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THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSTRUCTION OF POLICIES ON ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA (1964-2018)

BY

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DECLARATION

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I declare that this thesis, "the social and political construction of policies on adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia (1964-2018)" is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.
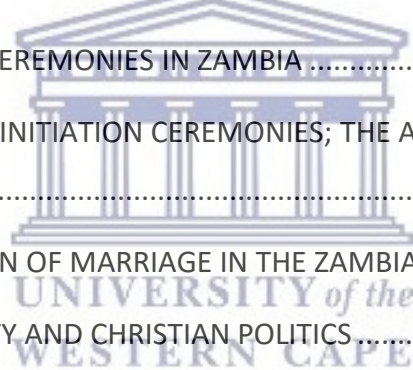
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ABBREVIATIONS

AHSP	Adolescent Health Strategic Plan
AU	Africa Union
BETUZ	Basic Education Teacher's Union of Zambia
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
FAWEZA	Forum for African Women Educationalists
MNGR	Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs
MOG	Ministry of Gender
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council
NPF	Narrative Policy Framework
NSECMZ	National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPR	What's the Problem Represented to be
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
ZDHS	Zambia Demographic and Health Survey
ZNDP	Zambia National Development Plan

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the social and political construction of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage policy and practices in Zambia between the nation's birth in 1964 and 2018 using a social constructionist approach. This approach questions the many ways social problems are defined, labelled, framed and understood by different groups/actors. Using a multimodal research method, I combined archival materials, policy documents, parliamentary speeches, newspapers and interviews with non-state actors.

The main findings show that firstly (in a broader context), Zambia is caught up in multiple spatio-temporalities: its colonial past, "Christian nation notion/ideology", and neoliberal developmentalism. This dominates problem definitions, solutions, and policy approaches, leading to conflicted policy clashes within the government itself and with non-state actors. Secondly, a one-sided (negative) problematisation has emerged that originates from a path-dependent, global homogenised policy culture that does not align with the local context and setting. Thirdly, it is evident that the negative dominant problem representation produces policy divides, favouring some groups of adolescents while others remain disadvantaged or potentially harmed, stigmatised or discriminated against. It is recommended that future research focuses on exploring alternative problem representations in this area.

Keywords: Adolescents, Child Marriage, Christianity, Social Construction, Space-time, Reproductive Politics, Policy, Zambia

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the former Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, stated in a speech[1]:

Perhaps the greatest challenge is the enormous growth in the population of young people in our country. The population between 0 and 20 must surely scare both parents and educationalists with a rapidly rising growth rate. School places are inadequate and traditional approaches just cannot cope with this challenge. The result is that hundreds of thousands of children are squeezed out of the school system at a tender age. They are thrown into the cold and cruel world without hope for their future. Worse still, many young girls fall prey to idleness and become victims of early pregnancies and early marriages. Even some in school fallout and join the victims of fate. Their future is destroyed (Kaunda, 2010).

Perhaps this is not the kind of speech Kaunda would have made in 1964.

Another member of parliament during national debates stated that "education is the best contraceptive. Let the girl child and the boy child be kept in school until they are empowered to make the right choices"(National Assembly of Zambia, 2011). A similar take on the issue can be seen in the African Union's agenda to wipe out child marriage in Africa, a "Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa: Call to Action" 2014-2017 (African Union, 2013).

In 2013, the Zambian government produced a National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (NSECMZ) to reduce child marriage by 40 per cent, and teenage pregnancies by 40 per cent by 2020 (Ministry of Gender, 2016). The Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) of 2013/14 revealed that about 33 per cent of Zambian women had given birth by the age of 18 and more than 50 per cent by the age of 20. Early pregnancy is correlated with two other ills: higher school dropout rates and early/child marriage. Public discourse in Zambia presents early or teen pregnancy as a national tragedy and moral issue than a development problem. At the same time, global pressures to conform to the West have increased. These pressures manifest not only in economic development but also in the intimate and social domain. Religion and elite moral discourse

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[1] Speech by his Excellency Dr. Kenneth D. Kaunda, first president of the Republic of Zambia on the occasion of the opening of the second Lubuto library.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/557edb36e4b0c3993dee95d1/t/60d218965f838d595654a1a0/1624381590525/NgwereOpeningKKSpeech.pdf

reinforce this by condemning sex before marriage. Furthermore, child marriage and teen pregnancy it is argued are the causes of poverty, school dropout and maternal health complications. In 2014, during president Sata's government, then the First lady, Dr Kaseba, in the newspaper called for the criminalisation of child marriage (Lusakatimes, 2014b). The then Minister of Gender supported this call, and child marriage became declared a "national crisis" (The Post Newspaper, 2014). In 2015, influential NGOs like Child Fund, Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), and the Media Network on Child Rights and Development also supported the move. In July 2017, at the 19th Ordinary General Assembly of the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS Summit, the country's First Lady, Esther Lungu, appeared on national television, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), urging her counterparts to advocate for an Africa free of child marriage and teen pregnancy.

There appears to be a relentless, one-sided and dominant pathological narrative around the issue in Africa, with lack of education cited as the main problem among teens. Teen pregnancy has been continuously associated with negative outcomes like poverty and high disease burden, low levels of education or none, and gender-based violence, among other things (Gupta and Mahy, 2001; Munthali and Moore, 2006; Hindin and Fatusi, 2009; Patton *et al.*, 2012; Walker, 2012; Althabe *et al.*, 2015; Rosenberg *et al.*, 2015; Omoro *et al.*, 2017; Tenkorang, 2019). Undoubtedly, public policy-making has evolved over the past 50 or more years, not only in Zambia but globally. There is a general consensus (Buse, Mays and Walt, 2005; Carrin *et al.*, 2010; Cairney, 2012, 2013; Eissler, Russell and Jones, 2014; Cairney, Oliver and Wellstead, 2016; Cairney and Weible, 2017; Crow and Jones, 2018; Weible and Sabatier, 2018) that there is a tremendous change in all the policy processes, starting with agenda-setting, including how ideas get to the table, who is involved (influx of multiple actors) and how they form coalitions and the ideas they carry, and how they make use of "windows of opportunity" to advance their agenda/argument. Also, not forgetting the external influence and power level that existed from the powerful global institutions/organisations which play a key role in how policy is formulated in different countries.

It is believed that today's governments do not wield as much power (level of autonomy) over policy-making as they did in the past decades (Carrin *et al.*, 2010; Walt, 1994; Sabatier, 2014). There is an increasing global policy-making culture, where countries

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begin to copy from each other and adopt policies that might have been ignored or rejected in the past (Gilson, Orgill and Shroff, 2018). Particularly for Africa, its colonial ties and continued dependency on former colonisers reinforce this universally homogenised policy culture that often conflicts with domestic and local settings.

A few years after Zambia's independence, around the 1970s, more new actors joined the public policy sphere. Apart from structural adjustments of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Health Organization (WHO) came on the scene under the umbrella of promoting international health. A series of global health reforms have directed the wave and motion of the healthcare system and, subsequently, the policy life in the health sector (Carrin *et al*., 2010). However, despite Zambia's independence, it did not entirely mean the end of colonial rule. The British administrative systems continue to influence the Zambia public administration system and influence policy-making. However, Zambia is not exempt from the 1990s wave of public sector reform-reinventing government practices (Peters and Pierre, 1998, 2006; Moran, Rein and Goodin, 2008; Peters, 2018, 2019).

In February of the same year, it was reported that the First Lady was invited to share Zambia's experiences at a conference in Mozambique on "Ending Child Marriage and Teen Pregnancies" (Lusakatimes, 2017b). The unprecedented call for criminalisation was further supported through a "submission on child marriage" by Zambia Law Development Commission in August 2020. While the advocacy on the criminalisation of child marriage persists, there are no legal implications against getting pregnant as a teenager or adolescent in Zambia. But getting married before the age of 21 years (the minimum age for marriage) is a constitutional violation if no prior consent is sought from parents or guardians, that is, if the couple is of the same age (Marriage Act, 1994). However, customary law and inherited traditional customs and cultural beliefs create a loophole for early marriage practices as the age for marriage is based on puberty.

The revised National Child Policy (NCP) defines a "child" as any person aged 18 years and below. In 2006, before the 2015 revised National Youth Policy, a "youth" in Zambia was defined as any person aged between 18 and 35 years, but the current policy covers ages 15 to 35 years, in line with the African Youth Charter (Ministry of Youth and Sport, 2015). According to the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (AHSP 2011-2015), adolescents in Zambia face several sexual reproductive health problems.

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The main health-related problems facing adolescents in Zambia include both communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly: Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs), including HIV and AIDS; and behaviour-related health problems, including early and unprotected sex, sexual abuse, early marriages and pregnancies, unsafe abortions, substance and alcohol abuse, accidents and violence, mental health, and unsafe cultural practices. If not detected and addressed early enough, these health problems often lead to severe short- and/or long-term consequences on the health and development of adolescents. (Ministry of Health, 2011a, p. 1).

However, the AHSP (2011-2015) mentions "early" and unprotected sex but does not specify what is meant by "early sex" although this may imply an early sexual debut. In 2014, Comprehensive sexuality education was introduced into the education curriculum to enable the provision of sex education to learners from grades five to twelve. Meanwhile, the ZDHS shows that the median age for first sexual debut ranges between 15.5 to 17.5 for both males and females. But there were variations in early sex debut by region, income and education. The reports significantly also show that 50 per cent of females and 55 per cent of males between 15-19 years *never* had sexual intercourse[2] (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018, p. 69, my emphasis).

Clearly, this is a matter that has come to be seen as a national crisis, yet there seems to be little or no grounded research to back up the claim. It is critical to analyse current policies by gaining a fair understanding of the historical roots - how policies were named and formulated, who the main actors were, and the various forces of power driving the policy life. The aim of a historical analysis of this nature is to generate data from the past and relate it to current trends for possible future policy direction. For example, Koski, Clark and Nandi's (2017) study show a *decline* in child marriage rates in sub-Saharan Africa, including Zambia. The ZDHS confirm a decline in both teen childbearing rates and age at first marriage from 1992-2018 (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018). Thus, statistics show mixed evidence of child marriage as a "national crisis" in Zambia. According to the 2018 survey by the ZDHS, however, regarding the ideal family size, Zambian "women prefer 4.6 children as their ideal family size" while men prefer even bigger families: "4.9 children among men" (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018, p. 89).

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[2] In Zimbabwe,67 per cent females,73 per cent males between 15-19 reported never having sexual intercourse (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency and ICF International, 2015).

Not only is this almost the same as the actual fertility rate, but it suggests a probable degree of choice by women and their desire for childbearing. It also suggests that Zambia's people have a different sense of the good life and when is the "right time" to have a family. This paradox raises relevant questions around the social construction of time and space and the policy issue and how it emerged historically.

Table 1 Timeline of events in adolescent sexual reproductive health matters between 1964-2018

YEAR	TRENDS IN TEEN/ADOLESCENT SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN ZAMBIA
1964	Zambia gains independence
1966	First National Development Plan
1969	MOH establishes the first Maternal and Child Health Unit (MCH)(family planning services included)
1989	National-wide expansion of MCH/Family Planning services
1972	Formation of the Family Planning and Welfare Association of Zambia (FPWAZ)
1979	FPWAZ becomes the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ)
1980	Formation of the Family Life Movement of Zambia (FLMZ) which promoted natural family planning against modern contraceptive use (at the time)
1986	Formation of The Pro-Life Society of Zambia global network which opposed abortion and the use of contraception
1991	* Zambia declared a Christian nation * Increased NGO-isation due to neo-liberal policies
1995	The International Conference on Population and Development(ICPD) Programme of Action call for the elimination of all forms of gender inequality against women and children and ensuring sexual reproductive rights are met including restricts on marriage
2006	National Child Policy (NCP) formed
2008	Adolescent sexual reproductive health first recognised as a concern in the National Reproductive Health Policy (NRHP)
2011	Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (AHSP)
2013	* Africa Union "Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa: Call to Action" *National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (NSECMZ)
2014	* First Lady Christine Kaseba calls for the criminalisation of Child Marriage * Child Marriage declared a "national crisis" by the Minister of Gender *Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)
2015	Revised National Youth Policy (NYP)
2016	Non-governmental Gender Organizations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC) makes a submission to the president on its position concerning the legal and policy framework for Child Marriage in Zambia
2017	First Lady, Esther Lungu, attends the 19th Ordinary General Assembly of the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS Summit
2018	Churches Health Association of Zambia holds a family planning workshop with religious leaders on family planning advocacy and clearing out misconceptions about the church's position

Much scholarly literature presents post-colonial Africa, as torn between promises of modernity and development as well as the realities of everyday survival and the pull of traditions. And as Blystad et al (2020, p. 1) point out, there are parallel discourses about the "problem" in Zambia. They suggest that many Zambians have "questioned schooling as the only solution to secure a girl's future, arguing that there are many reasons why early pregnancy may emerge as rational".

This suggests some of the questions this research seeks to answer: why and how has the issue of teen pregnancy and child marriage been constructed as a national crisis; how was it framed in the past? What can be learnt from a longer view of the problem? More broadly what does modernity mean in the Zambian context of a social collapse, a weak state, dimming economic prospects and increasing inequality? What are the gaps between official policy and reality?

In this thesis, it is suggested that historically, sexual education and becoming of age or an adult rested on the elderly within families and the community and were regarded as an intimate community matter. The right time and social space (spatio-temporalities) for becoming an adult was regulated by elders in a communal mode and this remained outside the privatising logic of Western commodification and the capitalist social clock. But later, after the 1990s, in the liberalised economy, the government, researchers, churches, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assumed a leading role in pushing for new senses of time and space, as the issue became a mainly public/governmental issue finally assessed by the logic of the "economy", religion and capital. Concepts like "teen" also became dominant.

"Teen" pregnancy studies conducted in developed countries (the UK and USA) have long questioned the conventional wisdom, and some authors such as Nathanson (1990), Lawler and Shaw (2002), Duncan (2007), Arai (2009) and others have re-examined the question, "what's wrong with teen pregnancy" and how is the problem constructed and how does it fit into agenda-setting and policy formulation matters? For example, an article titled, "What's the problem with teenage parents? And what's the problem with policy" (Duncan, 2007) reflects the positive experiences of teen mothers and fathers. Another article titled "Too much too young? Teenage pregnancy is not a public health problem" (Lawlor and Shaw, 2002) suggests that researchers need to take a much closer look at the teen pregnancy "problem" before labelling it a public health problem. Lister (2011) similarly

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implored policy analysts to carefully examine contestation around "what is the problem?" while Bacchi (1999) insists on a problem-questioning rather than a problem-solving approach, interrogating problem representation.

These highly contested debates about teen pregnancy and "marriage" mark the need for a more critical, historically informed analysis. The term "teenager" was invented by marketers and began to gain wider currency after World War II in the US (Massoni, 2006) while among social psychologists such as Erikson in the 1960's stages of development. As Cultural anthropologists have studied different lifecycles among various communities (how age and ageing are constructed). Ferguson (1999) points out, the term "marriage" needs unpacking in the local context. Notably, the origin of the word "teenager" and the notion of a teenager have not been fully deconstructed in Zambia. The term "teen pregnancy" seems to be a recent invention. Tied to this is the 1960s distinction between public administration for the West and development administration for the ex-colonies.

However, in the Zambian case, most colonial policy documents of the 1950s use the term "juveniles" and "youth" (National Archives of Zambia, 1957) to refer to young people, and the word "youth" continued to appear in national development plans after independence in 1964. This indicates no categorisation (by age) or adolescence stages of young people. Youth in Zambia were therefore defined as in Britain, reflecting British colonial influence. This categorisation seemed to exclude married young people as marriage was a marker or an indication of responsibility and duty symbolising adulthood. The western words "teen" and "adolescent" were used more frequently and much later in Zambia around 2005. This was highlighted in the National Reproductive Health Policy that first recognised adolescent sexual reproductive health as a concern (Ministry of Health, 2008).

Another dichotomy to be explored in a Zambian context that needs "re-articulation" is that of the "traditional" and "Christian" versus "modernity" (as described above on the policy disagreements) which is not explored fully in the public policy theories that are mainly tailored to the American system. Moreover, there is a strange silence about young women (adolescents/teenagers), childbearing, marriage and pregnancy in many feminist texts. For example, Lister (1999, 2002, 2011, 2012; Lister and Campling, 2017), who has written extensively on women's issues-disadvantages, sexual citizenship and stigma, rarely discusses the plight of young girls/women's vulnerability in society. This presents a theoretical limitation to suit the African context.

This leads to some of the questions this research seeks to answer: what are the main problem representations highlighted by different actors, what solutions are sought and advocated, and how is blame is apportioned? How is spatio-temporality contested in the domain of sexual reproduction in Zambia? Using Bacchi's problem-questioning rather than problem-solving approach, I explore how problem representations also have implications for how policy seeks to name and constitute "problems" in a way that some benefit while others are potentially harmed.

This research is a historically informed analysis dating back to 1964 when Zambia gained independence to trace issues around teen sexual behaviour, marriage, sex, and the family. It draws from the concept of path dependence/longue durée to look into history in order to understand why and how things are the way they are now. The study further examines the political environment focusing on different policy actors and political strategies used in public policy. Certainly, the issue of teen pregnancy and early/child marriage is not a new one. There are different discourses of how the issue is perceived in terms of politics, policy and the public/community at large over time. This study is limited to analysing the problematisation of policy formulation; therefore, it does not seek to evaluate policy outcomes or the implementation process per se.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Population, overpopulation and development have been controversial issues in the social sciences ever since Thomas Malthus (Maltus, 2006). Many external actors have come onto the scene under the umbrella of global health and have pushed against "harmful practices" such as child marriage, which has emerged as a global health issue for the past years as a threat to and violation of children/women's rights (UNICEF,2001; UNFPA,2015; WHO, 2000-2015,2020).

The elimination of teen pregnancies and child marriage is now seen as a matter of emergency, especially for Africa and other developing countries. As such, the teen pregnancy prevention agenda in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) has been heavily driven by the global health as well as the human rights community. Reports from the UN agencies involved in children and young people all seem to highlight the "harmfulness" of teen pregnancy and child marriage with a special focus on Africa (UNICEF, 2001; UNFPA, 2012; UNICEF, 2013, 2019; WHO,2014). Teen pregnancy and child marriage are now at the

core of adolescent sexual reproductive health and amongst the hottest topics not only in reproductive health but also in education and politics.

Despite the policies mentioned above designed to address teen pregnancy and child marriage, issues still remain intensely debated within contradictory discourses and contested in practice. What is intriguing is how much this "serious problem" has attracted sudden attention from political leaders over the past four years in Zambia. It is also unclear why the topic emerged as a public problem and was declared a "national crisis" when statistics show the opposite trend. Africa's problems are often studied in decontextualised and homogenised ways, with research methods duplicated from western scholars (Mkhwanazi, 2006; Tamale, 2011).

The overall objective of this study was to use a longer view to bring insights into contemporary problem representations and policy issues on teen sexual matters. Therefore, I argue for an "open view" perspective to viewing the problem.

My research objectives were as follows;

1. To review how teen pregnancy and child marriage were perceived, defined and addressed in the past compared to the contemporary debates.
2. To examine how the issue is explored by different actors (state and non-state actors), tracing dominant constructs and solutions including their implications.
3. To explore alternative problem representations and definitions of teen/adolescent sexual behaviour and the government's policy response focusing on selected teen/adolescent sexual-related policies (2012-2016).

The key research questions are;

1. How does history matter in relation to policy intervention?
2. How have the government and other different actors viewed and responded to the issue over time?
3. What changes/developments can be seen in how the problem has been perceived over time and can the problem be viewed differently?
4. What lessons can be learnt for policy scholars, what is ignored, misperceived and what are the implications?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, KEY CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study draws heavily on the concept of social construction. According to Birkland (2011, p. 188), "the process of defining problems and of selling a broad population on this definition, is called social construction". I adopt this definition in this study, and I further refer to Schneider and Ingram's (1993) social construction of target populations which is

particularly relevant to this study. It postulates that policy designs often reflect dominant constructions of knowledge, categorisations of groups and certain values and interests from certain powerful groups. Schneider and Ingram (2012) further argue that this can undermine the very essence of democratic institutions, promote social division and limit problem-solving.

In this research, social construction fits into the "unexamined negative" views about teen pregnancy and child marriage, the categorisation of the "conforming" and "non-conforming" young people to the national moral values. For example, those who are sexually active are seen as perpetrators of national moral decay and cannot be allowed access to reproductive health services despite the MOH's provision. Thus, for example, both the CSE and NSECMZ do not consider the provision of adolescent sexual reproductive health services. This ultimately limits problem-solving avenues. This ties in with Bacchi's (1999) What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR), which states that problem representations have implications on how policy seeks to divide problems and address them in a way that some benefit while others are potentially harmed. Thus, in further analysing these policy responses, I apply the WPR framework.

"Every policy or policy proposal is a prescriptive text, setting out a practice that relies on a particular problematisation ____[Therefore], it is possible to take any policy proposal and to work backwards to deduce how it produces a problem" (Bacchi 2012, p. 4). Since the choice of solutions to a problem is determined by how a problem is defined, it becomes necessary to start by problem questioning rather than problem-solving, as Bacchi suggests. Chapter three provides more details on the other related concepts useful to this study and some of their limitations to the Zambian context.

Some key concepts/terms used in this study include; "teen"/ "adolescent" pregnancy/ "childbearing", "child marriage" "problematisation", "problem representation", "dominant constructs" and "social construction". Even though I do not entirely agree with the inventions of the word "teen", "teenager", or "adolescent", I use the terms "teen pregnancy" and "adolescent pregnancy" interchangeably according to the dominant narrative. I also use the term "young people" to refer to age groups below 18. Teen pregnancy/childbearing in the context of this research covers the age from 13-19 years. In this study, teen pregnancy refers to any pregnant female between 13-19 years. The NSECHZ defines child marriage "as the legal marriage or informal union before the age of 18"

(Ministry of Gender, 2016, p. 1), while the UNFPA describes it as "a legal or customary union between two people, of whom one or both spouses is below the age of 18" (United Nations Population Fund, 2012, p. 3). It is also referred to as early or forced marriage, depending on the agenda being driven. I adopt both definitions in this study to allow for a broader perspective but do not equate child marriage to forced marriage.

The term "problematisation" involves "standing back" from "objects" and "subjects", presumed to be objective and unchanging, in order to consider their "conditions of emergence" and hence their mutability (Bacchi, 2012, p. 1). In simpler terms, the concept of problematisation seeks to make sense of "problems" through historical conjunctures, practices and processes. Thus, in the context of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia, problematisation means reviewing how the issue has come to be categorised as a serious problem over the past decade. I refer to Bacchi's (1999) way of analysing problematisation by carefully examining "problem representations" in policies addressing teen sexual matters. By "problem representations", I refer to the different problem definitions attached to the problem and how it is framed. Finally, the term "dominant constructs" refers to taken-for-granted views that remain unquestioned over time and can be difficult to change.

This study is a historically informed analysis following a path dependence and longue durée approach dating back to 1964 when Zambia gained independence to trace teen sexual behaviour, marriage, sex, and the family. At the same time, it examines the political environment focusing on different policy actors and political strategies used in public policy. Certainly, the issue of teen pregnancy and early/child marriage is not a new one, and there are different discourses of how the issue is perceived in terms of politics, policy and the public/community at large over time. Thus, it is critical to analyse current policies by gaining a fair understanding of the historical roots, how policies were named and formulated, who the main actors were, and the various forces of power driving the policy agenda. The aim of a historical analysis of this nature is to generate data from the past and relate it to current trends for possible future policy direction.

The scope of this study is limited to analysing the problematisation of teen sexual behaviour by the government and non-state actors and the policy responses/interventions addressing the problem. Therefore, it does not seek to evaluate policy outcomes or the implementation process.

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This study uses a qualitative multimodal research design using archival material, newspapers, policy documents, parliamentary speeches, interviews with selected organisations and documentaries. It was analysed through differential policy analyses and theoretical approaches to the social construction of public problems.

The significance of this study is to unravel and unpack possible alternative ways of thinking about "taken for granted" problem constructions that are ignored or overlooked to produce useful information. This can be documented (to mark a reference point) as background to contemporary problem representations and policy issues around teen sexual matters. Moreover, this research opens up debates necessary, particularly for African academicians, to question how Africa is researched and be mindful of the application of western methodologies in research. Therefore, we as African researchers should copy and make use of only what applies to our African context.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study aimed at seeking new insights and possibly undocumented information relevant to the topic under investigation. Undoubtedly, Zambia has evolved since 1964 and is now largely responsive to the global priority of the homogenised global policy culture and the effects of the colonial path-dependent system. For example, the health sector has undergone massive public health reform and restructuring resulting from a wave of global health agenda over the past years. This led to change and transformation in the policy process, comprised of an influx of governance networks (various policy actors) seeking to address adolescent sexual reproductive health needs. Other ministries like gender and education have not been excluded from this transformation. Additionally, introducing new ministries like the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs strategically contributes to the global policy agenda.

One of the important aspects of this research is that it is a historical review. The findings contribute to documenting past information that can be referred to as there appear to be limited studies that question and interrogate the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem from a historical point of view and social construction lens to gain insight into the current "moral panic" about the issue in Zambia. In addition, this study generates information that alternative problem representations about teen pregnancy and child marriage have ignored and potentially address pitfalls in policy choices and intervention. By

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way of illustration, the tables below show that while "culture might be relatively constant" over the long duree', there seem to be remarkable shifts in population growth and other data that present research conundrums. Especially notable is the 1985-1995 period.

This thesis consists of ten chapters. The chapter outline is as follows; Introduction; Constructions of Africa and the Methodological Approach; Policy Analysis Frameworks for the Construction of Public Problems; The Social Construction of the "Teen" Pregnancy Problem in General and in Africa; Zambia's Troubled Entry into "Modernity"; Women, Youth, Family, Humanism and Beyond; The Zambian Government's Policy Perspective on Adolescent Sexual Matters; Non-State Actors and Religious Perspective; The Contemporary Politicisation of Teen Pregnancy and, finally, the Concluding Remarks and Reflections. In this thesis, the results and analysis are integrated mainly in chapters five to nine. Chapters one to four introduce the topic and provide the foundation/base for building the main thesis and arguments. Thus, following the nature of the research question addressed, the structure of this thesis does not follow the conventional thesis structure that has a separate chapter for the findings or the data analysis.

Chapter One

This chapter gave an overview of the research problem, background to the research design, significance of the study and limitations. It introduced readers to what the research is about and how it was conducted. I have highlighted teen pregnancy making news and what has been said about it, mostly in the Zambian media (newspapers by political actors). Finally, I highlight the problem statement, objectives and research questions and design.

Chapter Two

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section begins to broadly discuss the dominant constructs about Africa as a continent and how this is linked to how problems are perceived and solved. It highlights Africa's distinct position globally and how all this trickles down to a continued legacy of post-colonial dependency and its effects on public policy. This section discusses in detail the cultural monopoly - how the Western culture continuously seeks to dominate the African culture and African ideas of the social clock and community as a social space. The picture presented about Africa is a negative one and has also affected how Africa is researched.

Moreover, Africa, as an object of study, attracts negative dominant constructions about African sexuality. Such negative constructions obstruct the objectivity of research

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trickled down to how teen pregnancy and child marriage are researched. Notably, more research on Africa is conducted by non-Africans with a less contextual understanding of lived experiences and homogenised path-dependent methodological approaches that do not fit into the African setting. These discussions raise a call for an Africanised future research agenda aligned with African sexual reproductive matters.

The second part highlights the research approach used in this study, the research design and the data collection process. I highlight the mixed data analysis approach used to interpret the data gathered. I also cover the research ethics employed during the data collection process and highlight the limitations encountered. This section aims to demonstrate clearly the whole research process to help the reader understand how information was gathered and used to answer the research questions.

Chapter Three

This chapter explains the theoretical base for this research study. It highlights a mixture of concepts that form the foundation of the research question. I discuss in detail the nature of social problems and social construction from a broader perspective. The policy analysis frameworks for understanding the constructions of public problems are discussed in detail. The concepts of the social construction of target populations, path dependency, bounded rationality, narrative policy framework and "what's the problem represented to be" approach are applied in examining discourses on teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. The chapter further presents the usefulness and the limitations of these predominately US-based public policy theories and models applied to the African and Zambian contexts.

Chapter Four

This chapter highlights the global discourses on the social construction of teen pregnancy from a global and African perspective. Examples of studies conducted on teen pregnancy from the USA, UK, and other high-income countries are cited. Historically, the literature shows teen pregnancy as a social problem, health problem and public policy problem. But some researchers like Arai (2011), Furstenburg (2007), Nathanson (1991), Duncan (2007), Rhode (1994) and others have questioned the negative dominant constructs about teen pregnancy and sought to research teen pregnancy that highlighted lived positive experiences. These studies challenged the "moral panic" about teen pregnancies mainly presented as problematic by political officials at that time. This relates to how the topic has

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been viewed in the past recent years in Africa and Zambia. The dominant view is that teen pregnancy and child marriage have devastating effects. It has attracted global attention and invited legislation amendments to curb early/child marriage, leading to state policy interventions. Like other African countries, Zambia has implemented a national strategy to end child marriage in Zambia by 2023.

However, studies citing both positive and negative experiences of teen pregnancy and child marriage are discussed (debating the "dominant" versus the "open view"). Most importantly, it highlights the gap in knowledge on the presentation of teen pregnancy research (in Zambia and Africa) that mainly presents the negative side without much contextualisation.

Chapter Five

This chapter highlights Zambia's brief historical political and structural elements. It discusses national ideologies (humanism, liberalisation, Tradition versus Christianity) and how they influence politics and public policy. Also, different institutions and groups play an important role in influencing policy change, particularly in Zambia. Even more important are the ideas that these policy actors strategically use to win the support of the masses. Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation created a window of opportunity for many (political actors and organisations alike) to showcase their agendas and deflect secular time into heavenly time. Narrowing down to discuss precolonial contributions to initiation ceremonies and contradictory debates on these practices. Sexual activities and sexual reproductive health matters and personal moral conduct all seem to be measured according to biblical principles. Christianity remains the strong instrument of power and plays a very important role in wielding political power and public policy-making in Zambia. The nation finds itself troubled and trapped in a triplex clash of Christianity, modernity and indigenous tradition. The chapter further discusses the strong triplex antagonism in detail and how the Christian way dominates the nation's governance systems. This has implications for how to view and examine the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda in Zambia. Both chapters five and six address objective one.

Chapter Six

The chapter focuses on women, youth and the family in the context of humanism. It describes the way of life during the "humanism era"[3], the youth and how they were groomed into adulthood. It highlights the importance and value of family, marriage and the community in the African Spatio-temporal setting reflected in the Zambian context too. Moreover, strong ties of colonial influence are discussed and how this affected the traditional society before British influence.

An important element highlighted in this chapter is the role that sex education played in shaping young people's behaviour and the government's programmes to keep young people occupied and far from destruction. The words "teen" or "adolescent" do not even appear in national policy documents. This potentially indicates that there is a high possibility that, even though teen pregnancy and child marriage were present, they were not recognised as "problematic" in this era. This chapter is particularly significant in providing information about how sexual matters were perceived (particularly as a private, not a public or a government issue) and addressed.

Chapter Seven

This chapter describes the government's policy response and intervention in addressing teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. First, I discuss the legal framework concerning teen sexual matters and analyse the prevalence rates from the ZDHSs (1992-2014). Secondly, key government ministries implementing policies in response to teen sexual matters are described, and the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of General Education, and the Ministry of Gender are discussed in detail. The policies discussed include; the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (AHSP) 2011-2015, the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), and the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (NSECMZ) 2016-2021.

Furthermore, intergovernmental policy clashes and contradictions are discussed extensively. For example, the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs minister opposed the implementation of the CSE by the Ministry of General Education, stating it was against the nation's Christian values. In addition, parliamentarians expressed their views on

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[3] The term humanism is widely used to describe the post 1964 era and its professed brand of nationalist ideology. Zambian humanism was coined by the first president, Kaunda to designate a special brand of African socialism and pre-colonial communal values. In retrospect scholars disagree on how much of it was practised especially under the one-party system. In this thesis I will use the term simply to designate an era without implying that I believe that the era was indeed "humanist".

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family planning, teen pregnancy and child marriage, sex education, and traditional versus modern approaches to addressing teen sexual matters. The key message from this chapter is that the government's perspective on teen sexual matters presents mixed messages and clashing policy approaches. This leaves much room for interpretation in terms of policy misdirection and "mis-intervention". Chapters five to seven address objective one.

Chapter Eight

This chapter presents findings from the data collected through google questionnaire forms sent to four non-state actors (Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), Forum for African Women Educationalist of Zambia (FAWEZA), and the Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council (NGOCC). It describes the NGO's perspective on the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem. In this perspective, NGOs are perceived as "modern missionaries". The questionnaire covered questions about the genesis of teen pregnancy and child marriage and what made it a popular topic; who are villains, victims and heroes in the discourse; what role do the specific organisations play in influencing policy change; the role of the church and Christianity; and views on ending child marriage in Zambia.

The chapter provides empirical data on how NGOs view teen pregnancy and child marriage. The overall finding is that all four NGOs shared the same views on the problem definition and the solutions to teen pregnancy and child marriage. In line with the dominant-negative constructs about teen pregnancy and child marriage, they all highlight it as a serious problem that has devastating effects on the girl child. They also advocate and promote safe sex approaches like access to condoms and family planning services, doing away with certain traditional practices and welcoming the implementation of the controversial sex education (CSE) as the best approach to tackle teen pregnancy and child marriage. This chapter addresses objective two.

Chapter Nine

Chapter nine provides a summary of the main arguments presented in this thesis. Bacchi's What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR) the approach provides a clear and simple way of interrogating problem representations. The problematisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage elaborates on the problem representation and the legal frameworks. Using Bacchi's approach the chapter discusses the problem representation of teen pregnancy and child marriage. The approach asks six questions to examine the problem

representation. The questions include; (i) What is the problem represented from the global perspective to the national strategy on ending child marriage in Zambia? (ii) What are the assumptions of the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage, and how did they come about? (iii) What has not been highlighted about the problem (what is ignored) and are there other ways to think about the problem? (iv) How is the representation of the problem produced, defended and disseminated? (v) What are the implications produced by this representation of the "problem"? and, finally, (vi) How could the problem representations be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

These questions help to examine the discourses on teen pregnancy and child marriage. Unveiling and unpacking the problem representation gives a deeper understanding of the social and political construction of social problems in the Zambian context. Thus, this chapter unravels empirical discussions in questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda. This chapter addresses objective three.

Chapter Ten

Finally, this concluding chapter summarises the whole thesis. It presents the main findings on present and past perceptions of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. The chapter highlights the study's scholarly contribution to the gaps in Zambian scholarship, the results implications, and the way forward for a new research agenda on adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. This connects the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage to the broader economic, social, political and religious context. Understanding the sexual-related problems of young people should not be narrowed to immediate outcomes or assumptions. Instead, we need to dig deeper for insights through a longue durée and multifaceted approach. For example, how Christianity dominates the scene and creates a continued path-dependent colonial system that undermines indigenous knowledge systems and culture. The clear picture presented is how religion (Christianity) plays a huge role in carrying forward a colonial legacy that has inevitably become the nation's identity borrowed from the many years of colonial rule.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTIONS OF AFRICA AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses constructions about Africa and how this reflects how African problems and solutions are perceived. This will provide a richer perspective on Zambia's problem-solving and policy approaches. The overall argument is that the dominant-negative constructions about Africa have serious implications for how research is conducted in Africa, how problems are perceived and solved. The second part explains the methodological approaches employed in this research.

Due to Africa's weak and disadvantaged position after being formerly colonised by the "advanced" capitalist nations, much of Africa "appears" to be based on social constructs developed by the colonisers. As a result, the African continent is construed by analogical reasoning and is most often seen negatively as lacking this or that feature found in European constructions of modernity or civilization. This construction is fundamentally temporal (see Ferguson 2006) and has dominated the world's view of Africa and its people as needing to catch up with the West and that over time Africa will become "developed". This chapter discusses the influence of these kinds of constructions on how Africa is researched, how social problems are perceived/defined, and the policy approaches to problem-solving.

The main point of attack on Africa is its "culture". African culture is perceived to be contrary to the "normal modern way of life". African time interestingly is a stereotypical racist construction. This has led to the adoption of externally influenced ideas as the best solutions for managing society and its social problems. Many African customs are seen as harmful and labelled as human rights violations because they are viewed as inferior to Western culture. Moreover, African culture is perceived as a toxic culture that should be eradicated and replaced by Western culture. This includes the constructions about African sexuality, marriage, motherhood, childbearing and sexual activity and the African way of life as organised around community spaces and time. This, therefore, has direct implications on how family, pregnancy and child marriage and age appropriateness are perceived.

PART ONE: AFRICA: DOMINANT CONSTRUCTIONS

Constructions about Africa are omnipresent and range from the macro to micro; from the "state" to "non-state actors", and from notions of "private" to "public", often based on binaries. Constructions about Africa (in this context) refer to how the African continent is viewed and rendered "knowable" from the dominant western literature and "international" perspective. Most often, as Mamdani (1996) argues, Africa is studied in relation to Western norms and hence by analogy. Mamdani (1996) says Africa is understood as "history by analogy", using examples and models from Europe to shape concepts for which Africa's deviation from the universal model must be assessed. Mamdani (1996) further criticises the tendency to normatively transpose concepts like state, civil society, life stages and family onto Africa.

James Ferguson (2006) sees "tradition" in Africa as a complex term used in scholarly discourse to denote backwardness/underdevelopment as a *stage* opposed to modernity/development. It is a time-based linear concept which presupposes that backward nations are at the start of a historical process and need time to get over traditions to inexorably become modern. He is critical of the time-based evolutionist usage of the term as well as assumptions that modern means a distinct "archetypal package" – nuclear families, liberal individualism, secular worldview, and critical rationalism. According to David Harvey, "European colonisation imposed quite alien conceptions of time and space upon indigenous populations and in so doing altered forever the social framework within the reproduction of these peoples could if at all, take place"(Harvey, 1996, p. 222).

The world's view of Africa is that of a troubled continent in crisis. As Ferguson (2006, p. 2) puts it;

> when we hear about 'Africa' today [from the international community], it
> is usually in urgent and troubled tones. It is never just Africa but always
> the crisis in Africa, the problems of Africa, the failure of Africa.

The picture painted consistently about Africa in the media and international reports or documentaries depicts the continent with a "series of lacks and absences, failings and problems, plagues and catastrophes" (Ferguson, 2006, p. 2). The stories told about Africa have been so well narrated hence creating dominant constructs that influence the definition of social problems, policy solutions as well as research on Africa. Poverty and backwardness (in terms of culture, religion and appreciation of science) are among the dominant

constructs of how Africa is described, symbolised and (mis)represented. Burke (1996) has documented racial depictions of how Africans were seen to be dirty and diseased during colonial times. "The African world was a world of universal dirt and filth, while their [European] own social world was its opposite, cleansed and pure"(Burke, 1996, p. 20).

> White settlers [in Zimbabwe] vehemently and repeatedly characterised Africans as filthy, depraved, and ugly. Most whites, regardless of their institutional or professional affiliations, agreed with the first Anglican bishop of Mashonaland that Africans were a 'repulsive degradation of humanity'(Burke, 1996, p. 19).

Ironically, even the evangelist spreading the message of Christianity had this negative perception of Africa as the "great unwashed". It has also been alleged that Africans generally lived like wild animals before the Europeans brought their civilisation to the continent (Burke, 1996). Being European meant being clean, and cleanness was defined as the "primary art of civilised life"(Burke, 1996, p. 20). Such is Africa's depiction, and even though the continent has undergone massive development, these views about Africa remain consistent, unquestioned and dominant. Very little is known, and no interest is shown in pre-colonial indigenous health and hygienic practices.

Moreover, the history (both told and written) about Africa has played a vital role in solidifying negative views about Africa. When we go back to our history, we realise that most of what is written is not as we have experienced it, but we still comply with the Western view of our history. This compliance has allowed African scholars to be outsiders of their own histories as they heard them being told and re-told in a very judgemental manner. Smith (2012, p. 2) points out that;

> indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell which not only question the assumed nature of those ideals and the practices that they generate but also serve to tell an alternative story: the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized. These counter-stories are powerful forms of resistance which are repeated and shared across diverse indigenous communities.

Notably, Africa having being rooted in colonial knowledge systems, much of the history about Africa in the literature and taught in schools is the Westernised view of African history. However, even after more than 50 years of African states gaining political independence, the education curriculum remains nearly unchanged. The early schools

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redefined the knowledge referred to today to change how indigenous communities were positioned within the world (Smith, 2012).

> From being direct descendants of sky and earth parents, Christianity positioned some of us as higher-order savages who deserved salvation in order that we could become children of God. Maps of the world reinforced our place on the periphery of the world, although we were still considered part of the Empire. This included having to learn new names for our own lands. Other symbols of our loyalty, such as the flag, were also an integral part of the imperial curriculum. Our orientation to the world was already being redefined as we were being excluded systematically from the writing of the history of our own lands (Smith, 2012, p. 34).

In the African setting, most indigenous places and landmarks had their original traditional names replaced by colonial ones, which are still used today. History plays a significant role in understanding past ideals and making decisions about the future. However, if there is a wrong or distorted account of past events and ideals, this affects the future course of action too.

The social construction view, while often thought of as relativism, however, stipulates that "a group that can create and promote the most effective depiction of an issue has an advantage in the battle over what, if anything, will be done about a problem"(Birkland, 2011, p. 188). This also entails that the hegemonic group with the most convincing story has the upper hand in influencing whatever happens next. In the African case, the successful group are the former colonisers who have used a fraction of the profits made in Africa for philanthropy and to "help" Africans. Over time, they have convinced the whole world that Africa is a problematic continent and needs global assistance and external solutions to its problems.

It is clear that the former colonisers hold a singular view about Africa, and no other alternative view can contend with the dominant constructs. The nature of dominant constructs is that they are difficult to change, and become woven into common sense even as power (often money/funding) comes into play as a reinforcing agent. It is through strong narratives (by those with power) that beliefs and actions take shape. This shows a very close link between history and power. Those with power tell a powerful story, and it automatically becomes unchangeable. Smith (2012, p. 35) states that history is the "story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others". The linkage between

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history and power is what has led to Africa not only being negatively construed but undermined, marginalised and placed in a position of powerlessness.

Social construction is also about how people or individuals (even subordinate ones) give meaning to issues, things, or objects in a manner that is influenced by their environment, culture, personal, and often past experiences (Clarke and Cochrane, 1998). Mbembe (2001, p. 2) states that;

> in several respects, Africa still constitutes one of the metaphors through which the West represents the origin of its own norms, develops a self-image, and integrates this image into the set of signifiers asserting what it supposes to be identity. And Africa, because it was and remains that fissure between what the West is, what it thinks it represents, and what it thinks it signifies, is not simply part of its imaginary significations, it is one of those significations. By imaginary significations, we mean "that something invented" that, paradoxically, becomes necessary because "that something" plays a key role, both in the world the West constitutes for itself and in the West's apologetic concerns and exclusionary and brutal practices towards others.

However, it has been pointed out that Africa, before the adoption of the so-called European civilisation, had a way of governing itself, often without many hurdles. For example, in matters of hygiene, before the introduction of soap, Africans used other forms of cleaning, but according to the Europeans, the only way to be clean was by using soap (Burke, 1996). Just because Africans did not use soap, they were not clean enough.

> For most twentieth-century Westerners, soap has defined hygiene. Where it and similar commodities have been absent, Westerners have perceived a complete absence of cleanliness. However, all Southern African peoples prior to colonialism had their own clearly defined hygienic rules and codes as well as ideas about what constituted proper physical appearance and personal manners (Burke, 1996, p. 24).

From the above statement, it is easy to observe that the African way of doing things is not considered the right or correct way. There has been consistent domination of Western culture as the only true path to civilisation.

The Western world considered itself duty-bound to carry the burden of 'civilising' Africans through the introduction of European civilisation. The 'civilising mission' meant influencing Africans to embrace modern lifestyles and abandon their indigenous culture and belief systems, including witchcraft. The African culture and belief systems were to be replaced with Christianity and modernity (Kalusa and Phiri, 2014, p. 8).

Kalusa further notes the missionary influence by describing Mable Shaw[4] school's evangelising mission. He notes that Mable Shaw sought to influence girls' clothing behaviours as

part of the wider evangelical crusade designed to recreate African material culture in conformity with western domesticity and Christianity. Through this hegemonic project, Mabel Shaw hoped no less to convert African girls to Christianity than prepare them for Christian girlhood, womanhood and marriage (Kulasa,2022, p. 62).

The same thing is still being replicated now when certain cultural practices are called out to be "harmful". The media depictions of Africa have successfully told the story in a way that even African governments themselves believe that the African belief system is the source of many social problems. The narrative policy framework describes a devil-angel shift narrative strategy to tell a more convincing story by exaggerating the opponents' bad traits and showing that only their solutions are the best (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the Western culture is seen as "good" (in the name of civilisation), while the African one is "harmful". This is what has led to the adoption of Western policies that appear to be in perpetual contrast with the African belief systems.

CULTURAL MONOPOLY

According to Mbembe (2001), the general assumption is that African social formations are particularly described as simple or traditional societies characterised by "facticity and arbitrariness". These "societies are seen as living under the burden of charms, spells, and prodigies, and resistance to change" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 4). In the colonisers' eyes, getting indigenous people to live "the right way" became imperative because only their culture was considered the "proper" way a civilised human being should live. The civilising mission

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[4] A well known british missionary and pioneer of an evangelical and educational mission for girls in boarding school during precolonial Zambia. She sought to educate girls in home craft along side deep rooted christian values.She established a boarding school for girls and named it after herself,thus it was regarded as one of the most prestigeous boarding schools for girls in Laupula province.

emerged most strongly when the labour of Africans was required. "Africans were presented as the exact opposite of idealised Europeans, also in their [primitive] sexuality, in order to give an ideological legitimisation to the colonisation" (Gausset, 2001, p. 510).

