female class mates who said: *“Most of the girls are weak in mind that’s why most of the boys participate in class.”* A male student acknowledged that the participation in the class depended on the subject. According to him, in the language subjects female students participated more whereas in the science subjects male students were more active. However, a male teacher pointed out that *“it depends on the ability of the learner”* and *“the nature of the activity”*. Another male teacher stated that in his experience *“girls are less shy than boys to shout out or speak out. So they participate more than boys in some activities.”* Nevertheless, one of the male teachers affirmed that *“on average I would say that boys do participate more than girls, however, the difference is very small.”* When being asked about the reasons why female students were perceived and saw themselves as shy one male teacher revealed *“most of the time, once they are giving a wrong answer the boys do laugh at them so that’s why they feel shy”*. In comparison, at the time the teachers themselves went to school *“most of boys were the ones who were participating, who were active in class but at this time we are able to see some sort of competition between boys and girls.”* In order to promote female participation, the teachers mentioned the possibility of attending additional classes.

In the **urban** school, one male student stated: *“Girls don’t believe in themselves. [...] But boys they believe. They are courageous.”* A female student also commented that *“girls don’t have that self-confidence in themselves.”* According to one male student, the different self-perception of female and male students might be motivated by *“their (girls’) mentality they say we cannot do it.”* However, the explanation the female students gave for their shyness related to their fear of being laughed at (also in rural school) and the fact that they considered

the correctness of their answers. Furthermore, in their opinion, male students sometimes raised their hands only in order to be noticed by the girls or to disturb the class. A male teacher from this school explained that *“what they have in mind is what they practice”*. The professor stated that *“[he does not] really think it’s shyness. It is more of confidence. Confidence to do something, confidence to answer a question”*. Besides, he encouraged asking the girls *“how do they get this mentality, it would be interesting, maybe some of them wouldn’t be clear but others, I think, could tell you this.”* One male teacher drew attention to the changes over time in the support girls experience to participate and go to school claiming that *“nowadays, it’s like there are efforts from everybody [...] everybody is trying to help the girls to get education, even the teachers and the students themselves.”*

4.1.4 Role models

Although the initial question was phrased as “is it easier to be a girl(boy) in school” the students often changed the word easier to better in their answers. One of the reasons why it was believed to be better to be a male student that was mentioned related to having role models at school.

In the **rural** school, one of the male students pointed out that *“here (at the school) are only few women so these girls think ‘ah, maybe the chances to be a teacher is only for males”*. Another student also stated that *“girls see that all teachers are males and females are less [...] They think that all things are for boys only.”* The only time the female teacher voiced her opinion happened in relation to the issue of role model. She stated that *“I’m a role model to the girls, so I do monitor the classroom.”* One of the male teachers pointed out his role as a role model to both female and male students explaining that *“[he believes] to be a role model is to be about conduct oneself in a manner that we encourage the young ones to be calm and work hard and achieve something.”* Another male teachers also agreed that they could be role models to female and male students independently from their biological sex.

In the **urban** school, however, the male students did not mention teachers as role models as the majority of their teachers was females. Nevertheless, one male student drew attention of his felt necessity of having a role model from the same biological sex as he claimed *“I feel ashamed that I do spend more time with my mother than with my father. [...] Like, I’m a boy, I mean a woman cannot tell me you should do this or do that means I’m going to pay attention to what she says but only a man can tell me do this one.”*

Neither in the urban nor in the rural school did female students mention role models as neither lacking nor being available. In comparison to the rural school, the majority of the teachers in the urban school were females. A male teacher pointed out that *“here in Malawi, most secondary teachers but also primary teachers are female. For male, they prefer to go further in their studies.”* According to the teachers and the professor, this depends a lot on the subjects taken in secondary schools and the majors on university level. However, the professor indicated that nowadays *“you get more and more women and girls into male dominated fields.”* Nevertheless, they ascribed the lack of female role models to rural and remote areas, concluding: *“In rural areas they promote that girls cannot reach a certain level”*. In addition, a male teacher compared that to urban areas in which *“they (girls) are not motivated lesser {...} girls can do better than boys, girls can do the same like boys, so it’s an inborn wish”*. The same male teacher named, besides teachers, also parents and community leaders as role models and pointed out that even billboards with female students or professionals who had pursued a career could give female students a positive outlook for their future.

