Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

LAURA TOMM-BONDE

MN (University of Victoria, 2009)
BSN (University of Victoria, 2001)

“Putting On and Taking Off the Capulana: How Mozambican Women Manage Oppression”

School of Nursing

Monday, April 11, 2016
9:00AM
David Turpin Building
Room A136

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Rita Schreiber, School of Nursing, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Marjorie MacDonald, School of Nursing, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Michael Prince, Department of Political Science, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Vida Nyagre Yakong, University for Development Studies, Ghana

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Laura Parisi, Women’s Studies Program, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The original purpose of this study was to answer the following research question: How do women and girls navigate the HIV/AIDS situation in Mozambique? I took a constructivist grounded theory, combined with the African philosophy of Ubuntu, as the approach to guide this study. I sensitized myself theoretically with the critical feminist theory of intersectionality to ensure I recognized important data during my collection process. Because grounded theory studies are developed inductively from a corpus of data, and evolve as data collection takes place, I discovered that participants’ concerns went beyond HIV/AIDS and involved a bundle of oppressions. Therefore the problem that participants faced, at a broad conceptual level, was gender oppression. As a result, my study shifted slightly in that I aimed to understand how women and girls managed their lives in relation to gender oppression, how they become socialized into a context that systematically makes room for social and political dominance over them, how they cope with the manifestations of dominance, and how, if ever, they control the situational and characteristic realities of gender oppression. Consequently, I developed a grounded theory about how women and girls manage gender oppression in Mozambique. The basic social process in this theory is called Putting On and Taking Off the Capulana, which can be understood as how women and girls become socialized into gender oppression in Mozambique and how they inch their way out. The four main categories that comprise this theory include: (a) Putting On the Capulana, (b) Turning a Blind Eye, (c) Playing the Game, and (d) Taking Off the Capulana. Second level processes under Putting On the Capulana, for example, include processes such as Adapting to Patriarchy and Living with Violence, which demonstrate how women and girls navigate a context saturated in oppressions. Third level processes, such as being robbed of sexual self-determination and accepting inferiority, explain the consequences of these processes that women and girls are forced to live through. This is a theory, grounded in the data and privileging the voices of women and girls in Mozambique, that is reflective of a constructivist feminist approach and Ubuntu philosophy. I argue that this study provides a nuanced understanding of the complexity of gender oppression in Mozambique, which can assist in developing relevant and meaningful policy.