Anything to do with Africa and its customs seemed to be perceived as not human. For example, African sexuality was described "as wild, animal-like, exotic, irrational and immoral" (Gausset, 2001, p. 510). African sexual practices have been frowned upon without considering the general view that a group of people practising a particular culture will see their practices as normal. Gausset (2001) gives examples of rumours and decontextualised African traditional sex practices by European travellers, colonial administrators and researchers, for example, practices like polygamy, sexual cleansing (a woman sleeping with a relative of the deceased to be cleansed from the husband's dead spirit), dry sex, pulling of the virginal labia, female circumcision and female genital mutilation (FGM), among others.

> These practices were ethnocentrically described either as irrational (lacking any cultural or social explanation) or as immoral. African men were described as sexually wild and insatiable. The authors, moreover, focused on various beliefs, such as those linked to sexual taboos, witchcraft and its effect on impotence or infertility, the use of love magic, the role of ancestors and spirits in the conception of children, etc. These taboos and beliefs were described as irrational, and little effort was made to understand the broader socio-cultural context in which they were embedded (Gausset, 2001, p. 510).

Similarly, Kaputa (2015), a Namibian historian, wrote a book review called "Wrongly Framed" to correct the wrong information presented by a foreign/non-African author Talavera (2002) in a book titled "Challenging the Namibian perception of sexuality-a case study of Ovahimba and Ovaherero cultural sexual models in Kunene North in an HIV/AIDs context". The book gives an account of the sexual cultural misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the Ovaherero people in north Kunene of Namibia. In his book, Kaputa sought to set the record straight on the false sexual cultural claims made about the Ovaherero community. The sexual misconceptions stated that;

> abstinence is not seen as a natural phenomenon: cattle do not abstain from sex, and neither do goats or horses. The cultural reality of the ovahimba-ovaherero child is that they are exposed to the natural procreation among animals (Kaputa, 2015, p. 21).

This would imply that children were oriented to the animal kind of sex, and that would exactly be how it would be translated in the human context. Kaputa (2015, p. 21) further

argues that this expression presents the notion that "there is no sexual mutual consent among the Ovaherero communities and the Otjiherero has no equivalence for Abstinence, Faithfulness and Adolescence". Kaputa (2015, p.21) further highlights three impressions of the represented picture of the sex life of the Ovaherero. Firstly, "that these people do not abstain from sex, first because the term abstinence "does not exist" in their lexicon (word list)".

Secondly, "that they replicate or copy animal sexual behaviour", but at the same time oral sex has been copied from the West, which is not an animal sexual practice. "If it is the case in the Western context, then Talavera (2002) is wrong in assuming that copying animal sexuality is, in fact, an African indigenous Ovahimba community's practice". Lastly, women are seen to be just like "cows" taken to the bull, "the women here are forced into sex".

From Kaputa's (2015, p. 12) argument Talavera is a "classic textbook example of cultural misinterpretation. It has neglected to recognise the "distinct socio-cultural settings" of its target communities". This indeed is the true picture of Africa's representation likened to animal behaviour, as Gausset (2001) describes.

Another example is sexual cleansing in Zambia, which, as a sex practice, seems to fit into the ideal of animal-like sexual behaviour and has been closely linked to high HIV prevalence rates. Below I highlight two texts on sexual cleansing in Zambia. The first is by Taylor (2006) titled "Culture and Customs of Zambia".

> Because a woman is considered to have married a family and clan and community as much as an individual, upon the death of her husband, she would not ordinarily return to her birth family but would remain instead in her late husband's village. The husband's nearest male relative, typically an elder brother or an uncle, would then inherit the widow, caring of (sic) her and her children as his own. In the precolonial, pre-Christian period, this nearly always resulted in the husband's kinsman taking his erstwhile sister-in-law as another wife. Although this continues in some areas today, more likely, the widow will simply have to have sex with the surviving male relative. Those who support this rite argue that it helps the woman avoid future promiscuity and that it appeases the spirit of the deceased. _____ [T]he importance attached to the spirit realm persists even in the contemporary period, and it is believed that if the deceased's wife is effectively abandoned, punishment will be visited upon the family. Thus, cleansing is, in some ways, a reflection of the strong bonds of community and of belonging.

Moreover, he argues,

On the other hand, it is also indicative of the subordinate status of women, even widows, who are most vulnerable, who do not have the power to control their own bodies. In addition to this discriminatory aspect, obviously, in an age of HIV and AIDS, cleansing is a ritual that harbours potentially deadly consequences.____First, the man selected to cleanse may himself be HIV-positive. It is not uncommon for the chief to select the same man for the job for years, and he may have contracted the disease himself. Second, the husband may have died of complications from AIDS, thereby putting the cleanser and his own wife and family at risk. This practice has been condemned not only by foreign aid workers and AIDS activists but by Zambians themselves: everyone from NGO staffers to health professionals. The former minister of health, Professor Nkandu Luo [then Minister of Health], herself lambasted the continuation of cleansing at the 1999 International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa (Taylor, 2006, p. 106).

The second text (on the same subject) is from a widely read book by Loryman (2018) titled "Zambia-cultural smart: The essential guide to customs and culture".

In rural parts of Zambia, a process of "sexual cleansing" or "purification" of the widow or widower takes place after the death of a spouse. The idea is that sexual intercourse will chase away the spirit of the dead from the living partner. In Bemba, this practice is referred to as kupyanika, and in Tonga as kusalazya, and it is carried out by a relative of the dead spouse. Failure to undertake it is thought to bring bad luck, and those who refuse to undergo it risk being cursed and despised by the village. Naturally, the surviving spouses agree to unprotected sex out of fear, even though the HIV/AIDS status of the person performing the ritual is unknown. Of course, if the survivor is HIV positive, the disease will transmit to the "cleanser". A widow is inherited in what is called a levirate marriage, where she will marry the person who performed the "sexual cleansing." This archaic practice, which regards a woman as a piece of property, is widely condemned as barbaric in Zambia, and is outlawed by the government and chiefs (Loryman, 2018, pp. 64–65).

Both these texts present women as helpless concerning sex decisions outlined by tradition. Loryman (2018) uses words like "archaic" and "barbaric" to describe the practice, while Taylor (2006) uses a political leader to show how deeply condemned the practice is. However, this same culture that is condemned is, for others, normal and acceptable. Taylor (2006) further adds that this practice promotes a sense of belonging and community bonding. Even though it is pointed out that the government condemns such "harmful" practices, there is a mismatch between upholding the indigenous culture and identity versus the western view that seeks to fight human rights violations. In this instance, most cultural

practices were cited for hindering the fight against HIV/AIDs. Again here, African culture is presented in a judgemental fashion and without much thought about the context.

While it may be true that sexual cleansing could have potentially contributed to increased HIV/AIDs infections, it is not the culture that is bad. Unprotected sex is the means by which the transmission and spread of disease occur. As Gausset (2001) points out, it is not the cultural practice that is wrong or leads to the contraction of HIV, but the option of not using protection makes one susceptible to the infection.

> Sexual cleansing [is] only problematic if ___ systematically practised without condoms or testing the blood of the widow (and of the brother of the deceased) before the man inherits her. Yet, my own experience from Zambia shows that people are usually aware of the problem. When they suspect that a man has died of AIDS, people either cleanse the widows with herbal remedies instead of a sexual cleansing or test the blood of the widow before cleansing her sexually. In the case of the alternative cleansing, culture has shown to be flexible enough to adapt to the new threat (Gausset, 2001, p. 513).

The emphasis here is that the practice of sexual cleansing may be meaningful and valued by those who believe in it. Depriving them of their beliefs is tantamount to oppression and indigenous cultural discrimination. It also displays insensitivity to the politics of difference (Young, 2011) and a tendency to invoke false universality. If this practice poses potential harm, such as the risk of infection, it is recommended to suggest ways to protect and prevent the potential risk of infection.

The same applies to FGM; it is a cultural practice that women themselves who practice have found pride in and see nothing wrong because they believe it is a normal practice. An example of this is the Sierra Leone first lady's YouTube interview (Fatu Network, 2019). The first lady said she saw nothing wrong with circumcising women as she is circumcised herself and has successfully given birth to her children without any health/medical complications. Meanwhile, on the international scene, FGM is one of the issues that has stimulated so much controversy among international human rights advocates. For a first lady, an important figure in society and the global community, to stand up for what she believes contrary to the practice's dominant-negative attacks is proof that culture is more complex than just embracing "modernity" or simply adhering to universally designed cultural approaches. She saw it best to share her experience and tell her own alternative story contrary to the media depictions of the practice described as harmful and a

violation of women's rights. It may be a voice from one person, but it still counts and represents others who share the same view.

The same can be said about the child marriage agenda. Some "harmful" cultural practices (rite of passage ceremonies) are closely linked to teen pregnancy and arranged child marriage. But this is not the standard; child marriage is not always arranged, and it is not automatic that the rite of passage is followed by marriage. But the fundamental question is, is child marriage an African traditional practice? For example, while child marriage has occurred in most parts of the world, the focus has particularly been on the African (and Asian) context. It is categorically placed as a "harmful" *African* traditional practice. Why would it be that "child marriage" in the African context is described as a "harmful traditional practice" but not when it happens in the USA or Europe? All this is due to the negative constructions about Africa, and anything to do with it is perceived to be wrong, inappropriate and uncivilised.[5] There is a strong tendency to assume that "Western-centric" ideas inform the standard to measure what qualifies as human dignity and human rights universally, without considering intricacies unique to different regions (de Sousa Santos, 2014).

Thus, the negative dominant cultural constructs have led to the discrimination, oppression, infantilisation and suppression of the African cultural identity. This act itself qualifies as a violation of human rights and oppression of individual freedom to practise one's own culture. Notably, African researchers, policymakers and political leaders have often questioned these dominant constructs but rarely with an interrogative and consistent view. One reason is linked to the economically weak position and low status in which Africa finds itself. As a result, it becomes easy for Africa to be seduced by the attractive offers from funding organisations and donor aid who dictate the terms and conditions of how Africa must be governed. Ferguson (2006) cited an example where he highlights largely middle-class subscribers' comments from a Zambian fashion magazine, stating that the rich nations (because of their superior position) have the power to point out/lecture Zambia on its poor economic choices.

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[5] In the West, abortion is an option for pregnant young women. In 2006, the lowest teen birth/abortion rate per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in Canada was 27.9, followed by Sweden (31.4), England/Wales (60.3), and the U.S.A. (61.2) (McKay and Barret, 2010). Abortion services in Africa are somewhat complex and not as liberal or flexible to access due to restrictive laws and the general negative perceptions about abortion.

> Because we [Zambia] are poor, we don't get the chance to point out that these particular emperors are butt naked. What we need to do is get either economic might or military might. Look at how China gets away with human rights abuses because of its economic muscle (cited in Ferguson, 2006, p. 148).

Others like Mills (2014) point out that African leaders themselves have made bad decisions and are to blame for their weak position and, instead of accepting responsibility for their failures, they end up assigning blame to the outside world.

> If Africa's dismal economic performance can be put down to bad choices by African leaders, then we have to ask: Why have those leaders made those choices? The key reason is that Africans and the international community have enabled them to do so. The former have typically believed that they lacked the means to change the status quo, whereas the latter have been too ready to "help" Africa for reasons ranging from self-interest to altruism and pity (Mills, 2010, p. 3).

Both statements presented above show and explain how Africa continues to live under the shadow of its colonial masters. This is convincingly linked to how and why Africa is governed the way it is governed and how African social problems are resolved with externally adopted policies. As far as policies are concerned, Mkandawire (2016, p. 567) reflects on why "African leaders refuse to implement what are obviously 'good policies' which have been fruitfully adopted by other parts of the world?" and why they choose to "adopt policies that impoverish their citizens?". Based on the arguments presented above, everything to do with civilisation is represented by the idea of "good policies". This especially includes adopting Western-centric ideas, which represent a more positive narrative than that of a dark, impoverished continent. But at the same time, the financially weak position that most African governments find themselves in (for example, structural adjustment programmes and Highly Indebted Poor Countries programme) have largely contributed to adopting incompatible policies.

AFRICA AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY IN RESEARCH BY NON-AFRICANS

This section discusses how the above-mentioned negative constructs affect how research is conducted in Africa. With such a negative worldview of Africa, problems and solutions cannot be analysed objectively. This is a taken-for-granted view that leads to questioning some of the consistently highlighted issues as problematic. Ultimately, it can be argued that the "status" that Africa holds has consequences for how Africa is researched as

well. Kaputa (2015, p. 11) states that "some subjective authors" have taken advantage of this situation [the dominant-negative constructs about Africa] "to ridicule cultural practices and consequently feed the world with erroneous information through stereotypical print". I discuss three main problems in the way African research is conducted. Firstly, research by non-African authors and secondly, homogenised and path dependant research methods; and thirdly, lack of contextualisation.

Notably, many academic and non-academic materials on Africa are written by non-Africans who represent issues according to preconceived ideas and how they perceive African issues. These preconceived ideas present negative depictions that override the actual African reality and experience.

Evidently, research on Africa has been dominated by either non-Africans or authors not based in Africa. This is shown by Basedau's (2020) study on African research, which analysed African authors and those based in Africa using papers from three African journals (African Affairs, Journal of Modern African Studies and Africa Spectrum). It found that only 14 per cent of the authors were based in Africa, and 30 per cent of authors were of African origin (Basedau, 2020). Thus most authors are of non-African origin and write about Africa without having a deeper practical experience of the African setting. Basedau (2020, p. 198) further states that;

> going beyond the very obvious point of departure that African realities should not be recounted by (only) outside voices, the broader inclusion of African views offers some distinct benefits. The outside perspectives of Western and other non-African scholars are burdened with a number of stereotypes, and these scholars often evince a lack of specific knowledge.

Notably, the lack of specific knowledge may be due to unfounded generalisations and the use of universal methods. At the same time, Basedau (2020) advocates the need for comparative research to strengthen the outcomes of findings and found that "comparisons with other world regions are practically absent. How can we know whether something is specific to Africa if we do not compare it to the rest of the world?" (Basedau, 2020, p. 200). However, studies have sought to compare Africa with Asia concerning research on teen pregnancy and child marriage as these are the regions deemed "third world" with high prevalence. Additionally, since teen pregnancy is closely associated with poverty, more comparative studies target Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) and are not compared with High-Income Countries (HICs). Another possible explanation for the lack of

comparison is that (in the case of teen pregnancy research) problems of teen pregnancy, and child marriage are highly viewed as African problems.[6]

It is also worth noting that there are different motives why outsiders research Africa. Some research agendas need to be questioned. Many researchers working on internationally funded projects see their research projects serving a greater good and benefit research subjects/communities. Particularly, Western researchers assume to have a critical understanding of other practices and cultures (using anthropological methods) to contribute to the body of knowledge. However, this leads to producing

> irresponsibly or maliciously – negative and often dehumanizing images that feed into policies 'employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence' and solve the indigenous problem (Smith, 2012, p. 94).

Some of the research conducted in indigenous communities by outsiders is largely influenced or altered to suit the funders' choice of outcome (Smith, 2012; Kaputa, 2015). Research is "justified as being for the good of mankind"(Smith, 2012, p. 26), but, in the meantime, indigenous culture is exploited and "unusualness" or [exoticism] is exaggerated to enhance careers or gain favour with the powerful institutions. As a strategy to show how bad things are in Africa, indicators derived from the West are used to show high poverty levels, poor health, and lack of education linked to cultural/indigenous practices to discredit traditional society. This is a typical scenario that dominates the teen pregnancy and child marriage literature, which suggests that it leads to inevitable poverty, poor health and low educational attainment. However, this practice is not only limited to non-African researchers but also local NGOs and government institutions in need of financial assistance/funding who easily fall into the trap and contribute to such depictions.

Thus, it becomes important to analyse the motives and politics behind certain research findings, as well as research that pretends to be "objective". The politics of research funding, who funds the research and benefits more from the research outcome, should not be overlooked. International organisations, pharmaceutical corporations and other superpowers have different strategy agendas and meanings attached to highly

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[6] According to review research by Bonell (2004, 255) "UK studies often justified investigating teenage pregnancy in terms of health. Research from the USA more often viewed teenage pregnancy as problematic because of associated welfare expenditure. … Such studies often focused on Black and minority ethnic populations".

contested issues or pandemics (Tamale, 2011). The different agendas behind the research are often ignored, especially when dealing with dominant constructs which are too deep-rooted and resistant to change. Having a dominant group of researchers (non-African) writing on Africa leads to a homogenised research environment that does not consider the alternative view. This is what the next point addresses.

HOMOGENISED AND PATH-DEPENDENT RESEARCH METHODS

Africa's colonial history created a path-dependant system which creates stickiness[7] to the Western model. International forces insist on homogenising global ideas about African sexuality by choosing to ignore and overlook the nature of complexities and diversity of sexual relations. Moreover, most African research does not take into context the relationship between poverty and marginalisation and the long history of colonialism, connected to the implications of present-day policy and politics (Smith, 2012). Thus, research on African sexuality has been shaped by many factors, but colonialism and globalisation are the most significant.

Tamale (2011, p. 2) emphasises that "colonial methods of researching, theorising and engaging in sexuality in Africa [have] left indelible and significant imprints on people's sexual lives". This trickles down to how the African governments perceive problems and decide what actions to take on sexual affairs (these actions are often externally influenced). At the same time, Africans are merely not passive. Some strongly identify with their African roots and way of handling their lives, including decisions on sexual matters.

One of the problems connected to adopting a homogenised pattern to research focuses on symbolic representations. Most disciplines conduct research that dwells on symbolic representations rather than unveiling the materiality of power and the state in influencing discourses and representations (Mbembe, 2001). There appears to be limited research that questions dominant constructs and power as a reinforcing agent. For example, the combination of power and the state can be described as the United Nations, influencing the course of research on teen pregnancy and child marriage and (the state) African political leaders using media platforms to speak against child marriage and rolling out campaign

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[7] Stickiness here implies a system that is consistently deep rooted in colonialism that became part of the culture and remains unchangeable.

strategies. These combined forces work as agents to reinforce dominant constructs in which the most powerful story told is the one that wins.

Thus, symbolic representations in research produce symbolic policies. Following the power of dominant constructs, policies are "often more symbolic than substantive, and statements are often made by policymakers to make it look like they are doing something when they are not"(Cairney, 2012, p. 24). However, Birkland (2011) points out that the difference between symbolic and substantive policy[8] may not always be clear, and "by enacting the symbolic policy[9], various actors can claim to have "done something" about a problem, even when the action taken is more symbolic than anything else" (Birkland, 2011, p. 220). In other words, it is more about politics than it is about problem-solving. This, to a large extent, might describe the politicisation of teen pregnancy and projects seeking to eliminate child marriage in Africa.

The problem of non-Africans researching Africa also contributes to adopting non-African and incompatible research styles. Non-African researchers easily decide to research Africa in the same way. They conduct research in their home countries using the same methods and theoretical concepts. This has been observed in feminist studies. For example, Aniekwu (2006) distinguishes African feminism from the Western one, with the one having differing views on reproduction and childbearing from the other. An African feminist takes pride in childbearing as a distinctive biological role that only a woman can bear (Aniekwu, 2006). This means that even though feminists will challenge men's domination over women in the African context, this does not compromise their desire to fulfil a biological role. This view contradicts the Western view that portrays a woman's natural ability to reproduce as more functional than desired.

Thus, the author advises that all African feminist research recognise this distinctive pro-natal factor (Aniekwu, 2006). This view should be extended in all research addressing reproduction and motherhood in the African context, emphasising the contextualisation of research. Tamale (2011, p. 4) adds that African research should be "informed by the lived experiences of women and men on the continent and the specificities of what they hold as

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[8] A substantive policy explains how the government will go about its policy goals in a particular area (Birkland, 2011, p. 219).
[9] A policy that satisfies public demand for statements of principles or values, without any resources to support them (Birkland, 2011, p. 220).

their culture, taking into account that there is not always agreement among people in the nuances and meanings of culture". This entails that cultural practices are diverse, and it also helps to view things in context.

LACK OF CONTEXTUALISATION

The problem of homogenising culture can be seen in teen pregnancy research in Africa. The problematisation of teen pregnancy and suggested solutions are incompatible with the African situation. As stated above, through colonialism Africa has inherited a path-dependent way of research, undermining the importance of putting things into context. The models and theoretical explanations used in African research are mainly underpinned by Western knowledge systems and snapshot statistics. Over the years, this has become embedded in the academic production of knowledge. However, it is important to be "aware of the dangers of uncritically using theories that are constructed from the global North to explain African societies"(Tamale, 2011, p. 25). It is also important to note that Africa has been expected to "catch up" in a few years and do what took Europe over centuries to do with five times more [of] the resources often plundered from the rest of the former colonies (Mkandawire, 2016).

Meanwhile, understanding the deep roots of a phenomenon requires attaching meaning to both context and concept in a particular setting. An example can be drawn from Ranger's (1993) argument that Europe invented Africa in its own image. According to Ranger and Vaughan (1993, p. 63) "before colonialism, Africa was characterised by pluralism, flexibility, multiple identity; after it, African identities of 'tribe', gender and generation were all bounded by the rigidities of invented tradition" . Ranger (1993) further asserts that there was a profound misunderstanding of comparing European neo-tradition to that of Africa, which were clearly incompatible. As he states "whites were certainly comparing unlike with unlike. European invented traditions were marked by their inflexibility"(Ranger, 2010, p. 454).

Another example is "bad" African cultural practices which are described in studies without attaching much meaning to the context and setting in which they occur (see examples under the section on culture monopoly). This has been well illustrated using the South African example by Macleod (2001) and Mkhwanazi (2006). Both state that South

African research on teen pregnancy adopts the US and UK-based models and socio-temporal frameworks that do not fit into the local context. For example, Mkhwanazi (2006, p. 97) states;

> when I read South African research on teenage pregnancy, I was struck by the amazing similarity in the findings of South African researchers and North American and British researchers. I soon realised that South African researchers were drawing upon methodological and theoretical frameworks that were developed and used in Euro- American research on teenage pregnancy. My sense was that these methodological and theoretical frameworks could not adequately describe the situation in South Africa.

Indeed, similarities in the framing of teen pregnancy as a problem and its solutions can be observed from most of the studies discussed in the literature review chapter. Mkhwanazi (2006), having specialised in teen pregnancy research in South Africa from an anthropological view, discovered an alternative understanding of teen pregnancy in the South African context contrary to the dominant global view;

> I came to see more clearly how representations of teenage pregnancy were underpinned by particular perceptions of the world and how the world should be lived in. Most research on teenage pregnancy in South Africa has not addressed local social and cultural ideas of the world and how the world should be lived in. It has also been uncritical of its methodological and theoretical frameworks (Mkhwanazi, 2006, p. 101).

The context and local concepts of adulthood connected to sexual activity, childbearing and marriage remain crucial in understanding research dynamics on the African continent (see literature review for detailed discussions). Mkhwanazi (2006, p. 103) recommends that there is a need for;

> an approach which places emphasis on understanding the social context in which actions concerning reproduction are taken by youth and how they and others make sense of the consequences of these actions is critical. The approach needs to be able to contextualise early childbearing with recourse to local people's everyday practices and to their subjective understandings of the social world.

In this regard, the key argument that stands out is the non-contextualisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage research due to not only a borrowed or copied but path-dependant research system that does not fit into the African setting (Zgambo, 2022). Thus, there is a need to change the approach to conducting research on and about Africa, which ultimately informs policy direction and intervention. If the slogan "African solutions to

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African problems" is to become a reality, developing alternative research strategies and spatio-temporalities becomes very crucial. This can be achieved through the following strategies; (i) contextualisation of local settings, (ii) uncovering an alternative view by presenting the other side of the story and (iii) re-telling the story through lived experiences and spatio-temporal practices. To emphasise this point, Smith (2012, p. 36) states that;

> telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past are all strategies which are commonly employed by indigenous peoples struggling for justice. On the international scene, it is extremely rare and unusual when indigenous accounts are accepted and acknowledged as valid interpretations of what has taken place. And yet, the need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance.

Tamale (2011, p. 25) advises that "there is a lot of sense in using existing [western] theoretical bases as a starting point and then correcting/revising them in light of the contextual evidence collected in current studies".

SUMMARY

African researchers have critically thought through the social construction of Africa in research. Even though most Africans appear to be aware of Africa's negative dominant constructs on many media and other information platforms, this is rarely linked to hindering research outcomes. In this chapter, I have discussed (i) the negative dominant constructs that give Africa a bad name and paint a bad picture, (ii) the cultural monopoly, where the Western culture is seen as superior and civilised, seeking always to dominate the African one, and (iii) Africa as an object of study, how negative dominant constructs are reflected in research on/about Africa (especially that most of the research on Africa is conducted by non-Africans).

Three issues are identified here. First, more research on Africa is conducted by non-Africans - this has implications on how the narrative is presented without the full backing of lived experiences and understanding of the background. Second, there is a tendency to exaggerate a story being told on behalf of another person based on its motive and the intended outcome of the message. However, this is not to say that all non-Africans misrepresent information. Third, some studies are objective, but some are still presented to

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portray judgment on certain practices deemed "harmful" or "inappropriate" due to dominant constructs.

I have not examined theoretical frameworks and methodological case studies, but through intensive reading, I have found that there is a certain pattern in which some African research copies/duplicates its former colonisers even in the present day. Of course, this is justified by the Western history that we are oriented to through formal education and a path-dependent system of governing African affairs just the same way our colonial masters taught us. Nonetheless, many African scholars (as cited) in this chapter are beginning to open spaces for discussion and raising critical questions that aim to produce indigenous knowledge and build on existing theories (to suit the African setting) that we can draw upon to govern our own affairs with no further oppression or suppression of indigeneity. The many African authors cited indeed probe for this production of knowledge.

> Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. Transforming our colonized views of our own history (as written by the West), however, requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes. This, in turn, requires a theory or approach which helps us to engage with, understand and then act upon history (Smith, 2012, p. 36).

In conclusion, generally, research on sexuality or sexual behaviour carries social constructs. There is a need to unpack the different beliefs according to their context in order to draw fundamental conclusions that inform policy intervention. This applies to how teen pregnancy and child marriage have been researched in Africa. History has directed the problematisation of the issue, and both insiders and outsiders have compiled research based on Africa's dominant constructs. The general picture in which Africa is viewed, the stories told, and what is written is linked to how Africa is researched (Zgambo, 2022). This has obstructed the other side of the story that describes lived experiences with a contextual background. It has also blinded the concerned parties (researchers, advocates, government, NGOs) to consider only a one-sided story as the true picture. This is reinforced by how and who tells the story most convincingly and what strategies are used to construct it.

The Narrative Policy Framework(NPF) explains more about some of these well-orchestrated strategies in chapter three. For example, one of them, the scope of conflict, describes actors determined to enhance only one side of the story, more likely *the* story,

while suppressing or overlooking the negative aspects of it (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). Clearly, we see that the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem is dominantly viewed from a one-sided negative perspective.

As hard as it may be to measure objectivity in research, some fundamental questions can be used to assess the authenticity of research outcomes. "Who writes? For whom is the writing being done? In what circumstances?" (Said, 1982, p. 1). According to Said (1982), asking these questions provides the ingredients for interpreting the politics of the developing world. To expand on this, it is of utmost significance that African scholars pay particular attention to how these narratives are crafted and the devil-angel strategies used to avoid falling for a one-sided story. Thus, analysing these narratives will help provide alternative views indigenously crafted and eventually lead to retelling our histories and producing indigenous knowledge and theories that can be referenced in future research. This calls for Africanised research methodologies for future research in sexual reproductive matters and policy intervention.

PART TWO OF CHAPTER TWO

This section of the chapter describes the philosophical assumptions this research is founded upon. It explains the research design, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and study limitations. This study uses a qualitative approach to investigate policy change in Zambia by examining the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage from 1964-2016. The study uses archival materials but incorporates other web-based data collection techniques, partly due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, I used more internet-based interviews (google forms) and parliamentary debates in addition to the archival material. There is very limited archival material directly covering teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia from both the National Archives of Zambia and the National Assembly of Zambia (the main national libraries).

RESEARCH APPROACH

There are two contradicting ontological positions in research; the realist and nominalist. The realist point of view draws from pre-existing realities yet to be discovered. For example, "a realist assumes that the "real world" exists independently of humans and their interpretations of it" (Neuman, 2014, p. 94). This implies a detachment between what

exists and how it is perceived. Realists argue that "our pre-existing ideas, subjectivity, or cultural interpretations contaminate our contact with reality" (Neuman, 2014, p. 94). Thus, researchers need to be mindful and counter such interpretations to ensure objectivity.

On the contrary, the social constructionist or nominalist's position is that the real world reflects human experiences, culture and subjective beliefs. Our experience with what we call "the real world" is always occurring through a lens or scheme of interpretations and inner subjectivity. Thus, subjective-cultural beliefs influence what we see and how we experience reality.

> The best knowledge about the world that we can produce is to offer carefully considered interpretations of specific people in specific settings in relation to each other and the social meanings they impose on the world. We can offer interpretations of what we think other people are doing and what we believe to be their reasons in specific settings. To produce social science knowledge, we must inductively observe, interpret, and reflect on what other people are saying and doing in specific social contexts while we simultaneously reflect on our own experiences and interpretations (Neuman, 2014, p. 95).

This research study questions dominant constructions and seeks to explore alternatives to problem definition and problem-solving. The argument presented in this study is that history and context matter in constructing social problems. It also matters who defines a problem and how they define it. All this has implications for how policy intervention unfolds. Most often, there are underlying influencers in how humans perceive reality or see the problem. This can be traced from their socialised beliefs, culture and social norms, and colonial influence. Therefore, this research's ontological position is founded on the nominalist position but also acknowledges the realist position that things are not always as they appear. "We are always limited in how far we can reach beyond our inner thoughts, cultural background, and subjectivity"(Neuman, 2014, p. 94). It becomes important to dig deeper, explore a problem sideways, and not only view it from a single dominant perspective. Thus, I argue that both views (nominalist and realist) contribute to the question this research seeks to answer.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design describes a specific direction of procedures undertaken in a research study (Creswell, 2009). Since this research study explores policy change over time

and the political environment (actors), a qualitative approach is indispensable. Qualitative research helps to conceptualise a matter being investigated and the context and background of how the issue has developed over time, including the surrounding factors and outcomes influenced by it. Thus qualitative knowledge can produce "constructions of theories, hypothetical explanations, predictions and measurements"(Wertz *et al.*, 2011, p. 1). The fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is that it provides a method that adequately expresses norms, values, events and actions, among other things (Bryman and Liao, 2020).

This research study used both primary and secondary sources of data, using historical approaches like researching the archives to dig into the past about teen pregnancy and child marriage. Even though the original data source was meant to be archival, this research mainly used secondary data due to the limited archival data and Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Historical research (longue durée) is used "to study events or ideas of the past, including the philosophy of persons and groups at any remote point of time"(Kothari, 2004, p. 4). Many philosophers like Foucault, Durkheim, Weber, Marx and others have used historical approaches in theory development, indicating its indispensable value in research. Thus, historical approaches can be useful in linking, for example, a contemporary phenomenon to a past one. This is achieved through document analysis, gathering the critical factors that tell us when and how the "teenager" came to be spoken about within a sexual context and how it became founded in the broader social, economic, political, and historical frameworks. Thus, this also helps to trace how teenagers/adolescents arrive in public health, education, gender and other associated contemporary discourses.

DATA COLLECTION

Archival research is considered important in political science (Frisch, 2012). The behaviour and actions of political leaders can be better understood through historical data. It makes it easier to understand the context and be able to relate actions. Decisions made today do not just appear neatly on the surface. Instead, decisions are previously made with a particular context in mind. This helps understand policy choices and political conditions that produce unique outcomes (Frisch, 2012).

Thus, research like this helps to give background to political actions and policy interventions over time. The sources of information in this study were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source was gathered from Google Form questionnaires designed for non-state actors/NGOs. The main secondary sources of data were extracted from both current and old policy documents; newspaper articles from the Post Newspapers, Lusakatimes.com, the Zambia Daily Mail, and parliamentary debates from selected dates. Also, media coverage by the national broadcaster (ZNBC) and YouTube channels were used.

SAMPLING AND SOURCES OF DATA

The Archives

Purposive sampling was used to identify relevant sources of information. The first step was to visit Zambia's main archives, The National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), and the National Assembly Library, which has an archive collection. The plan was to search through old newspapers, parliamentary debates and government documentation like reports, letters and other correspondence from 1964-1980, for example, the ministerial policies and programmes on youth, women, development, education, health and gender. However, the task proved to be difficult as most of the collection was not organised in a way that was easy to access.

For the parliamentary debates, the national assembly was very handy. The records were readily available and easy to locate. However, having spent three months searching through the documentation in the archives did not yield much success in tracing the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage in the post-independence era. The UNIP and MMD archives were not accessible as the custodians kept rescheduling visits until the Covid-19 crisis lockdown appeared. Overall the archival data collection appeared more challenging than anticipated. However, I found it very useful to consult with Zambian historians.

Policy Documents

Policy documents were key sources of information for this study due to the nature of the research inquiry and the unexpected Covid-19 global pandemic. In addition, the policy documents were especially relevant in analysing the government's perspective and position

on the matter (how it is problematised, sought solutions and policy interventions). The policy documents included the National Development Plans (1966-2016), Nation Youth Policy (2013/2015), National Reproductive Health Policy, Adolescent Health Strategic Plan, National Strategic Plan on Ending Child Marriage and Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

Newspaper Collections

Both current and old newspapers provided useful information on tracing issues over time or finding out what was said in the past. I sampled newspapers from the National Archives of Zambia from 1964-2011. I randomly selected six papers annually from different newspapers-The Northern News, Times of Zambia and The Post Newspaper. The Zambia Daily Mail and Lusakatimes.com were accessible online, and I used topical search terms to find relevant articles. Past newspapers did not have much news on teen pregnancy or child marriage until around 2011 onwards. Moreover, Muchangwe's (2013) master's thesis content analysis showed limited coverage and content of adolescent sexual reproductive health in Zambia's three main newspapers between 2011-2012.

Many research studies have used newspapers to study government or policy narratives on particular issues (Price, 2011, 2018). Moreover, media is one of the vital tools for problem-solving. Kimala Price used narrative analysis to study policy discourses on the emergence of contraception among teenagers in the USA. She used media (newspapers) coverage as a source of information. Kimala referred to the stories from the newspapers to interpret public policy-making within the context of the USA.

Public policy is an expression of meaning, values, and beliefs, and policy-making is a process through which various policy and political communities try to make sense of new social problems and situations and when they ultimately compete to define "reality". Thus, policy issues are not only about the "objective facts" of an issue but also about the interpretation of those facts (Price, 2018). Kimala's dissertation sought to explore storytelling by different actors on emergency contraception, similar to the research questions I seek to explore. However, I used policy documents and other texts to interpret the government's and non-state actors' perspectives on teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. There is limited research in the Zambian context that uses narrative research approaches on this particular subject.

Google Forms

A set of questions was formulated using Google Forms for selected organisations. This online questionnaire helped generate information on the NGOs' perspectives on teen pregnancy and child marriage. The objective was to establish their past or current contribution and participation or non-participation in addressing the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda. I established introductory correspondences first with the organisations before sending them the Google Form via email. Some NGOs responded while others did not. Among those who responded were; the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), Forum for African Women Educationalist of Zambia (FAWEZA), Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council (NGOCC), and Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ). These are the only organisations that responded out of the ten contacted and several follow-ups (details provided in chapter ten). This method was used due to the Covid-19 lockdown when the libraries and archives were closed for a long period; thus, online newspapers became useful.

Other Sources

Some information was gathered through the public domain via the organisation's websites like the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-Zambia, Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ), and Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ). I made several appointments to have interviews with PPAZ but they seemed not to be available and did not respond to follow-up emails. However, some websites provided limited and scanty information. Follow-ups via email were made to request electronic press release statements and reports, but very few organisations responded, and others did not have updated email addresses. Additionally, I requested to interview (via online platforms) a few selected political actors but was not successful as it was not easy to reach them via email or other online platforms. Others simply ended up not filling in the Google Form questionnaire even after agreeing to and many follow-ups.

Figure 1. Summary of Data Collection

PRIMARY SOURCES OF DATA

Type of document

Government institutions
1. Parliamentary archives- Zambia
2. Zambia National Archives
3. Ministry of Health
4. Ministry of Gender

Academic institution
1. University of Zambia
2. University of the Western Cape
3. University of Cape Town

Private institutions/NGOs
- UNIP archives
- MMD archives
- FAWEZA
- CCZ

Parliamentary archives

1. Speeches from parliament and selected NGOs
2. Policy documents

   -National development plans 1st-6th

   -Zambia poverty reduction paper 2007

3. Reproductive health policies

   -ARHSP 2011-2015

4. Newspapers 1964-2014

   -Times of Zambia

   -The Post

   - Rhodesian Times

Online search terms
- Debates on teen pregnancy
- Debates on child marriage
- School dropout rates
- Customary marriage
- Traditional practices
- Initiation ceremonies
- Opening parliament speeches 2000-2014

Hard copy Search terms
- Opening parliament speeches by presidents (1970-1990)
- Parliamentary debates (1970-1991, 1994, 2010-2014)
- Commitment reports on youth activities
- Committee on teen pregnancy and child marriage
- Ministerial reports MOE
- Ministerial reports MOH
- Ministerial reports on social welfare

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RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Validity in research has to do with truthfulness and authenticity, while reliability speaks to the consistency of data (Neuman, 2014). Qualitative studies employ a range of data sources and employ multiple measurement methods but do not have to lead to the same outcome/result. This happens because data collection is an interactive process in which particular researchers operate in an evolving setting whose context dictates using a unique mix of measures that cannot be repeated (Neuman, 2014). As a result, the validity of archival materials and other documents are questioned when it comes to reliability. The assumption is that some records may contain subjective reporting to suit an organisation or the people involved, hence they cannot be reliable.

However, in this particular study, I have ensured that the sources of information (list provided below) are from credible institutions and most are official documents. For example, the National Archives of Zambia has been cited by most historians and other researchers (Geisler, 1987; Larmer, 2004, 2010; Blystad, Haukanes et al., 2020). I have also used multiple sources and methods to ensure sufficient content representation. This was also helpful in cross-checking documents across institutions to increase validity as most important documents are dispersed and stored by other organisations. In my interpretations of texts from documents, I tried not to distort the information presented. I simply provided a brief commentary of my interpretations based on theoretical insights and questions posed by other scholars in similar settings.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is one of the most critical stages of research as it processes the collected data into the finished product. Since this study was qualitative, it employed qualitative data analysis techniques. In qualitative research, this means systematically organising and carefully examining and synthesising data to make sense of a problem or phenomenon. "Analysis allows us to improve understanding, expand theory, and advance knowledge" (Neuman, 2014, p. 477). Through qualitative analysis, social scientists have produced new theories, expanded and revised them. Additionally, building a new theory that stimulates an understanding of social life is more important than testing causal hypotheses. This is because theoretical explanations "tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context, and capable of showing the complex processes"(Neuman, 2014, p. 479).

However, the selection of the data analysis strategy is decided based on the amount of data collected and how it is collected. In this case, data was gathered from online questionnaires supplemented by secondary sources with in-depth interpretation, guided by theoretical insights. Thus, the data analysis is informed by a document analysis approach.

Archives, Policy documents, Newspapers, Parliamentary Debates and Others

As explained in the data collection section, this research study largely depended on secondary data (archival/documented material) with minimal primary data. I used an open coding system (Neuman, 2014) to group critical terms, key actors and different political governments, key events and other themes about the question of inquiry. Social construction formed the theoretical foundations of this research study (details are provided in the next chapter). Thus, the data analysis too was drawn from the social construction perspective. I used insights from two main theoretical approaches from Bacchi's (1999) WPR and some ideas from the Narrative Policy Framework-NPF (Shanahan, Jones and Mcbeth, 2017). These frameworks helped to examine narratives in policy statements, parliamentary debates and other texts expressed by key actors. In my case, I was analysing texts rather than policy stories but still used similar techniques to that of analysing policy stories.

Thus, in chapter eleven, I summarised the research findings using Bacchi's six questions of problem-questioning on Zambia's teen pregnancy and child marriage problem and the following themes emerged;

1. Dominant problem representations and their implications
2. Actors and institutions
3. Categorisations and target populations (Villains, victims and heroes)

These themes helped to guide the direction of my analysis.

Interviews via Google Forms

The response from the questionnaires were all used in the analysis to provide a wide context. I presented both the questions and responses from the questionnaire from four organisations. I did not have to group themes and topics in this case because each organisation was unique and provided deep insights into the organisation's position and perspective on the subject. I provided a brief commentary analysis on each question using theoretical insights/questions and linking them to the main research questions. This analysis is presented in Chapter ten. It focuses on the NGO perspective on the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda, the problem, how best to address it, past experiences and suitable

policy options and interventions. Chapter three provided detailed information on the theoretical framework applied to analyse the data gathered.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research study was approved by the University of the Western Cape's Research Ethics Committee. This paved the way for data collection to commerce. Archival research does not attract attention to human subjects. However, there are document ethics to be observed. The documents were thoroughly screened, authenticated and validated. All the information and documents used in this study were extracted from the public domain; thus, no consent or permission was needed to access them. The National Archives of Zambia is open to the public for a fee, and there are no restricted materials. The National Assembly of Zambia requested that I put in a formal request to access the library, which I did in the form of a letter, and I was granted access for two weeks. I searched through many documents, but most were not relevant and were omitted.

Later, having gathered data from the NGOs via Google Forms, a consent statement was included in the questionnaire asking the respondents if they freely agreed to participate in the study for academic purposes. The responses were respected accordingly. Thus, both human and document ethics were considered in this research study.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There were three main limitations encountered in this study. Firstly, as I have already pointed out, there was limited archival data on this particular subject before it gained media attention after 2011. Additionally, government offices could not be accessed due to red tape, even for documents in the public domain. Most government department websites were not updated and did not provide sufficient information on their sites. Moreover, as anticipated, some data from the archives was incomplete or missing due to poor record-keeping. However, even though the lack of archival information on the subject limited the study, it also provided a significant finding. This can be interpreted as a research gap or that teen pregnancy was not a topical issue or "problem" in the past. That is why there is not much documentation.

Secondly, archival and historical studies can be time-consuming and require a lot of patience. It is also important to have some skills or training on how to manoeuvre the

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archives in order to find what you want as a researcher. Thus, I used up a lot of time in the archives and derived little information. This also means I had to extend the data collection duration affecting the whole research timeline. Also, historical research relies on documentation, and it is anticipated that there may be a shortfall of information due to the unavailability of documents. It also helps to have some skills in historical research or how to go about doing archival research. This is something that I overlooked. It seems easy to think about doing archival research, but, on the ground, it requires critical searching skills. Archival material is not just there stored waiting to be found. One has to search through many different categories to get to a particular issue. For example, government ministries and the responsible policies within a portfolio change over time, and it can be hard to trace specific issues within such multiple ministerial changes. The data collection methods directed the path for the research design and the analysis.

Thirdly, the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown was never anticipated, and the whole world was caught by surprise by the pandemic. This had both practical and psychological implications. Practically, everything had to be shut down during the lockdown to stop the spread of the virus. This directly affected data collection as everyone was either still trying to figure out what was happening or trying to cope with the shock of the diseases that caused a global lockdown. Others were grappling with the illness, death or nursing significant others. The lockdown also meant that most public places were shut down and only a few critical institutions were operating, thus, libraries/archives. In addition, some government ministries were closed. Moreover, travel bans were enacted for a long period. All these conditions made data collection methods challenging and caused students to rethink data collection methods.

CHAPTER 3: POLICY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC "PROBLEMS"

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I introduce various ideas around policy and begin to develop the framework for the analysis in this thesis. The social sciences are founded upon theory and their authenticity is based on the use of theoretical frameworks. In social science theory, the concern is not about providing proof but about gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon at a given time (Howell, 2013). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 15) state that theory is about a "set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena". Howell (2013, p. 4) adds that "theorizing involves the systematic study of social activity through explicating, interpreting, understanding" and possibly being able to predict the outcome of a particular phenomenon.

It is also important to note that specific paradigms equally shape policy. As Bacchi (2009, p. 33) puts it, "paradigms matter in how policy is conceived".

> A paradigm consists of one's ontology (what we believe about the nature of things), one's epistemology (what we think we can know about the nature of things), and one's methodology (how we think we can go about finding out about the nature of things) (Guba, 1990).

Therefore, this research study is founded on the defined concepts to help gain a deeper understanding of Zambia's public policy dynamics-actors, governmentality and policy outcomes. This chapter forms the backbone of this research study that combines multiple theories to explain Zambia's unique public policy system. It demonstrates and strengthens the argument that social constructs/dominant constructs (even though ignored) play a big role in policy outcomes, which should not be underestimated.

This study is drawn from a combination of concepts and ideas of public policy-making. The concepts include the social construction of target populations (Schneider and Ingram, 1993), path dependency and policy stickiness, bounded rationality, the narrative policy framework (NPF) and Bacchi's "What's the problem represented to be" approach and Harvey's space-time theory (1996).

The chapter outline is as follows; the social problems and social constructions of time and space; social constructions of target populations; path dependency; bounded rationality and policy over-reaction; Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) and WPR; However, these dynamics are at play across all the phases of the policy cycle, and there is no rigid boundary between policy-making and implementation (Hupe, 2019). Additionally, policy is also what governments choose not to do (Birkland, 2011).