4.2. Implicit and effective teaching of norms and values

In this subchapter, I will present the findings that relate to “the norms and values that are implicitly but effectively taught in school and that are usually not talked about in teachers’ statements of end or girls” (Apple, 2004:78/9). Questions two, three, and six¹³ of the students’s FGD guide tried to explore the norms and values students believe in and convey. (see Annex 1). Questions five and six of the teachers’ FGD guide tried to find answers respectively (see Annex 2).

4.2.1 Behavior in society

In this context, students from all four groups mentioned they learn the behavior that is expected from them in society at school. As will be discussed in the following section, the students also alluded to rules, regulations and punishment they would receive if they were not behaving accordingly.

In the **rural** school, a female student made a reference to responsible behavior as she mentioned *“in terms of cleaning the toilets or the classroom it’s for both.”* However, outside the

¹³ Question six also answered to the classroom social relations that embody specific messages.

classroom a female student explained that, in comparison to her male siblings or cousins, she had to *“[clean] the plates, [mop] the house, [clean], sometimes [bath] the children... boys, they just sweep around the house then go to school.”* According to her, this compromised her time to study for her final exam at the end of the school year, which will give her access to university.

In the **urban** school, the cleaning of classroom and toilet facilities was also mentioned. Moreover, a female student made a reference to the subject “life skills”, which is complementary in form one and two and optional in form three and four. According to her, the subject teaches *“how life...how you get through...like how you can live”*. One of the male students, however, indicated the relevance of the communities and the parents as teachers of norms and values. He delineated that *“if someone provoked good behaviors or I should say necessary behaviors from their parents, those behaviors or those norms will lead his or her life even at school. So it is not school that can teach you how to behave but at home that’s where you learn how to behave”*.

4.2.2 Punishment in school

A typical measure of securing order and control at school is to punish those students who do not behave accordingly. As stated by the students of both schools, punishment was imposed when students did not behave in accordance with school rules. As specified by the students, this was rarely different among female and male students.

In the **rural** school setting, a female student explained that the punishment itself *“depends on the degree of making a mistake.”* Moreover, one female student stated that *“if it (the misbehavior) goes beyond limit there might be suspenses.”* Suspension as a punishment was portrayed as the worst form of castigation students could receive as it presented student with difficulties to catch up on what their classmates had learned. One male student pointed out that *“it’s good to punish where there is a wrong matter”* however, *“if the punishment is not much with the case [...] we find that that punishment will bring another estranged behavior”*. Additionally, he stated that *“so talk about those teachers who teach subjects like physics [...], maybe they show some biases among students. Saying bad things, shaming some students.”* In comparison to the teachers’ own school experience, punishment has changed over the years. Correspondingly, a male teacher explained that *“we used to have what we call ‘corporal punishment’ [...] it was applying for everybody.”*

In the urban school, according to a male student the *“number of boys who come to suspension to the number of girls who come to suspension it will be very different”*. Although most students in both groups agreed that the punishment was not gender-biased, one male student brought an example to attention in which *“a girl and a boy they are all late from break, they say a girl, you can enter, and the boy wait until the next period.”* One female student saw the reason for boys being punished more often in the home set up since, according to her, *“their families [...] do take them as superior. [...] Maybe they (boys) think that they can be {...} at home here at school”*. In accordance with this, another female student referred to the role of the parents and families which treat their male and female children differently so that the male children and adolescents believe *“we are boys we can do that.”* The teachers from the urban school did not express their opinions on punishment.