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CONTESTED SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF TIME AND SPACE

Social construction is in part a "process of defining problems" and "refers to the ways in which society and the various contending interests within it structure and tell stories about how problems occur" (Birkland, 2011, p. 188). Undoubtedly, many researchers agree that problem construction is critical (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988; Clarke and Cochrane, 1998; Peters and Pierre, 2006; Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon, 2007; Zahariadis, 2016; Hoornbeek and Peters, 2017), but it is crucial for Zambia that we recognize that policies are often imposed or imported from the outside. There is also a history to policy, and we need to look at continuity and change in policy over time, as Pierson (2000) suggests. Issues that are described as problems require much scrutiny because they may not be as problematic as depicted. Especially in the policy domain, problems are presented differently depending on who tells the story and how powerful they are and what strategies they use (Birkland, 2011; Hoornbeek and Peters, 2017; Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). Teen pregnancy has often been described as a social problem since it gained recognition as a serious problem in advanced capitalist countries and became tied to social welfare, labour markets, life cycles and social control.

The historic-spatial side of policy adoption might be seen in how policies diffuse and how different countries construct issues of appropriate spatio-temporalities in different ways. Ferguson (2006) refers to the problems of static thinking regarding Africa's "catch-up" with the West. Harvey (1996, p.225) argues, "What we have therefore is a struggle both of a gendered, class and *national* character over whose definition of time and space" (sovereignty at large as well an intimate spheres of individual bodily sovereignty). The general sense of time and space is contested at a subjective and policy level. Industrial capitalism in the West experienced class struggle over the appropriate length of the working day (see Marx Capital Volume 1) and the issue of the appropriate and "correct" age for

children to labour. … imposed the eight-hour day after a long struggle". Harvey (1996) calls the 1850's decision by British capital that childhood ends at ten an example of "capitalist anthropology". Harvey (1996) has developed an extensive theory of time-space, capitalist development, spatial fixes, time-space compression and geographies and politics of difference. He examines social change as struggles over "new definitions of time and space" introduced by the factory clock and the "correct time" and place for certain social actions. Harvey (1996) refers to struggles in England against the "tyranny of the clock" and the "cadastral map". In the colonies, mapping played a critical role in extracting and transporting resources, controlling populations and disciplining labour.

The control over the leisure time of the working class, their sexual practices, life cycles and space were major sources of disciplinary authority by the capitalist state, as Gramsci noted in his discussion of Americanism-Fordism (Ekers,2010). As Ekers (2010, p. 218) writes, Gramsci was one of the early Marxists to "historicise and spatialise sexual relations". He suggests five ways in which Gramsci helps to think about sexuality

> (1) an attempt to historicize relations of sexuality; (2) a spatial analysis of how relations of sexuality are mediated through the relationship between the city and the countryside; (3) the economics of reproduction; (4) the mutual regulation of labor and sexuality; and (5) a consideration of politics, sexuality, and women (Ekers, 2010 p. 220).

Gramsci not only rejects any idea that there is a normal or natural form of sexuality but also notes rural versus urban differences in birth rates. He is concerned with placing the subject in the realm of the economics of reproduction and managing the life cycles of distinct working classes. Gramsci recognises that controlling sexuality was an element in the making of "a new type of worker and man" (Ekers,2010). These insights are also pertinent to understanding colonialism.

Spector and Kitsuse (1987, p. 184) propose that "social problems be conceived as the claims-making activities of individuals or groups regarding social conditions they consider unjust, immoral, or harmful, and that should be addressed". They emphasise that this claims-making is achieved through processes of social interactions to produce *social facts* (Spector and Kitsuse, 1987). To the extent that they become legalized, these constructions become public and objective senses of time and space. Space is commodified through rigid notions and practices of private property, homes and nuclear families.

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This definition implies that, through these interactions, an individual or the society may decide what social and moral conditions are appropriate for "development" and a good society, and then the bad becomes classified as a "social problem". The words used in some definitions, like "harmful" and "immoral", should be addressed as they fit in with how teen pregnancy and child marriage have been defined by different actors, society and government (explained in detail later).

However, "social problems" viewed through the lens of social constructionism do not only look at what is defined or constructed to be a problem as the only objective way to view it because of consensus about an issue. Instead, how the issue came to be defined as such and, most importantly, who said so and under what circumstances is crucial (Lister, 2011). Moreover, "If a situation becomes defined as a social problem, it does not necessarily mean that objective conditions have worsened" (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988, pp. 53-4). In other words, this perspective questions the very nature of the way in which social problems are defined, labelled, framed, understood, and who determines or distinguishes what is considered a private matter from that of a public one. These insights are what I will draw on in this thesis.

Another important question to ask in the field of public policy is to what extent or how far should the state go in taking over the private lives of individuals or communities as a means of social control and regulation? In terms of teen pregnancy and child marriage, it raises more questions than answers on how the problem has been defined and how the solution has equally been constructed over time.

Another clear distinction in policy is between "personal troubles" and "public issues". In the Zambian context, these can be redefined as state versus community issues. While some private issues qualify as public, not all would be the state's responsibility (Mills, 1959). This brings us back to how and who selects what is and what is not a public issue and when the person might be constructed as political (Lister, 2011). Policy analysts also ask why some problems make it to the policy agenda while others do not. This can be connected to many factors, such as events in time, the actors involved and how influential they are (power play relations) (Peters, 2006; Peterson and Jones, 2016).

Lister (2011) points out that the prominence of problems arises from both top-down and bottom-up processes. Social problems can result from a massive amount of pressure exerted on the government by non-state actors to address certain issues considered worth

addressing or, in other cases, the government through its own means - social control/regulation/external or global forces at play decide what issues require government intervention or not (Lister, 2011). In some cases, citizens demand state action on troubling broad public issues. For example;

> Poverty, illiteracy, racism, immorality, disease, disaster, crime, and any number of other ills will lead people and groups to press for solutions. Often, these social problems require that governmental action be taken because services required to alleviate public problems that are not or cannot be addressed by private actors are public goods that can primarily be provided by government actors (Birkland, 2011, p. 188).

Notably, as mentioned earlier, how social problems appear on the scene differs from society to society, and even from region to region and how different governments decide to tackle them. The same considerations would apply to the question of whether teen pregnancy is as big of an issue as it is portrayed in Zambia. The point here is not only about problem questioning but also determining under what conditions such claims-making prevail. In answering the question of teen pregnancy being a problem or not, Fonda, Eni and Guimond (2013b, p. 1) point out that "it depends on whom you speak to, where you are coming from, and where you are located in history and the world". This also clearly indicates that different interventions are applied depending on the context, location, political actors involved (at a particular time) and their agenda and where they are coming from (the background/history). Thus, context, culture, power relations and history matter, and this should be applied in the way teen pregnancy is defined as a problem and the solution for it.[10]

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TARGET POPULATIONS

The idea of a "target" population is taken from Schneider and Ingram (1993) and their social constructionist perspective. Social construction is about how people or individuals give meanings to issues, things or objects in a manner that is influenced by their

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[10] Considering the fact that the very idea of a "teen" and the so-called stages of life evolved over time in western capitalism. Not long ago, child labour in Britain was acceptable and widely promoted. Children were used in the 18th century coal mines. Bizarrely laws were passed in Britain such *as the first child labour law in 1833 which made it legal for* 9 year olds to work in mines and factories. Today millions of children across the globe (some in brand name sweat shop factories) denied their youth and education through child labour. In the USA child labour and under-aged immigrant labour is still widely used in agriculture (Helene York, Do children harvest your food? https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/03/do-children-harvest-your-food/254853/.

environment, culture, personal and often past experiences (Clarke and Cochrane, 1998). "Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences [and] these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically"(Creswell, 2009, p. 8). One of the values of social construction in research is that it helps identify *multiple* standpoints or views, thereby questioning taken-for-granted assumptions. Therefore, one is able to tell if there are multiple views represented on a particular problem or if one view dominates the others. Discourses of groups and individuals may also be contradictory and run parallel.

Moreover, it "deploys ideology, language, discourse and power as key concepts and analytical tools" in the representation of studying social problems and their effects (Lister, 2011, p. 163). This is the relevance of the application of this concept to this research. I specifically narrow the focus to Schneider and Ingram's (1993) framework on the social construction of target populations. *The social construction of target populations* is a framework that describes the relationship between citizens, participation/democracy, power/influence, and policy designs. It refers to "the cultural characterizations of popular images of the persons or groups whose behaviour and well-being are affected by public policy"(Schneider and Ingram, 1993, p. 334). Even though this research topic is not about democracy and citizen participation, the framework's elements relate to the question of how dominant constructs come to be and how they affect policy direction in addressing social problems.

The framework describes different classifications of target populations/groups: contender, advantaged, dependent, and deviant. These groups present an unequal balance of power and the attention each target group receives from the state/government; some groups are rewarded (advantaged/dependent) while others are unrewarded or punished (deviants) (Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon, 2007). These groups are constructed by negative and positive traits. Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon (2007, p. 107) state that;

> People tend to exaggerate the positive and negative traits of groups and create myths and rationales that justify the domination of some groups over others. In time, these myths become inculcated in the culture and embodied in policies so that their authenticity is unquestioned, and they are accepted as fact.

For example, teenagers in the context of this research are a target group the state feels responsible for (as being dependent on the government) but at the same time may be classified as deviants. Deviant behaviour in Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation

implies non-conformity to the values of abstinence before marriage, and rebellion from this means going against the nation's Christian values and the theological/social clock. This also means that policies such as early orientation to comprehensive sexuality education or the provision and access to contraceptives for young people would be rejected and viewed as a pathway for encouraging sexual "immorality" for those not married, while other groups/actors may advocate and advance such provisions to be made available to young people. In this case, power dynamics come into play, in which a target group such as the contender possesses more power and influence than the others.

Discursive and institutional power (Lewis, 1998) is used to illustrate the social construction of social problems. Discursive power occurs in social groups inflicting their views and what they believe should be a social problem, while institutional power has to do with institutional practices developed to deal with the so-called social problems (Lewis, 1998). When strong beliefs or myths are built up in the institutional or value system, they become solidified with the enforcement of power. Clarke (2001) points out that the social construction of social problems is taken for granted, thus turning out to be viewed as "common sense". Hence, it has seemingly become common sense to link teen pregnancy/child marriage to negative outcomes without questioning or thinking critically about it.

Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon (2007, p. 106) further assert that "Policymakers, especially elected politicians, respond to, perpetuate, and help create social constructions of target groups in anticipation of public approval or approbation". Emphasis is placed on "emotional policy-making" drawn from a psychological perspective. That policymakers tend to make quick emotional and moral judgments over a topic or issue before it is translated into policy (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). For example, linking teen pregnancy to sexual immorality promotes the stigmatisation of teen mothers. Similarly, policies directed at the youth mostly carry negative constructions. As a result, they create personal and emotional outbursts. Such judgments are said to reproduce a "feed-forward effect", implying an action/belief/decision that runs unchanged for a long period (Ingram, Schneider and Peter, 2007). Bias judgments, values, and assumptions created by policymakers using their power lead people (the general public including different participating actors) to believe that something is a "natural" condition that remains unquestioned (Schneider and Ingram, 1993, 2012). Social constructs can be so strongly accepted that they carry long-lasting effects on

future policy, a case in which old policies are seen to resurface and are repackaged (*old wine in new bottles*). This is linked to policy stickiness and path dependency.

> Policymakers and entrepreneurs use labels and symbols that have specific cognitive referents and emotional impact. Employing these elements strategically alters the dynamics of choice by highlighting one dimension of the problem over others (Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon, 2007, p. 70).

Thus, it becomes difficult to change such constructions due to the way people are exploited to think or view a matter in a particular way, structured by the elite (topmost influential policy-making actors). This ultimately obstructs objectivity and rationality in public policy.

PATH DEPENDENCY

"*History matters*" and can enrich a deep understanding of how to view current policies and processes (Pierson, 1999). It is an important element in understanding public policy. The concept of path dependency originated in the field of economics and is used in policy studies to understand matters relating to tracing policy development. It makes use of history to expound on issues related to policy continuity versus stickiness, policy divergence versus policy change, linked to the past. The overall assumption is that it tends to be hard to change policy once it is established. Kay (2006, p. 29) states that "a process is path-dependent if initial moves in one direction elicit further moves in that same direction". Although more emphasis on path dependency focus on past decisions or choices as constraining or making it difficult for policy to diverge or change, policies may also take a complete turn from the past.

Path dependency stipulates that "today's policy options are a product of policy choices made previously" (Moran, Rein and Goodin, 2008, p. 348). This implies that policies do not just appear randomly as new ideas have an origin connected to the past. This past can either potentially constrain or enhance policy change opportunities (Moran, Rein and Goodin, 2008). Thus, it may work to the advantage of policymakers or against them. This is particularly important in understanding the colonialism effects on the African policy system. African, having been colonised for many years, most of its public policies have not deviated much from the colonial systems.

Moreover, it is associated with an incremental policy process in which "structural forces dominate; therefore policy movement is most likely to be incremental" (Wilsford,

1994, p. 252). This implies that a policy cannot easily change direction to be established through another new path not linked to what was started before. The emphasis is placed on occurring interactions amongst institutions, structures and policies. This is linked to historical institutionalism, which helps to provide an understanding of institutions and how they shape policy from time to time. The way an institution is formed and the choices made at inception have a hold on policy life. Thus, institutions are viewed as "structures that trace a path through state space; they endure, have a history and can be used to link temporally events and processes" (Kay, 2006, p. 29).

In health policy, "policy may result both from the way institutions operate and also how they create a dependency that constrains future policy or directs it in a particular way" (Carrin *et al.*, 2010, p. 6). It is further believed that in path dependency, actors and organisations exert behavioural patterns and characteristics aligned to set out paths established within the institutional public policy and a set of rules, standards, and values that bind them (Pierson, 1993). For example, British colonialism in Zambia established Christianity, which set the rules and standards of behaviour for citizens.

All these elements make up the policy environment and affect how policy ultimately turns out. Thus, in order to fully utilise the concept of path dependency in understanding policy change, it is important to keep in mind that the combination of institutions and policies constitute crucial and meaningful mechanisms for future policy direction and innovation.

The literature reveals Paul Pierson as one of the most frequently cited authors on path dependency, from his paper called "Path Dependence, Increasing Returns, and the Study of Politics"(Pierson, 2000). Pierson is famously cited for "increasing returns" (Kay, 2006; Moran et al, 2009). The aim here is not to discuss Pierson's paper but to acknowledge the additional knowledge in advancing the concept's application. Pierson (2000) not only considered the constraints of policies but also applied the concept of path-dependent constraints on different actors: how some policies may constrain particular actors (for example, less influential actors) while enabling others. This is a critical aspect throughout the policy-making process, especially the problem definition stage, and is very relevant to this particular study.

Having described the use of path dependency, it is also critical to take note of some limitations or misunderstandings. For example, Schreyögg and Sydow (2009) warn that not

every theory that refers to past decisions connected to particular outcomes should be seen to be the same as the path dependency theory. They describe two main branches in which path dependency is studied in social science. "One explains how specific outcomes occur as a result of specific sequences of events"____ while the other "explains how specific institutional systems are resilient over time as a result of the positive feedback they generate" (Schreyögg and Sydow, 2009, p. 14). According to Schreyögg and Sydow (2009, p. 14), the latter, as path dependency, should not be termed as path dependency because the "idea of a specific path and with it a progression from stage to stage, is less salient". Thus, the authors warn about the misunderstandings and slippery notions about path dependence that social scientists need to be mindful of. This also produces blurry understandings of the concept.

However, for this research study, I use the concepts/notions of path dependency selectively to help explain the stickiness and incremental process in institutions with a focus on the *long duree'* in Zambia as a continuation of British colonial rule. I do not focus on tracing sequences and events but on tracing dominant constructs that remain difficult to change.

BOUNDED RATIONALITY

Unlike comprehensive rational models, bounded rationality relates to limitations in how issues are addressed in making policy decisions. It is assumed that politicians can only attend to selected issues of personal interest at a time. Bounded rationality:

> recognizes that people do not have the time, resources, and cognitive ability to consider all issues and act optimally, so they use informational shortcuts and other heuristics or emotional cues to produce what they perceive to be good-enough decisions (Cairney and Heikkila, 2014, p. 370).

This implies that policymakers make quick emotional judgments over an issue and try to select evidence that aligns with the problem in order to justify it. However, it is also important to note that human emotional responses to situations or arguments are largely determined by social environment-social norms, values, traditions, customs and culture. Bounded rationality is linked to the concept of policy bubbles. Bubbles "appear in any policy sector, in any country and/or region, spillover from one policy sector to others, and when they burst, they carry the potential for radical consequences" (Maor, 2014, p. 469). A "bubble" describes a policy overreaction or under-reaction to a problem. A policy bubble is

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"a real and/or perceived policy overreaction that is reinforced by positive feedback over an extended period" (Maor, 2014, p. 470).

The notion of a policy bubble is linked to bounded rationality and questionable behaviour or reaction of policymakers in decision-making and evidence-based policy-making. Policy overreaction may often occur in cases where hot issues get staged up with little selected evidence or even outdated statistics to exaggerate an issue or problem (Cairney and Heikkila, 2014; Maor, 2016). This relates to biased judgments and decisions referred to by Schneider and Ingram (1993), in which policy actors engage their perceptions, views, ideas, beliefs and values to issues of public policy, thereby influencing policy design. Notably, a study in judgment bias measuring confidence versus accuracy showed "when confidence is high, confidence exceeds accuracy" (Maor, 2012, p. 234). This depicts the character of policy actors like policy entrepreneurs who may appear too overconfident about an issue and consequently less accurate.

Bounded rationality is linked to narrative policy analysis. In the narrative policy framework (NPF) developed by MacBeth and Jones (2014) and Shanahan et al (2017), similar to bounded rationality, the NPF recognises the role of emotions and the selective use of information by actors to maximise their agendas in influencing policy turn.

NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPF)

Narratives have been seen to be relevant in influencing public policy and how it turns out. Narratives can be stories told about an issue to convince and reinforce particular ideas so that they are supported by the public or a particular target of powerful people. They are told in such a way that people or institutions are drawn to believe dominant views without having to ask questions. When one narrative more than any other becomes the way we best articulate our "real" feelings or make sense of the uncertainties and ambiguities around us, then we are often willing to put up with that narrative, no matter how empirically objectionable it is in many other respects (Roe, 1994, p. 51).

Narrative construction has been recognised as a powerful instrument capable of shaping the emotions and realities of the masses (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). This is explained in the NPF. The NPF is associated with post-positivist approaches even though it appears to be more interpretive. It draws most of its ideas from social constructions and bounded rationality while incorporating assumptions of narratives and structure in policy-making. The

framework, describing policy narratives, is directed by four core elements; *setting,*
characters, plot and moral of the story (Shanahan, Jones and Mcbeth, 2018).

The setting has to do with the context of an issue or policy problem in terms of legal or
constitutional, geographical, economic conditions, accepted social norms and values, and
evidence that provides insight into an issue (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). These factors are
important in constructing narratives. *Character*s are a common feature of narratives,
describing different target groups (the social construction of target populations) such as
victims/dependents, villains, heroes, opponents or beneficiaries. Each of these characters
has a part to play in the narrative. The *plot* "provides the arc of action where events interact
with actions of the characters and the setting, sometimes arranged in a beginning, middle,
and end sequence" (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017, p. 176). In a plot, events are described as
conceding with the period in which an issue is staged. The *moral of the story* has to fall in
line with providing a solution that is seen to be socially acceptable.

An application of the framework in the Zambian scenario presents characters in the
story as teens/adolescents, female school-goers, teen mothers and married
teens/adolescents, all seen as the victims, while older men and parents are seen as the
villains. Thus, parents blamed for marrying off their children too young, older men marrying
young girls, cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies, and sexual immorality/moral
decay all carry the blame. In addition, girls may be viewed as victims but also as
perpetrators of moral decay in society.

The policy actors like politicians and NGOs are seen as the "heroes". They speak out
against the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem, taking action through policy
intervention. But, at the same time, it is also possible that these policy actors use "topical
issues" (moral panic) for both political gain and to seek financial resources from funding
institutions. In some cases, policy action may simply be symbolic.

By enacting the symbolic policy, various actors can claim to have "done something"
about a problem, even when the action taken is more symbolic than anything else (Birkland,
2011, p. 220).

NPF uses three levels of analysis; micro, macro, and meso. All three levels deal with
constructing the most compelling and persuasive narratives to influence policy change.
Micro applies to persuasion driven at an individual level, while meso represents policy
actors from different advocacy coalitions, organisations or interest groups (Shanahan, Jones

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and Mcbeth, 2018). Macro-level analysis on a larger scale looks at the potential that policy narratives have in shaping policy direction, established through societal norms, culture and institutions (Shanahan *et al.*, 2017). In the NPF, different strategies are used in which policy narratives can be achieved to influence public policy. The strategies are the scope of conflict, the causal mechanism, and the devil-angle shift.

The scope of conflict involves setting a scene where a more positive side of the story is presented, and the negative side of it is less likely to be presented. Mechanisms describe operations or activities involving individual actors or institutions concerning sticky belief systems that become path-dependent. Mechanisms tell us how things happen: how actors relate, how individuals come to believe what they do or what they draw from past experiences, how policies and institutions endure or change, how outcomes that are inefficient become hard to reverse, and so on (Falleti and Lynch, 2009, p. 1147).

Shanahan *et al.* (2017) highlight another strategy referred to as the devil-angle shift. It describes different policy actors presenting their narratives to convince the audience that their ideas supersede those of their opponents. "The devil shift predicts that actors will exaggerate the malicious motives, behaviours, and influence of opponents"(Shanahan *et al.*, 2017, p. 178). This is linked to social construction in that a " group that can create and promote the most effective depiction of an issue has an advantage in the battle over what, if anything, will be done about a problem"(Birkland, 2011, p. 188). This strategy helps to understand how dominant constructs are formed through a repeated one-sided or single narrative. All three strategies can help explain the actions of policy actors in the Zambian policy-making domain.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM REPRESENTED TO BE? (WPR)

The WPR is a policy analysis framework by Carol Bacchi that uses six questions to assess and evaluate policy responses to problems. The approach focuses on problem-questioning rather than problem-solving (Bacchi, 2009). It seeks to question taken-for-granted assumptions or dominant constructs presented in policies by interrogating how political actors present social problems. Thus, problem representation becomes a critical point of reflection.

A What's the Problem? Approach highlights the interests and commitments at stake in postulated solutions, and suggests that analysts, as well as other political actors, have interests and commitments here, which cannot be denied. Analysts cannot then be 'taught' to stand back and to 'balance' disagreements about values. They are in a direct sense 'interested' (Bacchi, 1999, p. 21).

I use this approach in chapter nine to examine teen pregnancy and child marriage problem representations in Zambia. This approach uses six questions in analysing problem representations. What is the "problem" represented to be in a specific policy, and what assumptions underlie this representation? How has this representation of the "problem" come about? *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem"* be thought about differently? *What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"? How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? Finally, how could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced*? (Bacchi, 1999).

Thus, I select texts from policies that have been implemented to address teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia, the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2016) and the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (2011). Bacchi's WPR approach comes in handy in explaining problem representations and the implications of what such representations mean in problem-solving. However, as already mentioned, because each of these frameworks does not fully fit neatly into the Zambia setting, I use a mixed analytical framework as the backbone of this study. This is in line with what Cairney (2012) suggests.

The use of multiple theories allows us to examine the policy process and build up a detailed narrative of events and decisions, using multiple perspectives. We focus on policymakers and seek to identify how they understand policy problems, how high the problem is on their agenda and which arguments and solutions they are most receptive to. We identify the political, social and economic pressures that they face when making decisions (Cairney, 2012, p. 20).

Most African countries find themselves in a conforming position. Most international organisations have a huge part to play, "since organizations are effective agents of social construction, they ' 'teach' states new norms of behaviour"(Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, p. 401). This entails that, through global evolution, governments can adopt unthinkable policies that could previously not have been considered. We have certainly seen changes in

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legislation against some cultural practices that are now described as harmful but were previously not noticed or recognised as problematic.

Teen pregnancy and child marriage are seen as a national crisis in Zambia. This is often pointed out/talked about more than proven. Those that emphasise the gravity of this problem are powerful actors (groups/organisations and individuals). As highlighted in chapter one, Zambian political actors have described and declared the issue a crisis leading to poverty, low educational attainment and health implications. The claims made are based upon global reports, local media stories presented in the newspapers, and some through mere observations.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

My thoughts on how social problems are constructed and addressed in Zambia stem from a combination of theories on the policy process. The bulk of the literature on public policy originates from American scholars, with most textbooks citing American public policy-making. Thus, it becomes challenging to attempt to fit an American-based framework into a formerly British-colonised Zambian context. Suffice to say, some notions/tenets from these theories do provide fundamental theoretical insights in illustrating the Zambia scenario (I explain the specifics below). Thus, my attempted approach to building a conceptual framework is drawn from borrowing applicable pieces from each of these concepts and compiling them into one piece tailored to the Zambian situation (cutting different pieces of fabric and putting them together to create a new fabric). Later in the chapter, I highlight three areas in which these theories fail to provide insight. Identifying this gap is where my knowledge contribution comes in.

This research study mainly draws on social constructionism and a combination of concepts similar to it. The social construction of target populations in this study helps explain power dynamics between powerful and less powerful groups. It is also linked to bounded rationality, further explaining how policy actors use personal judgment and emotions to influence policy ideas and the selective use of information to back up their arguments. Along the same lines, the NPF advances the use of information; when dominant groups concentrate on demonising the opponent's ideas to promote their agendas (using various strategies such as the scope of conflict, causal mechanisms and devil-angle). The path-dependency concept helps explain current policy actions as an extension/continuation

of past policy ideas. Finally, the WPR approach helps to examine the problem representation of teen pregnancy/child marriage and its implications.

As mentioned already, most of the research in public policy-making relies on American-based theories and frameworks. The theories are used to study policy change, stability, actors, institutions, ideas and social problems in multiple settings. For example, the dominant frameworks like advocacy coalitions by Sabatier (in his books; Theories of the Policy Process), and Kingdon's multiple streams are critical in examining policy change. However, they do not provide full coverage in understanding the nature of "African" or even the Zambian public policy-making system.

Firstly, Africa as a continent holds a distinct position in the world of policy and politics. Its position is deep-rooted in dominant-negative constructs that impact the social construction of African problems and solutions (chapter five provides more details). These theories/frameworks, in my view, do not provide much context in unpacking Africa's unique position. Instead, these frameworks focus more on actor role, power relations, and institutional or political change in a broader context.

Secondly, from widely reading and understanding the policy studies literature, I have observed that colonialism is often not discussed in public policy-making, despite the USA having once been colonised by the British like many other parts of the world.

Thirdly, the Zambian case is unique as a former British colony, and its value system is trapped in a web of Christianity, African tradition and modernity. This makes it hard to un-complicate the puzzle as the country finds itself with a borrowed (colonial) identity which is strongly believed to be the "true" national identity.

Therefore, this research's theoretical contribution highlights a different perspective in understanding the American-dominated public policy frameworks/theories in areas that have received the least attention in the field. It contributes to the limited literature on the social construction of social problems and solutions and the role of policy actors, ideas and the power dynamics at play in policy action in Zambia.

CHAPTER 4: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE "TEEN" PREGNANCY PROBLEM IN GENERAL AND IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I highlight contrasting views and approaches to the perceived problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage with illustrations from different parts of the world, including Africa. I show and present how one dominant construct has dominated the research domain on teen pregnancy, especially in African countries. Teen pregnancy is a subject that has been well-researched around the globe, and many different aspects have been explored in terms of health, education and domestic violence, among other contexts. One important debate relates to the varying perceptions, views, opinions, ideologies, and constructs on teen pregnancy and child marriage.

The methodology used in this literature review includes searching online sources and library books to access relevant materials specific to the subject area. Specifically, these include search alerts from Mendeley and Academia, Tylor and Francis Publications, University of the Western Cape (UWC) databases (Sage, Google Scholar, Sabinet Reference, Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, and Science Direct). However, not all these sources yielded success in providing the specific literature I was looking for. The search terms used included broad search terms - framing, social construction, social construction and teen pregnancy, teen pregnancy/adolescent pregnancy, child marriage in Africa, teen pregnancy in developing countries. Narrower search terms included - adolescent reproductive health policies in Zambia, teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia, youth in Zambia, and the social construction of teen pregnancy in Zambia. I found that the broader the search terms, the more the information, so I did not narrow down the search at the beginning. For example, from the UWC databases, search terms like "social construction and teen pregnancy" produced few materials, and some were not related to the topic.

Additionally, with the narrowed search terms, it was difficult to find any resources with the title "social construction" or any research that related to the concept. This finding itself provides evidence that there might be little analysing of the different constructs around teen pregnancy in Zambia or other African countries.

On the contrary, many resources were retrieved using the terms "social construction/social construction of teen pregnancy" on Google Scholar, Tylor and Francis publications, JSTOR and others. Many of these were articles and books from studies in High-Income Countries (HICs) like the USA and UK, and scholars from different disciplines - psychology, anthropology, sociology, social work and policy studies - have researched the subject. This knowledge gap is what this research aimed to fill.

This chapter is divided into four main sections; (i) an overview of <u>global discourses</u> on teen pregnancy; (ii) <u>construction of the problem,</u> which presents two contrasting views which I have termed the <u>dominant view</u> (what we have been told) that teen pregnancy is harmful, unplanned and unwanted and should be prevented versus the <u>"open" view</u> that it can be a planned, a positive experience and a rational choice made by the teenagers themselves, followed by different views about teen pregnancy <u>as a public health problem</u>, teen pregnancy as a <u>social problem</u> and teen pregnancy and public policy; (iii) <u>What has been ignored</u>, highlights three elements (history, culture and context, age and the knowledge gap) and, lastly, (iv) the <u>conclusion presents a summary of the chapter and key points</u>.

OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON "TEEN" PREGNANCY

There is significant literature revealing the origins and development of concepts such as "youth" and "teen" in Western capitalist contexts. From the moment teen pregnancy was discovered as an issue, it ignited much concern among different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology, which led to studies in adolescent behaviour. Research in the field of psychology sought to understand the psychology of "adolescence" linked to behaviour and cognitive development (Gesell, 1956; Bandura, 1977; Hall, 2019), including contributions from Sigmund Freud (2015). They all conclude that the period of adolescence and youth is a complex phase and is influenced by multiple factors that do not have to do only with biogenetic factors, heredity or psychological processes, even though they play an important part in behaviour influence.

At the same time, sociologists and anthropologists connect adolescent behaviour to societal influence and the environment. Rice (1981, p. 64) states, "each society defines the goals, values, and behaviours it desires for its members. Socially acceptable behaviour is rewarded; unacceptable behaviour is punished". Additionally, "society influences what

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adolescents are, what their problems are and what they [ultimately] become"(Rice, 1981, p. 64). The emphasis presented is that culture, customs, and beliefs have a critical influence on adolescent behaviour.

Similarly, anthropologists advance the study of different universal cultural patterns that appear to be general during the adolescence stage despite geographic location, ethnicity or economical structures, for example, how the notions of "children having children" and sexual indulgence were condemned in the past by many societies, and this continues to be the case. However, the study of culture shows that the behaviour of adolescents not only results from society but from the culture they are raised in. This has contributed to the knowledge of what is referred to as "negative influencers and positive influencers" in adolescent behaviour being socially acceptable or not (Mead, 1950, p. 61).

In summary, these disciplines all try to shed more light on understanding the adolescence stage before making any judgment or condemnation of the actions of teenagers. Similarly, this knowledge is vital in policymaking, and policy actors should understand various factors and complexities of addressing adolescents' needs and behaviours. Rice (1981, p. 75) puts it this way: "to understand adolescents, one [policymakers] must stand in many places and look from many points of view". Additionally, to effectively tackle adolescent issues, policymakers/actors need to take a helicopter view so as to grasp and understand all important factors underlying adolescent wellbeing. This also applies to a social scientist researching any social issues. They should be able to stand in many places before making any conclusions. Thus, the biological, social and cultural context, psychology and heredity should be a fundamental basis for policies addressing adolescent/teen sexual matters.

"Early childbearing", as referred to in the past, has long existed historically, as the literature shows. For example, in early America around the 17-18th century, it was not seen as a problem to marry during teenagerhood as long as both partners were sexually mature; however, premarital sexual activity among young people (teenagers/adolescents) was not welcomed by the elderly, parents, the society and the state (Rice, 1981; Vinovskis, 1987; Furstenberg, 2007). This can be applied to many other societies in the past that placed more value on marriage regardless of age rather than bearing children out of wedlock; thus, teenagehood was not numerically defined (Vinovskis, 1987).

Moreover, the acceptance of early marriage (at this time) was a way of ensuring protection from premarital sexual activities among unmarried people (Vincent, 1961). This changed after the 1970s when teen mothers began to be condemned and were categorised as deviants (Weatherley, 1987; Furstenberg, Brooks-gunn and Chase-Lansdale, 1989; Nathanson, 1991; Wilson and Huntington, 2006). Driscoll (1999) further criticises how mass culture and culture industry since the 1930s have produced a "conformist mode of resistance" that project young girls as both deviant and conforming. In a globalised culture, "advertising to the girl market has always utilised relations between conformity and non-conformity - the 'non-conformist' being one of its regular marketing label" (Driscoll, 1999, p. 177).

To date, a teenager who falls pregnant still suffers the same condemnation and exclusion in most parts of the world. The underlying issues of unwelcoming teenagers from procreating appear to be universal, according to the literature presented globally (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale, 1989; Gigante *et al.*, 2004; Pettifor, 2004; Mathews *et al.*, 2009; United Nations Population Fund, 2012; Envuladu, Umaru and Lorapuu, 2016).

There is wide literature that debates the perceived problem of teen pregnancy globally. In the United States of America (USA), teen pregnancy was described as an epidemic around the 1960s and about the same time, around the 1970s, in the United Kingdom (UK). Both countries are known to have had the highest rates of teen pregnancies compared to other developed nations like Australia, Canada, and Sweden (Jones and Institute, 1986; Macvarish, 2010; Cherry and Dillon, 2014; Linders and Bogard, 2014). The perceived problem of teen pregnancy has surfaced with different levels of importance attached to it in different parts of the world. For example, in the United States, researchers analysing the rise in attention to teen pregnancy refer to the 1976 Alan Guttmacher report as a starting point of popularity on the subject. The report is said to have led to the declaration of teen pregnancy as an epidemic, and it became a political agenda (Kristen Luker, 1996; Furstenberg, 2003; Fonda, Eni and Guimond, 2013; Linders and Bogard, 2014).

Frank Furstenberg is one of the researchers recognised to have extensively studied the teen pregnancy and marriage phenomena in the USA. He highlights a high rise in sexual activity amongst teens and young people in the USA after 1960, which also marked a decline in early marriages (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale, 1989). The increased

sexual activity is said to have been accelerated by the sporadic use of contraceptives, while the decline in early/teen marriage was attributed to advancing women in terms of educational attainment, employment and questioning the very practice of teen/early marriage that pre-existed prior to 1960 (Cherlin, 1981; Thornton and Freedman, 1983).

However, even when the rates of sexual activity among young people began to drop in the 1970s, the issue continued to receive more public attention and teen pregnancy was declared a major social problem in the USA (Gilchrist and Schinke, 1983a; Furstenberg, Brooks-gunn and Chase-lansdale, 1989; Kristen Luker, 1996). Political office bearers had much to say on the subject and began to pronounce publicly how big and serious the problem of teen pregnancy was. The seriousness of the problem at that time could be observed from George Bush's strict "abstinence-only" policies and Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton administrations that declared teen pregnancy "everybody's problem", even when the prevalence of teen pregnancy was seen to be declining (Luker, 1996; Furstenberg, 2007). Researchers like Furstenberg did not agree with this interpretation of the problem of teen pregnancy. He conducted extensive research, which concluded that the problem was misunderstood, exaggerated and misleading, seeing that statistics did not point to the rise of the problem (Furstenberg, 2007).

Many other researchers in this era, such as Vinovskis (1987), Nathanson (1991), Rhode (1994) and Luker (1996), all agreed with this view and believed that teen pregnancy in the USA had been socially constructed (discussed in the next section). Like the USA, teen pregnancy in the UK equally received massive attention from the British government as a public health and social problem needing intervention (Arai, 2009).

Researchers in the UK (Graham and Mcdermott, 2006; Arai, 2009; Dickins, Johns and Chipman, 2012) refer to the biased language used in speeches made by top government officials to show the seriousness of the problem. For example, as prime minister in 1997, Tony Blair was said to have used the words "shattered lives and blighted futures" (Arai, 2009b, p. 5), referring to those who would become teen mothers. Dickins, Johns and Chipman (2012, p. 348) give another example of a statement made in a speech by the Minister for Children in the statement below;

There is still much more to do to further reduce the number of teenagers whose lives are changed forever by an often-unwanted pregnancy. Teenage parents and their children are more likely to suffer from poor health, unemployment, and poor achievement at school than their peers.

From these statements, it is clear the British government saw teen pregnancy as unwelcome, unwanted, and the means to an unsuccessful life for a teenager. Therefore, the only solution was to prevent the problem. This led to the birth of a national campaign called Teen Pregnancy Strategy (TPS), which aimed at providing training and employment, education participation and strategies to reduce social exclusion among teen mothers (Arai, 2009). In the past, "marriage offered economic protection to mothers and their children in a time when the burden of unwed motherhood fell solely on local communities, so unmarried parenthood was highly stigmatised" (Arai, 2009a, p. 3).

While teen pregnancy in the USA and the UK hit the political scene as a public problem, in Sweden, it was not a "headline" problem, yet it was still seen as a social problem but dealt with it at an institutional level (Linders and Bogard, 2014). Meanwhile, in New Zealand, the constructions of teen pregnancy were predominantly located as an individual problem and a physical health problem (Cherrington and Breheny, 2005). However, in most African countries, teen pregnancy as a problem did not make it to the political agenda at the same time as in the developed world. In the 1960s, most African states were battling with liberation struggles from colonial rule, searching for political freedom and independence. Hence, it is less likely that teen pregnancy or early marriage would be a cause for concern at the time, even if it may have existed. On this basis, it can be assumed that priority was given to reconstructing struggling economies recovering from colonialism until later when the HIV/AIDs pandemic hit the continent.

In most African countries, teen pregnancy discussions appear to have stemmed from research related to HIV/AIDs. For example, in South Africa, discussions of teen pregnancy appear in the literature from 1989 onwards (Preston-Whyte, 1989; Preston-Whyte, 1991; Preston-Whyte and Zondi, 1991; Macleod, 1999, 2001). Notably, even though teen pregnancy has become less of a political agenda in the developed world, it remains a highly contestable issue in most developing countries/LMICs, especially in African countries like Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and many others. In the Zambian case, there appears to be limited literature tracing the genesis of debates and discourse around teen pregnancy,

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except indicators shown in the ZDHS (1996-2013), until it became a popular topic in the media and among politicians after the year 2011 to date (Refer to chapter one background section).

It is clear that there is a noticeable difference in the time/period in which teen sexual matters appeared popular and received massive attention, particularly in addressing the teen pregnancy phenomena between the HICs and the LMICs, but, at the same time, there are many similarities in how teen pregnancy has been perceived, especially by governments, how they have framed the issue, and the wording used to describe it.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROBLEM: THE "DOMINANT" VIEW VERSUS THE "OPEN" VIEW

There are two controversial debates on discourses around teen pregnancy. On the one hand, there is a generally accepted dominant view that teen pregnancy is a "serious problem" accompanied by negative implications that hinder future plans and the well-being of teenage girls (Omoro *et al*., 2017; Sandøy et al., 2016; UNFPA, 2013; Walker, 2012; Clark, Bruce, & DudeAnnie, 2006; Macleod, 1999). On the other hand, some question and oppose teen pregnancy's negative notions; they call for a more "open" view. This presents two different constructs. In this case, the dominant view is that teen pregnancy is harmful, unplanned and unwanted. Therefore, the solution is to "eliminate" the problem while the "open" view affirms more comprehensive approaches that not only focus on eliminating the problem but also on understanding the nature of the problem from a different perspective, taking into account individual choices and support systems for the choices made. This view presents a different construct to teen pregnancy, which might be perceived as controversial or misunderstood to encourage or promote teenage pregnancy.

Yet, it shows and brings out a critical view that provides insights into understanding what is being confronted. To ignore or overlook this view limits potential ways of addressing whatever the underlying issues might be in solving or unfolding the puzzle of teen pregnancy and child marriage. Scholars who have widely studied the social construction of teenage pregnancy advocate for a thorough examination of discourses around the issue to gain better insights into what informs the problem in different contexts and environments, rather than politically problematising it with insufficient evidence (Preston-Whyte, Zondi, Mavundla & Gumede, 2018; Linders & Bogard, 2014; Fonda, Eni, & Guimond, 2013; Arai,

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2009; Duncan, 2007; Furstenberg, 2007; Cherrington & Breheny, 2005; Lawlor & Shaw, 2002; Luker, 1996; Macintyre & Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Nathanson, 1991; Preston-Whyte, 1991; Murcott, 1980). These authors have questioned what is wrong with teenage pregnancy. From this perspective, it is believed that teen pregnancy can be experienced positively and can yield more positive and responsible behaviour (Arai, 2011; Furstenberg, 2007).

The term "social problem" tends to appear in most national documents. For example, the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (2013/14) states that teen pregnancy is a "big social and public health problem". Media briefs on teen pregnancies for both Zambia (Mushota and Panos Institute of Southern Africa, 2014) and Zimbabwe (Dube and Panos Institute of Southern Africa, 2015) equally state that it is a "major public health and social development" issue.

TEEN PREGNANCY AS A "PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM"

From a health perspective, pregnancy is said to endanger a pregnant teenager's health at birth and affect the infant's health. Associated health risks and complications include; sepsis, preeclampsia, anaemia, high blood pressure, and premature labour, among others (Mahavarkar, Madhu and Mule, 2008). Every pregnant woman, regardless of age, is susceptible to the mentioned diseases; however, the risk is said to be higher in younger females (Envuladu et al., 2016; Zheng & Anderson, 2009; Mahavarkar et al., 2008; Gigante et al., 2004).

A quantitative study conducted in seven countries using demography and health surveys sought to determine the association of child marriage with maternal health. Through a regression analysis, it was found that there is a negative association between child marriage and maternal health utilisation (Godha et al., 2016), implying that younger married females did not make use of maternal health facilities due to age inappropriateness of services. Another study conducted in India which compared birth outcomes between younger pregnant females below 19 and older ones from 19 to 35 found that teen mothers were three times more likely to suffer from anaemia and twice more likely to develop high blood pressure/hypertension but were also more likely to deliver naturally without any assistance like a caesarean birth (Mahavarkar, Madhu and Mule, 2008). It was found that

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older females had undergone caesarean births compared to the younger age group. Mahavarkar et al (2008) recommend the importance of adequate clinical support services to reduce birth complications in high-risk groups like adolescents and teenagers. They point out that *"Early booking, good care during pregnancy and delivery and proper utilization of contraceptive services can prevent the incidence and complications in this high-risk group"*(Mahavarkar, Madhu and Mule, 2008, p. 1)*.*

A similar study was conducted in Zambia (Luapula Province) comparing two different age groups of females aged 10-15 and 20-24 years. High rates of eclampsia, haemorrhage and prolonged labour were found in those below 16 years (Moraes, Likwa and Nzala, 2018). Still, this did not indicate a direct link between maternal age and the diseases as the authors state;

> a significant association was found between maternal age and eclampsia, fistulae, Cephalopelvic disproportion (CPD), Caesarean section, low birth weight (LBW) and perinatal mortality. However, there was no significant association between maternal age and prolonged labour, anaemia, haemorrhage, sepsis,____ maternal death, preterm delivery, asphyxia and low Apgar scores (Moraes, Likwa and Nzala, 2018, p. 5).

The authors further indicated a similar finding as that of Godha *et al.* (2016) that adolescents did not frequently attend antenatal care visits as much as older women. This might hinder close monitoring and detection of signs of danger. The lack of this attendance is linked to adolescents not having access to tailored "adolescent-friendly" services that cater specifically to their needs. However, a study conducted in Zambia showed that increased adolescent use of services has much to do with community-level influences on health-seeking behaviours (Mmari and Magnani, 2003). The more community acceptance and less stigma attached to teen sexuality, the more the accessibility of such services to young people. Furthermore, Moraes, Likwa and Nzala (2018) recommend better antenatal and obstetric care and service targeted at adolescents and overall strengthening of reproductive health services for all women to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality. Groot, Kuunyem and Palermo, (2018) highlight that;

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> Despite a large global evidence base on the consequences of child marriage, *in-depth studies* studying the dynamics and consequences of child marriage in Ghana specifically are scarce. A better understanding of the dynamics around child marriage is important to motivate more action around reducing child marriage rates, particularly given that decreases have stalled in recent years, and to inform programming assisting child brides (Groot, Kuunyem and Palermo, 2018, p. 2).

This led to the arguments made from the "open view" perspective that teen pregnancy is not a public health problem. "Researchers and health practitioners should think more carefully about why something is labelled a public health problem together with the social and moral context in which it occurs and in which they practice" (Lawlor and Shaw, 2002, p. 553). Lawlor and Shaw (2002) argue mainly against the negative labelling of teen pregnancy to be perceived as a sickness and a shameful thing. They seem to assume a lack of convincing biological evidence that ties teen pregnancy to maternal deaths. In their paper, they argue;

> Medical consequences of teenage pregnancy concluded that Critical appraisal suggested that increased risks of these outcomes [anaemia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, low birth weight, prematurity, intra-uterine growth retardation and neonatal mortality] were predominantly caused by the social, economic, and behavioural factors that predispose some young women to pregnancy (Lawlor and Shaw, 2002, p. 552).

In agreement with Lawlor and Shaw (2002), many other factors need to be considered before teen pregnancy can be labelled as a public health problem or a clinical condition. Some factors, such as the physiological body capacity to carry a pregnancy regardless of age, have been ignored. However, from the studies presented above, it may be clear that there are "some" possible complications or diseases that put pregnant adolescents and teenagers at risk, but the pregnancy itself may not be the main determinant of exposure to high-risk pregnancy complications in younger females. "The greatest risk for an adolescent mother and her child is the mother's age, delaying or failing to receive prenatal care, and the social and political response to her pregnancy" (Cherry and Dillon, 2014, p. 3). More factors have to do with care, access, and services for specific needs. With this in mind, teen pregnancy prevention may not be the ultimate solution to curb these complications/diseases as maternal age may not be much of a significant factor, seeing that all age ranges of women are susceptible to pregnancy-related complications depending on varying circumstances. Cherry and Dillon (2014, p. 3) further add that;

> ….the focus may be on some aspects of providing adequate medical and social services to reduce adolescent maternal and child risks. In these countries [developing countries], the major challenges being addressed are often the ability of the country's public health sector to provide adequate and effective contraception, prenatal and postnatal care, and well-baby programs.

Thus, governments need to direct more efforts into improving the quality of reproductive health services, including youth/adolescent-friendly services, in addition to ensuring early monitoring of pregnancy and follow-ups as suggested by Mahavarkar, Madhu and Mule (2008) and Moraes, Likwa and Nzala (2018).

TEEN PREGNANCY AS A "SOCIAL AND EDUCATION PROBLEM"

From a dominant view perspective, teen pregnancy as a social problem is associated with an endless list of social and economic consequences in a young girl's life. Low or no educational attainment leads to poverty, gender inequality and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and, thereafter, a long inheritance of poverty from generation to generation (Mathews et al., 2009; Edin et al., 2016; Envuladu, Umaru and Iorapuu, 2016; Montazeri et al., 2016; Efevbera et al., 2017; Agege, Nwose and Odjimogho, 2018). Teen pregnancy is continuously described as a social problem in most studies and in national and international policy documents as well as the media. In this section, I highlight some studies that address teen pregnancy as an education problem, Intimate Partner Violence, and poverty as key factors in these problem representations debates.

Generally, education is considered a key weapon in ensuring that every "teenager" succeeds in life. However, with pregnancy or marriage in the way, success cannot be achieved. Instead, the consequences are disastrous. Therefore, teenage girls "must" be prevented from pregnancy and child marriage. Gyan (2013) conducted a qualitative study in Ghana to identify what factors lead to teen pregnancy and to determine the effects of teen pregnancy on educational attainment. This study shows that poor parenting and peer influence leads to teen pregnancy and not the lack of love that leads teenagers to seek love. The study also points to poverty as a contributing factor to teen pregnancy due to material deprivation, based on the responses given by the research respondents. Gyan (2013) mentioned that he used purposive and snowball sampling to select 50 respondents. Among

these, the only respondents mentioned in his article are five teen mothers, two headteachers and three community leaders as key informants. It is unclear who the other respondents consist of and the dominant responses given in each category of listed respondents. It is also unclear if the five teen mothers interviewed were school dropouts or not.

These methodological limitations pose potential threats to the validity and quality of data collected. Regarding the effects of teen pregnancy on educational attainment, "It was clear from the study that some of the respondents dropped out of school due to the pregnancy while others became pregnant because they dropped out of school" (Gyan, 2013, p. 58). This indicates that school dropout is both a cause and consequence of teen pregnancy, according to the author. However, there are many factors associated with school dropout, especially in rural areas. In some cases, pregnancy may happen after leaving/dropping out of school for other reasons like falling in love or lack of school requirements and other needs. Moreover, the free primary education policy implemented by many African governments has not prevented school dropouts as such because of such social and economic factors.

Meanwhile, as much as it is emphasised by a bulk of research and international advocacy groups that education is a primary protective tool to prevent or delay teen pregnancy, many governments have not successfully measured up (Malhotra *et al.*, 2011; United Nations Population Fund, 2012; Vanwesenbeeck *et al.*, 2016; UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018; UNICEF, 2019; UNFPA, 2020). Additionally, not much has been explored in terms of the level of education required to delay the first pregnancy or marriage (Marphatia *et al.*, 2020). To this effect, a recent study conducted in Nepal using multivariable logistics and regression analysis on 6406 women aged 23–30 years showed that keeping girls in school and ensuring they complete secondary education would increase the chance of preventing pregnancy. As Marphatia *et al.* (2020, p. 14) state, "to substantially increase their chances of marrying after 18 years, women need to finish secondary school, of at least nine and ideally 11 years". However, this is in a case where norms to do with pregnancy after marriage are strongly upheld, as applies in most Asian communities. Similarly, in the African setting, pregnancy is more appreciated within the confines of marriage, as Christian values also demand so. But it is also likely that pregnancy creates a path to marriage.

In the same light, Ahonsi et al (2019) found similar results in the case of child marriage. They also conducted their study in Ghana to identify and explore the factors leading to child marriage and the norms that inform it, and how they can be addressed. They used quantitative data from the DHS and qualitative methods through interviews and focused group discussions. From the findings, it was identified that teen pregnancy was one of the drivers of child marriage. Once a girl gets pregnant, it is often expected that the next thing that follows is marriage. A study in a Nigerian community on parental perceptions of girl child marriage also concluded that "unexpected pregnancy is the highest cause of early marriage" (Agege, Nwose and Odjimogho, 2018, p. 1). This affirms that the two issues cannot be easily separated.

Ahonsi et al.'s (2019) study presented 21 per cent of women who got married before the age of 18 as retrieved from Ghana's DHS, representing one in every five women. The authors point out that there has been a decline in the rate of child marriage attributed to increased efforts on promoting girls' education. Yet, there is no substantiated evidence connected to what was found in their study. On the drivers of child marriage, it was found that different factors lead to child marriage like child betrothal and exchange marriages in the family; low bride price; marriage for financial gain; societal, family and peer influence; and pressure to wed (as marriage is highly regarded by society) (Ahonsi et al., 2019). Those not married face mockery and admire their peers who appear to be happily married (Ahonsi et al., 2019). Marriage is further tied to financial gain due to poverty, as stated below by the authors;

> This finding corroborated with the findings from the qualitative data suggesting that poverty was also a crucial factor influencing child marriage. Parents who could not take care of the needs of their young girls either encouraged or forced them into early marriage. In other cases, it was the desires and wants of young girls that led them into early marriage. The data showed that what usually led to teenage pregnancy was poverty, where the family of young girls were unable to take care of their needs in school and their social life. Once a girl got pregnant, she was forced to marry the man responsible for the pregnancy. These issues suggest that child marriage is used as an economic strategy for upward social mobility by girls and their parents in some instances (Ahonsi et al., 2019, p. 13).

Regarding what should be done to address child marriage, the article highlights ending child marriage campaigns similar to Zambian's strategy. However, it is worth noting that education and poverty do not come out as strongly as the issue of culture, social norms,

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family, and peer influence. There is also unsubstantiated evidence to demonstrate that poverty is one of the leading causes of child marriage because the term itself - poverty - is defined narrowly and used loosely. For example, would the desire for material gain by young girls be classified as deprivation or poverty? Does this desire for material things imply poor living conditions or poverty? Poverty has frequently appeared in teen pregnancy literature as a leading factor or cause of teen pregnancy, but this needs further interrogation.

Rural areas tend to have higher rates of teen pregnancy than urban areas. Odimegwu and Mkwananzi (2016) described an association between teen pregnancy and social disadvantage in most communities with high poverty levels. One study found inconsistencies between wealth and sexual behaviour among young people. At the same time, poorer females were more vulnerable to contracting infections (Madise, Zulu and Ciera, 2007). However, Yakubu and Salisu (2018) concluded that teen pregnancy occurs under multiple factors, including sociocultural, environmental, and economic factors. Thus, it is also possible that even girls from wealthy families may equally be as sexually active, drop out of school and choose to get married for reasons other than financial gain.

Furthermore, Luker (1996) makes a counter-argument on poverty as a cause of teen pregnancy. She argues that it is the situation of poverty that potentially leads to early childbearing, not the other way around. This argument can be substantiated by the evidence shown in the statistic that most teen pregnancy or child marriage rates are higher in rural areas than urban areas in Zambia,[11] as shown in the ZDHS 2013/14. Duncan (2007, p. 314) adds that "teenage parenting may therefore be a part of social disadvantage, rather than its cause". The argument presented is that most of the teenagers who fall pregnant are already living in poor socioeconomic conductions and circumstances, with limited access to most essential public services (Gilchrist and Schinke, 1983; Weatherley, 1987; Rhode, 1994; Lawlor and Shaw, 2002; Wilson and Huntington, 2006).

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[11] Statistics also show that in 1960 82% of Zambians lived in rural areas compared to 55% in 2020. This shows a reduced population of people living in rural areas. https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/zambia-demographics/

> Advocates and policymakers have implicated early childbearing as a cause of poverty and its associated ills, neglecting its etiology as a consequence of poverty. As a result, remedial policies have been adopted to change individual behaviour rather than altering the social conditions which contribute to the behaviour (Weatherley, 1987, p. 6).

These social conditions have to do with improving social services in rural communities, for example, making education accessible and attainable by building schools or universities, providing access to health facilities including adolescent-friendly sexual reproductive health, and skills development programmes that target vulnerable groups or out of school adolescents/young people. Another social problem linked to teen pregnancy and child marriage is Intimate Partner Violence. IPV is said to result from child marriage, and in the case of teen pregnancy, girls lack sexual negotiation skills. Kidman (2016, p. 2) states that;

> child marriages are characterized by spousal age gaps, power imbalances, social isolation and lack of female autonomy all of the above are demonstrated risk factors for IPV and represent potential causal mechanisms.

Findings from studies (Klomegah, 2008; Raj *et al.*, 2010; Kidman, 2016; Yount *et al.*, 2016; Tenkorang, 2019) in different parts of the world have concluded that the younger the girl, the more likely they are to face abuse from their partners. Most of these studies show correlations through regression analysis. For example, a study conducted in India by Raj *et al.* (2010) and in Ghana by Tenkorang (2019) showed an association between marital age and marital violence. Both studies conclude that females who married at a younger age were more susceptible to facing IPV.

In Zambia, Klomegah (2008), using data from the ZDHS, highlights the practice of wife-beating among married women between the age of 15-49 years, even though child marriage is not directly linked to this. Another comparative study of 34 countries reported similar findings as that of Ghana, Indian and Bangladesh but also pointed out methodological limitations that could potentially compromise the validity of these findings. Kidman (2016, p. 11) states that "before we conclude that child marriage has a more consistent impact on physical IPV, studies with larger sample sizes and better measurement of sexual IPV are needed". She further outlines the limitations of bias presentation from DHS and states that the sensitivity of the subject could hinder the reliability and validity of data.

Contrary to the dominant view, the literature presents another side of the story to teen pregnancy, against the claim that teen pregnancy is a tragedy in one's life course. For example, Modell, Furstenberg and Hershberg (1976, p. 218) argue that;

> one cannot glibly conclude that parenthood in adolescence inevitably or irreversibly disrupts the life course. A sizeable proportion of the young mothers in our study was able to cope successfully with the problems of early parenthood, these mothers were making out as well as their former classmates who did not become pregnant premaritally.

Similarly, a study conducted in the UK by Arai (2011) suggests teen pregnancy can be experienced positively. This study aimed at responding to the new Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (TPS) implemented in England in 1999. It involved interviewing young mothers under 21 in three different locations in the UK. Findings conclude that teen pregnancy resulted in families coming together, which was a positive life-changing experience for some teen mothers and support was provided in carrying through the pregnancy by the family and community. Arai (2011) adds that policymakers should be observant of some positive aspects of teen motherhood experienced in some contexts. Arai (2011) further points out how qualitative research can unravel more insights into a perceived problem rather than relying on statistical correlations.

Miller (2018), in a book chapter titled "What if Becoming a Teenage Parent Saved your Life", gathered positive stories from teen mothers through a collection of narratives in New Zealand. The author used the statement "dominant-negative constructions of teen pregnancy" to refer to the negativity associated with teen pregnancy and that this is what provided a context for the study. The study reports that;

> Despite the 'shock' of discovering they were pregnant, the experience of pregnancy for all of these young women marked a turning point in their lives and aspirations, prompting them to think about their own and their child's future well-being and, in some cases, to consider a different style of life, a different assemblage. For several, these changes were literally 'life-saving': leaving the gang, stopping drug-use, even extricating themselves from violent relationships (Miller, 2018, p. 264).

Miller (2018, p. 266) concludes that this study "strongly refutes the findings of academic research that teenage parenting always, and of necessity, results in negative outcomes for teenage parents and their children". Duncan (2007, p. 321) expands on this view by adding that "evidence about the actual experience and outcomes of teenage parenting is ignored, discounted, or re-interpreted in line with the expected, 'common

sense' view". This "common sense" view is known to have produced a form of stigma and social exclusion of girls that fall pregnant during teenagehood.

Another study conducted in the UK in different locations showed that the "prophecy of doom, failure, and isolation were recurrent feelings" experienced by pregnant teenagers (Whitehead, 2001, p. 445). This study involved face-to-face interviews with a group of pregnant teens and not pregnant aged between 16-19. Findings from the study reveal that pregnant teenagers expressed feelings of stigma and dooms-hell upon themselves due to the negative perceptions drawn from religion and the cultural backgrounds that value the structure of the family and marriage. Whitehead (2001, p. 446) states that;

> …the extent to which the perceptions of the moral issues were negatively or positively felt influenced the teenage pregnant woman, and they either felt supported or believed themselves to be on the road to 'social death'.

Similarities can be drawn from the international literature with that of the studies conducted in African countries. The common themes are the shame, disapproval and stigma attached to teen pregnancy. The other distinguishing factor is that cultural and societal values play a significant role in influencing decisions to get pregnant/married or not, regardless of age. How these matters (motherhood, marriage or when one is considered old enough to engage in sexual activities) are administered differently from society to society. Like Fonda, Eni and Guimond (2013a) put it, it "all depends" on the history, culture and location. Additionally, the evidence used and provided to make a claim and who (powerful and dominating groups) makes a claim is crucial.

While the discourse about the problem of teen pregnancy began much earlier in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1970s, scholars in South Africa only began questioning the issue after the 1980s (Macleod, 2003). Preston-Whyte, one of the early researchers on teen sexuality in South Africa, revealed that teen pregnancy (on the contrary) was not perceived as a problem but instead was a rational choice. As for Zambia, most studies on teen sexual matters appear from the beginning of the 1990s, with most of them focusing on the HIV pandemic and the negative effects of teen pregnancy (Pillai and Barton, 1998, 1999; Magnani *et al.*, 2002; Kapungwe, 2003; Siziya *et al.*, 2008; Mwanza, 2015; Svanemyr, 2019; Packer *et al.*, 2021).

For example, one study conducted in Zambia in 1992 highlighted increased maternal dependency, less self-reliance, disturbed heterosexual relationships, derailed personal

development and loss of life direction as psychosocial consequences of teen pregnancy (Peltzer and Likwa, 1992). Furthermore, studies rarely question or examine the topic from a contextual perspective or under the social construction lens. This is where this study attempts to provide a wider outlook on the problem in the Zambian context, although a few studies over the past years have drawn away from the HIV issues and focused more on interrogating the discourses around teen pregnancy (Webb, 2000; Waszak et al., 2012; Blystad et al., 2019; Simmons, Henning, Zulu et al., 2019; Zulu et al., 2019; Blystad, Moland, *et al.*, 2020; Haaland et al., 2020).

Contrary to the popular assertion that teen pregnancies are often unplanned and unwanted, Preston-Whyte's (1991) study revealed that teenagers might decide to become mothers (by free choice) in order to uphold social norms, customs or traditions/acquire a respectable status in that particular community (upward social mobility). Thus, "becoming pregnant was a rational and conscious decision that a teenager made in light of her particular circumstances rather than merely something that happened to her" (extracted from Mkhwanazi, 2010, p. 348). Another ethnographic study conducted in a South African township concludes that;

> despite the negative perception of teenage pregnancy within the township, particularly social and cultural circumstances provided fertile ground for its occurrence". [Furthermore] in this particular community, the management of a teenage pregnancy played a functional and critical role in maintaining and reproducing social norms and ideals regarding intergenerational relationships, which ultimately ensured that the rates of early childbearing remained high (Mkhwanazi, 2010b, p. 348).

Meanwhile, a study conducted in Zambia in 2017 sought to explore the experiences, needs and coping strategies of pregnant and parenting teenagers in Lusaka and North Western Provinc*e* (Katowa *et al.*, 2017). Through a phenomenological approach, 27 pregnant and married girls (three school-going) were interviewed from the ages of 15-19 years. Findings from the study revealed that the participants experienced negative feelings not only about finding out they were pregnant but also about the negative reaction from their families. This made them feel "distressed, [embarrassed], disappointed, frightened and ashamed that they were pregnant. In addition, parents, siblings, some friends, and partners reacted negatively by expressing disappointment, distress, and denial of pregnancy" (Katowa *et al.*, 2017, p. 066).

A combination of these feelings (including rejection from some of the parents) is said to have caused a stressful pregnancy for the teenagers. However, despite these circumstances, they were able to cope through different mechanisms.

> As a means to withstand the negative experiences and live within the circumstances of unmet teenage and motherhood needs, the pregnant and parenting teenagers used a number of adaptive coping strategies, including avoidance of negativity, embracing support from family and partner, repentance and dependence on God, and focusing on own and the child's future (Katowa *et al.*, 2017, p. 067).

This study is an example of the effects of dominant-negative constructions about teen pregnancy that increase the burden rather than reduce it. Combing these views and what is presented by Preston-Whyte (1991) and Mkhwanazi (2010) makes teenage pregnancy a much more complex issue that requires contextual understanding. In some cases, rather than restrictive standard measures, more supportive intervention strategies are needed to help pregnant teens and mothers cope and rebuild their lives even after dropping out of school. In the case of child marriage, some studies (Knox, 2017; Schaffnit *et al.*, 2019) equally show some positive elements expressed by some married teenagers. This study is an example of the effects of dominant-negative constructions about teen pregnancy that increase the burden rather than reduce it. Combing these views and what is presented by Preston-Whyte (1991) and Mkhwanazi (2010) makes teenage pregnancy a much more complex issue that requires contextual understanding. In some cases, rather than restrictive standard measures, more supportive intervention strategies are needed to help pregnant teens and mothers cope and rebuild their lives even after dropping out of school. In the case of child marriage, some studies (Knox, 2017; Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019) equally show some positive elements expressed by some married teenagers.

A recent study conducted in Ghana sought to explore first-hand feelings and experiences of married females aged between 12-19 years through a phenomenological approach (Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020). The study conducted in-depth interviews with 21 married girls in the northern region of Sagnarigu, Tolon and Mion districts, where the practice of child marriage is common. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling, comprising four married girls without formal education, six primary school drop-outs, eight junior high school drop-outs, and three senior high school drop-outs.

Contrary to the dominant view that has focused attention on the negative effects of teen pregnancy and child marriage, findings from this study reveal a mixture of both positive and negative experiences faced by married girls as mothers, young wives, and expectant mothers. The authors state that;

> the majority of married girls perceived the timing of their marriages as early and negative, while a few others considered it as timely and positive. However, married girls reported more positive aspects in their marriage than they did negative aspects (Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020, p. 205).

The authors further challenge the bias and condemnation approach by policymakers and the research community to turn to more positive approaches in handling child marriage.

> The positive experiences serve as manifestations of positive outcomes that could further be explored by identifying personal strengths in resilience and coping in the context of child marriage. These findings challenge policymakers to adopt a novel perspective that will drive child marriage interventions through a more positive psychological view that focuses on coping and resilience (Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020, p. 206).

Similarly, a qualitative study conducted in Zambia's six districts in 2015 by Child Frontiers showed that marriages occurring between teenage girls and boys of almost the same age were consensual. Part of the findings from the study revealed that;

> the most common unions are those that take place between peers – girls (from age 12 or 13) and boys (from age 14), usually with an age difference of about two to three years. The majority of marriages involving children do not adhere to traditional processes. Children often decide on their own to marry (Mann, Quigley and Fischer, 2015, p. 39).

As already pointed out by Preston-Whyte's study, this study showed that teenagers themselves made a choice to marry. This is contrary to the general view and assumption that girls are victims and forced into marriage by parents or due to traditional processes.

'A sweet and sour taste: Motherhood as an ambivalent experience in Zambia', an article by Mwape et al (2014), describes a study that explored the experiences of motherhood among women aged 18-45 years. The study, conducted using focused group discussions with both married and single women, found both positive and negative motherhood experiences. A child was seen as a future investment and gave a sense of prestige and honour to the woman and the family. It also strengthened marital relationships. These were the positive highlights of pregnancy and motherhood. However,

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negative experiences included vulnerability to diseases like HIV, limited social support and compromised decision-making powers (Mwape et al., 2014). On the other side, if a woman does not have a child, she is ridiculed, stigmatised and excluded from society. Mwape et al (2014, p. 105) point out that the negative notions of "childlessness may contribute to [the] immense value attached to having children in low resource setting[s] such as Zambia".

It is worth noting that, even though this study targeted an older range of women, these experiences reflect the desire for childbearing embedded in most African societies where younger girls grow up. Thus, this desire is easily transferred to even the younger age groups of women. The authors further emphasise that;

> it is essential that both positive and negative experiences of motherhood are acknowledged without concealing the complexity of their interaction. The co-existence of both negative and positive aspects would probably help to create a balanced view of motherhood and render it a worthwhile process for women to experience (Mwape, Patricia et al., 2014, p. 105).

Another study that shows similar findings was conducted in South Sudan to find out the reasons for childbearing. Both males and females aged between 16-20 years, covering school-going and out-of-school adolescents and the parents of those with children, were all interviewed, amounting to 24 respondents (Kane *et al.*, 2019a). Like Mwape *et al.* (2014), this study revealed the high value placed on childbearing/motherhood regardless of age. Motherhood is seen as a fulfilling and meaningful experience. A home-making experience that implies stability and a passage to adulthood and carrying one's name forward all emerged from the voices of the respondents as reasons for childbearing. As the authors state;

> Having a child seems to somehow define one's worth and establish one's claim to adulthood. Amongst the study participants, the girls who had children of their own, whether they were in school or not, seemed to take much pride in being mothers (Kane *et al.*, 2019b, p. 7).

In their views, the authors seem to suggest that adolescents' decisions about childbearing are a reproduction of the high value placed on motherhood by society. They affirm that "these decisions are also shaped by the harsh economic and social realities which constrain the futures"; therefore, they argue that "it is important to pay attention to whether adolescent pregnancy causes poorer life prospects or if poor life prospects motivate early pregnancy" (Kane *et al.*, 2019a, p. 7).

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In another study conducted in Tanzania, similar outcomes on child marriage were observed. This study aimed to determine why people marry, the appropriate time to marry and who guides the marriage process (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019). Data was collected through focused group discussions (FGDs) with parents of young people below 15 years and a survey in which 993 females were interviewed aged 15-35 from 743 randomly selected households. Among the reasons for marrying were; childbearing is God's Law (implying that it is natural to reproduce), partnership, respect and status (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019). The study also found that, generally, the "right" time to marry is determined by puberty rather than chronological age, even though most respondents refer to the age of 18 years as old enough to marry. Concerning marriage guidance, females had a say in deciding when and whom to marry as opposed to the dominant view that child or early marriage is often forced.

Schaffnit *et al.* (2019) point out that two of these findings (high degree of autonomy in marital processes and marrying to gain respect and status) are particularly significant in explaining why it may not be possible to totally eliminate child marriage in Africa. The authors recommend that;

> It is essential to engage with the reality that marrying early is attractive to young people in some contexts, while in other contexts, marriage may indeed infringe upon women's autonomy regardless of their age (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019, p. 103).

Tanzania and Zambia being neighbouring countries, the context described in this study can be equated to the Zambian case as highlighted by Mwape *et al.* (2014).

TEEN PREGNANCY AND "PUBLIC POLICY"

When teen pregnancy was pronounced a public policy issue in the USA, Weatherley (1987) referred to it as an issue in the "excited discovery stage". Since the recognition of teen pregnancy as a serious problem, many governments began to seek interventions that could provide solutions to the problem. While the USA and UK have passed this stage, the topic in Zambia and many other African countries seem to be at its "exciting discovery stage".

In most cases, solutions to a problem very much depend on how a particular problem is defined and by whom. Apart from governments, different professions also sought to provide solutions according to how they perceived the problem. According to Weatherly (1987), they are two processes historically that have contributed to shaping problem definition and problem-solving responses. One has to do with professional agendas in line with the profession's beliefs. For example, psychologists and sociologists would advocate for applying behaviour change and social control mechanisms in problem-solving. The other has to do with solutions that are politically and economically attainable. As highlighted earlier, the problem of teen pregnancy in the USA, at its peak, was declared to be "everyone's" problem. Implying that it was not only the problem of the government but also other non-state actors that needed to participate in prescribing solutions for it. At that time, different organisations such as the Alan Gluttmacher and Planned Parenthood Associations and academic institutions provided suggestions for actions, such as sex education and school-based clinics, birth control and chastity campaigns, but all these are said to have been failed responses (Weatherley, 1987; Kristin Luker, 1996; Furstenberg, 2003; Hoffman, Foster and Furstenberg, 2003).

Weatherly describes the platforms that made teen pregnancy stand out as a serious problem;

> Three kinds of processes have been involved in sustaining popular and official perceptions of teenage pregnancy as a crisis demanding governmental attention: a) rhetorical devices stressing the gravity of the problem and the threat it poses to the social order; b) issue expansion, whereby teen pregnancy is implicated as a cause of other recognized social problems; and c) selective utilization of empirical evidence (1987, p. 21).

In the same way, today, the problem definition of teen pregnancy has not changed from how it has been viewed in the past, let alone the handling of it. The only difference now is that teen pregnancy has largely become to be perceived as a global problem, if not altogether an international crisis. United Nations agencies such as UNFPA and UNICEF, and other prominent international organisations have dominated and set a standard representation of teen pregnancy as a "serious problem", as highlighted in most reports already presented.

Cobbett (2014) points out that the UN bodies have been instrumental in advocating and promoting girl child education policies and adolescent sexual reproductive rights, yet this advocacy carries problematic constructions of girls as "victims and heroines". Cobbett (2014, p. 313) argues that "the continuing hegemony in which schooling for girls is considered 'a good thing' disrupts our ability to 'hear' girls and blurs understandings of empowerment". A scenario is presented to illustrate two choices in the "victim and heroines" girl effect below;

> In the first scenario, the girl 'gets a chance', meaning 'she gets educated, stays HIV negative, marries when she chooses (and) raises a healthy family'. In contrast, in the second scenario in which she does not go to school, 'she is illiterate, married off, is isolated, is pregnant (and) vulnerable to HIV'. The factual accuracy of these scenarios is dubious, and other organizations may take a more subtle line; however, this depiction of 'two scenarios' in which schooling girls is equal to empowering them seems to be becoming commonplace. The 'victim' and 'heroine' images of girls are very apparent in these depictions, with formal schooling, made possible by international aid, constructed as the way in which the 'girl-child' can be turned from one to the other (Cobbett, 2014, pp. 313-314).

Academic research too has adopted such representations, and the studies that present the negative effects of teen pregnancy and child marriage are mostly quantitative (Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Rhode, 1994; Duncan, 2007a; Arai, 2009). The picture presented has convinced most political actors to meet unrealistic targets in attempting to implement policies that do not take into account contextual factors. Such studies are said to have taken up more space in creating dominant-negative constructs about teen pregnancy leading to a one-sided story. "This means that policymakers then only receive a one-dimensional view of teenage parenting [which is] unable to capture the thoughts and feelings of teenage mothers themselves" (Wilson and Huntington, 2006, p. 64).

Duncan (2007, p. 328) further adds that "media and political portrayals of teenage mothers will also reflect, and impose, their own categorical version of teenage mothers and fathers – a version that does not admit diversity or context". Duncan (2007) highlights three discourses similar to Weatherly's, which have directed policies on teen pregnancy taking the same path we see today. The elements are; discourse as a moral panic, discourse as quantitative social science, and the social exclusion discourse (Duncan, 2007). These discourses are said to have shaped policies around teen pregnancy as perceived through

dominant-negative constructs that have blinded us to see only one side of the story, thus resulting in inappropriate instruments for policy design and thereby misdirecting policy so much that they become irrelevant and meaningless (Peters, 2006; Duncan, 2007).

Teen/adolescent, reproductive health research has sought to analyse how governments respond to the subject by reviewing state policies targeted at improving the sexual reproductive health needs of young people (Ziegler *et al.*, 1990; Bacchi, 1999, 2016; Arai, 2009; Lister, 2011, Beltz et al 2015, Price, 2018). One of the important ways of analysing the government's intervention in addressing social problems is through understanding how a problem is presented and by whom rather than what the problem is, as outlined by Carol Bacchi (1999).

Bacchi (2009) suggests taking an interest in the way problems are problematised, that is, how they are presented and come to be recognised as problematic. According to Bacchi (2009), each policy contains an inherent interpretation and diagnosis of a problem. In other words, policy solutions or interventions have much to tell about how the problem is thought about by whoever constructs it. The goal of this approach is to challenge the conventional way of viewing issues or policies as they are presented. Then more answers can be drawn from scrutinising the effects and implications of problem representations. This approach fits into the related concepts of bounded rationality, and the social construction of the target population explained in the theoretical chapter. The way in which "problems" are represented, or constituted, is crucial.

WHAT HAS BEEN IGNORED

Conclusions on what has been ignored in the teen pregnancy debate can be observed from the literature presented. These have to do with taking into account history, culture and context, age, and the knowledge gap.

HISTORY, CULTURE AND CONTEXT MATTER

From the ontology realist perspective, context is very critical in explaining meanings. Many researchers (Weatherley, 1987; Rhode, 1994; Wilson and Huntington, 2006; Duncan, 2007b; Lisa Arai, 2009; Price, 2011; Fonda, Eni and Guimond, 2013; Cobbett, 2014; Al-Kloub *et al.*, 2019; Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020) have pointed out the importance of

putting things in context in order to understand them. Particularly regarding the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage, policymakers tend to ignore context. "Policy issues do not exist in a vacuum, as they are contemporary influenced by a series of events, conditions, and actions that preceded them"(Price, 2011, p. 283).

Currently, the perceived problem of teen pregnancy seems to be a one size fits all approach prescribed by the UN. There appears to be a universal problem definition with a single solution that does not consider history, culture and context. The aspect of culture comes out very significantly in several studies, mostly cited in studies from Asia (Marphatia *et al.*, 2020) and Africa (Stephenson, 2009; Knox, 2017; Agege, Nwose and Odjimogho, 2018; Svanemyr, 2019). Pillai and Barton (1998) conducted a study on teen sexuality activities in Zambia (Lusaka and Kitwe) and found that modern methods of controlling teen sexual activities are suppressed by traditional institutions like initiation ceremonies. Even though this study was conducted more than 20 years ago, it still reveals a strong foundational background of the influence of tradition embedded in the mindset of girls as they grow into womanhood. Hindin and Fatusi (2009, p. 59) point out that in "many developing country settings, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, women's gender identities and social status are tied to motherhood and childlessness is highly stigmatized". Some recent studies presented above attest to this (Mwape *et al.*, 2014; Kane *et al.*, 2019; Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019; Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020).

A more recent study conducted in Zambia's rural areas by Svanemyr (2019) highlights that, in addition to norms playing a part in influencing young people's sexual behaviour, religion also contributes, as Zambia is declared a Christian nation. This implies that Christian values of abstaining from premarital sex are expected to be upheld, and pregnancy outside marriage regardless of age would shame the family. Despite this, premarital sexual activity is common among young people (both males and females) in Zambia (Ministry of Health, 2011; Bowman and Brundige, 2013; Kembo, 2013; Menon *et al.*, 2018) and often done secretly (Svanemyr, 2019). Another dominant cultural norm is the desire and pride in fatherhood, leading to younger men seeking opportunities for childbearing (Macleod and Tracey, 2014; Steinhaus *et al.*, 2016; Menon *et al.*, 2018). While policy efforts are more focused on girl-specific interventions to prevent pregnancy, the boy's contribution/role in this is ignored. Despite the evident influence of culture and norms, policymakers have paid less attention to male involvement in intervention programmes.

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However, social norms often appear to conflict with legal frameworks that seek to regulate social behaviour. It then becomes crucial to question if governments can control and regulate sexual activities among young people. For example, Marphatia *et al.* (2020) point out that in the case of child marriage, if the norm is to marry below the legally accepted age, does the government hold the whole community to account, and how do they achieve it if at all it is attainable?

Sexual behaviour is a complex phenomenon, and most governments seek to control citizens' sexual activities through different mechanisms and instruments. For example, in the Zambian case, Christianity is used to condemn sexual immorality - this includes sex before and outside marriage, sexual orientation and same-sex/gender sexual activities. Laws are also enforced to ensure compliance with acceptable sexual conduct. Thus, the laws or national ideologies set the standard for what is considered acceptable sexual conduct and what is not. For example, despite the classification of early marriage as a "harmful cultural practice", marriages before and after 18 years are not locally regarded as distinct forms of marriage. Rather, marriage is a practice that occurs at various ages, and the overwhelming majority of women who don't marry before 18 years do so soon after.

HOW YOUNG IS "TOO YOUNG" AND THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Another element that comes into question is how young is "too young" to have sex or get married. Some critical factors are important in answering this question but are often ignored in both policy and the problematic definition of teen pregnancy or child marriage ln the USA; for example, Rhode (1994) argues that the appropriate age for sexual relations and parenting is dependent on time, place, race or class and is simply a matter of cultural definition. Therefore, it cannot or should not be standardised. The diversity of what it means to be old enough or too young has been overly ignored in most policy interventions targeting the elimination of child marriage. It is important to think critically about who determines the appropriate age for sexual activity and what criteria are used. "Adulthood and marriage is integrally linked to local concepts of adulthood, but adulthood is only partially linked to age" (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019, p. 100). As most studies have highlighted in Africa, the value placed on marriage and the desire for motherhood make it

difficult to set a standard age for one to be considered old enough to start sexual activities, marry or have a child.

In Schaffnit *et al.*'s (2019) study, the respondents used the word "adult" to measure when one can marry. In most African societies, adulthood is often marked by puberty. Moreover, even if the constitutional age for marriage is 21 years, marriage under customary law is allowed based on puberty in the Zambian context. This also brings in the question of inconsistent legal frameworks that conflict with policy direction. With this in mind, it then becomes critical to question the universal age of 18 years for marriage. Below that, it is considered child marriage. However, there is no attached age restriction with pregnancy, only words like "adolescent" and "teen" pregnancy. Dixon-Mueller (2008, p. 257) argues against setting a universal age limit in the statement below:

> Because chronological ages and developmental stages are not highly synchronized and because environments of risks, opportunities, and constraints differ dramatically across and within countries, setting a minimum age under which male and female adolescents are too young (or, conversely, an age at which they are old enough) to make safe sexual, marital, and reproductive transitions is bound to be arbitrary. Different individuals and groups pass through their developmental stages at different ages.

Dixon-Mueller (2008) highlights three determining factors; body readiness for sexual activity or pregnancy, cognitive capacity to make decisions, and age set by national legal frameworks. These play a key role in assessing the appropriate age for sexual activity, pregnancy or marriage for young people. However, legal frameworks may be difficult to follow as they are often in conflict with traditional customs and diverse cultural practices. Body readiness or psychological development has been ignored (highlighted in teen pregnancy as a public health issue). Most studies use age to associate teen pregnancy with poor health outcomes. As for cognitive capacity, young people's ability to make informed decisions voluntarily depends on many influences like peers, family, society, or media. Also, making a decision that is considered wise or correct is very relative and cannot be easily operationalised. However, it is still important to note that these factors have not paid attention to the age definition of teen sexual matters.

In answering the question "how young is too young" for sex, marriage, pregnancy/parenthood, according to Dixon-Mueller's (2008) assessment, ages 10-14 years are considered "too young" because they lack the three elements mentioned; 15-17 years is

dependent on the onset of puberty (some may be "old enough" others not); 18 years and above are considered old enough in all three aspects. Concerning the ages from 15-17 years, the author points out that;

> some adolescents may wish to cohabit or marry at this age and will have the cognitive and social maturity to do so, in which case defining all unions in which one partner is younger than 18 as "child marriages" and calling for their elimination could be construed as a denial of their freedom (Dixon-Mueller, 2008, p. 258).

In agreement with Dixion-Mueller's view, the elimination solution to child marriage limits the freedom and choices of young people without taking into account their circumstances and the environment they are socialised in. Notably, marriage decisions, especially in most African societies, largely rely on what the community dictates. For example, Schaffnit *et al* (2019) reveal varying views about marrying "too late" for males and females. If a woman delays getting married, she is considered worthless, not contributing to society, while it is a sign of irresponsibility in the case of a man. Thus, this creates the need for critical assessment and evaluation of such policies, particularly capturing local conceptualisations of age and marriage, to meet the needs of young people.

THE KNOWLEDGE GAP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

From this review, it is clear that there is an imbalance in the representation of teen pregnancy globally. Most research tends to favour the dominant constructs, therefore overshadowing the contextual, cultural and historical factors necessary in critically analyzing the issue. The implications of this gap limit different avenues of problem-solving, eventually leading to misdirected policy intervention. Firstly, the argument presented by many scholars is that research has turned a blind eye to capture the subjective experiences of adolescent and teen mothers themselves, as evidently shown in the most recent studies (Mwape *et al.*, 2014; Knox, 2017; Kane *et al.*, 2019; Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020).

Many other international scholars have drawn attention to this too. For example, Duncan (2007) points out the discrepancies between teen mothers/parenthood accounts of experiences and policy interpretation. Notably, research findings on these subjects are often omitted in most government and international policy documents (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019; Graham and Mcdermott, 2006; Wilson and Huntington, 2006). Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley (1993) highlight that the main focus of these reports is excessively

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focused on exposing the negative aspects and ignoring the desires experienced in particular settings. This presents a one-sided view of the problem. "From a policy perspective, and in keeping with this "one-story only" stance, teenage pregnancy is depicted as a problematic, or even pathological, behaviour"(Arai, 2009b, p. 181). Cherrington and Breheny (2005) warn that researchers should critically analyse why an issue is defined as a problem even if it appears to be "scientific" or evidence-based. Most of the studies showing this one-sided picture are quantitative, and this has its limitations.

The second argument is that there is an enormous over-reliance on quantitative methods to qualify the devastating effects of teen pregnancy and child marriages, as highlighted earlier in the chapter. "Reliance on quantitative studies that overlook the contextual nature of human behaviour can only give a distorted and limited understanding of the lives of these women" (Wilson and Huntington, 2006, p. 69). Additionally, in most cases, these approaches lack rigour and contain some methodological flaws (Wilson and Huntington, 2006).

For example, even though demographic and health surveys provide reliable official statistical information used in policy decision-making, they present, however, some limitations that should not be overlooked. Many researchers have pointed out some flaws in the sampling age and data omissions and, in some cases, fluid marriage definitions (Cherrington and Breheny, 2005; Cobbett, 2014; Koski, Clark and Nandi, 2017). Notably, the methodological data collection approaches used in DHSs tend to exclude or omit data from younger adolescents aged below 15. There is a tendency to generalise both early and late adolescence groups using one sampling age. For example, in the ZDHS (refer to chapter eight), data on teen pregnancy from ages 13-15 was omitted because it did not meet the threshold of 50 per cent as per survey inclusion criteria (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health and ICF International, 2014). Additionally, a study analysing DHS, early marriage trends in 31 sub-Saharan African countries, including Zambia, highlights omission limitations. Koski, Clark and Nandi (2017, p. 13) state that;

there is a large problem with censoring [omitting data], as some women interviewed between ages 15 and 17 may have gone on to marry before their 18th birthday. This means that the estimated child marriage levels obtained from cross-sectional measures are expected to be lower than those estimated in our primary analysis.

Cherrington and Breheny (2005, p. 108) further argue that;

to present 20-year-olds as at 'risk' of teenage pregnancy within the same mapping of risks for young people of 13 and upwards simply elides potentially major differences across groups, homogenises the pregnant teenager and appears to assist in the creation of overlap between quite different debates.

This limited sampling age and data omission create a knowledge gap. In addition, this data could provide significant variations useful for making inferences targeted especially at the age group in question, 13-19 years. Thus, omitting this data limits the information that could potentially give more insight into the prevalence of both teen/early pregnancy and child marriage.

On the definition of child marriage, marriage firstly is open to interpretation. This is because there are many disparities and contrasts between legal and customary law/traditional systems. As such, in the DHSs, marriage is not defined in terms of legal or customary union. For example, in the ZDHS, those living together/cohabiting are counted as married (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health and ICF International, 2014). Thus, using this measure to determine the prevalence of child marriage presents unfounded data to conclude the occurrence/seriousness of the problem.

The third argument is that quantitative studies appear to be taken more seriously than qualitative studies. Wilson and Huntington (2006, p. 70) argue that in "the teen motherhood debate, the tendency is to privilege the quantitative science seen as more sound, more expert". They further state that the tendency to prefer quantitative over qualitative findings leads to inadequate policy decisions. This, in turn, may affect the views, judgments and practices of various professions/sectors involved in providing services for young people. For example, in the USA and UK, the research studies that magnified the negative aspects of teen pregnancy led to politicians and policymakers believing that teen motherhood results in social exclusion and welfare dependency, leading to misdirected policies (Luker, 1997; Whitehead, 2001; Graham and Mcdermott, 2006; Wilson and Huntington, 2006; Arai, 2009; Dickins, Johns and Chipman, 2012). In most African countries, these effects are seen in how

young people are stigmatised, especially regarding access to reproductive health services or the treatment of teen mothers returning to the classroom. Presenting a negative picture of teen pregnancy creates a dominant narrowed approach in the minds of the service providers (like teachers and health workers) that are hard to change.

The contrasting views presented show a gap in research globally but most especially in the African context, presenting a one-sided view of the story of teen pregnancy and child marriage and thus creating room for further exploration.

Therefore, this research fills in the gap to show the dominant-negative representation of teen pregnancy. This research does not go beyond testing or advocating either of the perspectives but raises some useful questions for researchers and policymakers to critically think about how dominant constructions can lead to path-dependent and misdirected policy intervention. Moreover, the relevance of bringing out both perspectives is to give a background and context and how the general public often fails to distinguish between the "real" and "unreal" due to social constructions. This marks a critical point of analysis in how public policy turns out. This is what makes my research unique, as there have been very few studies that have critically analysed the social constructs around teen pregnancy and how they ultimately led to a limited one-sided policy approach.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed literature covering the global discourse on teen pregnancy, which has generally been viewed as a big problem over the years in different regions and times. The issue was more popular in HICs in the 1970s and is no longer as popular as it currently is in LMICs and Africa in particular. The description and solutions to teen pregnancy problems presented and discussed years ago are very much similar to what is presented today in contemporary debates. It shows a path-dependent string of dominant views that remain unchanged. Teen pregnancy has often been viewed as a bad idea. The construction of the problem discussed two views; the "dominant view" that teen pregnancy is a negative thing versus the contrary "open view" (positive side of the story). The dominant view has led to a call to eliminate teen pregnancy and child marriage in Africa. The problem has received much attention on the global and continental agenda.

The chapter discussed teen pregnancy, defined as a public health problem, social problem and public policy responses in detail with selected studies. Teen pregnancy as a social problem is linked to low educational attainment, IPV and a continuous poverty line, among other things. However, this argument overlooks the living conditions and other socio-economic factors that pre-exist in setting the stage for teen pregnancy or child marriage. Moreover, poverty in relation to teen pregnancy seems to be loosely used or defined. Thus, it is argued that failure to provide social services may circumstantially lead to teen pregnancy, not the other way around, as argued by Luker (2006) and Duncan (2007). Notably, concerning teen pregnancy as a public health problem, the research presented in the literature attempts to link teen pregnancy to adverse health effects. However, some studies do not show a clear association, and some methodological limitations were identified. For example, age-specific pregnancy complications and morbidity leave room for further exploration in determining if age rather than body readiness equals increased risk in pregnancy.

History, culture and context matter in defining problems and solutions. Each issue has a context, culture and historical circumstances that partly influence each problem. These elements have to be critically studied in order to understand social problems and public policy. The issue of age should be defined in cultural terms. As studies have shown above, for example, adulthood is not measured numerically but is determined by puberty. The localised concepts of adulthood have not been taken into account in policy debates. The partial representations of the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem create a knowledge gap. The quantitative evidence presented is given more preference over qualitative research, limiting a deeper understanding of social problems.

Different views are represented from the literature on the subject of the "wrongness" of teen pregnancy. The religious perspective says it is "shameful" and "immoral", politicians say it is a national crisis, and human rights organisations say it is a "violation of human rights". On the other hand, certain traditions and customs may embrace it as part of their identity, while the young people themselves seem to be receiving unclear and mixed messages on which sexual path to follow. These formations of views on teen sexuality have been developed under the name of "protecting" the wellbeing of young people for their own good, but it depicts a situation of controlling and managing them to live up to the expectations of the established standards of a good life as it appears in the eyes of the

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people that hold the instruments of power - these may be policymakers, parents or religious groups but mainly the state.

To conclude, teen pregnancy does not appear to be as much of a problem as portrayed. It is the representation of it that is problematic. While some of the studies indicate genuine harmful effects that might result from complications in teen pregnancy or child marriage, not all suggest that it is the same everywhere. Some cases are different, but the way the research is presented, especially in international reports and national documents, comes across as a one size fits all approach. It does not bear in mind that history and context matter, including the notions of adulthood. There is no single way of looking at the problem or a single solution that can fit all situations. Each country should tackle the issue according to its particular context and culture. Furthermore, it narrows down to each country using the best methods suiting their particular conditions. In Zambia, there is a need for more open approaches to how the issue has been described and how that relates to the prevalence of the problem. There is a need to further explore teen pregnancy and child marriage issues in context and the conditions that permeate the issues. The answer does not lie in simply structuring an elimination method and setting targets to be met in order to fulfil international obligations.