4.2.3 Learning chances and opportunities

Furthermore, students believed that both female and male students should be given the same chances and opportunities regarding their studies.

Albeit, in the **rural** school, one male student negated that everyone should learn the same, he based his argument on the abilities of the students and their future career wishes. He explained: *“It’s better for people to have a chance to select the subject they are good in so that they may excel”* and that *“in general, they (female and male students) should have the same opportunities and same chances to select the subject they are good at.”* As stated by one male teacher, in the past, subjects depended more on the role a student had according to their biological sex. For instance, female students had to enroll in home economics whereas male students took agriculture class.

A female student drew attention to the fact that females and males should learn the same as *“they [women] can be in a position to lose someone.”* Another female student added that *“nowadays Malawi is encouraging that there should be a 50:50 campaign. [...] It is very important for boys and girls to learn the same behaviors or the same ethics of life”*.

However, one of the male students claimed that girls would not be interested enough in education. According to him, *“outside the campus [...] only boys who are also {...} like they are discussing also education issues [...] they [girls] forget about school [...] they (girls) do nothing, wasting their time, spending their time irrelevant.”* Another student agreed with this statement, claiming that *“boys, when they are out of school they are busy to dream about their educations while the girls, they’re busy to wear shorter blouses.”* Besides the low interest in

education the male students ascribed to the female students, they also mentioned pregnancies and marriages in context of chances and opportunities. Conforming to one male student, getting pregnant while enrolled in a school is *“a symbol [...] that once you’re out of campus you’re doing unnecessary things, you are doing nothing, you are involved in sexual issues, immoral issues.”* Furthermore, it was stated that *“girls experience to be in early marriages not because of our culture force them but themselves they don’t show interest to love school while boys they show interest of what [...] loving school.”*

In comparison, in the **urban** school, a female student stated that chances and opportunities should be the same *“cause we are all human beings”*. A male student explained that *“they [girls] are able to compete with what [...] boys, because they are now given the chance to compete”* and *“teaching a boy and a girl in the same way will help everybody.”*

Whereas monetary support and bursaries were discussed by the students especially in relation to female inferiority and male superiority, the teachers in the rural school addressed the topic concerning equal chances and opportunities. A male teacher explained that being excluded from those projects would encourage the male students to work hard since *“after all the boys know that it is not the school that is doing that but there are foreign organizations that have come to assist us in a way so I don’t think there is much conflict.”* Another male teacher stated the contrary and added to consideration that *“they (NGOs) are looking at that so that they can encourage the girl child but by doing that they are demoralizing the boys.”* A third male teacher stated that *“we don’t see an open conflict between the boys and the girls because the girls are being sponsored [...] it’s natural that the boys will admire if they were in the same wagon to receive those (supplies female students receive).”* Yet again, one male teacher warned *“instead of creating a gender balanced society, they (NGOs) are creating, they are aggravating the belief that the other section is weaker, that’s why they are getting what [...] bursaries. So they need to explain their projects, their aims and why they are doing that.”*

In the **urban** school, one point that was made in relation to chances and opportunities by a male teacher was that *“these organizations who are coming, first they should look at institutions which are lacking resources [...] here in Malawi we go to other areas we find students learning under a tree [...] during rain season that means there is no learning.”* Furthermore, most initiatives from NGOs exclude male students almost entirely, which then

generates envy and reinforces the belief that females are inferior and could not succeed by themselves.

CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As has been outlined in the literature review of this thesis, pedagogical approaches present the risk of contributing to the maintenance of existing ideas about the conception of femininity and masculinity. Jean Anyon's contribution to the research on the concept of the hidden curriculum, which was referred to in the theoretical framework, shows how pedagogical approaches can be influenced by normative assumptions. Therefore, it was considered that especially the way teachers teach would contribute to the maintenance of existing ideas about gender roles and relations and lead to disparities. Furthermore, schools as institutions and its educators were considered to conduce to the socialization process of gender disparities and the construction of what is believed as either feminine or masculine. In school, both female and male students are exposed to ideas and concepts that will influence their self-perception and their judgement and understanding for "the other". As became evident by presenting the results of the FGDs, this differs considerably between the urban and rural school setting. In this last chapter of my thesis, I want to present how cultural hegemony, hidden curriculum, and gender ultimately contribute to gender disparities in the two Malawian CDSSs I conducted my research at. Moreover, I want to reveal how nongovernmental organizations and their donors also relate to the hidden curriculum in schools. Therefore, I am going to display the connection of the main themes that were brought up and discussed in the focus groups with the concepts discussed in chapter two.