CHAPTER 5: ZAMBIA'S TROUBLED ENTRY INTO "MODERNITY"

INTRODUCTION

Zambia has attracted much research from both insiders and outsiders. Both African and non-Africans have written a lot on Zambia's culture, history, labour, precarious modernity and politics (Parpart, 1994; Saha, 1994; White, 1995; Ferguson, 1999; Mizinga, 2000; Gausset, 2001; Rasing, 2003; Taylor, 2006; Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008b; Kalusa, 2009; Larmer, 2010, 2019; Bond and Cliggett, 2013; Richards, 2013; Fraser, 2014; Kalusa and Phiri, 2014; Schler, 2018; Loryman, 2018). Miles Larmer brought in the oppositional role of trade unions and the working class in the post-independence period, while more recent work has questioned the teleological modernist scholarship focused on the development of western style proletariat and urbanisation (Larmer, 2017).

Concerning early works on adolescent sexual matters in Zambia, Audrey Richard's detailed account of the Chisungu Bemba initiation ceremony remains the most cited and earliest work on girls' initiation rites. She began her research on the Bemba tribe around the 1930s (Richards, 2013). Her works reveal fundamental insights into rites of passage specifically for girls in pre-independence Zambia, even though the research is from one tribe (this is discussed in detail later).

It appears that more non-Zambian scholars have written major recognised works on Zambia than the indigenous Zambian citizens or historians, and this might have introduced a degree of bias, narrowness and sweeping generalisations even though there is a wide array of perspectives adopted. This has implications for the narrative and representation of a situated Zambian view from a local positionality. The issue is not that the information produced by the non-Zambian researchers may be less credible, but there is a limited contextual and historical reading and construction of the problem because many of these researchers do not possess the lived experience or contextually derived analytical categories (Burawoy, 2014). It includes the fact that prestigious universities and Britain at large, as Larmer (2016) put it, has failed to come to terms with "its imperial past, to engage in an effective 'imperial reckoning'". Lamer (2016, p. 3)[12] goes on to criticise the fact that "African

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[12] https://centreforcontemporaryafricanhistorydotcom.wordpress.com/2016/11/26/rhodes-must-fall-and-the-study-of-african-history-at-oxford/

history has traditionally been taught in Oxford as an offshoot of imperial history, suggesting a history in which Europeans are the primary agents bringing influences to which Africans respond". This also speaks to issues raised by Harvey (2003) around the concept of "accumulation by dispossession" – a concept that should include knowledge or epistemological dispossession.

This is not to say that local scholars are necessarily more nuanced. As I have suggested, the cloning of arguments and the transfer of teleological theory and concepts from the West remain a major obstacle. Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of Zambian literature written by Zambians. Kalusa and Phiri (2014, p. 1) argue that;

> If colonial anthropologists produced knowledge essential to the exercise of colonial power, colonial historians no less denied the existence of African history before colonialism than assumed that the history of Zambia and of the African continent, in general, was the history of Western imperial entrepreneurship.

At the same time, Zambia has particularly drawn the attention of many anthropologists (White, 1993, 1995; Parpart, 1994; Ferguson, 1999; Richards, 2013) and studies on the Copperbelt province (official mining capital). In addition, the mining and labour-related activities attracted sociologists and labour historians(Burawoy, 2014; Larmer, 2016). This includes historical accounts of culture and tradition and sexuality. Kalusa and Phiri (2014) have also pointed out that the post-colonial Zambian literature mainly focused on UNIP's role in forming independent Zambia, "political liberators", economic and political issues, and democratic politics. Thus, there is less documentation and written account of social life and matters relating to marriage and motherhood, especially in the context of early marriage or teen pregnancy. Notably, Kalusa and Phiri's (2014) analysis of Zambia's post-colonial historiography also largely cites works by non-Zambian historians. This is an even more clear indication of the gap in Zambian history authorship. Therefore, most of Zambia's history relies on accounts from outsiders' perspectives and carries fundamental implications.

History, culture and context matter in gaining a deeper understanding of the present-day phenomena/ policy debates and path-dependent policies. I have stressed that policy is often not new but happens incrementally within the context of legacies. There is a conflicted political process of making private issues public that public authorities need to

address. In trying to understand present-day sexual politics, this chapter highlights the historical and structural context upon which Zambia as a nation is built and the repertoires of agenda-setting and policymaking. "Many structural and historical factors influence the making of public policy and constitute, in part, the environment in which public policy is made" (Birkland, 2011, p. 87) as well as the stability and changes in policy. Hence, I discuss the historical and structural context which has shaped the Zambian public culture.

British colonial influence, ideas of humanism and ubuntu, indigenous traditions, Christianity, globalisation, democracy and liberalisation all form the core values of the construction of the "Zambian way of life" today. This has a direct effect on policymaking and the governance of society, as well as the construction of social problems. It trickles down to how family, motherhood, pregnancy and marriage are perceived. Thus, this chapter addresses objective one. From a broader perspective, reviewing how pregnancy, childbearing, marriage, family, and the transition to adulthood were perceived, defined and addressed in the past compared to the contemporary debates.

HISTORICAL AND STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

Zambia was introduced to British rule around 1888 by the British South Africa Company, largely owned by Cecil John Rhodes (Gann, 1968). The British Empire, through a company, ruled Zambia as Northern Rhodesia up to 1924, after which the colonial office ruled it until attaining political independence in 1964 under Kenneth Kaunda's presidency (KK). It is well known that upon independence, Zambia, like other former British colonies in Africa, inherited what is referred to as a "colonial-minded historiography"(Kalusa and Phiri, 2014) and imperial geography (Harvey, 1996). Additionally, its leading thinkers were educated by missionaries.

> Among the chief architects of this historiography were European anthropologists and historians. European anthropologists led the way in undertaking studies that unravelled and highlighted the nature and organisation of African societies. Collectively, they generated academic knowledge to understand the nature and workings of African societies. This knowledge assisted colonial authorities to develop administrative systems through which they hoped to rule Africans effectively (Kalusa and Phiri, 2014, p. 1).

On the other hand, Kaunda's governance system was embedded in the tenets of socialism, anti-tribalism and humanism (referred to as Kaunda's humanism). KK coined the

slogan "One Zambia, One Nation", and humanism became the first national ideology in 1967 under the United National Independence Party (UNIP). The national ideology combined nation-building, identity, African socialism and pre-colonial communalism (Kaunda, 1976). Notably, the one-party ruling system was a common feature in African countries that had gained independence during this period. After independence, most African leaders seemingly sought to build unity in their newly formed countries by employing some socialist ideas combined with a "people-centred" approach to humanism. These ideas spread out in different parts of Africa like Tanzania's "Ujamaa" (working together/family hood), Kenya's "Harambee" and other terms like the "Spirit of Ubuntu"(Nyerere, 1987; Gathogo, 2008; Magadla and Praeg, 2014). Due to these approaches, most African communities were ruled by these values and were able to unite and address problems collectively.

Generally, much has been written on socialism and humanism in Africa, including Kaunda's humanism in Zambia (Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008a; Lensink, 2013; Magadla and Praeg, 2014; Eleojo, 2016; Sishuwa, 2020). Thus, I do not aim to give a detailed account of humanism in Zambia but will briefly highlight some important aspects from a book by Kenneth Kaunda himself titled 'Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation Part 1' (Kaunda, 1976). Humanism in the Zambian context is "a great charter for the Common Man. This common man is not a special class. He is a representative man, sharing qualities with all other men" (Kaunda, 1976, p. 1). An individual's worth is not measured by their status, success or efficiency in society in a humanistic context. Humanism rather "seeks to free man from man, to allow him to find truth as man-in-community"(Kaunda, 1976, p. 1).

The general belief is that humans can live as equals under such principles as well as develop each other as a community collectively. Most importantly, the idea of humanism being instituted after independence symbolised independence - freedom from oppression and exploitation of man by man. Thus, "independence was not meant to be merely a changing of the guard. It was the liberation of man from foreign domination which institutionalised the inherited systems of social, administrative and economic structures" (Kaunda, 1976, p. 2). Moreover, the concept and ideas of humanism are closely linked to religious beliefs and pre-colonial values of cooperation and mutuality. For example, Kaunda himself was raised in a Christian family. He spoke about God and was in close association with the clergy during his presidency (Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008a).

Additionally, humanism emphasised public morality in support of religious teachings.

> The teaching of public morality and the maintenance of discipline in any given
> situation must be the concern of all the various sections of our community in all
> fields of human endeavour (Kaunda, 1976, p. 118).

Thus, "discipline" was instilled at all national levels, be it in schools or the workplace. Civil servants/public service workers had to learn and master what Zambian humanism is all about. But as Schler (2018, p. 98) points out, "Kaunda and the Zambian political elite struggled in translating these lofty principles into coherent policies, and often abandoned some core principles in the face of alternate priorities," and humanism was silent on gender, although these silences are themselves very significant.

Furthermore, Kanduza (1990) argues that Kaunda's National Development Plans were very similar to those produced in the colonial era. He argues that;

> Zambia's official agricultural policy from 1964 to the mid-1970s resembled
> that of the colonial administration in its neglect of rural areas. Another
> striking feature is how the country's first development plan adopted in
> 1947 initially focused on rural areas, but in 1951 the emphasis was shifted
> to urban development. All post-colonial development plans had a similar
> end. One possible explanation that could be postulated for these trends is
> that there is a continuity at the level of ideas emanating from a social
> strata with similar assumptions on socio-economic change (Kanduza, 1990,
> p. 24).

ZAMBIA: ELEMENTS OF IDEOLOGICAL CONFIGURATION 1964-2016

Christianity, especially in its evangelical form, is one of the central pillars on which Zambia stands, and there is growing scholarly interest in the intersections of theology[13], structural adjustment, copper and politics (Pelusua and Watts,2001; Chitando and van Klinken, 2016; Kaunda, 2020; Kaunda *et al.*, 2020). In the 1980's Pentecostalists also inculcated a specific idea of time and of redemption in the afterlife, or God's time. This sense of time is woven into Zambian politics, particularly with the "born again" Chiluba. A combination of elements of colonialism, national/political ideology, religion,

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[13]Mike Davis (2006) Planet of the slums makes a chilling prediction that Pentecostal evangelic movements are more powerful than any other movements in growing urban slums. With the collapse of state services people turn to healing "born again" theology to cure depression, loneliness and alcoholism. "Pentecostalism is a kind of spiritual health delivery system".

tradition/customs and modernity/globalisation all form the core of the Zambian structural context.

Policy stability can be assessed by looking at three interacting variables; policy problem definition, which actors are involved in the formulation and implementation and, finally, the policy content itself (Hill, 2014). Using Anderson's (2002) four elements of stability model (Birkland, 2011), I briefly illustrate Zambia's elements of stability (and change) that appear to be path-dependent (See figure 2).

The policy change is said to not often be moderate or stable, for that matter. The punctuated equilibrium theory stipulates that policy change may be characterised by long periods of stability followed by (sudden) sporadic shifts emerging from an agenda (Weible and Sabatier, 2018). This theory has been used to explain the rate of change in policy in American public policy; however, in the case of most African countries, it may be difficult to apply. This is due to the after-effects of the colonisation of Africa, as most of the structures remain under formal colonial systems.

Similarly, Zambia's political structure remains deep-rooted in the British system, and most of the policies implemented are a result of instruction from external forces. Thus, Zambia has not seen sporadic changes in policy even after attaining political independence in 1964. It has maintained a fairly stable equilibrium without sporadic punctuations. Despite the changes in national ideology from 1964-2016, there is consistency in religion (Christianity) introduced through colonisation, and it has become a significant part of national identity.

Despite the move from Kaunda's humanism to Chiluba's liberalisation, there has been no significant change in the national ideology to date. I argue that two main national ideologies have been consistent, Christianity and humanism. Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation can be viewed as a codicil to what Kaunda had already started. Although the "Christian nation" stance has been interpreted as a political tool and strategy for popularism (Njovu, 2002; Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008; Sishuwa, 2020), to date, this declaration still stands. The state and church relations remain a critical point of analysis in Zambian politics and policy. However, Kaunda's humanism seems to receive little attention in present-day discussions, but some practices remain noticeable. These practices are reinforced through tradition and customs. The Zambian culture and tradition form the

backbone on which both humanism and Christianity are indirectly drawn. Smith (1999, p. 545) points out that;

> what the Chiluba regime accomplished [the Christian declaration] was precisely the successful reuniting of sacred with secular, cosmic with temporal, in ways that restored Zambian life to something approaching the holistic view of life that existed prior to the intrusion of European colonialists and missionaries.

Both Kaunda and Chiluba's ideologies have embraced Christianity. The same can be said of the presidents that followed, Levy Mwanawasa, Rupiah Banda, Michel Sata, Guy Scott and the current Edgar Lungu. Political parties also rooted themselves in competing loyalties of various denominations, with Catholics pitted against Pentecostals. Chiluba set the scene for the Christianity agenda through the 1991 declaration. Then Edgar Lungu, in 2015, declared 18th October a public holiday and a National Day of Prayer, Fasting and Reconciliation. Therefore, all Zambians are expected to pray and fast on this day annually, coordinated by the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs, which Lungu also established in 2016 (more about this ministry is explained in chapter nine).

Kaunda's political motto, "One Zambia, One Nation", remains a reference point in pursuing national unity and modernity among the 72 tribes. More importantly, even before the inception of colonialism, spirituality had been a strong pillar of Zambia's identity. It is believed that before the arrival of Christianity, a form of spirituality (African traditional spirituality) existed (Smith, 1999; Mbiti, 2015). However, due to colonial influence, Christianity is now more practised than African spirituality (which is not even recognised as a religion).

The majority of the population in Zambia (96 per cent) are Christians. Most of them are protestant (75 per cent), which has increased over the years, surpassing Roman Catholic followers (20 per cent) (Zamstats, 2021). Even though Zambia is constitutionally a Christian nation, it allows for freedom of worship of other religions, and due to immigration and the African slave trade, Islam and other religions are practised on a minimal scale.

The freedom of worship in Zambia is expressed through a diversity of religious bodies that often play a key role in public policy. These mother bodies are predominately Christian denominations. The major bodies include; the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Islamic Supreme Council of Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), Jewish Board of Deputies Zambia, Rastafarians, Hindu Association of Zambia, Seventh-day Adventist Church,

Baha'i Faith in Zambia, and Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) among others. The CCZ, EFZ and ZCCB have played a significant role in Zambia's public policy. The EFZ (mainly comprised of protestant Christians) played a part in Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation. Chapter ten provides more detail about the involvement of these bodies in national policy. It is important to note that Zambians are not uniformly sectional since they voted for Sata, a Catholic, in 2011, and there are many dissident voices (Klinken, 2018).

Christianity arrived in (then) Northern Rhodesia in 1882 through different missionaries; the London Missionary Society, the Primitive Methodists, the Paris Society, and the Roman Catholics White Fathers (Smith, 1999). Smith (1999) further points out that the Paris Society and White Fathers particularly played a significant role in establishing the British South African Company in Zambia. It is believed that one of the African Roman Catholic leaders expressed that they had lost confidence in the Europeans' Christian mission as they felt it was merely a cover to take advantage of the Africans and enslave them (Taylor and Lehmann, 1961). Thus, there appears to be a twist to the introduction of the Christianity agenda in Zambia and the rest of Africa.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS, POWER, PROBLEMS AND POLICY CHANGE (1960-1970s)

The political ideology, government of the day and national values/beliefs all play a part in problem definition and problem-solving. Therefore, it is important to study how different actors become important public policy influencers by maximising national values to build their case.

Since Zambia's independence in 1964, there have been seven male presidents and three different ruling parties (UNIP, MMD and the current Patriotic Front-PF). Ever since the transition from a one-party to a multi-party system, a sitting president may serve only two terms (ten years) of office subject to re-election as per the constitution. To date, no president has deviated from this constitutional practice. Thus, the transition of power from one government to another has been stable.

However, the transition from colonial rule to independent Zambia was not smooth and was dogged by problems for four key reasons. Firstly, there was the issue of how to control Zambia's economic resources to serve the country. Secondly, there was a wide vacuum of skilled personnel in the public sector after the colonisers' departure, as was the case in many other newly independent African countries (Young, 2004; Vyas-Doorgapersad,

2011). For example, skilled personnel in the education and health sector were particularly strained, leading to limited healthcare services and education facilities (Republic of Zambia, 1989). With 12 million people, Zambia had fewer than 646 doctors in 2006, about 28% of its target of 2300, according to a study done by the Ministry of Health and the University of Zambia, and less than a third of the doctor-patient ratio recommended by WHO (cited in Schatz, 2008). The country had only 6096 nurses, far below the target of 16 732. When internationally funded HIV-AIDs NGOs started paying better salaries than what nurses earned, there was a flight into NGOs and more international brain drain, too (Schatz, 2008).

Thirdly, Zambia, having been under combined federation colonial rule as Northern Rhodesia with Malawi (Nyasaland) and Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia contributed to the public service dysfunction when the countries were finally separated. This is partly due to labour migration within and across these countries' mining industries (Phimister and Tembo, 2015). Fourth, Zambia had to overcome inherited racist social services. The Education Act of 1966, for example, ruled that racially segregated schools had to be abolished and non-fee-paying schools established.

However, despite these hurdles, the UNIP government sought to leverage change by nationalising key parts of the economy to allow citizens to participate in its development. Later, the nation experienced an economic boom through copper production, but this could not be sustained after the 1970s when copper prices dropped. Due to the dependence on copper exports, the economy crumbled (Auty, 1991; Imboela, 2005). With this economic downfall and the inception of the one-party rule in 1973, Kaunda's rule created room for opposition. Some critics argue that Kaunda's humanism ideology meant to replace the colonial administration was contradictory (Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008; Lensink, 2013). It is believed that the nation had suffered at the expense of Kaunda's passion for eradicating colonial exploitation of man not only in Zambia but also in other African states that were still bound (Kalusa and Phiri, 2014).

With money in their pockets, the Zambian people could not spend it due to erratic supply lines and border closures leading to scarcities in basic commodities. Elderly citizens[14] in Kaunda's time have pointed out that they had to travel to neighbouring Malawi to shop for essential commodities. Additionally, the commodity scarcity worsened when Kaunda had

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[14] Gathered from informal conversations with family members who experienced life in Kaunda's era.

closed all the borders during the war with Ian Smith. The latter was the Southern Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) prime minister from 1964-1979. Apart from the external pressure, Kaunda also faced opposition within his government, which resulted in an attempted coup. There arose mounting pressure against the one-party system. Valentine Musakanya, who served in Kaunda's cabinet, publicly spoke out against the undemocratic one-party system[15].

Thus, in 1991, Fredrick Chiluba (a trade unionist) was elected into power and adopted a liberalisation ideology under the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). Chiluba sought to free the Zambian economy through open trade and embraced multi-partism in the name of democracy. He was known for the slogan "The Hour Has Come", abandoning the "One Zambia, One Nation" national motto. Due to the neo-liberal policies, Chiluba's era is well known for its massive Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS), even though they begin almost at the end of the Kaunda era.

The MMD's liberalisation agenda led to increased foreign investments, privatisation and a flood of global networks (Mkandawire, 2016). This saw the rise and expansion of local and international NGOs advancing girls' rights, including reproductive health. It was less of government and more of governance as non-state actors got more involved in in-service provision. It relatively became an "open society, open rule" system, inherently affecting the economic and social structures as well as public policy. Even the national policy name changed from "National Development Plan" to "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (PRSP). This is discussed in detail in the next section.

The SAPs called for the unnegotiable inception of neo-liberal public sector reforms. For example, health reforms were introduced in 1992, such as decentralisation of planning and service delivery (International Monetary Fund, 2007; Ministry of Health, 2011b). However, in addition to the deteriorating economy and increased financial debt, there was an increased demand for health services (the quality of health service delivery declined) as the population grew. Thus, the government resorted to new reforms that would include introducing commodification and specifically user fees to access healthcare services. This meant that people had to pay a certain among of money to contribute to healthcare costs,

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[15] A full account is given in an autobiography called 'The Musakaya Papers'. Miles Larmer also provides a detailed account in his article "Chronicle of a Coup Foretold: Valentine Musakanya and the 1980 Coup Attempt in Zambia". The Journal of African History, 51(3) (2010), pp. 391-409.

but this did not work out as most people could not afford them. Thus, it got abolished in 1996. This is an example of the reversal of neoliberalism and reassertion of policy continuity. It also serves as a typical example of re-colonisation as the Zambian government had to submit to the harsh conditions imposed by the lending institutions in order to save a crippled economy.

After saving two terms in office, It is believed that Chiluba sought to contest for a third term [16], contradicting the constitution of Zambia. Although he did not publicly declare his intentions, these rumours seem to have made him even less popular, combined with suspected government corruption. Citizens also appeared not too happy with the privatisation of large industries, including the copper mines (Phiri, 2003). Consequently, in 1997, the MMD government was attacked by a failed coup attempt that lasted only a few hours. Chiluba was investigated for corruption by his successor - the newly elected president Levy Mwanawasa who served as his vice president. This stance is most likely what made Mwanawasa gain popularity as the president who tried to fight against corruption in Zambia. Unfortunately, in 2008, Mwanawasa died before he could complete his second term of office, and, constitutionally, the nation had to elect another president. Not much has been written about Mwanawasa's presidency compared to the popular Kaunda and Chiluba. However, a book by Ntomba (2016) provides a detailed analysis of Mwanawasa's presidency.

The MMD government was re-elected into power and continued to rule after Mwanawasa's death under Rupiah Banda's leadership (commonly known as RB), who previously served as vice president. RB, who appeared to have been even less popular, is the only MMD president to have ruled for a single term. He was defeated in the presidential elections by PF's Michael Sata (commonly known as King Cobra) in 2011. Before forming his own political party, King Cobra had a long political background serving in both Kaunda and

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[16] Lumina (2020) provides more details on this in a book chapter, Frederick Chiluba's Third Presidential Term Bid in Zambia. In: Mangala J. (eds). 'The Politics of Challenging Presidential Term Limits in Africa'. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40810-7_7

Chiluba's governments (PF). Sata had been contesting as an opposition party for a long time before making his way to victory.

He was known as a "man of action", seen from his successful record as once Minister of Health and Lusaka mayor. Also, Zambia's current improved infrastructure is credited to him, and part of his manifesto was an anti-China foreign policy. He sought to empower local entrepreneurship. An extensive historical biography of Sata's political life is provided in Sishuwa's (2017) thesis, which argues that there have been as many continuities as changes in Zambia's political system since pre-colonial times. Both Fraser (2014) and Sishuwa (2017) argue that Zambia's political leaders have strategically used populist and clientelist approaches to gain voter endorsement.

However, like Mwanawasa, King Cobra (Sata), too, did not live to see the end of his first term of office, as he fell ill and died in 2014. After his passing, the nation had to go to the polls to elect another new leader for the second time. In the interim, Sata's vice president - a white Zambian-born Guy Scott, constitutionally assumed the role of acting president. This period saw much controversy and debates arise on the legitimacy of having a white Zambian president of Scottish origin. Despite Scott holding this position constitutionally, the PF party was conflicted. Some party members were eager to elect a new party leader and presidential candidate.

With Zambia's record of non-racial prejudice and its commitment to democracy, this event brought forth new revelations about racial tensions in politics. It appears that this was not the first time racial tensions had occurred before in Zambia when a white man, James Skinner, served as Zambia's first Chief Justice and the only white member of Kaunda's cabinet. Sishuwa wrote an article in 2019, "A White Man Will Never Be a Zambian": Racialised Nationalism, the Rule of Law, and Competing Visions of Independent Zambia in the Case of Justice James Skinner, 1964–1969. The author points out that;

the major difference between the Skinner and Scott incidents is that Guy Scott's case was about race in an even more clear-cut way. As noted earlier, Skinner was born in Ireland and moved to Zambia as an adult. His critics could undermine his position and credentials by pointing to his foreign birth. Scott, however, was Zambian by both birth and citizenship. His critics aimed not at the circumstances of his birth but entirely at the colour of his skin to contest his status as a 'real' Zambian and bring him down. In this sense, racial politics in Zambia are more pronounced in the 2010s than they were in the 1960s (Sishuwa, 2019, p. 20).

Therefore, Sishuwa (2019) argues that Zambia, which is believed to be a non-racial society, entertained political, racial bias and used it "as a tool to delegitimise political opponents and mobilise supporters, especially in instances where the actions of white Zambians threaten the political ambitions of black Zambians" (Sishuwa, 2019, p. 21).

After the internal party conflicts, Edgar Lungu (former party Secretary-General and Minister of Defence) succeeded in becoming PF's presidential candidate in 2016. As such, the presidential by-elections were held, and PF retained power. Upon assuming office, President Lungu publicly announced that he did not have his own vision and would continue to carry out Sata's agenda.

POLICY CONTENT AND PROGRAMMES

Incremental changes can be noticed in the national policies from 1964 to date. There have been seven National Development Plans encompassing minor changes. Kaunda's era had four National Development Plans from 1966-1993, with minor additions to each plan. There was a sharp attempted change in policy direction during the Chiluba era, with the introduction of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSP was introduced as a debt relief plan for countries struggling with their economies, classified as "highly indebted poor countries" (HIPC) (Republic of Zambia Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2000). As a result, there arose a desperate need for financial aid and debt relief.

> Zambia urgently needs substantial debt relief under HIPC because of huge amounts of debts falling due in the coming few years. Since the I-PRSP is a required document to access PRGF [Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility] and subsequently for consideration for HIPC, Zambia has had to prepare this document urgently so as to be able to present her case at the earliest possible opportunity. The government requests favourable consideration of this paper (Republic of Zambia, 2000, p. 2).

This deviation from the previous national development plans was a forced/inevitable precondition to access funds from the Bretton Woods Institutions through the implementation of SAPs. The PRSP served as the national policy from 2000-2004, and the process reverted to national development plans. In 2006 the fifth national development plan was developed under Mwanawasa's leadership. The current Seventh National Development Plan seems not to have deviated much from the previous plans (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2017).

Policy development in Zambia appears to occur in an incremental path-dependent fashion. Kanduza (1990) argues that Kaunda's national development plans were very similar to those produced in the colonial era.

> All post-colonial development plans had a similar end. One possible explanation that could be postulated for these trends is that there is a continuity at the level of ideas emanating from a social strata with similar assumptions on socio-economic change (Kanduza, 1990, p. 24).

I provide a summary of the national policies from 1964-2016 in the figure below showing changes and similarities.

Figure 2 Summary of policies 1964-2016

	UNIP 1964-1991	MMD 1991-2011	PF 2011-2016
National policies	1st National development plan 1966-1970 2nd National development plan SNDP 1972-1976 3rd National development plan 1983-1987 4th National development plan 1989-1993	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2000-2004 5th National development plan 2006-2010	The 6th National development plan 2011-2015 was revised to the 6th NDP 2013-2016 to fit into the priorities of the new government of PF 7th National development plan (2017-2021)
Teen pregnancy and child marriage	Not addressed in national policy documents (the word "teen" does not even appear in the national policy documents)	Only addressed in national reproductive health policy 2008	Becomes a national crisis
Similarities/ changes	National development plans similar to those in the colonial era Urbanisation creates a gap in productivity when youths leave the rural areas and leave the elderly without support	Increased sexual activity among young people. Pre-marital sex and early pregnancy were linked to urbanisation, implying that young people were less sexually active under the control of the rural community	Teen pregnancy and child marriage were treated as a combined issue. Preventing teen pregnancy by eliminating child marriage. Teen pregnancy and child marriage were linked to multiple factors - poverty, lack of education, poor health and "harmful" cultural practices.

Figure 3 Structural Stability

	Meaning/ Interpretation	Examples
Ideological stability	Most Zambians uphold the values of Christianity in their way of life. Be it political or social, life is measured against biblical teachings. For many Zambians, Christianity is not only a matter of religion but a lifestyle.	Even before Zambia's official declaration as a Christian nation, Christianity was still a common element of humanism. Most of the Zambian presidents, starting with the first, Kaunda, refer to biblical teachings or mention God in their speeches.
Political stability	After the end of Kaunda's one-party state, the inception of multi-partyism paved the way for wide political participation and democratic elections. There is strong evidence for political stability.	After the 1991 democratic elections, a stable transition of power was delivered through a transparent and independent electoral commission. However, others may question the free and fairness of elections or the autonomy of the electoral commission. The Zambian constitution has served its use concerning the presidential term of office. There has been no alteration/manipulation of the constitution to favour a sitting president to rule continuously, like in some other African countries. To date, there have been three different ruling parties and six presidents since independence (1964).
Power Stability	The transition of power in terms of the transition from one government to another has been fairly stable over the years.	Even though there have been two failed coup attempts on record, the transition of power has been constitutional. Chiluba was alleged to have attempted a third term of office, but this did not materialise. Politics about Guy Scott's legitimacy as acting president arose, but the constitution still prevailed. Thus, even after the loss of two sitting presidents, the transition of power was not disturbed.
Policy stability	The policy can be said to be path-dependent, with changes taking place in an incremental fashion and over a long period.	From the first national development plan in 1966, changes can be seen as build-ups. In Chiluba's era, it was the same content, however, with a different objective and focus. The name was changed from "national development plan" to "**Poverty** Reduction Strategy Paper". In 2006, the national policy sequence reverted to the national development plan to date.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS CHRISTIANITY DILEMMAS

DEBATES ON INITIATION CEREMONIES IN ZAMBIA

Richard's early research, that initiation ceremonies not only taught about sexual practices but also about "economic and political issues"(Richards, 2013). Firstly, she noted that the onset of puberty marked a new stage in the development of the girl child into adulthood (this is regardless of age). Secondly, Richards observed that the entire Chisungu was a "continuous series of complex ceremonies lasting for a month" deep-rooted in the culture of matrilineal society. Thirdly, reaching sexual and social maturity at puberty was pivotal for practices around sex, fertility, marriage, and the rearing of children (Richards, 2013). It was very significant both in the community/village and at school. Girls took time off school (about 10 days) to attend the Chisungu ceremony where they would be in seclusion. However, in her writings, Richards at the time (the 1930s) notes and acknowledges that the Chisungu ceremony was likely being performed less in modern times.

In affirming Richard's point on the reduced practice of the Chisungu, there were colonial forces that sought to interfere with the practice of local customs. An example of such interference can be seen in Mable Shaw's Christian influencing agenda. When Mable Shaw attended one of the Chisungu ceremonies she did not fully approve of the rites. "They were partly good, she thought, but it was mixed with much that was repulsive to me"(Morrow, 1986, p. 620). Morrow (1986) argues that Shaw succeeded in Christianising tradition as well as traditionalising Christianity. Later it is stated that girls attending Shaw's boarding school stopped going to the village/home towns for Chisungu, instead, they would observe the rite of passage within the confines of the school.

As Morrow states "the transition [Chisungu] had been completed from socially-based ritual to an essentially private and individual concern mission....Thus a Christian form of Chisungu ceremony was developed" (Morrow, 1986, p. 620). In her words, Shaw states that "Nowadays there is no medicine sent up, the Chisungu does her work, cooks the food, laughs and plays, and nobody knows anything about it but the bakalamba [elders]. She has her instruction with me and her initiation in the chapel(ibid).

Morrow (1986, p. 621) further narrates that;

> On the first day of her period, a girl would be taken by some of the bakalamba .... would advise the girl, mainly about sexual matters, in the customary.... [then the girl would be taken] to Shaw, who would arrange Christian village women to come to the school; a month later, when certain, the girl would be presented to her fellow pupils in the chapel and announced as having reached womanhood, prayed over and advised.

Despite the local customs prevailing, Shaw sought to reinforce her Christian evangelical ideologies on top of the existing local way of doing things as far as puberty was concerned. It is further noted that Shaw said "no girl leaves the school unmarried"(Morrow, 1986, p. 621). However, it is noted that the Shaw schoolgirls got married much later than the norm at the time and Mable Shaw herself would be involved in the selection of suitors ("Christian men") as well as the preparation of the "white" wedding (Morrow, 1986).

Some of the initiation ceremonies in Zambia include; Chisungu-for girls, Chinamwali-for girls and Nyau for boys (Eastern province), Wail for girls (North-Western province), Mukanda (male circumcision in the North-Western province) and Nkolola-for girls (Tonga tribe), among others. Notably, the general view of initiation ceremonies in Zambia is the focus on sex training for both girls and boys and, after that, the initiates are given a platform to demonstrate what they have been taught. It is the sex subject that makes these ceremonies controversial among policy actors and other concerned parties. Initiation ceremonies have been linked to increased HIV infections (Kapungwe, 2003; Moyo and Muller, 2011), but more recently, the concern has been on child marriage and teen pregnancy (Daka et al., 2020; Kok et al., 2021).

It is important to note that not all initiation ceremonies in Zambia teach sex skills and techniques, as each tribe has unique practices for the rites of passage ceremonies. Some ceremonies rather focus on teaching girls how to behave (conduct) before marriage (Richards, 2013). They are also told to preserve themselves (not have sex before marriage) and warned of the consequences of sex before marriage through proverbs and parables. The same with the boys, they are given land to farm, taught to hunt and should only be looking forward to sex after marrying. Particularly among the Tumbukas, Tongas and Ngonis, pre-marital sex is not permissible (Moyo and Muller, 2011). Initiation ceremonies also served as the first point of "sex education" in the past, as talking about sex was taboo (Pillai and Barton, 1998; Rasing, 2003).

Moreover, Kapungwe's (2003) study on the initiation content/syllabus found that 43 per cent was on hygiene, 34 per cent on respect, 27 per cent on sex and 20 per cent on no sex before marriage. However, there appears to be limited information and documentation of these ceremonies as they are considered sacred and private. The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs has little documentation of these ceremonies regarding their prevalence, effects or impact. The National Policy on Traditional Affairs is silent on this matter. Given the inadequate/scarce information, it becomes difficult to measure the association between initiation ceremonies and teen pregnancy or child marriage.

Kapungwe (2003) highlighted that marriage was not a matter of urgency after initiation. Actually, most of the cultural practices/activities seemingly began to reduce as urbanisation progressed in Zambia after independence and onwards. Jules-Rosette (1980) already began to highlight changing practices in initiation ceremonies in the 1980s, especially in towns (urban areas). But, at the same time, a more recent study on the effects of Chinamwali in Katete shows that these practices are still prevalent and affect school attendance for girls that have to enter long periods of seclusion (Phiri, Musonda and Daka, 2020).

More recently, in early 2021, The Namibian (the national newspaper in Namibia) front page highlighted the Sikenge initiation ceremony experiences of women in the Zambezi region[17] of Namibian bordering Zambia (Mukokobi, 2021). In the article, for example, a 20-year-old woman stated that;

> I was so scared in that room because I was alone and my grandmother didn't explain what was happening until some old ladies informed me. I don't see any harm in sikenge; they really taught me a lot. Even when I decide to get married today, my marriage won't fail because I have been taught how to handle my husband and how to care for my family and home (Mukokobi, 2021).

Clearly, this woman showed appreciation and value in the ceremony, while others expressed mixed views.

Sikenge has no harm, but things that they are teaching us at a young age are not good because some girls tend to sleep around to see if the things they are taught are true! Some

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[17] The religion is characterised by inter-border cross culture with Zambia by the Lozi people of Zambia. Some Namibians identify themselves as Namibian-Lozi. The Sikenge is an initiation ceremony for girls who have reached puberty - a culture shared between the two countries. It is believed to have originated from the Zambian Lozi tribe and, due to inter-border migrations, entered the Zambezi region of Namibia.

teenagers are pregnant because they learned it from their elders at a young age." She added, "Some girls lack respect, love and discipline because they refuse to be taught by elders; the majority are following the new generation, which doesn't help (Mukokobi, 2021).

However, the Women's Leadership Centre in the Zambezi region (programme officer) said;

> girls are taught how to dance for their future husbands, and in some communities, after training is over, they are expected to demonstrate what they have learnt with male relatives – it can be your uncle or grandfather – which leaves them vulnerable to teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (ibid).

Contrary to this, a 51-year-old Sikenge instructor mentioned that the girls are not forced into marriage.

> Sikenge is a ceremony of preparing young girls for marriage. When a girl reaches puberty, we hide her in a private room and start teaching her womanhood. If the girl doesn't adhere to our rules, we beat her. We do not force these girls into marriage afterwards. We leave them as long as we have done our part as parents, mothers, sisters and aunties (ibid).

While Namibia's Minister of Gender stated that;

> I don't like the fact that girls have to go through a lot in sikenge. For instance, girls are beaten; they get traditional cuts (insalo). Such treatment is not needed; that's why we want the ministry of gender to create awareness.____ [but at the same time] girls are taught manners in sikenge, and they are being prepared well for marriage. Hence, girls who didn't go through sikenge are taking themselves to marriages/boyfriends, and they don't like to be told (ibid).

These debates are very much in line with the topic of discussion in Zambia on the effects of initiation ceremonies in contributing to child marriage and teen pregnancies. Others support the eradication of initiation ceremonies, while others promote content modification and others think it is good to preserve the culture as it is not the root of the problem.

> Bevine Sangulube-The Executive Director of the Crafts Centre in Choma Museum encouraged the revival of the Nkolola and Kugobelo (boy's ceremony) ceremonies in the Tonga region. Sangulube highlighted that Nkolola and Kugobelo were not meant to teach about marriage preparation. Instead, they focused on adult responsibility and attributed gender-based Violence to a lack of traditional grooming (Lusakatimes, 2017a).

> Nkolola was a good thing, but it has been misunderstood, girls were taught about hygiene, how to live with people and also to prepare for the future. I was part of it and learnt from that, as they taught us helpful values, and here I am.____ Others believe that Nkolola is old-fashioned and only for people in the village, but our parents were not fighting as is the case now, we grew up in a good environment. A lot of things are happening wrongly, that is why we need to get back where we started from (Lusakatimes, 2017a).

Furthermore, pro-initiation ceremony views were also expressed by Lusaka (Zambia's capital city) residents of Jack Compound.

> Initiation ceremonies are very important not just in the villages but also in urban areas because they stand to benefit a lot of people. Moreover, it's not just the people in the villages that need morals and responsibility but even those that are in urban areas, and that is why it is important that the initiation ceremonies for young men and women are revived (Lusakatimes, 2016).

Another female resident blamed today's immorality and irresponsible/indecent behaviour on the lack of training from initiation ceremonies.

> Today we see young men and women misbehaving anyhow, their dressing is indecent, they are involved in immoral activities on a daily basis and not having initiation ceremonies to teach them how they are supposed to conduct themselves in society is one of the major contributors to the bad behaviour in our young men and women today._____ The responsible old men and women we see today are a product of initiation ceremonies when young men and women were taught a lot of things that not only benefit them but their societies as well where they come from (Lusakatimes, 2016).

Meanwhile, a recent study on the role of traditional leaders in ending child marriage in Katete revealed reduced early/child marriage cases due to Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi's modifications to the Chinamwali initiation and Nyau ceremonies (Daka et al., 2020). The Paramount Chief banned the ceremonies from taking place during school days. They

were to be conducted only during school holidays and for a reduced period of one week instead of 30 days. He further increased the age of initiation to 18 years, unlike previously when initiation was scheduled immediately after first menstruation. Thus, according to Daka et al.'s (2020) study, these measures helped reduce school drop-outs and early marriage in the area and emphasised the important role of traditional leadership in policy implementation[18].

However, what remains clear is the insufficient coverage of information that connects initiation ceremonies to increased sexual activity or child marriage, considering the massive amount of knowledge about sex provided by technology and the changing environment. Many factors need to be critically analysed before concluding that initiation ceremonies or "harmful" cultural practices (as they are referred to) are responsible for teen pregnancy and child marriage or that they cause girls to want to explore sexual activity. Notably, especially urban girls (who rarely undergo initiation ceremonies) are more exposed to the internet and television/films/movies that are sexual than rural girls. As expressed by one concerned Zambian;

> I am referring to traditional leaders in Zambia, who have opted to get rid of some traditional norms and culture in their determination to combat teen pregnancies and early marriages. I am very surprised to see that the government welcomes the development and say that the move taken by the chiefs will largely help bring to an end early marriages and pregnancies. Yes, somehow, the move sounds good, but reflecting on it is ignorance. What about the internet? Is the internet going to be banned in the region? As far as I know, teens learn more from the internet than from anywhere else (Msyani, 2019).

Zambians have taken a mixed approach to spirituality, embracing both Christianity and African religion/spiritualism. Although African spiritualism (explained in detail later) is often perceived synonymously with evil spirits, witchcraft or black magic is particularly designed to harm others. Divination, cannibalism, ancestral consultation (seeking ancestral approval and blessings), and blood rituals all have been closely associated with witchcraft practices (White, 1993, 1995; Lumbwe, 2012). Zambia's major tribes proudly exhibit their traditional heritage through several diverse cultural ceremonies despite the Christian

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[18] Following the implementation of the Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (2016-2021).

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declaration. There are 96 registered cultural associations that host traditional ceremonies annually (Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, 2018).

The traditional sector's significance was emphasised in 2011 when Sata's government formed the Ministry of Chiefs and Trade Affairs to recognise traditional leaders' role in national affairs. Widening the platform for traditional leaders increased Sata's popularity and paved the way for a more inclusive public policy. This move has proved very significant in the fight against teen pregnancy, school drop-outs and child marriage (as expounded on in chapters seven and eight).

The Ministry's mandate is policy formulation and implementation of the administration of the affairs of chiefs and traditional ceremonies, preservation of indigenous knowledge and oral tradition and cultural research (Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, 2021). In 2018, a National Policy on Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs was formulated by the ministry. Traditional ceremonies in Zambia display the history, culture, heredity and indigenous national identity. But most of these ceremonies have rarely been documented by indigenous people (as mentioned earlier). Thus, its objectives were to strengthen, promote and document customs and traditions, strengthen conflict resolution among chiefdoms, implement programmes against harmful traditions, and fight against child marriage (Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, 2018). The formation of this ministry has certainly strengthened relations between traditional rulers and the government. Traditional leaders now seem to be working closely in collaboration with the government in implementing national policies like the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (NSECMZ) (Ministry of Gender, 2016).

The NSECMZ has received great attention from traditional leaders. For example, the value of traditional ceremonies has been extended to fighting against child marriage and gender-based violence against women and other vulnerable groups (Mwansa, 2015b). During the 2015 Nc'wala ceremony, Chief Madzimawe (of the Ngoni tribe, speaking on behalf of paramount Chief Mpezeni) said;

we are taking advantage of our traditional ceremonies to advocate an immediate end to early and forced marriages. For example, we used this year's Nc'wala traditional ceremony to speak against the vice. I hope this kind of approach can be adopted by other traditional rulers countrywide (Mwansa, 2015b).

Meanwhile, in 2017, president Lungu decided to distance himself from attending traditional ceremonies because, according to him, they were causing more division than unity. According to the Zambia Daily Mail newspaper, he stated that;

I am finding it difficult to attend traditional ceremonies because they are now dividing us. My failure to attend the Kulamba ceremony of the Chewa has raised a lot of issues because, in February, I attended Nc'wala (Mvula and Chibuye, 2017).

Clearly, the president showed more concern about the political stipulations for attending traditional ceremonies than the value they hold.

In efforts to curb "harmful" traditional practices, in 2018, Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi of the Chewa people announced a ban on a list of traditional practices and was highly applauded for it. Among the list of practices was; "Cidyerano" - a sexual practice where men forcibly exchange their spouses for sexual variety against their wish; "Chokolo"- spouse inheritance; "Fisi", also known as the "hyena concept", where parents employ a mystery man (hyena) to test the sexual skills of a young girl who has reached puberty; Sexual cleansing; Early marriages below the age of 16; and "Gule Wamkulu" – an obligatory initiation into the secret society for boys above 16, but can now join willingly (Musonda, 2018).

However, it is unknown to what extent these traditions have been practised as there appears to be limited documentation on such acts and research on policy implications. Despite doing away with some of the traditions, conflicts continue to exist in maintaining both traditional and European Christianity in many African societies (discussed in detail below in the section on initiation ceremonies in Zambia).

Another controversy arose in 2011 when pictures of topless (bare-breasted) women were published in the local newspapers (Lusakatimes, 2011) during the Nc'wala ceremony, a display that has been practised for many years since the 1980s (similar to the reed dance of the Swazi and Zulu tribes). Later, in 2019, Paramount Chief Mpezeni banned both men and women from attending and performing dances at the ceremony topless. He explained that men and women performed the ceremony topless because there were no clothes in the old

days, which is no longer the case in modern society. He further called to arrest anyone in violation of his decree, for example, those who were inappropriately/indecently dressed at the ceremony (Tumfweko, 2019). The Chief's ban was commended and welcomed by the Minister of National Guidance and Religious Affairs, Reverand Sumaili. During a visit with the Paramount Chief, she stated;

> Our cultural values, our Christian principles and our values are in the constitution; they are all together. We are happy as the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs with your stance to ban bare breasts. We should stay like Zambians, we should fear and respect God. We should embrace national unity and patriotism and respect human dignity (Zambian Politics News, 2019).

Furthermore, in a separate interview with One Love Radio, Sumaili emphasised that;

> Laws in the constitution will now be based on Christian values, and all cultural beliefs will also be in line with the values. That is why for this year's Nc'wala ceremony, the paramount chief Mphezeni refused women from performing with bare breasts.   The Christian values and principles are the anchor for our nation as we intend to base all things from government policies, family values, and development agenda aligned in the seventh national development plan on all these values because we are a Christian nation (One Love Radio, 2019).