5.1. The hidden curriculum inside the classroom

The hidden curriculum inside the classroom is going to be analyzed and interpreted in relation to the themes that came up with regard to the classroom social relations of the former chapter.

The socialization process into certain gender roles that individuals undergo can be understood as a doing of gender (see Röckenhaus, 2014: 27). The way gender and sexuality is perceived controls and leads our behavior and the way we interact with each other on a daily basis (ibid: 42). Obwano's essay, for instance, which has been mentioned in the literature review, showed that behavior can and will be perceived as either feminine or masculine.

In the FGDs, gender roles were brought up in the cultural context. As seen above, there is a clear divide in the depth of the discussion about gender roles between the rural and the urban school setting and its students and teachers. Whereas the discussion with the students in the urban school did not evolve around gender roles, in the rural school both female and male students explained that there are clear expectations about their behavior in society and the school depending on their social gender.

Although it was expected that especially the teachers' teaching tacitly would contribute to the perception of what accounts as female and male behavior and strengthen assumptions about gender roles, it is the teachers who show a high level of awareness towards gender biases. This did not differ between the teachers from the urban and the rural school. Teachers from both schools drew attention to the role of parents and communities in the maintenance about gender biases and the resulting gender roles.

In the rural school, the teachers asserted that with extra study circles and attention they tried to encourage both their female and male students to perform well and to overcome prejudice about gender. Whereas female students perceived their teachers as encouraging, it seemed like some male students interpreted the "help" female students received as confirmation for their inferiority. The misinterpretation of encouragement and help can be allocated to the hidden curriculum as it strengthens the belief that females are depended on others to succeed. Interestingly, although the extra study circles were placed at the disposal of both female and male students, only female students that attended them were seen as less intelligent. Once again, this deeply rooted belief makes part of an androcentric worldview in which females are inferior to males and in need of help in order to understand or succeed academically.

Even though gender roles were not discussed in the urban school, the belief of female inferiority and male superiority was clearly stated. The idea that females are inferior to males was presented in all groups. On the one hand, the students from both schools mentioned males being biologically superior to females. Their persuasion was supported by the argument that female students were physically incapable of walking long distances and moreover, was put within the context of menstruation. On the other hand, the female mind as being inferior was discussed by all students. It became evident that especially female students from the urban school, in comparison to their male colleagues, doubted this conviction and attributed it to cultural beliefs. Alas, both female and male students from the rural school were deeply

convinced that females were naturally weak minded and less intelligent. The use of the bible as an example for female inferiority shows how cultural hegemony, or in other words a powerful group - namely the clergy - uses its position to maintain control and to treat females as second-class citizens. The conception that females are being inferior to males was so incorporated in the students' beliefs that it was (unconsciously) being learned and conveyed to the classroom. This unconscious learning of this social relation within the classroom - from and with classmates - the trust in this unquestioned claim, and the acceptance that female seem to be inferior alludes clearly to the hidden curriculum.

The students' participation in the classroom was discussed in relation to shyness and confidence, characteristics which were unquestionably attributed either to female or male students. As seen above, male students from both schools asserted that males were courageous and being shy did not make part of their nature. Hence, there was the belief that males inherited self-confidence, whereas females were not only shy but also in self-doubt. Although various students mentioned the subject itself as determining participation, female shyness and male confidence were also being seen as crucial factors. The females' lower participation in class was ascribed to their lack of confidence. That this is a matter of belief and attitudes of the students is shown by the fact that teachers in both schools mentioned that from their point of view, class participation between female and male students was either balanced and, in some cases, it was even the female students leading in class participation. This shows how ideas about gender are often unquestioned and brought into an environment - the classroom - and how shapes the perception of "the other".