Religion in the African context covers all aspects of human life. It is said to have "dominated the thinking of African peoples to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organisations and economic activity"(Mbiti, 2015, p. 10).

The word "religion" itself is often only associated with the predominant religions like Christianity and Islam. These religions have sacred books like the Bible and Quran and one universal superior God, while African religion takes a more flexible approach to spiritualism depending on the need (Mbiti, 2015).

Like other world religions, some elements of African spirituality consist of; (i) religious beliefs - God, human life, magic, and spirits; (ii) ceremonies and practices - rituals for death, births, weddings, puberty, pregnancy and many others; (iii) objects and places - alters, shrines, totems and others; (iv) principles, values and morals - this involves traditionally accepted behaviour, what is considered good or bad or inappropriate; (v) religious officials to precede over activities/practices - chiefs, kings, elders in the family/community, traditional healers/herbalists, diviners among others (Taylor and Lehmann, 1961; Smith,

1999; Lumbwe, 2012; Mbiti, 2015). However, despite the similar elements shared with other religions, African spirituality remains unequal and not recognised as a religion but is often negatively construed.

The fact that African religion is passed on through history and not bound by one universal authority makes it appear as a weaker dogmatic system. Moreover, the Christian missionaries often dismissed African spirituality or considered it mere superstition (Smith, 1999), which presently is still the case among modern Christians. This has led to many wrong ideas and misinterpretations of what consists of African religion. In some cases, as mentioned earlier, African spirituality is wrongly identified as witchcraft or evil, and it would not even qualify as a religion because it cannot be scientifically proven.

The elements of African spirituality described above are evident in Zambian spirituality. Seemingly, most Zambians are churchgoers by virtual of Christianity being part of the culture. However, some (the strong Christians) want nothing to do with any form of traditional customs and practices, while others combine both biblical and traditional beliefs for daily guidance. Christians who still embrace their culture and heritage find themselves caught in between indigenous traditions and Christian beliefs. Some traditional practices are considered to contradict biblical teachings. For example, Zambia's traditional ceremonies are perceived to embrace "praising the ancestors for good harvest, asking the ancestors for good rainfall, celebrating conquest and coronation of a Chief among others"(Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, 2018, p. 10). As such, most of these ceremonies are seen to appease other gods but not the one true Christian God. For example, one concerned citizen (in a letter through the Zambia Daily Mail) expressed disappointment that Zambia as a Christian nation condoned devil worship through some traditional rituals at these ceremonies.

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We must draw a line between idol, ancestral worship and true worship of the risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We cannot continue burying our heads in the sand when we as Christians are fully aware that in these traditional ceremonies, our fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, friends and other people are worshipping idols and ancestral spirits. They are doing food and drink offerings on shrines and other high places to appease ancestral spirits. We have all become partakers of this evil through sponsorship and attendance. We are unable to account for alarming road accidents, teenage pregnancies and many other diabolical demonic activities unleashed from the pit of hell. ___How can we be a Christian nation and worship demons and make food and drink offerings to foreign gods at the same time? This contradiction is harmful to our nation, for we worship a jealous God (Mutale, 2014).

In line with the above, the Pentecostals (the rising church denomination) view traditional systems as;

divisive, obsolete, and, at worst, as "demonic altars" which need to find new interpretations that could help transcend any single ethnonational community, to synchronize with the One Ultimate Altar erected to Jesus at the Zambian national level (Kaunda, 2018, p. 7).

The Pentecostal church is therefore known for not condoning anything supernatural contrary to biblical teachings, and all such things are subjected to deliverance by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is believed that every nation bows to something, be it the African religion or the European one. As for the Pentecostal movement, the belief is that "the president of the nation can never become powerful without the altar [of Jesus Christ]. They believe that altars give power to the presidency office" (Kaunda, 2018, p. 7).

Based on these foundations, Zambia as a nation finds itself consistently confessing countless sins to seek the Almighty God's blessings. The National Day of Prayer annually held is marked by a whole day of prayer and fasting. In the prayers of confession, sins against adultery, fornication, idolatry, sodomy, witchcraft, corruption and other things are mentioned (Njovu, 2002; Phiri, 2003; Namitondo, 2014; Klinken, 2015, 2018; Kaunda, 2018, 2020). Thus, both the political and Christian communities believe that if things are not going well in the country, prayer is the solution. Immorality stands out as the number one enemy of the country's progression, and such immorality speaks very much to citizens' social behaviours, particularly sexual conduct.

VALUING MARRIAGE AND INITIATION CEREMONIES; THE AFRICAN WAY (THEN AND NOW)

According to very recent Zambian government statistics, only "fifty-six per cent of women and 50% of men age 15-49 are currently married or living together with a partner as if married". This means that 44% of women are single. The "median age at first marriage was 19.1 years among women and 24.4 years among men age 25-49". The "median age at first sexual intercourse is 16.6 years among women age 25-49 and 18.5 years among men age 25-59". The report also found that the "percentage of women who are currently married has declined over time, from 61% in 1992 to 55% in 2018" (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018, p. 61). Policy analysts do not offer an explanation for this phenomenon.

The median age at first sexual intercourse among women aged 25-49 increased from 16.3 years in 1992 to 17.3 years in 2013-14 before declining to 16.6 years in 2018 (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018, p. 63). Notably, the statistics show that in rural areas young women start sexual intercourse 1.1 years earlier than women in urban areas.

Marriage in the African tradition particularly calls for much preparation and is considered a significant factor in the formation of the family and community. This makes sex education and puberty initiation ceremonies particularly important in every person's life. In general, initiation ceremonies prepare young people for the most important phase of their lives, including economic and social life. Like the Christian religion, marriage in the African context is equally viewed as a spiritual matter.

> It is believed in many African societies that from the very beginning of human life, God commanded or taught people to get married and bear children. Therefore, marriage is looked upon as a sacred duty which every normal person must perform. Failure to do so means, in effect, stopping the flow of life through the individual, and hence the diminishing of mankind upon the earth (Mbiti, 2015, p. 104).

Thus, initiation ceremonies are a "profound religious act by means of which the young people accept that they have to become bearers of children and their community gives approval to that step"(Mbiti, 2015, p. 104). For example, male circumcision is symbolic of "the flow of life through the shedding of blood from the organs of reproduction" (ibid). The picture presented here is that puberty leads to marriage, and then marriage provides the passage to childbearing. Mbiti (2015, p. 104) points out that "in all African societies,

everything possible is done to prepare people for marriage and to make them think in terms of marriage". This resonates very much with the studies cited in the literature review chapter. However, with the spread of the Eurocentric culture, more people are beginning to prioritise career/personal development before marriage. But still marriage is highly valued in Africa (by both men and women) and even more valued is child bearing. This gives us a deeper contextual background into the issues of child marriage and teen pregnancy.

Following the spiritual context in which marriage is described above, it can be argued that child marriage and teen pregnancy do not exist according to this view. I could further argue that there was no child marriage or teen pregnancy because these terms did not exist traditionally. For people to be married, they had to be adults, not children, which was marked by puberty. Through initiation, the childhood door is closed, and the adulthood one is opened (Mbiti, 2015). Therefore, if a person can bear a child, then they are seen as adults, not simply as a child, because of their age. In most cases, age was not a measurement for maturity and is still not in most rural areas (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019).

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THE CHANGING DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE IN THE ZAMBIAN CONTEXT

While economic fortunes shape culture and social life, the link is not direct. Like other key terms transferred/exported from developed capitalist societies and scholars, marriage is understood differently in many parts of Africa at different times. Through a process of combining history and uneven development, many western terms such as marriage need to be rendered "strange". Even in recent work, there is a tendency to present these terms historically; blinkered views apply to Europe, where marriage and the bourgeois family are relatively recent phenomena. Yet, these terms are presented as eternal and universal categories where women are seen as relentless victims.[19]

Western feminists are also often ethnocentric in modernising "feminism". This western view is different from the African context, as discussed in chapter two. A very extensive examination of terms like "woman" in West African languages and Bantu languages shows that the language has no equivalent for the English "he" and "she".   As Oyěwùmí (1997) convincingly shows, the concept of "women" is a western invention. For example, in the Yoruba language and custom, it is not recognised as primary since age is more of a social marker (this is similar to what other African studies have shown). We need to understand the African setting using local and internalised concepts, not imported words and conceptualisations. Thus, "gender was not an organising principle in Yoruba society prior to colonisation by the West... the primary principle of social organisation was seniority defined by relative age" (Oyěwùmí, 1997, p. 31).

 Decisions about sexual activity and reproduction or childbearing have influenced how a "woman" and family are defined by society. The idea of being a woman is socially constructed. I also refer to Simone de Beauvoir's works on the "Second sex" (first published in 1949). She argues that femininity is socially constructed as one is not born a woman; rather one becomes one (De Beauvoir, 1989), and the category is not universal. In the same vein, I argue that the term "husband" or "wife" does not coincide with its English meaning. This is very similar to the Zambian situation.

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[19] An exception is Parpart (1994) who studied an evolving variety of marriages on the Copperbelt arguing that missionary notions of proper Christian family were already widespread by the 1940s. She argues that "patriarchal alliances, both European and African, were shot through with contradictions that opened up space for redefining and renegotiating the nature of African urban life, particularly relations between women and men. Women took full advantage of these opportunities, and their struggle to broaden and redefine African family life in town is a central theme" of her research.

Marriage is another concept that is universally defined but is very dynamic in different parts of the world. In Zambia, the term "marriage" generally takes many historical and recent forms. Customary/traditional marriage is legal and acknowledged under customary law as part of the nation's identity, which is open to all citizens. At the same time, Zambia, having assimilated the "civilising" mission, became a Christian nation that places high value on "Christian marriage", otherwise also considered a "white/church wedding", conducted by a pastor or clergy. Yet, the traditional procedures of bride price (lobola) in most cases precede the white wedding.

In most cases, no white wedding takes place in the absence of traditional marriage processes. Historically, in urban settings, hybrid directly commodified marriage forms emerged, including piece-work marriages where women received a wage from the mine worker for sexual and other services. However, many of these arrangements grew into long-lasting stable relations.[20] Ault (1983, p. 187) argues that this had less to do with "the deterioration of individual moral standards" but rather "the structure of urban social life and the specific impact of the Depression".

Another interesting form of marriage in Zambia is informal and open to interpretation. These "informal" unions also constitute the concept of marriage in Zambia. For example, there appears to be a blurred line between what constitutes a formal union, cohabitation and what Ferguson calls "concubinage" (Ferguson, 1999). Ferguson (1999, p. 178), an anthropologist having widely researched Zambia, stated, "It [is] very difficult to apply the term marriage at all in any clear cut and unambiguous way", referring to the Zambian context. Following Ault (1983), Ferguson (1999, pp. 178–179) further argues that;

> the designation of 'marriage' was therefore contextual and often debatable; even the short-term relationships commonly engaged in by men whose wives were away from home for a time were called 'piece-work marriages.

Thus, the concept of marriage is not only limited to formal/official or traditional processes and ceremonies. For example, some people consider themselves married simply determined by how long they have been living together (cohabiting) and by having children together.

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[20] See Ault (1983) *State Power and the Regulation of Marriage in Colonial Zambia*, for a detailed description. You need to check that when you state the title of a book that yu format it in the same way each time. Here you put the title in italics and you use capitals for all the main words. Do you follow the same format at all times?

Notably, such "arrangements" constitute the definition of marriage according to the ZDHS (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health and ICF International, 2014). This shows that circumstances and context define the concept of marriage in Zambia. We need to conceptualise the different understandings of marriage before looking at what constitutes child marriage and the term "child".

Therefore, there seems to be a failure in understanding the critical role that local conceptualisations of adulthood, marriage and family play in interpreting sexual behaviour in the African context.

> Understanding the link between age and African sexual culture should be seen in a complex, multi-layered and dynamic manner. Regulating or indeed governing African sexualities requires deep insider understanding of the finer workings of each unique sexual culture and the role of tradition and its custodians. Failure to comprehend local meanings, nuances and enactments of local sexualities results in irrelevant, inappropriate, meaningless and time-wasting policy interventions that are bound to be "oppressive" for the target communities or individuals (Nyanzi, 2011, p. 479).

SEXUAL RIGHTS, IMMORALITY AND CHRISTIAN POLITICS

Even though Zambia is as much a democratic nation as a Christian one, its "Christianity compass" seems to supersede democratic principles when convenient. For example, individual rights to sexual activity before marriage are condemned, and diversity in sexual orientation is criminalised. As such, certain international human rights such as homosexuality remain subject to the Christian and traditional scrutiny. Homosexuality during Kaunda's time was not even heard about or discussed in public media (Muwina, 2016). However, the former UN Secretary General's (Ban Ki-Moon) visit to Zambia in 2012 set in motion public discussions and condemnation of homosexuality. From the highest office in the land to the church, traditional leaders selected civil society groups and ordinary citizens. Ki-Moon, in his address, pointed out that the rights of homosexuals need to be respected and dignified (Lusakatimes, 2012). Homosexuality, lesbianism, and transgender (GBLTQ+) practices are against Zambia's laws and are punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment. Many other African governments have taken a firm stance against embracing

such practices in the name of human rights. Thus, the majority of Zambians[21] rejected this call, and further condemnation was expressed by the Christians.

From the Christian perspective, as Klinken (2013) puts it, the discussions on homosexuality were "eschatologically enchanted" as a sign of the prophecy of the end of the world and the beginning of the antichrist agenda. However, the homosexual debate did not end there. Few arrests of homosexual acts have been reported, and some top institutions and political actors have spoken out against the country's homophobic laws.

In 2013, the EFZ director gave a statement calling out the European Union (EU) for promoting unacceptable acts to the Zambian community (Lusakatimes, 2013). In 2014, another statement rejecting homosexuality was made by the catholic body - The Bishops in the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) (Lusakatimes, 2014a). Meanwhile, The Pastors' Association for the Vision of God in Zambia claimed that homosexuality was happening rampantly in the prisons and correctional facilities and this needed to be addressed, but the Zambia Correctional Services denied the claims (Kachemba, 2019). Furthermore, in a newspaper article, "Man kissing man not for ZNBC", the government instructed the national broadcaster (ZNBC) to programme more local content and avoid airing foreign programmes that promote homosexuality (Mwila, 2019).

This topic became even more conspicuous in 2019 when the US Ambassador to Zambia strongly condemned Zambia's strict sodomy laws concerning a case in which two men were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for engaging in acts "against the order of nature" (homosexuality). This led to vinegary diplomatic relations between the US Ambassador and President Lungu, who demanded that the Ambassador be relieved of his duties to Zambia. Thus, he was recalled (Sky News, 2019). Lungu has consistently spoken out against the recognition of homosexuality as a human right in Zambia. In an exclusive interview with Sky News, he expressed this view strongly by stating that Zambia will not bow down to international pressure or be forced to amend the sodomy laws for the sake of receiving international aid. He further expressed his personal views, saying, "for me, I think they [homosexuals] are sick, that's how I see it, they need help" (Sky News, 2019).

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[21] The Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) aired interviews with random people from the streets, all of whom rejected the idea of recognising homosexuality as a human right (Klinken, 2013). Discussion on media platforms seemed to suggest the same response.

However, later in May 2020, following the commemoration of African freedom day, the two convicted men were among the group of prisoners released under the presidential pardon. Notably, the Lusakatimes news did not report distinctively on the two men's release but only reported details about the presidential amnesty. Instead, it was reported on by the BBC (BBC, 2020) and other international media platforms.

Despite the vast condemnation homosexuality has received in Zambia, others have spoken out against the sodomy laws. For example, Rev. Kapaya Kaoma, a Zambian priest and human rights activist, wrote an article in Lusakatimes with the heading; "King Henry VIII's Ghost Applauds Magistrate Mumba's shameful ruling on a Gay Couple" (Kaoma, 2018). He pointed out that Zambia was holding on to colonial laws on homosexuality which are rather secular than Christian. He further stated that homosexuality is a private issue that does not affect other people's rights or well-being. In another newspaper article, Kaoma stated that president Lungu was using the anti-gay rights agenda as a political distraction from attending to more serious matters in the country. "Zambia's president has made homosexuality a campaign issue to distract attention from the fact that his people are starving, millions are living in poverty, and the nation is buried in international debt" (Kaoma, 2019).

From the discussions above, it is very clear that the politics of a Christian democratic nation are convoluted. Sexual immorality is seemingly the scale of measure when it comes to upholding Christian values. Even though it may be difficult to tell the religious intentions of Kaunda or Chiluba and the rest of the presidents, it remains clear that Christianity is a powerful tool that can be used to gain political mileage and influence public policy. It is also a continuation of colonialism, used as a tool to control and regulate sexual behaviour and not necessarily shape societal values.

> The personalisation of power that arises from charismatic leaders promotes unaccountable leadership and has often led to the erosion of democratic ideals. In the era of the dominance of the neoliberal doctrine, the absence of original solutions to Africa's problems is germane. Reliance on the West for ideological direction and stamp of approval characterise the current supposedly charismatic leaders on the continent. This development may be traced to the role that the International Financial Institutions played in their creation (Sishuwa, 2020, p. 14).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored Zambia as an object of study, its structural elements and political stability, traditional versus Christianity values, initiation ceremonies and marriage and the politics of sexual rights and immorality.

Secondly, it is well illustrated in the chapter that Zambian's political structure has been founded upon some Christian elements. Religion has played a huge role in politics and policymaking in Zambia, dating from the pre to post-colonial era. All Zambian leaders have embraced Christianity as the nation's identity, which began with Kaunda and was later constitutionalised by Chiluba in 1996. Thus, Christianity has been the foundation that forms the basis for politics in Zambia. Zambia, however, still maintains traditional values through the many displays of traditional ceremonies from the nation's 72 diverse tribes. As a result, Zambia finds itself trapped in traditional versus Christianity clashes, where traditional ceremonies are strongly associated with evil/ancestral worship against the one true Christian God. Christianity, as a dominant religion, undermines African religion/spirituality.

African spirituality is perceived as evil and demonic, mainly by the Christian community. Thus, most Zambians, being Christian, have resorted to renouncing some traditional practices as they go against biblical teachings. Others (it appears) find themselves stuck between Christianity and traditional beliefs, whichever suits the occasion. However, what remains predominant is ultimately upholding Christian values at whatever cost. Notably, even some traditional leaders seem to be influenced by Christianity, thereby changing some traditional practices to fit Christian values. Thus, some traditional ceremonies are unacceptable in a Christian nation like Zambia.

Thirdly, the nation's stance on immorality precedes international human rights. Selectively, the nation decisively takes its position on what is acceptable sexuality. For example, sexual orientation, when and with whom one has sexual intercourse, seems to be a matter under state control. The government uses Christianity as a standard measure of morality and as an instrument for controlling citizens' sexual behaviour. Such is a continuation of the colonial legacy that overshadows Zambia's indigenous identity. While some citizens call for the preservation of Zambia's heritage and culture, others seek to leave behind the primitive (old-fashioned) way of life by embracing Christianity. Thus, the

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politics of Christianity remains crucial in analysing the construction of Zambian politics and policy.

Lastly, to understand the way the youth/young people are viewed today, we need to understand the changes that the country has undergone politically, economically and socially. These changes have impacted the course of policy intervention. Any changes in the political structure continue to affect policy development. For example, like the changes in the political structure, youth policies in Zambia, too, have evolved over time, even though they remain path-dependent.

The main argument presented in this chapter is that policy change (in the Zambia case) depends on the changes in the political and ideological structure that influence the way sexual behaviour is perceived. These views are construed and shaped to fit into the dominant (Christian) view. Thus, it extends to the fluid and changing assumptions about the sexual rights and needs of young people, how different segments of society perceive adolescent sexual behaviour, and the state's role in controlling the sexual behaviour of young people.

CHAPTER 6: CAPITALISM, COLONIALISM, HUMANIST BELIEFS AND REPRODUCTIVE POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how reproductive behaviour was perceived in the officially designated "humanism era". What about marrying at an early age or early pregnancy? Was it a "big" moral issue? What was the role of the community in providing guidance about sex, pregnancy or marriage? What powerful influences did colonial rule leave behind? There might be no easy answers to these questions due to limited and one-sided documentation, and, likely, teen pregnancy or child marriage did not make it onto the national/political agenda during or after colonial rule under humanism. This chapter focuses on contradictory understandings by the state and powerful social forces of women's role and human development, the family and marriage, as well as what was expected of female adolescents transitioning into adulthood and integrating into society.

The chapter also critically looks at the emergence of population control as part of the efforts to re-frame the issue and "solutions". Some insights from this chapter help interpret past sexual behaviour through how society was governed under humanism. Undoubtedly, many things have changed since 1964 as the Zambian society has evolved with time. There are both changes and continuities in the Zambian culture, beliefs and value system.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF COLONIAL RULE, SOCIAL POLICY AND SERVICES

Northern Rhodesia was invented after the British South Africa Company (BSAC) invaded the area called "Rhodesia" in 1896. In 1911, the territory called Northern Rhodesia was identified as a "protectorate" of the BSAC a private company granted the right to rule by the British government. In 1924, Britain took over authority from the BSAC. Throughout this period indirect rule (rule through the chiefs) existed in parallel with the British colonial administration. As Ranger (1980, p. 351) notes the BSAC period of rule was frowned upon by the new British ruler (Sir Herbert Stanley) because he regarded it as "soulless capitalism rather than Imperial paternalism".

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According to Ranger(1980, p. 350) " colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia required a shared system of ideology which linked rulers and ruled" However rule was exercised indirectly for the most part through local chiefs and the central and district local authorities tended to have a rather light imprint. " Because of the minimal services which it was prepared to offer the colonial administration had no state schools through which it could inculcate an ideology"(Ranger, 1980, p. 350).

Religion as disseminated by missionaries has important but contradictory roles. Fields (1985, p. 41) argues that

> " Colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia depended on two irreconcilable religious ideologies--on progressive Christianity as taught by the missionaries and on the traditional religious beliefs which gave authority to chiefs within systems of Indirect Rule. Hence the ideology of colonial Northern Rhodesia was profoundly ambiguous.

Ranger (1986) drawing on Fields, looks at religious movements in Africa within a broader governance context noting that in Northern Rhodesia the effects were deeply contradictory

> On the one hand, missions served the regime. They aided it practically by mediating the spread of western culture and morally by helping to legitimise colonial rule... On the other hand, they undermined the regime. Indirect Rule pre-supposed the continuance of customary authority: but the missions attacked as "heathenism" much that was customary (Ranger, 1986, p. 19).

Ranger (1986, p. 19) suggests that

> In this situation, African religious movements which repudiated both mission Christianity and traditional religion--which indeed attacked mission Christianity partly for being too tolerant of traditional religion-- were striking at the very heart of colonial ideology.

However, as Kulusa points out that in urban areas, the "Christian" copper mine workers deeply resented the colonial authorities' efforts to extend power to the local traditional rulers and authority. "The miners promoted the Christian discourse of mortality to legitimize their opposition against traditional practices of death, which the convert, trading on the language of Christianity, relentlessly denounced as both backward and primitive" (Kalusa, 2011, p. 117).

In colonial times, with an economy based on enclaves centred on copper mines linked to the railways, Africans were essentially a pool of unskilled labour (Mamdani, 2001). The skilled work was conducted by white workers from Britain and South Africa. Missionaries, mainly Catholics and Protestants, ran a few primary schools, but in 1942 only 35 Africans were receiving high school (Henkel, 1989). Up to 1925, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) did not spend taxes it collected on supporting any of the mission schools for black pupils except one in Barotseland because of a 1907 agreement with Chief Lewanika (Kelly, 1999). However, public funds were used by the BSAC from 1908 to fund white schools (Henkel, 1989).

The colonial office's official view (Advisory Office on Native Education for Tropical Colonies) was that "education is a curse for women if it makes them discontent". The Methodists opened the first black girls' secondary school (Chipembi girls) only in 1946. By 1958 there were a mere 1000 black pupils in secondary schools (Fenichel, 1991). By 1960 there were 387 black girls in high school, 15 per cent of the total black enrolment (Kelly, 1999).

From the above description, it is well established that Zambia had one of the weakest education and health systems in the British Empire, with fewer than 0.5 per cent of the local population having basic education and African women who were invisible. Yet, by the 1940s, Northern Rhodesia accounted for a considerable amount of the world's total output of copper used in cars, war and electrical equipment, while almost half the black male population had worked for mines as migrants (Sikamo, Mwanza and Mweemba, 2016).

Mining profits were sent to London with half of the tax revenue kept by the empire, leaving little for social investment. A colour bar with low wages and poor conditions for Africans led to strikes at three mines in 1935 (Turok, 1989; Fenichel, 1991). With the onset of the Second World War, Britain took control over all copper in Zambia with concessions to white workers (mostly from South Africa) and black workers who went on strike (Phimister and Tembo, 2015). African workers formed and joined unions during the war and gained bargaining rights (unlike South Africa).

During the war, the small urban African middle class (teachers, clerks, foremen, and clergy) started welfare societies both in the mining towns and in rural areas. This led to the formation of the Northern Rhodesia Congress.

Berry (1992, p. 342) points out that;

> when agents of the British South Africa Company first moved into the new protectorate in the late 1890s, they were favourably impressed with the apparent power of Bemba chiefs, who presided over large fortified settlements, and even worried that they might have a tendency to abuse their power. In 1907 the company banned the practice of citemene [Chitemene] (extensive agriculture) and forcibly rounded people up into villages. Company officials were afraid the dispersal of the population would erode the authority of Bemba chiefs, making them useless as agents of Company rule.

However, as Berry (1992, p. 340) further shows;

> colonial officials who succeeded the company pursued similar ends with less draconian means, but their efforts to establish a minimum size for Bemba villages were no more successful. When admonished that their authority would dwindle if they permitted their 'subjects' to scatter, Bemba chiefs blandly countered that 'the greater the number of villages, the greater the prestige of the chief.

Notably, in the pre-colonial era, "chiefly authority was less authoritarian than under company rule. Contra to Mamdani (1996), Berry (1992, p. 328) agrees that "scarcity of money and manpower not only obliged administrators to practise 'indirect rule' but also limited their ability to direct the course of political and social change". This led to the British officially continuing to readjust the native administration structures up to independence. But we see that unofficially these structures remain predominant in present-day Zambia. One typical example is the British Overseas Military Administration (BOMA), formed under colonial rule, but the name is still maintained to refer to the district administrative offices in modern-day Zambia.

While whites made up less than 2 per cent of the Northern Rhodesian population, their numbers rose between 1946 and 1951 from 22,000 to 37,000, aided by immigrants from Britain due to the copper boom (Sikamo, Mwanza and Mweemba, 2016). Following a major African strike in 1952, the real wages of African mineworkers, at last, moved upward. In 1955 the industrial colour bar was broken, and a select few African workers

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were encouraged to settle in the mining areas and "stabilised" labour began to replace migrants (Turok, 1989).

As the British rule and empire expanded, in 1953, three British Protectorates, Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, were amalgamated to form the Central African Federation (CAF). But a new generation of educated leaders, including Kaunda, became displeased with the amount of worthy transported from N/Rhodesia to Salisbury (Harare, which was the federation's headquarters) and the under-development in a copper-producing country. Thus, this increased the demand for N/Rhodesia's independence from the federation leading to the Cha Cha Cha uprising. As resistance and opposition to the federation and oppressive British rule grew, protesters burnt down and damaged 33 primary schools, while black high schools were shut down between 1959 and 1960 (Ministry of Education Triennial Report, 1964, in Kelly 1999). The federation was finally dissolved around 1963, and a year later Zambia gained independence.

Zambia launched a major renaissance in investment in communications and social services. Whereas in 1960, there were only 2,500 Africans in secondary schools, by 1971, there were 54,000 – a twenty-fold increase (Kelly, 1999). This was a massive shift by any standards.

Copper prices recovered steadily from 1964 to 1970, boosted by US demand for copper, and Zambia emerged as the world's third-largest producer of copper (Sikamo, Mwanza and Mweemba, 2016). Moreover, the external drain of copper profits abroad was greatly reduced. Like oil in Nigeria, copper has been linked to the rise of "petro-fetishism" and Pentecostal evangelism in popular culture (Peluso and Watts, 2001). "Evangelical cronyism" linked to copper and fabulous unearned wealth or undeserved poverty is a suggestive term coined by Watts. The wild fluctuations in copper price can be seen when it rose to $1500 in 1965 and dropped to a mere $350 in the early 2000s.[22] The figure below shows the fluctuations.

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[22] Zambia is highly dependent on mining as its major productive industry, with the extractives sector contributing about 10% to the country's GDP. In 2019, the country's mining sector accounted for 28% of the government's revenues and 77% of export earnings, with copper accounting for over 90% of the sector's exports (https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/metals/051821-record-copper-prices-double-edged-sword-for-zambian-miners)

Figure 4: Zambia copper price 1960-2000
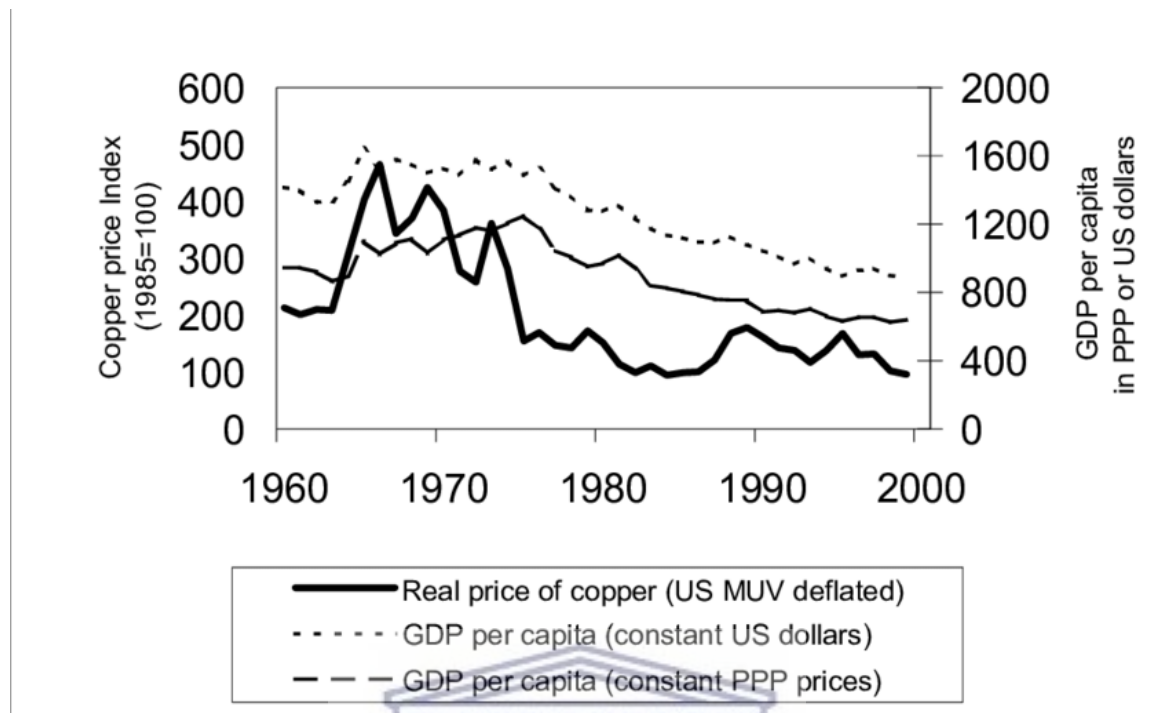
The fluctuating copper prices and a fragile economic state provide a historical context for analysing issues of inequality in a broader context relating to the problematisation of the Zambian youth. The country's economic forces provide a bigger picture in understanding the social context in which "problems" and how blame is assigned by the powerful elites. Thus, understanding the issues of teen pregnancy and child marriage requires a broader contextual outlook, including structural and economic issues at the national level.

THE HISTORY OF FAMILY AND THE FAMILY PLANNING AGENDA

Generally, society has often sought to control women's sexuality for many reasons, but the family and women's bodies have been a central target of population control and state policy. Historically, women's sexual reproduction has been analysed through the relationship of the state, family and private property (Williams, 1989; Lister, 2010). Through the development of the British welfare state, for example, the nuclear family was elevated, and the roles between men and women were sharply defined.

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Zambia as a British colony was (and is) very much influenced by British economic imperialism and its concerns with labour supplies, local culture as well as the soul (a concern of missionaries). Before we unpack the family planning agenda, some crucial aspects need to be noted. Women in Africa are perceived to be in a disadvantaged and vulnerable position due to traditional cultural practices. But women in many African cases are seen as having sacred/mythical powers linked to the child-bearing position of women. Through the contemporary human rights movements, the international community and the western culture advocate constructing the African woman as abused by the man, un-empowered and unable to make her own sexual reproductive health choices due to gender inequalities.

For example, Taylor (2006, pp. 91–92) reflects this narrative by stating that;

> Certainly, African women have faced enormous obstacles, hardships, and discrimination within the family, community, state, and international context relative to males. In the majority of contexts, women are but a mirror image, a relatively powerless reflection of their male counterparts. In short, all aspects of life-family, social, economic, and legal-in Zambia and in Africa, in general, are simply harder for women than they are for men.

However, what is overlooked is that these inequalities are not only prevalent in the negatively constructed "Africa" but also in many other parts of the world, including the "almighty" British empire itself. Taylor (2006) further claims that women in Zambia were regarded as inferior to men even before colonialism. On the contrary, gender inequalities and woman's position were all part of the British colonial package, including the arrival of Christianity in Africa and Zambia.

History shows us from the British welfare state policies how the woman's sexual reproductive role was exploited to build an imperialistic empire that came to rule over many other nations and rebirthed its culture and influence over time. Different philosophies explain the role of sexual reproduction in British society, using the family as a tool. For example, the Fabian society viewed the family as;

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constituted by the breadwinner father and dependent wife and children as the basic unit of society and of welfare provision. In this sense, the financial dependence of women on men and their primary responsibilities to society as mothers and wives were taken for granted (Williams, 1989, p. 5).

Britain built its empire on encouraging procreation by introducing a motherhood allowance for women to fulfil their reproductive roles. As Fiona Williams suggests, "the endowment of motherhood, from which the family allowance system emerged, was central to these ideas" (1989, p. 5). For Britain to preserve its imperial strength, there was a need for increased human resources in the military, which could only be achieved through procreation. "Maintaining the 'Imperial Race' was seen as an utmost priority: quality of the 'race' for national efficiency, the quantity for the imperial army" (Williams, 1989, p. 157). Thus, the major role of women's contribution to national development was through motherhood (Williams, 1989).

From a capitalist perspective, reproduction was a means of increased productivity. However, later during the post-world war period, Britain moved to another agenda. More labour (black men and women) was imported from commonwealth countries to cover the labour shortfall (Williams, 1989). For "Western civilisation … it was our duty to help and guide the teeming millions of India and Africa to a more abundant life" (Titmuss, 1943, p. 9).

Williams (1989, p. 7) adds that "as the power and profits of imperialism declined, only its civilizing mission remained". Moral evangelism became the culture of the British welfare state (and also the Fabians and "progressive" imperialists), but this civilising mission was not as uniform as Williams (1989) and other authors suggest as argued by Mamdani (1996). Notably, the British colonial state abandoned much of the civilising mission in Africa by minimalising social investment and adopting indirect rule and a bifurcated state.

The third-wave feminist movements of the 1980s later began to confront the state policies of the family as the source of women's oppression, which reduced the role of womanhood to that of a wife and mother. The feminist view is that we ought to see the whole fabric of society as gendered. "Once the persistence of gender divisions is understood, it becomes easier to appreciate the persistence of inequalities" (Lewis, 2008, p. 101).

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However, before the feminist movements, in 1924, there arose the first wave of feminists in the form of birth control societies advocating for "children by choice, not chance" (Family Planning Association, 2011). This was developed into the National Birth Control Council (NBCC) in 1931, which later became the Family Planning Association (FPA). The inception of the FPA saw an increase in clinics providing family planning services in England and the inception of marriage guidance in the clinics (Family Planning Association, 2011). Despite the progress made by the FPA in reaching out to women and providing advice on family planning, there was still control from the state on who should access these services. It was preferably first offered to those married, and those below 16 years were excluded until later when provisions were changed. But the provision of family planning for *young* people in England only appeared as a government policy in 1997 as a strategy to reduce teen pregnancy (Arai, 2009a; Dickins, Johns and Chipman, 2012).

In the late colonial times (pre-1964), the Salisbury Family Planning Association (SFPA)-Southern Rhodesia strongly advocated for birth control. It played a key role in disseminating information on the benefits of birth control and emphasising the freedom to choose when to reproduce. Since Zambia and Zimbabwe were jointly ruled by the British before independence under the federation, the same association was formed in Zambia in 1957 as the Northern Rhodesia Family Planning Association.

Later, the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia, a British-based international organisation called the "International Planned Parenthood Federation", was established in 1972 in Zambia. The main purpose of these associations was to strongly advocate for birth control and family planning. It was seen as important for the growth and well-being of both an African and a European child. Family planning was common in England, such that it was prescribed as part of the culture (Williams, 1989).

However, this message was resisted by the African community, as reported during the SFPA meeting in Zimbabwe. The Africans viewed family planning as a trick to provide continued white domination over the blacks. Controlling reproduction was a way of constricting the African population from expanding (so that it did not get out of control) – an idea that still resonates today. Contrary to the British culture, having more children

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(especially males) was much more important in continuing the family name and bloodline than planning carefully for one child's growth[23].

However, in comparison to the Zimbabwean community, the Zambian community is said to have been more responsive to family planning than the Zimbabwean community. Below is a letter describing a positive response to the family planning awareness programmes (clinic services) rolled out by the Salisbury association in the community. It appeared that the locals were cleared of any misconceptions they had about family planning and gained new insights. The letter also highlights that the association was sponsored by the government (through the copper mines industry).

In Zambian, family planning was highlighted as a major issue only in the late 1980s in the Fourth National Development Plan (1989). One of the explicit neo-Malthusian objectives was to reduce fertility rates by promoting family planning, and both adolescents, youth and women were grouped into one category (Maltus, 2006). It is clear that this agenda was externally influenced. This was before strong opposition from both domestic and global movements like the UNIP women's League in the 1970s-1980s, the Family Life Movement of Zambia (FLMZ) and the Pro-Life Society of Zambia which advocated for natural family planning methods (Borne, Tweedie and Morgan, 1996). "Nurses were harassed when providing family planning services without the consent of clients' spouses, and family planning literature and contraceptives were confiscated and burned" (Borne, Tweedie and Morgan, 1996). By 1992, as shown in the DHS, 35 per cent of women used natural family planning methods such as withdrawal and periodic abstinence(Central Statistical Office Zambia, 1992).

Another important civilising association during late colonial times was the formation of the marriage council called "The Marriage Guidance Society of Northern Rhodesia". The main objective was to encourage unity on the basic principles of marriage deemed healthy for the nation's wellbeing (The Marriage Guidance of Northern Rhodesia, 1962). The society was composed of six members elected from the society in a general meeting by its members. However, some members were appointed from the Northern Rhodesia Council of Social Services, the Northern Rhodesia Catholic Bishops' Council, and the Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia (now Council of Churches Zambia). This shows

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[23] See attached appendix (I) of the piece of newspaper cutting from the National Archives of Zambia.

that the church's presence in marital guidance and civil society was valued during the late colonial era. But there was no conflation of church and state.

The marriage guidance society created a constitution that outlined marriage principles. The priority was placed on building a stable and united nation by safeguarding the family unit, which could only be possible in a monogamous marriage. This might have been prompted by some cultural practices of polygamy in the African community. For example, the Tonga people of Southern Zambia are one of the tribes commonly known for polygamy practices. Marrying more than one wife meant increased labour in the field and housework, securing family lineage and undisrupted continuous fulfilment of sex duties (In case one wife was pregnant or menstruating, the other would be there to fill in) (Saha, 1994; Bond and Cliggett, 2013). It was boldly stated that;

> the right foundation of this unit is a permanent monogamous marriage which alone provides satisfactory conditions for birth [pregnancy], upbringing of children, for the expression of the function of sex and a secure relationship between a man and a woman (The Marriage Guidance of Northern Rhodesia, 1962).

Thus, there was to be no sexual intercourse and childbearing outside western privatised family marriage. It was also pointed out that the public had a collective duty to "prevent and cure marital disharmony" or breaking up of families as it would result in a de-stabilised nation.

Although there was no specific mention of teen pregnancy or the appropriate age for marriage, these principles appeared to provide marriage as the ultimate "safe zone" for sexual intercourse, parenthood and pregnancy/childbearing. The emphasis was placed on the approach to marriage (by following the right way - monogamy only) and making a careful choice of partner to preserve a practice that can be passed on from generation to generation. Considering this view of marriage as a "safe zone" regardless of the age factor, what is now considered early or child marriage might not have been a problem then. The same would apply to teen pregnancy, as long as it is *within* marriage. It would be viewed as a normal pregnancy omitting the "teen" word.

HUMANISM AND THE COMMUNITY

Humanism particularly sought to create a society that not only frees "man" from the exploitation of one man by another but also one that lives in peace and harmony. The

humanist belief is that "mankind is one and indivisible. He who harms a single one of his fellows strikes at every man"(Kaunda, 1976, p. 14). Traditional societies, referring mostly to the rural community setting, were painted as natural with self-regulated governance systems that brought about peace, unity and harmony. Society was not only about strong kinship ties but also characterised by members of the community looking out for each other. This collective form of humanism conflicted with the bourgeois standard of the privatised nuclear family.

The humanist system was meant to protect all members of society from adverse social conditions - a kind of collective security (Noyoo, 2019). It implies that social problems were dealt with at the community level and not treated as purely personal. In the spirit of unity and collectiveness, a child did not only belong to their biological family but also, by extension, neighbours and the community at large. They all had the responsibility to guide and protect children transitioning into adulthood.

Additionally, words like "uncle" or "aunty" from the maternal side are replaced by "mother" or "father" in the local culture. For example, the biological mother's sibling is referred to or addressed as mother or father bearing the same title to show closeness. All played a key role in discipline, training and teaching children how to present and conduct themselves according to socially accepted behaviour. Thus, there was no need for instruments of control, such as the state or externally driven policies.

Kaunda (1976) pointed out that villages did not need the intrusive state to intervene in their way of life. For example, villages in Zambia were deemed to "operate individually as well as collectively, as a team - as member of the family - the Human Family" (Kaunda, 1976, p. 15). Kaunda (1976) further argued that there is a need to think critically about the state's relevance in the governance of man's wellbeing;

> We need to examine these institutions so that we can find out why he [man] thinks he needs them. We need to know whether they are absolutely necessary to Man's existence. If not, we need to examine the possibility of doing away with them, for it is correct to say the more institutions that are created to govern Man's life, the less free he is (Kaunda, 1976, p. 14).

Notably, the British rulers drawing on their penchant for chiefs, queens and royalty, expressed confidence in some aspects of the African tradition, strong and reliable communal relations. Nayoo (2019) points out that the British authorities did not plan for

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the workers who migrated from their villages as they were considered permanent residents of their home villages. Therefore, the authorities conveniently "believed that the African family did not need state protection in the urban centres as the traditional extended family system would meet the needs of its members" (Noyoo, 2019, p. 79).

However, Kaunda's philosophical position and faith in rural governance were not realised in many respects, notably, in rural cooperative agricultural development and quality education, which by the 1970s had manifestly failed. Increased urbanisation, the growth of capitalist individualism and a black urban elite who benefitted most from new policies saw the deepening of the colonial culture, putting the traditional society under threat (see Dumont's devastating account of Zambia's failed development trajectory (in Kelly, 1999).

The already stark divide between poor rural Zambians, including those living in urban shanty towns and the wealthy educated middle class in low-density suburbs, also grew in the structural adjustment period undermining claims that Zambia was built on a social solidarity system. Unemployment and prostitution were on the rise. It is believed that the youth became uncontrollable, and families began to break down, contributing to class apartheid (Ferguson, 1999; Nayoo, 2019).

By the late 2000s, Zambia, like South Africa, was among Africa's most unequal nations. Research shows that income inequality in Zambia as measured by the per capita income-based Gini-coefficient increased sharply from 0.70 in 1996 to 0.75 in 2004, before declining slightly to 0.74 in 2015.[24]

The colonial solution to these problems was to preach the message of civilization and Christianity, especially in the context of marriage. This also was the same for the post-colonial rulers of the 1990s when Pentecostalism and Jehovah's Witnesses took hold of popular culture and politics (Ferguson, 1999). It was predicted that the traditional society would inevitably be replaced by the modern family, "structurally nuclear, sexually monogamous, conjugally companionate, and adhering to a world religion" (Ferguson, 1999, p. 171). Yet this is not unambiguously so.

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[24] https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Policy-brief-Inequality.pdf.

NOT BORN A WOMAN BUT BECOMING ONE

A woman's lower status in the world seems to remain constant no matter where they are or where they come from. Even Kaunda's humanism did not attempt to override this with its "all are equal" humanistic rhetoric. Historically, the woman's role in society is one that has specifically been tied to family matters (taking care of the marriage, husband and children) than that of economic development or national issues. However, in 1975, women had a nominal place in Zambian party politics under the UNIP women's league led by the country's then-first lady (Geisler, 1987). Geisler, who researched women in Zambia during the 1960s, stated that;

> economic disadvantage and moral subordination of women is still accepted, perpetuated, and deepened, over 20 years after independence, in a country which purports to adhere to an ideology of Humanism (Geisler, 1987, p. 45).

The Fourth National Development Plan in 1989 introduced the integration of women empowerment development programmes. The national plan sought to increase women's decision-making and planning while controlling reproduction by advocating for child spacing and reducing fertility rates (Republic of Zambia, 1989).