As seen in Chapter 2.2, it is the repetition of acts and the cultural construction that make the body develop into its gender. Hence, female students are perceived as shy based on the assumption that females in general are shy and less confident. Whereas the female students from the rural school represented the idea that their lower participation was also connected to their inferiority, the female students from the urban school interpreted their male colleagues "over" participation as a cry for attention since they often did not consider the correctness of their answers before raising their hands. Once again, it becomes apparent that the mindset between rural and urban students varies, especially between female students. In this context, it should be mentioned that teachers from both schools drew attention to the change in mentality that has happened over time and is happening at the moment.

Another factor the male students remarked as being influential on participation was role models. From their point of view, in order to have a positive impact on a student's self-esteem and performance, a role model has to have the same biological sex.¹⁴ The male students at the urban school felt in doubt about their role models since the school employed few male teachers. Furthermore, the lack of female role models at the rural school was seen as decisive for the lack of confidence with which female students were described. Interestingly, neither the female students from the rural nor the urban school mentioned role models. In the urban, the students did have many female teachers and hence, saw women succeed. In the rural school, the students only had one female teacher which might have confirmed the belief that the majority of females is incapable to work in the field. Although some of the male teachers from the rural school saw themselves as being capable of being a role model for both female and male students, they also acknowledged the necessity of female role models for their female students. The teachers from the urban school showed high awareness for the general lack of female role models and unfolded it as problematic since the underrepresentation of females discourages female students to continue their studies and only motivates males to move up the corporate ladder. The absence of female teachers as role models functions as a hegemonic instrument within the hidden curriculum and secures the social and cultural order in which schools and higher education are recognized as male territory and women are being perceived as inferior to men.

5.2 The hidden curriculum outside the classroom

One value the students explained they learned at school was being responsible in school. The example given in the school context was the cleaning of classrooms and toilet facilities which was assigned by the teachers. However, according to different female and male students, outside of the school environment it was expected from female students to take responsibility for household chores or siblings. This did not differ between the rural and the urban school. Hence, there is an existing division between classroom values and those outside of the classroom. The main reason mentioned for the despaired distribution of tasks was the role of the cultural set up. This shows a limitation in the power schools have in the Malawian context. Although scholars such as Apple and Giroux ascribe schools the roles of "agents of cultural and ideological hegemony" (Apple, 2004:4), the school's limitation in

¹⁴ The students did not make a difference between (social) gender and (biological) sex.

influencing cultural norms and thus, the slow progress in changing prevailing gender roles becomes conspicuous.

Besides their position of role models, teachers also represent authority figures. In order for the classroom to function accordingly to school rules, the teachers have to control the students. For this purpose, the teacher, on the one side, has to convince the students that it is in their interest to collaborate. The students, on the other side, have to concur to what they are being taught.¹⁵ According to Pace and Hemmings (2007), “[s]ociety traditionally entrusts teachers with the formal right and responsibility to take charge in the classroom and expects the students to obey” (4). Hence, teachers are key figures in the interpretation of what a society in a certain time and setting considers as moral behavior (see *ibid.*: 5). In order to assure their authority and dominance, teachers punish and reward their students depending on their behavior (see Jackson, 1998:73/4).

As the teachers from the rural school had mentioned, the kind of punishment in Malawi has changed - corporal punishment is forbidden by law. In both CDSSs, castigation was mentioned as consequence of “bad” behavior. In most cases, punishment was described as being equal for female and male students however, one student in the urban school mentioned observing different forms of disciplinary actions. Although most students asserted that the punishment was reasonable, some students expressed their concerns about disproportion. That disproportionate and arbitrary punishment can result in mistrust and the reinforcement of unwanted behavior, as one student had remarked, was also found by other researchers (see Erickson, 1986; Werthman, 1963 cited in Pace/ Hemmings, 2007:8). Consequently, the abuse of the position of authority and the use of disproportionate and gendered punishment makes part of the hidden curriculum and might convey to students the feeling of powerlessness and unfairness. As mentioned above, although schools seem to have limited access to influence values and beliefs about masculinity and femininity deeply rooted in communities, the rules in schools are still likely to be based on what society or even the prevailing group in power accept to be moral or good. In this context, Giroux’s (1978) point that schools are “agents of socialization” (148) becomes evident. Teachers, which work within

¹⁵ That this is not a given was communicated by one male teacher who explained that a new female teacher has to acquire her position of authority with the male students, who might not take her seriously in the beginning.

the social institutions of education transmit, reinforce, and normalize a dominant ideology that disseminates the beliefs and interests of a prevailing social group.

The norms and values that are implicitly taught in relation to chances and opportunities were surprising. Although the majority of students from both schools believed in male superiority and female inferiority they agreed that everyone should be able to study the same subjects and learn the same contents at school independently from their biological sex/societal gender. Whereas the girls in the rural school saw the need for an academic career in the risk of being dependent on themselves at some point in their life if they did not study, the girls in the urban school explained that they were no different from their male colleagues. Once again, this shows the difference in the mindset between the urban and rural school. The female students from the urban school were able to see themselves as equally entitled to their male colleagues to learn whereas the female students from the rural school saw the necessity to learn more as a reinsurance if their future partner would leave them or was not able to provide for them. A difference in the opinions among the males from the rural and the urban school also became apparent. Despite the fact that the male students in the urban school had stated throughout the discussion that females were inferior they were still persuaded that they could compete with their male colleagues. However, the male students in the rural school represented the viewpoint that their female classmates on the one hand, were not able to succeed themselves and, on the other hand, although given “everything” by (non)governmental organizations, were not interested in school and their education and therefore, could be hold responsible not only for their failure but also for teenage pregnancies and early marriages. This notion specifically can be ascribed to the concept of cultural hegemony based upon a patriarchal society in which an androcentric point of view takes male responsibility away for (unwanted) pregnancies and unequal opportunities.

5.3 The hidden curriculum of Nongovernmental Organizations

Due to the literature reviewed and the definition and contextualization of the hidden curriculum, it was expected that the school as institution and its educators would be the key force in conveying norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes to their students. However, during the FGDs it became apparent that numerous beliefs come from communities and families and are being brought into the school especially by the students themselves.

Nevertheless, the most unexpected finding made during the research was the way in which nongovernmental organizations and their donors contribute and relate to hidden curricula. The initiators of projects that support mostly female students play a fundamental role in the maintenance of the belief that females are inferior to males. As seen above, male students who were neither explained sufficiently the purpose of a project nor the reason why they had been excluded from it felt vindicated in the belief that their female colleagues were weak and unable to succeed without the help of outsiders. This notion was supported from students from both schools. Furthermore, this was also demonstrated in the FGDs with the male and female teacher. Considering that some of the teachers erroneously thought that all their male students understood the reasons why their female colleagues were being assisted, it is even more required from NGOs and their donors to position themselves and explain their projects and target group to *all* students. Moreover, the androcentric worldview the students are exposed to within their communities, families, by the media (although they often have limited access), and also within the school environment needs to be questioned. In respect thereof, it is essential to bring any project in context with the country's history and culture, which has benefitted men. The exclusion of a group, however, may increase competitive behavior in school, envy, and frustration, especially among male students who often have to cover long distances as well or come from impoverished families and lack school supplies.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to shed light on the relation and impact of the hidden curriculum on gender disparities in two CDSSs in Malawi. As the title exemplifies, I have looked at the classroom as a curriculum. The combination of a feminist and a critical approach to education attempted to illuminate the relation between gender disparities and schools as agents of socialization. This has become feasible by looking at the norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that are brought into school and conveyed at school.