The majority of women in this era (which is still the case) believed in marriage and the superiority of men (in addition to the biblical teachings of the wife submitting to the man) (Geisler, 1987). Being a wife and mother would be a fulfilling duty as a woman. Singlehood would be presented negatively. The perceptions of an unmarried woman were likened to an irresponsible and immoral character. For example, according to Geisler (1987), the "immorality of a woman" in the UNIP government and politics was considered a serious impediment to economic development. The view was that;

> the leaders focus on an independent, single, and educated women, who have gained a social position and are categorically classified as prostitutes, as well as on those school-girls who become pregnant, and on women who drink beer in public. These women do not conform to the 'mother and wife' image and are therefore said to be the cause of the break-up of marriages, 'moral decay', and the loss of cultural values (Geisler, 1987, p. 48).

However, Geisler's one-dimensional un-nuanced account of Zambian women leaves aside much of the small-scale women's organisations and focuses on the visible and the official. Parpart (1994) offers a more nuanced account of women's agency, as does Mohanty's

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(1988) account of the third-world woman. The stories of heroic but well-known Zambian women are being assembled by the Women's History Museum of Zambia with the scope to look into everyday heroes as well. As Kapwepwe, a curator of the Zambian Women's Museum noted;

> pre-colonial Zambia was 80 per cent matrilineal and matriarchal, but this was changed to patriarchal rule by British colonizers and Christian missionaries. Many women chiefs were either ignored or not recognised by the colonial government, who were now keeping the historical records. The patriarchal biased system continued after the colonial period, and post-colonial historians took up and maintained the male perspective of history. Oral history has kept female history, but little of it made its way to print or schools. (https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/museum-of-women-how-zambia-inherited-patriarchy-from-colonialism-29729)

It has now been 56 years after independence, and the characteristics of a Zambian woman have not changed much in terms of values and perceptions of social life (family, marriage and children). The recent literature attests to this (Mwape, Patricia et al., 2014; Katowa et al., 2017; Menon et al., 2018). The way an adult woman is perceived or expected to behave is reflected in young Zambian girls too. As is the case in most African societies, girls were prepared for womanhood, even before puberty. Zambian girls were exposed to house chores as soon as they were old enough to wash the dishes or sweep the surroundings (Matoka, 2007).

Boys, too, had to do some gardening or work in the fields (Matoka, 2007). Thus, the behaviour was moulded from a tender age in learning to be a responsible citizen of the country.

> Children began life as total dependants. For the typical Zambian girl, the period of dependency is brief. As she grows, her relationship to the household in which she lives gradually changes from total dependence to interdependence. _____ adult residents come to expect the girl to play a strategic role in the performance of household duties (Schuster, 1987, p. 367).

Thus, girls are expected to grow up quickly and taking care of siblings cuts across both urban and rural Zambia even in present times. Initiation ceremonies played a part in instilling responsibility, respect and shaping behaviour and conduct as boys and girls transit to adulthood.

HEALTH SERVICES AND HIV/AIDS

Health services everywhere but particularly in rural areas were regarded by Dumont (in Kelly, 1999) as very poor and uneven, and even worse, suffering from misguided attachment to the Western model. The emphasis was on curative rather than preventative services in spite of the fact that the latter is *cheaper* to provide. The infant mortality rate was much higher in rural than in urban areas. Malnutrition, too, was far more common in rural areas. Hospital extension services lacked transport facilities, and staff preferred to work in urban areas.

In the 1980s, reproductive health policy debates were largely about HIV/AIDS. Two value systems were in antagonism on the cause of HIV/AIDs in the society and who is to blame. The traditional society blamed the disease on the influence of Western culture, in contrast to Modern society (the colonial masters), who blamed it on the primitive and "immoral" African traditional practices. Gausset (2001, p. 511) states that;

> early researchers were looking for things to blame and identified African cultural practices as culprits. The logical consequence of this was to fight against African cultures and sexualities. _____ When asked to identify which aspects of African culture and sexuality were to be held responsible for the different profile of the epidemics, anthropologists complied without properly reflecting upon the prejudices on which these demands were based. _____ Many failed to reflect upon what was being asked of them and reinforced the dominant clichés.

The dominant clichés included polygamy, traditional rituals such as sexual cleansing[25], the rite of passage rituals-circumcisions, "permitted" extramarital and pre-marital sex and witchcraft (Gausset, 2001). However, the Tonga people expressed contrary views to these dominant clichés. Gausset (2001, p. 512) highlights that;

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[25] A ritual which involves a widow having sexual intercourse with the deceased husband's brother to chase away the dead man's spirit. This a practice exclusively for women as dictated by a patrilineal society.

for them [Tonga], the spread of AIDS is seen as a result of Western practices; people go to town, visit prostitutes and no longer follow traditions and the old moral code (partly because of modern education). AIDS is associated with prostitution and with Western and urban life____. The Tonga living in rural areas say that we should promote and restore African traditions and culture in order to fight against AIDS. The discourse is the exact opposite of the Western one that implies that we should fight against those very traditions.

In analysing the two discourses presented here, each side presents the problem the way they see it. Therefore, the solution becomes determined by how the problem is framed. "The way in which a problem is perceived and judged strongly affects the kind of solution suggested"(Manning, 2008, p. 31). Thus, the "blame game" between the western and traditional views was not the solution to ending the spread of the disease. As Gausset (2001, p. 512) argue;

both discourses focus on wrong targets. Whether people live an idealized ''traditional Tonga'' way of life or, on the contrary, behave and think like Europeans, AIDS will still be there and continue to spread unless people practise safe sex and safe blood contacts. Traditional or Western behaviour and ways of thinking are not what prevents the spread of AIDS.

The discourses presented by Gausset (2001) can be likened to the problem representation of teen pregnancy and child marriage debates. Two issues of comparison arise from this AIDs case. Firstly, AIDs was a disease - a clinical condition that needed not only social and behavioural expertise but also clinical. The disease itself was not a social problem. However, the outcome led to several social problems (death and loss of a breadwinner leading to orphaned children, resulting in increased poverty, and crime).

In the case of teen pregnancy, however, this is not a disease but has been treated like one. There is no agreement on what sort of a problem it is, making it more complicated to understand even before solutions can be sought. Like in the AIDs context, the same dominant narrative of "the primitive and immoral" culture is among the many factors blamed for teen pregnancy and child marriage, except the word used now is "harmful" traditional practices. All traditional practices are described as harmful, including rites of passage ceremonies meant to teach young people how to conduct themselves as responsible adults. The blame is assigned without a contextual understanding of a perceived problem that may not even exist.

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Thanks to Christianity and modernity, some of these ceremonies have become less popular as they are perceived to invoke demonic spirits. Initiation ceremonies for girls are even scarcer now. As for the boys, traditional circumcision has been medicalised as part of the World Health Organisation's agenda (now Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision-VMMC) to fit into civilisation and modernity. Even though traditional male circumcision remains deep-rooted in most East African countries, due to external influence and global policy obligations VMMC has become a more preferred choice (it comes with funding from the international health communities attracting many African governments) in most parts of Africa.

It is clear that since the Victorian era of colonialism, the western agenda has been to dominate all cultures, using Christianity as a tool to measure moral behaviour. This can be seen from the inception of birth control and the family planning agenda to the rules set out by the marriage guidance association to dominate their culture over the African one. The "Western way" of defining problems and solutions is clearly seen as "the only way". For example, sex education existed in the traditional society in the form of initiation ceremonies, but this practice is now condemned to lead teenage girls into sexual activity. Meanwhile, modern safe sex methods such as contraception and condoms and the early introduction of sex education (Comprehensive Sexuality Education) to grade 5 pupils are endorsed and welcomed. Yet, they even provide a wider path to sexual activity than the so-called "harmful" traditional ceremonies.

KAUNDA'S YOUTH AND WOMEN-RELATED POLICIES

Under Kaunda, population control was not an explicit concern in economic development planning, but there were implicit social policies. The 2nd National Development Plan (1972-76) used demographic variables such as growth rate, future population size, estimates of the current and future school and working-age populations. It "recognised rapid growth and population pressures on social services as population problems" (Msimuko and Khasiani, 1981, p. 21).

Kaunda promoted the idea that youth were part of the nation's reconstruction programme and contributed to its economic growth and development. However, no explicit agenda for young people's sexual reproductive health was developed.

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Kaunda continued with the free education policy and made education compulsory for all Zambian children despite the economic decline. However, the limited revenue base and rapidly decaying education infrastructure in rural areas did not make it easy for girls to enrol in schools (Republic of Zambia, 1989). Additionally, the preference to educate boys rather than girls hindered most girls from accessing free education, as reported in the 4th National Development Plan.

In 1987, the government introduced the "Youth Lima" programme, which encouraged pupils to participate in agriculture and grow their own food (Republic of Zambia, 1989). In addition to this the UNIP young pioneers, UNIP youth league, boy scouts, and girl guides served the purpose of moral guidance and moulding young people's behaviour.

Moreover, if a girl got pregnant while in school, they would be immediately blocked from attending classes and not allowed to return. This was a tough part of the teachings of "discipline" in humanism to discourage sexual activity among young people. However, later this changed when the education re-entry policy was introduced in 1997 under the MMD government. The entry policy was implemented to allow girls to go back to school after giving birth since education began to be widely recognised as a human right.

Nonetheless, the government had realised the gender inequalities in school enrolment between girls and boys and that more girls were dropping out of school before reaching grade seven for unknown reasons. Thus, the Fourth National Development Plan (1989) set out to increase the enrolment numbers for girls at both primary and tertiary levels; reduce school drop-outs; eliminate gender distinction in the education curriculum; and increase awareness of family, sex and responsible parenthood among pupils (Republic of Zambia, 1989). However, despite girls dropping out of school, neither teen pregnancy nor child marriage appeared on the list of social problems experienced post-independence.

For example, urbanisation was listed as a problem affecting rural development in the First National Development Plan (1966). Young people migrated to urban areas, leaving only older people and children. Thus, the elderly were left struggling on their own with no one to take care of them, calling for state intervention. The urbanisation problem was later linked to increased sexual activities among young people, as highlighted in the 2008 National Reproductive Health Policy (NRHP).

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Adolescent sexuality is becoming an increasing concern in Zambia. Urbanization and modernization are giving rise to a new pattern of sexual behaviour in adolescents, including pre-marital sex, which often leads to early pregnancy, induced abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infections (Ministry of Health, 2008, p. 14).

After the MMD took over power, there was reduced state intervention through their liberalisation system, and most of Kaunda's youth programmes were discontinued. Coincidently more reports of increased sexual activity and related problems among young people began to appear in national policy documents.

To date, most youth programmes are NGO-ised and globalised as the traditional culture is being eroded by externally influenced educational curricula such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

Matoka (2007, p. 25) adds that the Educational Reform and the rural development centres set up by the UNIP government "was a positive way of maximising socialisation, a positive method of training and preparing the child for adulthood roles". It appears that these programmes provided many benefits, as they provided opportunities for the youth to engage in more productive activities than destructive ones. "Without these additional institutions, the country would have lost many able children who failed to find school places to the streets", says Matoka (2007, p. 25).

Currently, there are no rural development centres in Zambia but more opportunities for access to education with minimal national guidance for young people. The socialisation of children and behaviour moulding have been left to the international NGOs that preach a globalised culture. These changes place the present-day adolescent/teenager in an environment of sexual liberalisation, where information about sex is provided, and more options for safe sex practices are made available.

CONCLUSION

This chapter traced how reproductive behaviour was perceived in the Kaunda era and by powerful influences from colonial rule such as family planning and Christian values. It also tried to counter-pose colonial legacies with rival historical precolonial conceptions of social institutions like marriage and the very different expectations and meanings of being female and adolescent. The chapter further critically discussed the emergence of

population control in efforts to re-frame the issue as an economic development issue. Three key arguments are raised in this chapter.

Firstly, the context in which marriage occurs in the African setting is influenced by socialisation from a young age. This results from the high value placed on marriage and the significance of procreation. However, at the same time, every girl is prepared to be a woman according to what norms and standards society sets for what it means to be a woman. Hence, one is not born a woman but is simply made into one. The African setting creates an environment in which marriage and childbearing appear to be more attractive and fulfilling to both the individual and the community at large. This is why puberty initiation ceremonies are highly regarded as essential for one's preparation for adulthood.

Secondly, the principles of humanism during Kaunda's era might have played a significant role in youth social and economic development. For example, in the era (1964-1991), the state attempted to engage the youth in productive programmes to diverge destructive behaviour and, at the same time, provide guidance and training for adulthood. In terms of sexual behaviour, this era presented limited space for sexual activities among young people. This is compared to the MMD era, in which liberalisation brought less state intervention, more international engagement (human rights movements), and indeed more sexual freedom for young people.

The Western agenda to dominate the African culture created marriage as a "safe zone" for sexual activity and childbearing. Regardless of the age, what is now considered early or child marriage might not have been a problem then. The same would apply to teen pregnancy, as long as it is within the marriage. It would be viewed as a normal pregnancy omitting the "teen" word. However, the British rulers emphasised monogamy as the only way to family stability. Thus, polygamy was perceived as inappropriate and backward. This is a classic illustration of how colonial and western culture has continuously dominated traditional African life and raising children.

Lastly, Zambia's way of raising children in the Kaunda era is significantly different from the present day. Ideas about adulthood, sex, pregnancy and marriage have taken a different turn, adopting more liberal approaches to teen sexual behaviour. Traditional ceremonies play a significant role in the preservation of culture and social life. Particularly, the humanism era tells us that initiation ceremonies are crucial in moulding

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and shaping behaviour as children transit to adulthood. Contrary to this view, initiation ceremonies today have become a cause for concern (mainly by policy actors), while in the past when sex talk was more of a taboo, initiation ceremonies served as a communication tool for sex education (which was taught in private). Critics insist that initiation ceremonies promote early marriage and early sex debut among young people.

At the same time, others see the moral value of teaching responsibility to young people as they transition from childhood to adulthood through initiation ceremonies. Here I argue that dominant-negative constructs overshadow the value of some traditional aspects that can effectively tackle problems relating to teen sexual behaviours and other social problems. However, as modernity continues to replace old traditions, some practices are bound to face extinction in the near future.

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CHAPTER 7: THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT'S POLICY PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT SEXUAL MATTERS (2007 to 2016)

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem in Zambia, it is important to examine the "practices of the government of teenagers" and the authorities that govern them. This chapter analyses the diverging state policy responses and approaches to addressing teen sexual matters in Zambia between 2012-2016. Before this era, under Kaunda's humanism and Chiluba, there were hardly any policies regulating teen/adolescent sexual behaviour. This might be attributed to teen pregnancy not distinctively appearing on the national agenda as a serious problem. Also, monitoring children, teens or youth was a collective societal duty and responsibility as part of the precepts of humanism. In this chapter, I focus on the three main ministries mandated to address youth well-being, particularly on matters relating to sexual behaviour. These ministries are; the Ministry of Health, Ministry of General Education, and Ministry of Gender.

However, after Chiluba's ideology to embrace a free market economy and Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation in 1991, concerns arose to address health matters affecting the youth. Through these ministries, the following policies were implemented; the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (AHSP) 2011-2015, the Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia (NSECMZ) 2016-2021.

I highlight various views and causal narratives expressed by parliamentarians discussed in the national assembly of Zambia on the subject. The parliamentary discourses and debates are selected from specific years, between 2007-2016, when matters relating to the subject were discussed. Notably, sexual behaviour among young people, particularly teen pregnancy and child marriage, dominated the media and public political agenda around 2012.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEEN SEX-RELATED MATTERS

Teen sexual matters like many other social issues are regulated through legal frameworks that seek to protect young people's sexual rights. Aside from the policies discussed in chapter eight, the following laws were effected; the Marriage Act Chapter 50 of the Laws of Zambia, the Education Act of 2011, The Termination of Pregnancy Act Chapter 304 of the Laws of Zambia, the Penal Code Act of Chapter 87 of the Laws of Zambia, and the Customary Law.

There is no legal constraint against teen pregnancy in Zambia. However, the Penal Code Act of the Laws of Zambia (Offences against morality 138) prohibits older persons from engaging in sexual relations with young persons below 16 years (Republic of Zambia, 1941). Any person found guilty of this offence is liable to life imprisonment, while the Education Act of 2011 prohibits (i) marrying off a child learner or pupil and (ii) marrying off child learners and stopping them from attending school. According to the Act, the penalty for this offence is up to 15 years to a maximum of life imprisonment (Republic of Zambia, 2011).

These legal frameworks in Zambia make provisions for the protection of minors from sexual abuse in order to create a safe and healthy environment for them. However, when it comes to young people's sexual reproductive rights, the laws appear restrictive and limiting. For example, personal choices and pregnancy termination decisions have legal ramifications that limit one's control over one's sexual matters. The Penal Code Act under "offences against morals" states that a person who:

> unlawfully administers to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or
> uses any force of any kind, or uses any other means whatever, or
> permits any such thing or means to be administered or used, is guilty of
> a felony and is liable to imprisonment for seven years (Republic of
> Zambia, 1941, No. 152).

This means that performing or attempting to abort a pregnancy is an offence and attracts seven years' imprisonment. However, the Termination of Pregnancy Act allows for abortion to be conducted only by a registered medical practitioner under three circumstances; (i) if it poses risks to the life and health of the pregnant woman, (ii) if it poses risks to existing children of the pregnant woman, and (iii) if it poses health risks to

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the unborn child (Republic of Zambia, 1972). However, in 2005, the Penal Code Act permitted abortion to accommodate rape victims too.

The Zambian abortion laws remain controversial and not very well understood by the citizens. There appears to be a lack of awareness of these laws by both the adult and young populations, in that people are unsure if the service is legal and can be easily accessed in the hospital. Some authors argue that "poor knowledge and conservative attitudes (sic) are important obstacles to accessing safe abortion services"(Cresswell et al., 2016, p. 1). We should also consider that the parliament in 2012 considered a referendum to change the constitution advocating that "life begins at conception". Surprisingly, despite the media attention, the proposal to ban abortion was defeated in a low-turnout referendum in 2016 (Haaland et al., 2019).

Most importantly, despite abortion being legal under prescribed conditions in a Christian nation like Zambia, many see it as immoral and with a stigma attached to it (Webb, 2000; Waszak et al., 2012; Haaland et al., 2019). Abortion done privately is more expensive but calls less attention to oneself than if it is discovered openly and known to the community (Haaland et al., 2020). The stigma associated with abortion, whether it is legal or illegal, stems from the view that those who abort are sexually promiscuous or are involved in prostitution.

A further contextual development was in 2017 when the Catholic church welcomed US president Trump's ban on all funding relating to abortion services (Mulenga, 2017). Such explains the dynamics of sexual reproductive rights being regulated not only by the law but also by the organised global conservative Christian right.

When it comes to marriage matters, two opposing legal systems are in place: customary law and inherited traditional customs permit marriage *with no age restriction* as long as one has reached puberty. In this case, puberty becomes the marker for adulthood. Thus, the local conceptualisation of an adult is based on puberty, not determined by age.

Having a dual-route to marriage means that one can choose between the two, to either follow what is prescribed in the Marriage Act or the customary law. Even though the constitution is the supreme law, more people in rural areas would be more familiar with and inclined to follow customary law. This scenario presents parallel legal

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frameworks and a clash in policies that supposedly call for a stop to teen pregnancy and child marriage.

CONSTRUCTING THE PROBLEM THROUGH STATISTICS

> Ultimately, all this effort to promote the development of adolescent girls and to reduce early marriage and teenage pregnancy is important in the fight against poverty… Global evidence shows that girls who delay marriage and childbearing reach a higher level of education which helps them to become more productive members of society, and contribute better to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty through investing in their own children (Kundhavi Kadiresan, World Bank Country Director for Zambia).

> It is critical for Zambia to act now, considering that there are already 4 million adolescents in Zambia and that this number is expected to reach 10 million by 2050 based on current demographic trends (Sophie Naudeau, the World Bank Lead Researcher for Zambia).

Population statistics have been the central focus in defining and providing rational arguments for the problem of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, as well as poverty reduction and human rights. Statistics are frequently mentioned or quoted to highlight the seriousness of the problem reports, speeches by politicians, policy documents, newspapers and research studies.

The ZDHS produce official statistics about health and population. They capture teen pregnancy rates between ages 15-19 but do not particularly capture child marriage rates. However, the prevalence of child marriage can be derived from the indicators measuring "age at first marriage". Thus, the figures below show the teen pregnancy rates and the median age at first marriage from 1992 when the first ZDHS was conducted to 2014.

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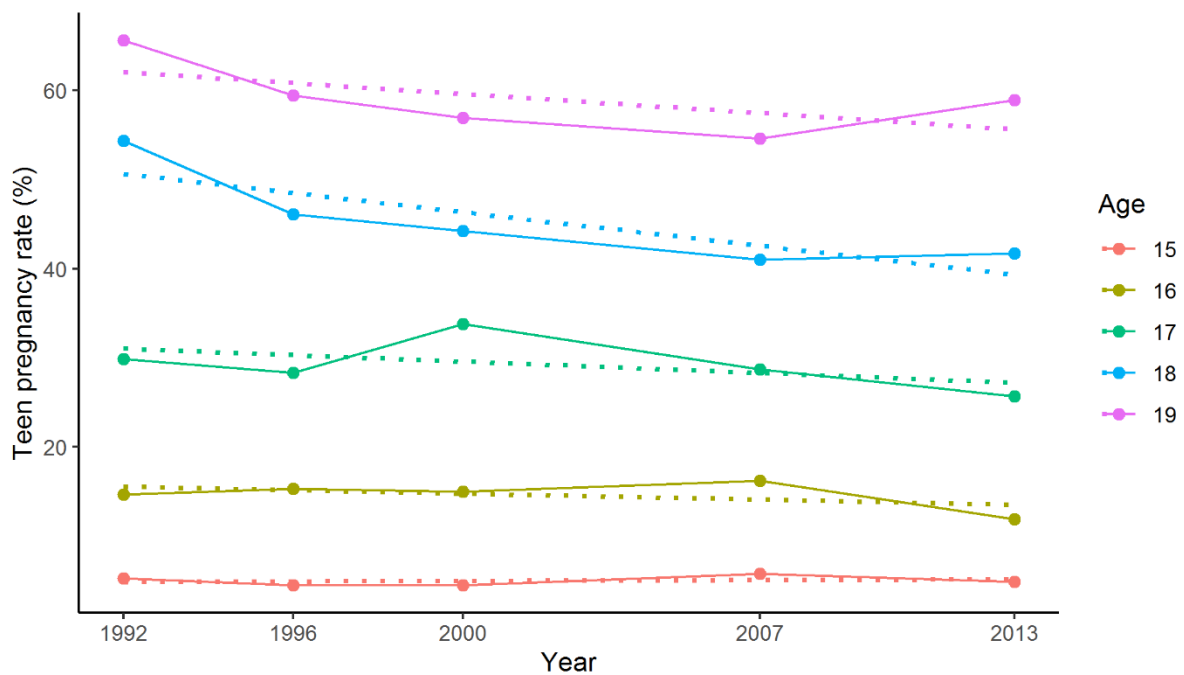
Source: ZDHS 1992-2013

From the statistics shown in the past ZDHS, young people begin sexual activities before they even reach 15. The 2013/14 ZDHS reported that 29 per cent of females between 15-19 years already had a child or fell pregnant, 36 per cent of pregnancies occurred in rural areas and 20% in urban ones. However, as highlighted in figure 2, the teen pregnancy prevalence rate appears to have declined from ages above 15 years in the period between 1992-2014. The teen pregnancy rate between ages 15-19 years in 1992 was 34 per cent; it later declined to 31 per cent in 1996, and further declined to 28% in 2007 and then rose to 29 per cent in 2013/14. This also shows an increase in age at first pregnancy as the trends show a decline in teen pregnancy from 15 years.

Moreover, the most recent 2018 ZDHS states that "the percentage of women age 15-19 who have begun childbearing increases with age, from 6% among those age 15 to 53% among those age 19"(Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018, p. 78). This implies that more females are currently getting pregnant much later (after 18/19 years). As such, these statistics are contrary to the fuss around teen pregnancy being described as a national crisis and treating it as a national disaster as portrayed by the politicians and the international health community/advocates. The next figure below shows the median age at first marriage from 1992-2013/14.

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Figure 6: Median age at first marriage (1992-2014)
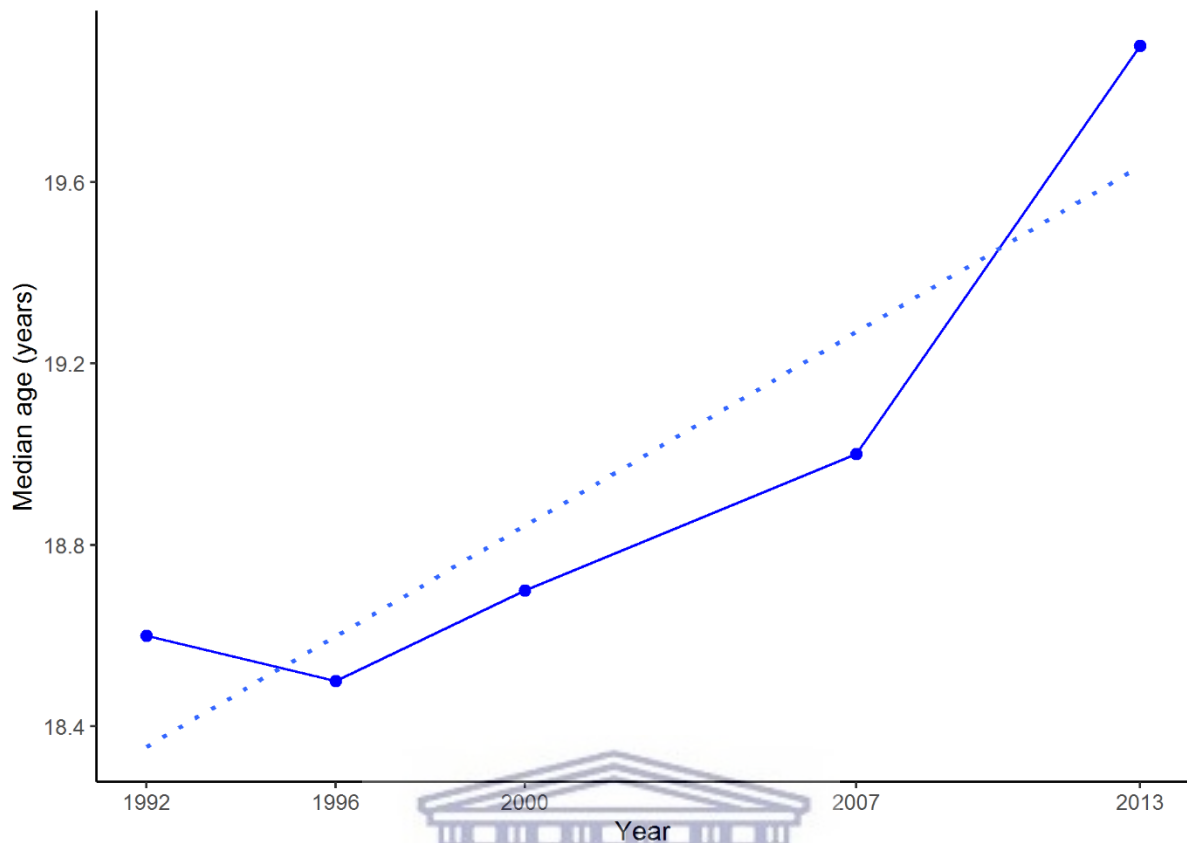
Source: ZDHS 1992-2013

The statistics show the median age at first marriage estimated at 19 years for the age group between 20-24 years. It shows an increase in the median age at first marriage from 19 years in 1992 to 20 years in 2014. This entails a decline in young people getting married during early adolescence/teenagehood, thus indicating that there is a low prevalence of what may be perceived as early or child marriage in Zambia.

But long-term statistics show that in 1960 fertility rates per 1000 women aged 15-19 were around 170; they rose after independence to 190 in 1980 and then began a long 40-year cycle of dropping to around 136 per 1000 in 2020[26].

Having statistically presented the childbearing and teen sexual behaviour trends in Zambia from the national/official statistics, it is evident that the problematisation of the issue does not match the statistics. Additionally, Koski et al. (2017) attest to the decline in

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[26] Source: https://knoema.com/atlas/Zambia/topics/Demographics/Fertility/Fertility-rates-at-age-15-19-years?action=export&gadget=indicator-preview-host).

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the prevalence of child marriages occurring below age 18 in most sub-Sahara Africa. Countries listed include Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. This study confirms what has already been highlighted by the ZDHSs regarding both teen pregnancy and age at first marriage prevalence. Koski et al. (2017) argue that eliminating early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa cannot happen without additional research to better understand the social patterns of prevalence. They further state that;

> [i]n particular, we must learn more about what characterises marriage among the youngest girls and the social forces that perpetuate it in the face of a rising trend in the average age at marriage throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa (Koski, Clark and Nandi, 2017, p. 26).

Parenthetically, I include the USA trend in teenager sexual debut and pregnancies. This figure shows a significant change in first pregnancy to around age 25 with a decrease in sex debut to 18 years.

In the next section, I discuss different government ministerial problem definitions and their policy solutions.

GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The government's response to addressing teen sexual matters has been implemented through programmes and policies cutting across different ministries. Some Ministries have direct involvement in youth sexual reproductive health while others play an indirect role. For example, the Ministry of Youth and Sport does not focus on young people's sexual matters but mostly on developmental programmes. However, the 2015 National Youth Policy under the Ministry highlights strategies to promote the provision of youth-friendly health services and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of General Education have direct policies on youth sexual matters.

The CSE and the education re-entry policy fall directly under the responsibility of the Ministry of General Education, while the provision of youth and adolescent sexual reproductive health falls under the Ministry of Health. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Gender devised the "National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia 2016-2021". I briefly discuss and analyse the three key policies that seek to govern adolescent and

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youth sexual health; Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (AHSP 2011-2015), CSE (2014), and NSECMZ (2016-2021).

MINISTRY OF HEALTH: ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN (AHSP) 2011-2015

Before the formulation of the AHSP (2011-2015), there was no specific policy directed towards addressing the sexual reproductive health needs of those in early adolescence. This set the scene for the inception of what was grouped as "Adolescent Health Friendly Services" (AHFS). The strategic plan aimed to explicitly promote AHFS to cater to the needs of younger adolescents, after realising that the existing policies left adolescent age groups (10-19) hanging between youth services and general adult reproductive health services (Ministry of Health, 2011a). Thus, the policy gaps identified were; firstly, the lack of a separation between "youth" and "adolescent" and, secondly, limited health facilities providing reproductive health services to the youth.

According to the National Youth Policy (2015), a youth in Zambia is defined as a person aged 15 to 35 years, excluding early adolescents (10-14 years). Meanwhile, adolescence is defined widely as the age between 10 to 19 according to the AHSP (2011-2015). In Zambia, reproductive health services, both in the pre- and post-independence era, mainly catered to the general adult population. Young people were not expected to be seeking reproductive health services as they were meant for the "adults", although, around 1997, some health services specifically tailored for the youth were introduced through the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ).

PPAZ, a British-based international organisation called International Planned Parenthood Federation, was established in 1972 in Zambia. It was the first to introduce "Youth Friendly Corners" (YFCs) in a few selected clinics, collaborating with the Ministry of Health. The standard reproductive health services offered by YFCs include; peer counselling, family planning, screening and STI testing, voluntary counselling and HIV testing, and outreach activities in the community and schools (Ministry of Health, 2011a). However, the MOH highlighted in the AHSP (2011-2015) that;

the services offered by YFCs are targeted at youths, which are a much broader target group, representing different age groups with varying health needs. As such, it can be observed that, currently, there are no public health facilities offering specific healthcare packages targeting the adolescents and their special needs (Ministry of Health, 2011a, p. 1).

The Ministry of Health formulated the first National Reproductive Health Policy (2008), in which the need to address adolescent sexual reproductive health was recognised. Nonetheless, although the policy recognised young people's challenges in accessing sexual reproductive health due to stigma and discrimination, it did not provide for the separation of these services between the old and younger population. Moreover, the AHSP (2011-2015) reports that a few YFCs have been operating as pilot programmes from inception (Ministry of Health, 2011a). This shows that the government has not taken a deliberate step to make Youth Friendly Services available in most health facilities. In health facilities with no YFCs, reproductive health services are offered to young people and adults under the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) unit (Ministry of Health, 2015). This continues to present challenges for young people (including adolescents) to access these services even though the national reproductive health policy makes such provisions.

Therefore, the aim of the AHSP (2011-2015) under the instruction of the World Health Organisation was formulated to;

provide adolescents with access to essential health services in an adolescent-friendly environment, including [the] appropriate location of health facilities, appropriate standards of care, privacy and confidentiality, affordable services, flexibility, availability of appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, effective partnerships, and involvement of the adolescents in policy formulation (Ministry of Health, 2011a, p. 16).

Notably, the MOH has a clear mandate to ensure that young people of all ages have access to whatever kind of health services they need. The Ministry has further trained its personnel to treat every individual as a client without stigmatisation and discrimination (Ministry of Health, 2008, 2011a, 2015).

However, while this strategic plan may be well formulated from a human rights-sexual reproductive health rights approach, this is not the kind of message portrayed by other ministries (within the same government) and the views from different segments of

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society. The goals of the plan conflict with both the traditional and Christian values of the nation. Moreover, even within the same government, conflicts arose in narratives and understandings of teen sexual behaviour.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES I: TRUST THE SYSTEM (Because we say so)

The following statements are extracted from parliamentary debates for the second session of the tenth assembly held on 1st February 2008, which preceded the AHSP. The discussions show differing views and perceptions on family planning uptake among Zambians. The parliamentary debates addressed the issues surrounding the uptake of a family planning contraceptive called Depo-Provera (injectable). The then Minister of Health, Dr Chituwo, in his address to the house, said;

> about 20 per cent of our women on contraceptives are using Depo-Provera. Many women have found it to be a convenient product because one does not have to use it every day. No severe adverse effects, so far, have been reported on this product in Zambia. I must also mention that the pre-constituted one was introduced to Zambia as a donation through USAID in November last year [2007] (National Assembly of Zambia, 2008).

Despite Depo-Provera being reported to have no side effects by the Minister and was seen as a less tedious contraception method than the daily pill, it appears there was limited information about this particular contraceptive, raising doubts even among the health workers. In the statement above, it is reported that this contraceptive was a donation from the USA. This might have contributed to suspicions about the drug. The Minister of Health further reported;

Sir, following concerns from various quarters of the community, including some of the health workers, that this family planning product contained HIV, my Ministry immediately issued a circular to withdraw the product from all health institutions. Further, the Ministry began to conduct tests on the product to ascertain whether it, indeed, contained HIV._____ Mr Speaker, owing to the sensitivity of the issue and taking into consideration the need to safeguard the health of the Zambian people, the Government, through the Ministry of Health, decided to send samples of this product to various laboratories and South Africa for independent opinion. I must mention that what is of paramount importance at the moment is that scientific investigation through the tests using PCR shows that Depo-Provera does not have the virus that causes AIDS (National Assembly of Zambia, 2008).

Upon hearing concerns about Depo-Provera, the government responded by withdrawing the drug from the public. The investigations were only started after the drug had already been distributed for use instead of testing it before issuing it to the public. There seems to be a tendency for African governments to receive donations with open arms without questions. However, the then member of parliament for the Luena constituency posed a question to the Minister of Health; "Would the hon. Minister accept that there are perceptions in certain quarters of the world that the HIV/AIDS pandemic was introduced to wipe out a certain race?"(National Assembly of Zambia, 2008). In response to this, the Minister of Health stated that;

Mr Speaker, the world, including Zambia, is very much aware of this conspiracy theory. This means, as it has been stated, that the human immune deficiency virus was produced in the laboratory for the specific purpose of targeting our continent as an example. Mr Speaker, scientists and social researchers have delved around this question for many years now, and there is no proof, indeed, that this theory ever existed as far as we know. I agree with the hon. Member for Luena that when one has a health programme or any other programme in the country for that matter, perceptions do matter. In order for us to dispose of perceptions, it can only be done by providing all the information that is available for that population to digest and make decisions (National Assembly of Zambia, 2008).

Another member of parliament for Chienge-Dr Kalumba pointed out that;

I would like to move from populist science to facts. Given the fact….that Depo-Provera has been a source of controversy from as early as the late 1970s and 1980s, I want to commend the Government for being cautious about the product. However, I also want to ask the Government whether, in fact, the current controversy may be associated with the struggles between pro-life campaigners and pro-choice people regarding the use of contraceptives in general (ibid).

This view is in line with what is discussed in chapter seven. When the colonialists introduced family planning, Africans had reservations about it, and they believed that nothing should be able to hinder the natural order. Indeed, the debate appears to have been more about diversity in values, traditions and cultural beliefs than a medical issue.

As explained by the Minister of Health;

In the context of science and particularly in reproductive health, he is right. There are people with a view that life is sacred and that anything to do with contraception is interfering with nature. However, there is another school of thought that says that just like the Almighty God gave us trees, plants and water to take dominion over, we can surely use that God-given knowledge to better our lives while here on earth. Therefore, the first school of thought will, indeed, do everything possible to discredit the other, hence part of this conspiracy theory surrounding reproductive health. Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise that the duty of the Government and the Ministry of Health, in particular, is to provide all the information, choices and options that our people can take at the family level so that the Government's policies are formulated through them. Depo-Provera is also being used in the United States of America. Now, we have not checked when this was started, but that is in the past. Therefore, we will continue to provide accurate information arising from science so that our people can make informed choices (ibid).

While the Health Minister expressed confidence that the product was safe because it was also being used in the USA, a female MP, Mrs Kapata, finally engaged in the discussion, raising concerns (as if she was not convinced by the Minister's reassurance that the drug did not contain HIV) about the health status of the women already pre-exposed to Depo-Provera. She asked, "Mr Speaker if the Ministry is caring, it would immediately call all the women ….Sir, will the Ministry properly screen all the women who have received Depo-Provera so that they ascertain whether they are HIV positive or not?" (ibid).

The Minister of Health responded by stating that;

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let me [re-emphasise] for her benefit. The confirmatory test for the presence of HIV particles has consistently revealed that there are no HIV particles in Depo-Provera. Therefore, I do not see the reason we should call all the women who have been on Depo-Provera to be tested for HIV because there is no evidence of the HIV in Depo-Provera (ibid).

Despite the Health Minister's efforts to reassure the house of the safeness of the drug, there was further scepticism expressed by another female MP, Mrs Musokotwane, representing the Katombola constituency;

Mr Speaker, the hon. Minister has made it very clear that there is no HIV in Depo-Provera. However, has the Ministry gone further in the tests to ensure that there is no chemical in this product that might bring another complicated disease in these women other than HIV? (ibid).

To take the discussion further, Mr Chanda, the MP representative for Kankoyo, added;

Mr Speaker, the concerns of the people over the issue, are very high, bearing in mind that there was a case in Libya where innocent children were infected. What is your Ministry doing to win the people's confidence that there is no HIV in this drug? (ibid)

Another female MP for the Munali constituency, expressing further suspicion, asked;

Mr Speaker, I would like the hon. Minister to assure women who have been affected by this drug. A statement was made by the United States of America Ambassador, who is a woman. Is the Ministry thinking of injecting her with this quarantined drug to prove to women that it is fine? (ibid)

This session ended with the Minister of Health repeating and re-emphasising that the drug was exported to the whole world, not only Zambia and that he was very sure it was safe. While making these claims, at the same time he maintained that the drug was undergoing further investigation and that the final results would be shared with the house and the drug would be released back to the public within the shortest possible period. This sets the scene for the perceptions against modern family planning methods in Zambia. It gives a general overview of the doubts and scepticism around the uptake of western forms of family planning.

In 2011 Mr Simbao, Minister of Health, encouraged and assured the nation that the Ministry was ready for more childbearing.

Uganda, the President, has advised the people in that country to have as many children as possible as long as they are well-spaced, the reason being that we are too few to start talking about limiting the number of children that one woman can have. It would, therefore, be good for our people to understand that the Ministry of Health is ready to deliver their children only at the right time (National Assembly of Zambia, 2011).

Barriers, Challenges and Limitations in the implementation of Family Planning services

On the matter of adolescent sexual reproductive health, the then Deputy Minister of Health reported that "youth-friendly services have been revamped under the new adolescent health strategic plan. This plan also addresses the issue of early marriages, family planning and condom programming"(National Assembly of Zambia, 2011).

However, in a motion to second the uptake of family planning services, Mr Musonda- Kapiri Mposhi MP expressed concerns about the problem of health workers failing to implement the policy.

Sir, your Committee [committee on health, community development and social services] is dismayed at the reported unprofessional conduct of some health workers towards the youth and unmarried women who seek family planning services. The youth and unmarried women are sometimes stigmatised and given misleading information on family planning. To stop this unprofessional conduct, your Committee recommends that the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health and the Ministry of Health should train and retrain health workers regarding the handling of the affected clients. The training should emphasise the clients' right to information on family planning (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

Even though they may be trained to observe the client's rights, discretionary action is an inevitable characteristic among frontline workers (Zulu et al., 2019). The resistance to the above-mentioned unprofessional conduct is very much linked to societal norms, such that health workers are not to separate their values and beliefs from their profession. Another MP pointed out further challenges in family planning uptake relating to religious and social norms.

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Family planning has been talked about for a long time in the Republic of Zambia. However, the environment we live in has made it very difficult for this particular aspect of health to be implemented. Your Committee's report has talked about cultural and religious values, which have been an impediment in the implementation of family planning programmes. _____ I want to talk about the effects of some of these contraceptives and implants. There is a belief out there amongst our people, especially those that I represent in Lupososhi Constituency, that these contraceptives have effects to the extent that even when somebody stops taking them, she cannot conceive. The other effect is that they bring about conflicts amongst individuals because they begin accusing old people of having bewitched them when they start failing to have children. These things are real in rural areas. (Mr Bwalya, Lupososhi (MP) National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a)

The MP further stated that;

Mr Speaker, indeed, there are different methods that are used to practise family planning. Some of them are called traditional methods. My people in Lupososhi Constituency will tell you that they have nothing to do with the modern style of family planning. They would rather use traditional ways. Therefore, modern family planning methods are very difficult to deal with in rural areas. That is not all. The church, on the other hand, has been at the forefront of discouraging the usage of certain methods. The use of condoms is one method of family planning. This, however, has not been well received by certain circles in the religious sector. Again, it calls for a lot of concerted efforts if this programme has to succeed. _____ The involvement of chiefs will help to break certain traditional barriers that have impeded the implementation of this beautiful programme. Without the chiefs' involvement, it will be very difficult to implement this programme (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

In addition to cultural and religious barriers, because childbearing is highly valued in Zambian society, stigma is singled out as another limitation to family planning. As Mr Bwalya pointed out;

How will the community and society look at a lady who starts using contraceptives on the first day of her marriage and goes for one to two years without a child? These are the thorny issues for some of us who are representing rural areas because cultural values in these places are so entrenched to the extent that when you talk about such issues, you are seen as if you are a witch. Mr Speaker, so, stigma is an issue that we need to look at as we try to come up with ways of reaching out to the rural areas. We need to convince our people that we mean well and that the programme of family planning is workable and is for their good._____ Mr Speaker, this is why I am saying that the sensitisation campaigns require concerted efforts which will draw people from all walks of life. The use of an implant is even worse because you are more or less introducing a foreign substance in your body. The people in rural areas are very sceptical about the use of such items because the benefits have not been properly defined. (ibid).

However, the same speaker expressed mixed feelings about providing family planning services to school-goers (pupils) fearing it would encourage more sexual activity. Thus, there should be clearer guidelines on the age limit for young people to access this service.

Mr Speaker, the other thing related to that is the timing with regard to the use of the family planning methods. We have school girls and boys who are sexually active. To introduce family planning related issues to them calls for a lot of courage and determination. If this programme is not well introduced and planned, it may lead to moral decay amongst the pupils and others who are teenagers. So, I would suggest that as we embark on this well-meaning programme, we need to look at the timing and where this particular programme is being implemented. Mr Speaker, we also need to define the age at which one can use contraceptives in this country. Those in the medical field should be able to determine who should access the contraceptives. It is good to say we want to bring about family planning and so on and so forth, but if we do not define the age, we will end up with *a population that will have no* children to take to Grade 1. So, my appeal to both those that are in leadership in various spheres of life, especially the church, and health practitioners, is to sit down and see how best we can define the age for family planning so that it is clear who should not be allowed to use contraception (ibid).

The MP recommended that the church, the traditional leaders, and the health sector come together to provide guidelines for providing family planning services to the youth. This is what is understood as the "bottom-up" approach in policy studies, similar to what Sabatier (2007) describes as the "Advocacy Coalition Framework" (ACF) and other terms like "policy networks" and "policy communities" (I discuss these in detail

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later). The ACF suggests that actors who share the same beliefs or trust each other (have worked together in the past) form coalitions of actors to influence policy change (Cairney and Sabatier, 2015; Weible and Sabatier, 2018). Thus, ACF insists that the pressure for policy change is rather a result of domestic coalitions than external coercion/influence (Cairney, 2019).

On the contrary, most African governments are pressured into policy implementation because of debt. Thus, in the Zambian context, government policy intervention is mostly externally rather than locally influenced. It becomes very significant to analyse the various factors influencing policy change. It should not be taken for granted that all government policy action is meant for good because the problems are so morally defined. Even though it remains highly vulnerable to external influences and past colonial experience, internal/domestic coalitions have played a significant role in policy change and formulation.