In the first chapter, the relevance of the inquiry of the relation between cultural hegemony, hidden curriculum, and gender disparities in the Malawian context became evident. Different understandings of the concept of the hidden curriculum were presented in the second chapter of this thesis. Furthermore, the connection between hidden curricula and the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony and gender as a social construct and cultural hegemony was displayed. The role of cultural hegemony in the sustaining of a prevailing order, however, was only touched upon superficially and needs further investigation in the case of Malawi. For this purpose, it would be desirable to investigate the official curriculum and see how gender norms, roles, and relations are depicted. What is being included and excluded by the government and curriculum authors makes part of the hidden curriculum and the socialization process and would allow an insight into cultural hegemony. The theoretical and analytical tools mentioned above encouraged the use of the methodological choice of focus group discussions, which findings were presented in the penultimate chapter. In the last chapter, I delineated the outcomes unfolded through the FGDs.

It can be summarized that, although teachers were expected to play a significant role in the socialization process of gender differences, it became evident that especially students themselves contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender perceptions, gender stereotypes, and attitudes that may lead to disparities. This happens through the beliefs and ideas they bring to the classroom from their homes and communities and exchange with each other. Particularly the persuasion that females are inferior to males is deeply rooted in the students' belief. A lack of same-sex role models, but especially the underrepresentation of female role models in rural areas concerns teachers and students and was identified as having a great influence of the self-perception of female students. In addition, participation

also is affected by gendered beliefs and presumptions. The powerful position teachers occupy through the imposition of punishments gives the students a sense of disempowerment. Furthermore, although the schools try to teach their students about equality between females and males, traditional gender roles and division of labor persist in families. It has become evident that NGOs (and their donors) that assist schools also make part of the hidden curriculum and unwillingly reinforce certain beliefs about gender differences. Moreover, they generate dissatisfaction when excluding male students from projects and bursaries. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is necessary for NGOs to position themselves and explain their aims to all children and adolescents who will be in- and excluded.

One question that has not been answered with this research is how schools and NGOs can use the hidden curriculum to their advantage and reduce gender disparities. As already indicated above, it cannot be abstained from. Hence, it would be interesting to see the effect of the inclusion of all students in (bursary) projects over a longer time span. Furthermore, it seems to be necessary to approach families and communities since it is especially their perception of reality and moral order that influences children and adolescents. For further research, it would be recommendable to form a team with a Malawian researcher who contributes, on the one hand, with knowledge about cultural norms and values and, on the other hand, who speaks Chichewa, the language mainly spoken by the students.

The definition of the concept of the Hidden Curriculum that was being used identified such as “the norms and values that are implicitly but effectively taught in school and that are usually not talked about in teachers’ statements of end or goals” (Apple, 2004: 78/9) and “refers to those classroom social relations that embody specific messages which legitimize the particular views of work, authority, social rules, and values (...). The power of these messages lies in their seemingly universal qualities” (Giroux, 1983:10). These definitions do not seem to be sufficient to grasp the complexity of the Hidden Curriculum. Therefore, I propose the following definition:

The Hidden Curriculum refers to the socialization process through the covert exposure to norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes. These are not only conveyed tacitly by educators and schools as institutions but above all are brought by the students’ themselves from their home into the classroom and then acted out and interacted merely among them. Hence, these

norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes are frequently invisible to the school and its staff members.

The hidden curriculum seems to be a significant factor when it comes to maintaining power structures within a system that oppresses certain groups. Within the school setting, it contributes to the institutionalization of gender - to the idea what is considered feminine and masculine - and hence, fosters the maintenance of a patriarchal system. However, instead of operating as agents of socialization and merely to ensure that children and adolescents fit into an existing system, schools and their educators, through the hidden curriculum, can encourage their students to question their surroundings and to change a system which does not give equal opportunities to everyone.

ANNEX

Annex 1

FGD-GUIDE FEMALE/MALE STUDENTS

- 1 moderator
- 6-8 female/male students

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce myself ■ Organization I work with ■ FGD part of my research ■ How is learning at school different for boys and girls? ■ Ask about experiences, views, opinions ■ Every viewpoint is valuable ■ Voluntary participation - you don't have to say anything if you don't want to ■ value everyones opinion - welcome to share ■ Confidential information, will be used only for research purposes ■ No right and wrong answers - honestly feel ■ Phone to record ■ Names won't be used - what you said can't be traced back to you ■ Only one speaker at a time (speaking pillow) ■ Different points of views - feel free to disagree ■ Share your own opinions ■ Let everyone have their say ■ 60-90 minutes ■ Name, Age, Grade. Favorite subject? 	5-10
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Questions	Time	Notes	Prompts
Introductory question	10		

1) In what aspects of school is it easier being a female student (male student) than being male student (female student)?	10	General view on gender roles	
Transition questions	15		
2) Beside's the lessons in the classroom, what else do you learn at school?	7.5	Belief	
3) Do you think girls and boys can and should learn the same things at school?	7.5	Opinion/ attitude	
Key questions	30 - 45		
4) Who participates more in class? Girls or boys? <input type="checkbox"/> Why?	15	Belief/ opinion	What influences participation? In Life?
5) Do you think girls and boys make different experience in/outside of class? (Do they actually learn different things even if they shouldn't) <input type="checkbox"/> If that's the case, why?	15	Attitude	
6) What kind of behavior is expected from you in school as a girl?/ as a boy? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you sometimes behave against what is expected from you? <input type="checkbox"/> What happens if you do so? <input type="checkbox"/> What behavior is expected from boys? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they sometimes behave against what is expected from them? <input type="checkbox"/> What happens if they do so?	15	Opinion	
Ending question	10		
7) From the topics that we have discussed in the last hour, which one do you consider the most important one?	10		
Total time (questions + introduction)	80 - 90		

Annex 2

FGD-GUIDE TEACHERS

- 1 moderator
- 6-8 teachers

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce myself ■ Organization I work with ■ FGD part of my research ■ How is learning at school different for boys and girls? ■ Ask about experiences, views, opinions ■ Every viewpoint is valuable ■ Voluntary participation - you don't have to say anything if you don't want to ■ value everyones opinion - welcome to share ■ Confidential information, will be used only for research purposes ■ No right and wrong answers - honestly feel ■ Phone to record ■ Names won't be used - what you said can't be traced back to you ■ Only one speaker at a time (speaking pillow) ■ Different points of views - feel free to disagree ■ Share your own opinions ■ Let everyone have their say ■ 60-90 minutes ■ Name, years of teaching, subject area 	15
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Questions	Time	Notes	Prompts
Introductory question	10		
1) In what aspects of school is it easier being a female teacher, is it easier being male teacher?	10	Opinion/ belief	
Transition questions	15		
2) In which way has the learning experience for girls and boys changed in comparison to the time you went to school?	7.5	Opinion/ belief	
3) Do you believe either girls or boys study more than the other? Or needs to invest more time in studying?	7.5	Opinion/ belief	Ask for explanation

Key questions	30 - 45		
4) Who participates more in class? Girls or boys? <input type="checkbox"/> In your opinion, what influences participation?	15	Belief/ opinion	
5) If a girl faces difficulties in a certain subject, how do you help? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you encourage your male students when they struggle with a subject?	15	Belief/ attitude	Encouragement Self-belief in abilities
6) Besides teaching your subject, what other things do students learn from you? <input type="checkbox"/> How does this behavior/knowledge that you convey differ between boys and girls?	15	Attitude	
Ending questions	10		
7) From the topics that we have discussed in the last hour, which one do you consider the most important one?	10		
Total time (questions + introduction)	80-90		

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