However, it is important to note that each segment or group of actors represents distinct and contrasting views on teen sexual activity. These views have resorted to domestic conflicts, for example, bringing together the church and the MoH creates conflict in that the Christian principle is "no sex before marriage", while the MoH would rather support a more open approach to sexual activity as mandated. Thus, why would the church agree with the provision of family planning services to young people who are not married? The same applies to traditional leaders. Suppose they have been practising traditional family planning methods, which are part of their culture. Why would they encourage the use of modern methods that they are unsure of and uncomfortable using? These conflicting beliefs present a challenge to consensus building. One group has to compromise in order to reach a consensus, which depends on the power dynamics at play. The more powerful group dominates by romanticising their agenda and demonising their opposers to persuade a good following.

Another critical issue that comes out of these debates is the contradictory views on the traditional perceptions of modern contraceptive uptake. The inception of modern contraception in a society where childbearing is part of the culture and a source of family pride certainly seems oppressive and capitalistic. How do you re-orient people's minds to simply switch from their way of doing things to a foreign hyper-capitalist culture of suppressing social life, which they do not even understand. It also becomes important to

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ask who benefits from this kind of agenda and its impact on preserving cultural identity and democratic choice over when and whether to have children. People are not abstract individuals or *homo economicus* but are socially embedded in family and community.

Such complexities should not be overlooked in social constructionist thinking as they make the policy process more complicated. As a state regulator, the government also comes in to control sexuality in the name of population control and better developmental prospects and services to its citizens, but often also to cover up its own failings.

Consider the statements below;

> Mr Speaker, the population is growing every day and, therefore, it calls for all of us, as leaders, regardless of what level of leadership we are at, to work together and see how best we can control our population. On the one hand, in one of the great books, it is written, "Go and multiply and fill the world". However, on the other hand, there are people who are saying no, wait, do not do that. These are contradicting statements. The church will say one thing today, then the ordinary members of the community will also say something different. Some members of the community feel that having many children can be a source of wealth. Family planning is a big issue that we need to deal with as a nation, and the reality on the ground is what I have stated. It is very clear that the people out there are not well educated in as far as family planning programmes are concerned (ibid).

Another MP representing Bweengwa constituency-Mr Hamududu, also emphasised that family planning should be targeted at the youth and be seen as preventative medicine against a social disease and economic problem.

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Sir, family planning is actually a preventative health initiative. You can actually call it preventative medicine. In the long-term, if we invest properly in family planning, we will actually reduce the health care burden that we have in our country. This report has revealed two critical issues. There are poor family planning services in this country to the extent that our people are not easily [accessing] them. To those who can access the family planning services, the uptake is low. These are two critical issues that must be resolved in our country. Mr Speaker, if we are to properly invest in family planning, we must target the young people. The family planning services and, basically, in broad terms, the sexual and reproductive health services must be availed to the young people. Zambia has one of the highest fertility rates not because people want to have more children but because the family planning services are not adequate, and the uptake is not at the required levels for those who have access to them. Sir, the average fertility rate in this country is about six children per woman. That is one of the highest in the world. That is *why, today, you see, Zambia has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world[27]*. We have such a young population because the child spacing, which is practised, is not the recommended one (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

Mr Hamududu also stated that there is less information about family planning now than in the past. The MP claimed that the nation at the household level is unbalanced, not clearly explaining what it meant exactly.

Mr Speaker, as a country, I think we have lost it. In our schools, when I was young, there were a lot of visual images explaining the importance of family planning. Some of the visual images used to have a pendulum in the centre and then food on one side and people on the other. The visual aid was trying to show people that there was need to balance the weight on both sides of the pendulum. This country is not balanced at the household level.

The MP continued;

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[27] In 1960 Zambia's infant mortality was 137 per 1000 live births while in 2020 it was 39. https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/zambia-demographics/. South Africa in 2019 was 27.5.

Sir, together with the International Pregnancy Advisory Services (IPAS), we had a meeting at Radisson Blue Hotel where we invited young people___ We were amazed when we heard what the young people had to say about the issues which we are talking about here. We realised that in this country there is a generation gap. We are trying to whip our children to live in our generation, and yet their generation has moved into a completely different phase. At the meeting I am talking about, the youths said that in our health facilities, there are no friendly corners for young people to access family planning services. When young people go to the hospital and they ask questions to do with their reproductive health, they are accused of being promiscuous. We should realise that we are not dealing with youths in the 20th century. The country must move on. Sir, today the youths use a lot of information communication technologies (ICTs). You cannot tell young people not to talk about certain things when they are reading and hearing about them every day. We must come to terms with the state of affairs today and craft policies that recognise times. What we never talked about sometime back when we were youths is being talked about today.____Sir, as leaders, we must always attune ourselves to the changes that are going on and embrace them. If we do not embrace change, we will continue to face problems of child marriages, high teenage pregnancies and a population that is getting destroyed. Can we quickly attune ourselves to the modern age (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

Another MP, Mr Muntanga (Kalomo Central), expressed contradicting views from

Mr Hamududu on providing family planning services to young people.

Mr Speaker, we have a problem here because we are not able to provide the needed medical services and, therefore, we want to stop people from producing children. We are now talking about providing family planning training to children. It seems as though, first of all, we should allow them to have sex, and then we can tell them how to plan their families. I do not agree with this. This reminds me of a former hon. Minister of Education, the late Mulikita. We asked him, as student leaders, to grant maternity leave to our fellow students who got pregnant. We wanted him to give them maternity leave because we thought that it was a right. However, his answer was: "I agree to give you maternity leave if you first give yourselves sex leave." Mr Speaker, we looked at him and wondered what he was talking about. He meant that we were to stop playing around with sex, and then we would automatically not need maternity leave (Mr Muntanga Kalomo Central-MP, National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a)

Mr Livune, Katombola-MP, agreed with Mr Muntanga's views, adding that;

> Hon. Hamududu was talking about condoms. Now the Igwe, Hon.
> Muntanga, who is on the floor, is talking about sex education.
> Considering that there are children in our midst, are we in order to
> continue talking about condoms and sex? Are we not confusing them
> more by talking about condoms and sex? ___ Children will know that
> we have differing opinions, the children must be told to avoid playing
> around with sex. It is not a box of matches that you can play around
> with to see how it lights things up. Mr Speaker, in my language, we say,
> tente ulapia. That means, be careful, you will be burnt. It does not help
> us to just talk to children about family planning. Why should we do
> that? Have they got married and want to start producing children? I
> agree that we should have health insurance for treatment of diseases
> for all age groups. Mr Speaker, when you were a child, your age mates
> never played around with sex (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

In the same light, Mr Muntanga expressed concern about the lack of disciplining children due to international "human rights" interference. Discipline in the Kaunda era was part of the principles of human rights. It was instituted both at home and in schools. This would ensure that children grow up morally upright under the parents' guidance and discipline.

Most traditional or elderly citizens see the human rights movement as a hindrance to upholding societal moral values. In particular, the strong advocacy for sexual and reproductive rights as human right result in significant backlash effects in the African setting (Tamale, 2011). Ahiberg and Kulane (2011, p. 324) add that;

> reproductive health and rights, and specifically women's bodies have
> become the site of the battle between the powerful moralist agents
> and people who advocate a human rights approach to public health.

This statement indicates an elusive and destructive agenda behind those who stand to advocate for these so-called "human rights" to undermine parental and family authority and this is often overlooked.

The statement below by an MP presents an example of how difficult it is to discipline children in the African context because of the monopolised way of defining human rights.

> Sir, the only thing that is of concern is the fibre of our society. It must be checked. Why should we allow our children to behave in the manner they are behaving? This brings me to a certain situation that happened in the village. I was confronted by people over the issue of corporal punishment who were saying that we in this House, stopped it in schools.____Sir, they said that they now fear to discipline the children because they can be reported to the police. This is what is happening in this era where the call for human rights has taken centre stage, much to the detriment of the health of our children (Mr Muntanga Kalomo Central- MP, National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a.

In the statements above, a few things can be observed. There is a similar pattern in how all the MPs present their arguments, and each of them uses personal stories to fortify their arguments and make them more convincing. The MPs also use riddles and metaphoric language to expound their arguments to make them more appealing. It is worth noting that family planning is connected to many aspects of society in the eyes of these MPs, which makes it a complex issue to deal with. One of the complexities is the persistent divide between embracing globalisation, "modernity", and science in Zambia's realities and sticking to the traditional way of doing things or finding a middle road.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The expressions above present mixed messages and contrasting discourses about the desirability and feasibility of family planning and making services accessible and available to young people. Despite the MOH's efforts to make family planning services accessible to young people, there are contrary expressions about it from other powerful segments of society as well as within the government itself. This simply shows that there are more policy clashes about "what is the problem" and policy logjams than the suggested cohesive multi-sectoral policy intervention.

The Ministry of General Education (MoGE) seems to disagree with pupils accessing family planning services. A representative of the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) raised concerns about reported high contraceptive use among pupils in Zambia's Chienge district (ZANIS, 2020). DEBS said that the mission of the MoGE is abstinence from sex for all pupils, not promoting contraception uptake. This contradicts the MOH's agenda to make sexual reproductive health services accessible to the youth and

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adolescents without stigma and discrimination. In response, the Chienge District Health Office representative admitted attending to pupils as "clients" (like any other person) visiting the facility to seek family planning services, implying they did not discriminate or segregate against whoever sought the services. It was stated;

> as Ministry of Health, the issue is that we do not just dish out contraceptive to everyone, but we carry out a vigorous process that involves counselling, explaining the side effects of the contraceptives, checking the marital status of a client, as well as the number of children the woman has (ZANIS, 2020).

Further condemnation of contraception distribution among teenagers was expressed by the chieftainess of the Namwanga people of Zambia. She said;

> I have noticed that girls, especially those who got pregnant but went back to school after delivery, are put on contraceptives to prevent them from conceiving again. I feel this is just promoting immorality (Lusaka Times, 2017a).

Thus, a concern was raised with such mixed messages in a report compiled by a youth organisation called RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT.

> Young people are confused by safe sex messages – the media and various organisations give out lots of different messages in terms of what they can do to protect themselves when engaging in sexual intercourse (Nyimbili, 2012, p. 29).

These differing opinions and responses to teen sexual behaviour within the government ministries are vital signs of policy incoherencies. The incoherence can be seen as a result of several factors embracing external ideas and concepts that are not consistent with the local setting.

While providing sexual reproductive health services to young people is the solution to addressing teen pregnancy for the MOE, the MoGE seeks to use the CSE tool to solve the problem. CSE focuses on providing more knowledge and information to help teenagers make informed choices about sexual activity in order to prevent/avoid teen pregnancy. This has been implemented through another globally driven agenda.

MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION: GIRL CHILD EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

The Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education (PAGE) was initiated just before Kaunda lost the election in 1991. The girl-child education campaign in Zambia picked up momentum again in 1996.

The Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP, 1998-2002) intended to improve access to basic education for Grades 1-7. Alongside that, in March 2000, the Government formulated the National Gender Policy. Under the 50-50 enrolment policy schools by law had to enrol equal numbers of girls and boys in Grades 1, 8 and 10, and co-education public schools and colleges were created, as was the start of the re-entry policy (Mumba, 2002). There was also a deep class divide since sixty-two per cent of girls in the highest wealth quintile attended secondary school, compared with a mere 10% of those in the lowest wealth quintile. Boys follow a similar trajectory (73% in the highest quintile and 13% in the lowest) (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018).

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION (CSE) FOR SCHOOLS

CSE landed in Zambia as an outcome of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Before CSE, the education curriculum did not have any subjects about "sex education" in school. However, learners were introduced to the reproductive health system in a secondary school in biology classes. It is also possible that school clubs such as the anti-Aids club would provide sex education. That was the closest to sex education before CSE. The absence of sex education in the education curriculum develops from the backdrop of sex discussion being considered taboo in the Zambian traditional system. In traditional society, sex education is taught only during an initiation ceremony when a child reaches puberty.

The onset of CSE began in 2011 when the Minister of Education amended the education curriculum to add CSE for grades 5-12. CSE was largely funded and run by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the Sida-funded three-year project (2013-2018). Under this project, the government as an implementing partner was expected to reach 9,000 government schools targeting learners from grades 5-12 and 60,000 teachers (UNFPA, 2017).

CSE is described as;

> a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to: realise their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives (Wekesah et al., 2019, p. 2).

The CSE covers various topics from culture and societal values and attitudes, relationships and skills to human rights, sexual behaviour and reproductive health (UNFPA, 2017). The CSE outlines five objectives (UNESCO, 2016, pp. 6–7);

- Strengthen the quality, delivery and effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) curricula to ensure that they are evidence-based, gender transformative, age and *culturally appropriate*.

- Ensure access to quality and age-appropriate SRH information and health services for adolescents and young people, including young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) and those with disabilities in supported project sites.

- Strengthen Zambia's ability to protect children against sexual violence and harassment in school settings.

- Improve community engagement in young people's access to CSE and SRH services.

- Improve research and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) around SRH for young people to enhance the evidence base for planning and implementation of programmes.

In 2017, the CSE aimed to provide school-going children with education/resources on sexuality and incorporate sex education into the school curriculum and also provide a CSE manual for non-learners (UNFPA, 2017).

CSE is not taught as a single subject but incorporated into different subjects like; science, biology, religious education, civic education, home economics and social studies. It is reported that the rolling out and implantation of CSE has been "successful". According to the UNFPA (2017) report, 97,184 schools implement CSE. It is also estimated that 1,346,260 (77% of the set target) learners from grades 5-12 are taught CSE (UNESCO, 2016).

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The UNFPA (2017) report further highlights a section on "How Comprehensive Sexuality Education is Changing Lives in Zambia". A quote from a 13-year-old girl states;

> I have seen girls become pregnant, become victims of violence and become HIV-positive, and I don't want to become one of those girls____I'am happy they have taught us in school how we girls can protect ourselves (UNFPA, 2017, p. 13).

One headteacher said, "for a long time, learners have been hungry for information that is now being delivered through comprehensive sexuality education in school" (UNFPA, 2017, p. 13). Another teacher from Twalumba Primary School in Lusaka said, "we see critical thinking, confidence, assertiveness, communication, respect for others and responsible sexual behaviours" (UNFPA, 2017, p. 13).

However, CSE has not been implemented without challenges and opposition. Different views have been expressed on CSE implementation from various segments of society, including the church and traditional leaders. Cultural barriers have been cited most as a hindrance to the implantation of CSE, as speaking about sex in the open, in Zambia and most African cultures are considered a taboo (Khau, 2007; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016; United Nations Zambia, UNFPA and Population Council, 2017; Wekesah et al., 2019).

Some studies show that discussions or information on sex safe practices are avoided. It appears to be more appropriate to teach the abstinence message (United Nations Zambia, UNFPA and the Population Council, 2017). Moreover, despite the training of teachers on CSE, a study conducted in 2019 revealed that teachers exercise discretion on what information to give to the pupils based on personal judgement, convictions and belief systems (Zulu et al., 2019). Zulu et al. (2019, p. 7-8) state that;

some of the features of work settings that shaped decision-making among teachers were sociocultural factors. These factors included the incompatibility of CSE with the local culture and religious ideals. For example, while the CSE framework required teachers to discuss different ways of preventing pregnancy, religious and cultural values expected teachers only to focus on abstinence. Such incompatibility created teacher-parent role dilemmas in the classroom setting. Teachers tended to see themselves in a parental role with the obligation to shape their pupils into responsible or morally upright adults. Abstinence was a key message in this regard.

For a nation like Zambia founded upon Christian values, most parents, teachers or politicians tend to generally assume that no adolescent/young person should be sexually active, overlooking the reality that some young people are already sexually active. Everyone is simply placed in the "not sexually active" category and therefore expected to abstain from sexual activity until marriage.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES II

The contradictions explained above are also evident in the quotes presented below. The quotes emphasise that young people need to be equipped with information/ education, culture is not static, and the nation should adapt to the changing environment.

> The lack of education on sexuality for young people means that they are not being guided properly. The Ministry of General Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, during a meeting with some donors, made assurances that it would introduce comprehensive sexuality education in our schools. That must be done. Let the young people understand their bodies, especially the girls, so that they are not abused. Sir, young people must be empowered with the tools to be in control of their own bodies, and family planning is one such tool. Education on sexuality must go down to the schools. This generational gap must be closed and services provided. Sir, young people want to have their youth-friendly corners in all our health facilities where they can get comprehensive information. Information empowers them to make decisions. Do you think that the 15,000 school-going children falling pregnant every year want it that way? No. It is because they were not armed with information. Therefore, we need to empower the young people to be in control (Mr Hamududu Bweengwa-MP, National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

Mr Hamududu went on to further state that;

> Sir, as a result of a very uneducated population in our rural areas, even if the government provided family planning services, their uptake would be very low. So, education, as people have said, is the best contraceptive. Let the girl child and the boy child be kept in school until they are empowered to make the right choices. Today, we have school drop-outs at as early as Grade 5 level. Do you think that if you provided family planning services in your clinics, they [could] take them? They cannot because they do not have the aptitude to understand them (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014a).

Mr Hamududu seemed very passionate about embracing modernity and forgetting about the past;

> Culture is not static. A long time ago, our grandparents used to walk with just a skin here and a skin there, and it was normal. Today, we must wear clothes. Sir, as leaders, we must always attune ourselves to the changes that are going on and embrace them. If we do not embrace change, we will continue to face problems of child marriages, high teenage pregnancies and a population that is getting destroyed. Can we quickly attune ourselves to the modern age.____We must realise that now we are dealing with a different generation. Young people today are facing a lot of pressure. That time, my mother and father could not talk about these issues, but today, I have to talk about them with my daughters because times have changed. For example, there was no internet that time. Today, you just open your internet, and a picture comes up___ pictures of naked men or women are readily available. Let us begin to discuss these issues because our children are being challenged and must be guided (Ibid).[28]

Despite the expressions to support CSE, there has been more controversy than agreement in its conception and implementation. Yet again, conflict within the government is present on this matter. In early 2018, Zambia's Minister of General Education pointed out that CSE was the key to the fight against teen pregnancy and child marriage. He mentioned that the CSE contained information considered age-appropriate, culturally sensitive and legally binding (Lusaka Times, 2018).

Ironically, the Minister of National Guidance and Religious Affairs from the same government strongly opposed implementing CSE in schools. She said, "Zambia is a

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[28] The influence of media might be overstated. The ZDHS 2018 noted regarding "Exposure to mass media: Only 5% of women and 13% of men have access to three specified types of mass media (newspaper, television, and radio) on a weekly basis. Internet use: Overall, 12% of women and 26% of men age 15-49 have used the internet in the past 12 months". This can be seen in the context where only 8% of rural homes have electricity.

Christian nation anchored on Christian values, so we have to protect our Christian heritage" (Lusaka Times, 2020c).

The Orwellian named The Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) was created in 2016 by President Edgar Lungu, although this Ministry also existed during the Kaunda era (the 1970s-1980s) as the Ministry of National Guidance to facilitate the implementation of humanism. When President Lungu re-created it, the religion part was added following Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation. A female, Reverend Sumaili (from a Pentecostal church), was appointed to head this Ministry with the mandate to promote national values conforming to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation for social transformation and sustainable development (MNGRA, 2015).

Reverend Sumaili has spoken out on many platforms on issues that go against Christian values. She has expressed strong condemnation of sexual immorality among the youth and opposed the CSE, the rejection of sex dolls[29] and panty-less dancers, corrupting national morals. In addressing the youth during the 2018 National Day of Prayer, the Minister stated, "There are so many illicit activities happening in the country involving youths. This is the reason why we are calling upon them to come in large numbers and be part of the day of blessings"(Zulu, 2018).

On the issue of the panty-less dancer, the Minister discharged power to deny entry into the country of a South African-based entertainer (Zodwa Wabantu) due to her "unchristian" performance style. In an interview, the minister stated that;

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[29] The Rev. advised men to stay away from sex dolls and look to God to overcome the temptation but one person opposed this view, saying "I would order a sex doll without hesitation if I had a chance because there are so many advantages of owning one, especially in this day of sexually transmitted infections. Firstly, I am assured of a disease-free relationship because a sex doll will not cheat on me. They are not materialistic and will forever remain faithful. I also do not have to worry about monthly periods and cramps coupled with irritability and mood swings that come with dating a normal woman.____ government is now violating our privacy as citizens. No one should detect what I do in the privacy of my own house, let alone my bedroom. I should be allowed to import and possess a sex doll if I want without fear of being arrested" (Chisunka, 2018).

the promoter has not applied for the said licence, and as you may be aware, any foreign artiste who wants to perform in Zambia are supposed to be cleared at least three months before the date of performance, and in any case, Zambia being a Christian Nation upholds Christian values of morality and ethics and human dignity and in any case, it's not in the interest of the nation to have an artiste who performs without an underwear (Lusakatimes, 2018b).

This exercise of power and influence clearly shows how much authority is not only bestowed upon the ministry but also on the minister as a religious person/reverend. It is, however, questionable that she can execute decisions on matters of immigration, but in this case, the basis was protecting the nation from acts that perpetuate sexual immorality. This is a typical example of the use of Christianity as a tool for state social control.

Speaking further on the matter of the CSE, the Reverend Minister said that Zambia should have nothing to do with it. She stated that;

CSE sharply differs from ordinary sexual education that has been taught in Zambian schools since the 70s, as it promotes values about gender identities, sexual orientation, and reproductive health rights alien to Zambia"(Lusaka Times, 2020c).

The minister has gathered support from the church/clergy and some traditional leaders who have expressed objections to the CSE implementation. (This is discussed more in chapter ten).

Notably, Rev Sumaili takes up two roles - one as clergy and the other as a politician. It appears the government ministry is run similarly to a church ministry. The Rev. Minister was reported in the newspaper praying for a boy inflicted with needles, backed by the EFZ (Siame, 2018). It then becomes difficult to distinguish where her duties as a clergy end and the point where the politics begin. This creates blurred lines in how the Ministry fits into the government's overall political goals. It brings into question the politics of the nation's "Christianisation" agenda.

Despite implementing CSE, Zambia presents and maintains a good picture on the global scene, cooperating with international/ funding organisations. Yet, there is no consensus about the benefits of implementing CSE within the government and other key stakeholders. Such are the dynamics the Zambian government finds itself facing with policies that are not aligned and in perpetual conflict with the Zambian value system.

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Moreover, since the commencement of the CSE project in 2013, there seems to be no documented evaluation of the CSE by MoGE, which is an implementing partner. Most of the reports are done by UNFPA and UNESCO (UNESCO, 2016; UNFPA, 2017; United Nations Zambia, UNFPA and Population Council, 2017).

MINISTRY OF GENDER: NATIONAL STRATEGY ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA 2016-2021

With teen pregnancy and child marriage declared a national crisis in Zambia, the Ministry of Gender (MOG) found itself at the forefront in spearheading a multi-sectoral approach to eliminating child marriage in Zambia. With other stakeholders and partners, the Ministry developed a national document (NSECMZ, 2016-2021) designed to implement the total elimination of child marriage and prevention of teen pregnancy countrywide.

The Ministry of Gender was formed as a government ministry only in 2012. What existed before was the Gender in Development Division (GIDD) under the Cabinet office. The merging of GIDD and the Department of Child Development under the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health formed the Ministry of Gender. Thus, the Ministry's portfolio function was to coordinate and implement the National gender policy, the Matrimonial Causes Act and the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011 (Ministry of Gender, 2021). More women entered senior government positions. The figure below shows an increase in women's participation between 2013 and 2016. In addition, 2015 saw Zambia's first female vice president - Inonge Wina (former Minister of Gender), under the Lungu presidency.

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Figure 5: Women in ministerial positions 2007-2019

Source: https://tradingeconomics.com/zambia/proportion-of-women-in-ministerial-level-positions-percent-wb-data.html

In 2015, Prof Nkandu Luo - believed to be the first female professor in Zambia - microbiologist, politician and vocal gender activist, was appointed as minister, then called the Ministry of Gender and Child Development. The NSECMZ (2016-2021) was developed during her term and implemented through a multi-sectoral approach in which different ministries and key stakeholders campaigned and raised awareness of the "dangers" of child marriages, mainly targeted at the rural community. However, it is unclear how the Ministry of Gender won the responsibility to champion the fight against child marriage and teen pregnancy when it is not a ministry directly involved in youth development or health.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Child Development have direct involvement in youth affairs. However, the Ministry of Gender carried the plan forward. In addition, the Minister was very proactive in parliament and the media.

The NSECMZ (2016-2021) runs under the vision of "A Zambia free from child marriage by 2030" (Ministry of Gender, 2016, p.20). The target is to reduce child marriage by 40 per cent, teenage pregnancies by 40 per cent, age at first sex for both boys and girls by 50 per cent by 2020 (Ministry of Gender, 2016).

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The objectives of the strategy (Ministry of Gender, 2016, p. 8) are as follows;

    i. To strengthen multi-sectoral responses in order to reduce children's vulnerability to marriage;

    ii. To facilitate the development and review of policies and legislation in order to ensure consistent interpretation and application of child-related interventions;

    iii. To facilitate positive change in prevailing negative attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and practices in order to reduce the incidence of child marriage;

    iv. To facilitate the provision of child-sensitive services in order to reduce children's vulnerability to child marriage; and

    v. To effectively mobilise financial resources in order to enable the implementation of programmes aimed at reducing children's vulnerability to marriage.

As noted earlier, the ICPD Programme of Action called for the elimination of all forms of gender inequality against women and children and ensuring sexual reproductive rights are met (United Nations, 1995). The ICPD specifically stipulated that;

countries should create a socio-economic environment conducive to the elimination of all child marriages and other unions as a matter of urgency and should discourage early marriage. The social responsibilities that marriage entails should be reinforced in countries' educational programmes. Governments should take action to eliminate discrimination against young pregnant women (United Nations, 1995, p. 34).

To this effect, governments were instructed to enforce and stiffen marriage laws in terms of the age deemed appropriate for marriage. According to the report;

governments should strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. In addition, Governments should strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age at marriage and should raise the minimum age at marriage where necessary (United Nations, 1995, p. 26).

In compliance with the ICPD-prescribed guidelines, the African Union (AU) set out an agenda to wipe out child marriage in Africa through a "Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa: Call to Action" 2014-2017 (African Union, 2013). The then AU chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, stated, "We must do away with child marriage.

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Girls who end up as brides at a tender age are coerced into having children while they are children themselves" (African Union, 2013, p. 1). Many Africa countries have launched this campaign by developing similar strategic plans. These countries include Zimbabwe, Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia, and DR Congo (Girls Not Brides, 2015; UNICEF, 2019). Thus, there is a colossal splurge all over Africa in which governments appear to be under a massive amount of pressure to meet impracticable targets.

Zambia is one of the countries said to have made significant progress in this campaign. According to the ministerial statement presented in parliament by the then Minister of Gender;

> Zambia has made tremendous progress in ending child marriage. The campaign to end child marriage was launched in Lwangeni Village in Chipata on 13th April 2013. This campaign placed Their Royal Highnesses at the helm of the National Child Marriage Agenda. Furthermore, Zambia was host to the National Symposium on Ending Child Marriage that brought together local and international leaders to share experiences and insights on ending child marriage (National Assembly of Zambia, 2014b).

She further reported that her Ministry had secured funds and support to end child marriage in Zambia.

> My Ministry is currently hosting the secretariat for the consortium of ten ministries, including the ministries of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Health, Community Development, Mother and Child Health, Justice, Home Affairs, Gender and Child Development, Youth and Sport, Labour and Social Security, and Local Government and Housing. The symposium attracted a lot of funding for the Campaign against Child Marriage. Canada pledged US$1.7 million; the United States (US) pledged US$1 million, and the United Kingdom (UK) pledged over £600,000 (National Assembly of Zambia, 2016).

Due to Zambia's achievements[30] in implementing the national strategy, it gained high status as a model for other countries and hosted the first-ever summit on ending child marriage in Africa[31]in 2015. Prof Luo stated;

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[30] It is not clear what these achievements are based on or measured against.
[31] The summit was attended by 1100 delegates including first ladies from some African countries, civil society groups and NGOs, religious groups and funding agencies, youth and child marriage survivors, and ministers of child and youth from different countries among others.

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Zambia is now the model of all African countries and the world over with regard to its agenda on child marriage. ____The presence of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in this country and Princess Mabel van Oranje was for them to learn how ten ministries could get together, in partnership with the civil society, private sector and co-operating partners to put up a robust campaign against child marriage. To this effect, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have chosen Zambia as one of the countries to be supported (National Assembly of Zambia, 2016).

Thus, it appears that the implementation of the NSECMZ and the hosting of the summit was a significant milestone for Zambia in achieving the elimination of child marriage. However, there are some challenges that this kind of strategy poses. Three things need thorough re-examination as far as the implementation of this strategy is concerned.

Firstly, the strategic vision is to eliminate child marriages by 2030. The vision itself appears to be unrealistic and unattainable given that child marriage is not a new "pandemic" or "disease" that can be easily eradicated but an issue that has pre-existed and is deep-rooted in complex factors. It carries a history, context and meaning different to every society. Childbearing is a reoccurring phenomenon and cannot be easily eradicated, and there is certainly no guaranteed way of controlling individual social behaviour. Here it becomes critical to re-examine how a private issue becomes a public policy concern and what role the government plays in modifying, moderating or controlling individual sexuality, especially in societies that highly value childbearing.

Additionally, whose problem is teen pregnancy or child marriage? The state or the family? If the state/government perceives it as a problem, do the young people also see it the same way? It is essential to note that whoever defines the problem pursues an agenda favourable to them as bounded rationality and the narrative policy framework entails.

Secondly, there is a dual marriage system in Zambia, constitutional and customary law, that prescribe different pre-requisites of marriage for all persons. One of the objectives of the strategic plan is to ensure the harmonisation of laws between the constitutional law of marriage and customary law. Even though the constitution is the supreme law, customary law plays a vital role in preserving the nation's traditional identity. Thus, careful consideration needs to be given to the participation and

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representation of all stakeholders, including native citizens, and not just top-level decision-makers.

The government is using the influence of traditional leaders to inculcate behaviour change in rural settings to eliminate child marriage. However, this responsibility lies not only on traditional leaders but also on both internal and external societal influences. It has to do with how children are socialised and what they are exposed to as well. Moreover, due to cultural diversity, it is important to note and observe the rights of and justice to all citizens without any form of discrimination or forceful striping of inherited customs and traditions in place of externally adopted cultures. The following parliamentary debates show how complicated the issue of modernity versus local tradition is.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY III

African authenticity versus Western modernity

The constitutional versus customary laws of marriage attract contrasting views. Some parliamentarians express concerns about losing their cultural heritage, while others are more open to embracing modernity, although both the constitution and customary law were formulated from British colonial rule.

> Madam Speaker, what we are looking for is the Africanness, and that is why we want to cut off this umbilical cord. Therefore, to achieve that, let us be free to marry, if we wish to, under the customary law. Those who wish can proceed to marry under the English law, but let me remind you that under the English law, if you endeavour to marry more than one wife, you commit an offence called bigamy._____ I do agree that we should continue with the current situation where we enjoy a dual system of marriage, that is, the customary and the English law, because, as Africans, we are potentially polygamous (Mr Chilembo Chama-MP, National Assembly of Zambia, 2007).

Mr Chilembo further stated;

Even where I come from, the Nsengas and Tumbukas, polygamy is practised and is a source of pride, supported not only by men but also women. It is believed that if you do not marry more than one wife, some will remain unmarried, thereby denying them the right to conjugal rights and so on. For those who do not want to be governed by this law, the only escape is that, please, do not marry because the cause of divorce is marriage. If you marry, you are already, potentially, a client under this law. You may one day wish to have these provisions help you. However, in this country, we seem to be undecided in as far as marriage is concerned. There is still a mix between customary law and English law. If you are marrying under the Act, why do you want me to pay dowry? People pay dowry and take part in Matebeto and practice other traditions and thereafter, wear a white dress as a Christian, mixing the two laws. Can we choose one law? (National Assembly of Zambia, 2007).

Mr Mabenga, MP of Mulobezi constituency, expressed his support for customary law but also seemed to agree with the English law.

What I would also like to say is that the Customary Law must continue. If we say that the Customary Law should not continue, then we should start contemplating doing away with traditional leadership, norms and values. We must do away with them and go with the foreign way [of] doing things, but that cannot work. The main problem we have in this country is that we are copying things that are alien to us, and because they are alien, we are seeing a lot of problems affecting our young ones. It is important that we understand the role of Customary Law in our lives. I do not refute the fact that the English way is important because we have already started with English Law. It is actually working very well in marriages at the moment, and so, it can play its role. Those who want to go with that can go ahead. However, the Customary Law must be kept to ensure that our identity as Africans is seen (National Assembly of Zambia, 2007).

The views expressed above show the complexity of harmonising what is referred to as English law and traditional law. Even though culture may not be static, traditions and customs change over a long period, but some practices still prevail.

Thirdly, there appears to be a case of policy over reaction. Policy over reaction may often occur in cases where hot topics get staged with little or insufficient selected evidence or even outdated statistics to exaggerate an issue or problem. The problem of teen pregnancy has been problematised without a deep understanding of the nature of the problem, its prevalence and what informs it.

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These combined values of traditional customs, colonial/Christianity culture, and humanism still influence present-day public policies such that some of the modern ideas and approaches to social problems come into conflict with these national values. For example, the conflicts presented in clashes on the approaches to tackle teen pregnancies include abstinence before marriage versus safe sex practices and traditional sex education versus modern comprehensive sex education.

Zambians differentiate its culture from other African nations' cultures in terms of its national values, where Christianity has been constitutionally enacted and takes a more important role in the Zambian way of life and the influence on public problem-solving than in other countries. Birkland (2011, p. 189) points out that depending on the historical and structural context of a country, "problems are likely to be constructed differently, and different policies are the result". Recently, due to external influence and pressure, Zambia finds itself trapped in a society embedded in various constructs resulting in conflicting policy solutions to social problems.

PROBLEM DEFINITION, WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY AND ACTORS/GROUPS

The social construction perspective describes different meanings to social reality. Similarly, problems can be defined and analysed through different lenses and depicted differently (Birkland,2011). This depends on the;

> goals of the proponent of the particular depiction of a problem and the nature of goals of the proponent of the particular depiction of a problem and the nature of the problem and the political debate (Birkland, 2011, p. 188).

Policy change is largely influenced by the role and influence of different policy "actors" in both an institutional and historical context. The change in government and political ideology (see chapter six) changes how we see problems and creates a window of policy change opportunity (borrowed from Kingdon's multiple streams framework, 2011). For example, Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation and president Chiluba's 1991 liberalisation both created a window of opportunity for the manifestation of activities, groups and power dynamics in both the policy and political arenas.

It is particularly important not to underestimate power dynamics in influencing policy intervention. Birkland (2011, p. 188) states that;

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groups will work very hard to prove that a problem is a problem and that a solution can be found. Merely stating a problem is not enough: one must persuade others that the problem is real or that the problem being cited is the real problem.

In the Zambian case, powerful groups are defined by religion. Thus, Christianity is the tool that determines who is powerful and less powerful. The groups (including political parties) aligned to Christian values and principles appear more powerful and make non-Christian groups less powerful. For example, the Christian declaration gave less powerful groups like the indigenous groups (traditionalists) to express their views on traditional practices condemned as evil. As such, these groups having shared/common beliefs (Christianity) become dominant actors in public policy and form a policy monopoly, a concentrated group of the most important actors dominating the policy domain (Sabatier, 2007; Birkland, 2011).

These actors use their similar/common beliefs to qualify problems as problems and provide the best solutions based on their shared values or dominant constructs. If we follow the political structural elements (in chapter six) in the Zambian scenario, I argue that ideas are more important than actors in forming and solidifying dominant constructs. Thus, the ideas that actors hold make them important actors in public policy.

For a problem to gain popularity, using the devil-Angle shift (Shanahan et al., 2017), there is increased negative emphasis on a problem, leading to a convincing call, making policy change inevitable (Birkland, 2011).

> Policy communities use agreed-upon symbols to construct their visions of problems, causation, and solutions. As long as these images and symbols are maintained throughout society, or remain largely invisible and unquestioned, agenda access for groups that do not share these images is likely to be difficult; change is less likely until the less powerful group's construction of the problem becomes more prevalent. If alternative selection is key to the projection of political power, an important corollary is that powerful groups retain power by working to keep the public and out-groups unaware of underlying problems, alternative constructions of problems, or alternatives to their resolution (Birkland, 2011, p. 177).

Indicators are very useful in directing policy intervention but can also be used in a very selective manner in order to back up a problem. This closely relates to the concept of bound rationality discussed in chapter three.

> Changes in indicators are usually changes in statistics about a problem;
> if data collected by various agencies and interests indicate that things
> are getting worse, the issue will gain considerable attention (Birkland,
> 2011, p. 179)

It becomes important to study how actors use indicators to advance their policy ideas and agendas, as "groups will often selectively use official statistics to suggest that problems exist while ignoring other indicators that may suggest otherwise" (Birkland, 2011, p. 179). However, in the Zambia case (as discussed above), statistics are used even if they do not show the problem worsening but decreasing. The decrease is then attributed to the government's activities in attempting to solve the defined problem even when no scientific evidence is linked to government policy intervention.

The magnitude of the problem is also backed up using events (especially negative ones) that specifically target a particular selected group (this is discussed further in the next chapter). These are referred to as focusing events. Focusing events tend to pay attention to significant issues that attract moral panic, especially those reported by the media (Birkland, 2011).

> Focusing events can lead groups, government leaders, policy
> entrepreneurs, the news media, or members of the public to pay
> attention to new problems or pay greater attention to existing but
> dormant (in terms of their standing on the agenda) problems, and
> potentially, can lead to a search for solutions in the wake of perceived
> policy failure (Birkland, 2011, p. 180).

These events most often attract the attention of the general population and the consciousness of the political elite, as well as the international community, thereby gaining massive demand for action from different advocacy groups. Sometimes, what makes the event attractive is not how tragic it appears but how repeated it is in the media. The number of times an issue is referred to and consistently presented in the media plays a huge role in convincing people to believe it is indeed a serious problem that needs solving. Such messages are usually followed by appeals for citizens, families or individuals to work collectively with the government to address them.

> Groups and interests often seek media coverage as a way of expanding the scope of conflict. Media activities can range from holding news conferences to mobilizing thousands of people in protest rallies. These activities are more newsworthy if they address an issue of current concern (Birkland, 2011, p. 187).

However, in most African countries, governments align themselves with issues that make it to the global agenda and seek to address them to fit in with the international community or how other countries are doing it. For example, problems are seen to contain a "perceptual, interpretive element" due to the diverse meanings and ideas about reality (Kingdon, 2011). Herweg, Zahariadis and Zohlnhofer (2018, p. 10) argue that;

> we might come to see a condition that we previously perceived as acceptable as a problem once we learn that other countries are doing better in this regard. Or we start seeing a condition in a different context that turns the condition into a problem.

This explains the changing ideas about indigenous culture and traditions. Many African governments, including Zambia, are beginning to question their very heritage and customs that have existed even before colonialism surfaced. They seem to be seeing things in a different context that carries a world view but mostly what is stipulated by the dominant elite international communities and funding organisations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed an overview of three different approaches the government of Zambia uses to tackle and address the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. Three policy approaches are discussed; (i) the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2011-2015, (ii) the Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and (iii) the Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2016-2021. All three policies highlighted have one common element, which is that they are externally driven. Notably, the government seems proud to have been providing a lot of external funding and support towards eliminating child marriages in Zambia. Three arguments can be drawn from this.

Firstly, I argue that the more the Zambian government appears committed to what is dictated by the funding institutions, the more money and support they receive. Despite that, these policies have some objectives that conflict with the Zambian traditional structure and value system as a "Christian nation". For example, the provision of

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adolescent sexual reproductive health services implies access to family planning services, which provides young people with an option to engage in sexual activity against traditional and Christian national values. This position seems to put the government between a rock and a hard place, in that submitting to the modern agenda contradicts the Christian values of the nation. This also forms the basis on which the church and the traditional system build their case for anti-modern sex approaches to preventing teen pregnancy.

Secondly, discussions from this chapter further reveal that the government is divided into its approaches to tackling teen pregnancy and child marriage. Some approaches advocate for sex safe and others complete abstinence from sexual activity for young people not married. This is evidently seen when the Ministry of General Education preaches abstinence for pupils while the Ministry of Health remains mandated to provide family planning services to all, including pupils, thereby sending mixed messages and leaving much room for open interpretation. These mixed messages create room for policy incoherence and potentially threaten successful programme implementation. Moreover, the lack of a clear message for young people leaves little room for guidance on sexual behaviour. It also reveals the consequences of submitting to externally influenced approaches that do not fit into the Zambian context.

Lastly, there are different views, expressions and feelings about embracing the modern methods to teen sexual activity versus the more conservative ones, as seen from the parliamentary debates. On the one hand, there is an acknowledgement that technological change has influenced societal views and norms, including the argument that sexual activity is a reality among young people. On the other hand, there is a strong sense of sticking to the old traditional ways that control teen sexual behaviour as a way of preventing moral decay.

In summary, the chapter shows how policies and strategies tackling teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia are not aligned and are incompatible with the culture and value system.

CHAPTER 8: NON-STATE ACTORS: TRACING DOMINANT CONSTRUCTS, AND NGOs AS THE "MODERN MISSIONARIES"

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to review and analyse selected non-state actors' perceptions and understanding of the teen pregnancy problem agenda in Zambia. I refer to the term "non-state actors/organisations" covering both international and local organisations, faith-based organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This chapter includes data collected from some NGOs involved in adolescent/ teen sexual matters operating in Zambia. The data was gathered via Google Forms-semi-structured questionnaire from the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), the Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council (NGOCC) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). These are just a few of many other organisations involved in advancing the sexual rights of young people in Zambia, but each has a distinctive take on the issue while sharing common assumptions.

In terms of the selection criteria, FAWEZA and NGOCC were selected because of their active involvement in advancing girls' education rights and advocacy against teen pregnancy and child marriage. These are not the only organisations in this domain, the other organisations did not respond when contacted. CCZ[32] and YWCA[33] were selected to represent the role and involvement of the church community in teen sexual matters. The Google Form questionnaire consisted of questions about the "problem" of teen pregnancy and the "ending child marriages agenda", such as What has led to this agenda, and when it started? What are some of the oppositions faced, solutions or suggested ways of eliminating the "problem" and recommended policy actions, according to the NGO narrative in Zambia? This data is supplemented by additional discourses presented in the media on specific subjects.

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[32] Formerly called Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia formed 1945 and became Christian Council of Zambia after independence in 1964. CCZ is part of an international network of interdenominational churches under the World Council of Churches. CCZ is involved in programmes to do with spirituality and youth involvement.

[33] YWCA is also a global NGO network involved in empowerment programmes for women and children.

One of the pertinent ways of discussing non-state actor involvement in societal/public affairs is through the concept of globalisation. This is linked to the emergence of New Public Management (NPM) in Africa in the 1990s, which called for a "reinvention" and downsizing of the public sector to mimic the private sector. The NPM movement advocated for reshaping and building transparent relations between the state and its citizens as well as the international community in the name of good governance (Peters and Pierre, 1998; Mkandawire, 2016). Citizens needed to have a choice and wean themselves off the state. In Zambia, this ideology coincided with the liberalisation of the economy under the MMD government, which paved the way for neo-liberal public sector reforms. Thus, Zambia became open to the global market, resulting in an influx of global networks. The networks were formed by civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, public-private partnerships, NGOs, international organisations and all other forms of non-state actor engagement. This internationalisation agenda drew on local intellectuals and professionals often offering better salaries than the public sector. Thus, the increased engagement and role of non-state actors in adolescent sexual reproductive matters can be seen in the light of "NGOs as the "modern missionaries". This chapter addresses objective two; to examine how the issue is explored by different actors (state and non-state actors), tracing dominant constructs and solutions including their implications.
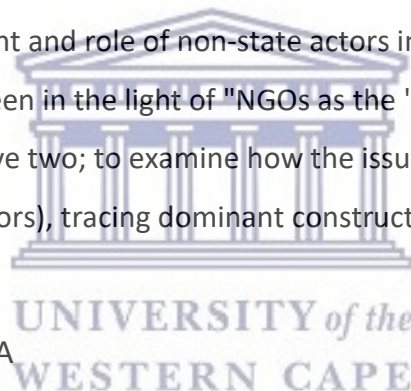
THE NGO-ISATION IN ZAMBIA

The concept of globalisation in Africa is not only viewed in terms of economics but also how Africa has become globally connected through questionable links. These links reside within unequal relations, domination and widespread exclusion (Ferguson, 2006). Most African governments are likely to submit to international agreements that undermine effective policy intervention. As Ferguson (2006, p. 21) states;

> most Africans can hardly feel that they are being dominated by being forced to take on the goods and forms of a homogenising global culture when those goods and forms are, in fact, largely unavailable to them.

A clear example is that Zambians might be told to use condoms, but then the government might not have the budget for free condoms. Thus, it can be argued that this "unavailability" in terms of the policy domain has to do with the one-size-fits-all universal

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requirements that are far-fetched and often not based on reality. Similarly, Adesina (2011, 2020) has observed the blindness of most of the current scholarship on health and social policy to implicit issues around social control. This is partly due to the co-opting of much of the scholarship by bilateral and multilateral donor funding and agendas. This also leads to governments' failure in meeting internationally set targets that do not allow for the diversity of culture and local context.

In the global health space, an example of this is the UN agencies, international research organisations and advocacy groups whose research on teen pregnancy and child marriage has dominated the policy and intellectual space.

USAID is especially powerful in setting the agenda and constructing the problem. (Solo, Luhanga and Wohlfahrt, 2005, p. 8). It identified several factors that have contributed to Zambia's high fertility rate that needs social re-engineering. As spelt out in the National Family Planning Programme (1992–2000), these include; low age at first marriage; low education levels; low socioeconomic status among women; desire for large families; economic rationality of large family size; high levels of infant and child mortality; and low levels of family planning knowledge and use.

The USAID optimistically noted that the modernising agenda was succeeding;

> Several of these factors have changed over the past 10 years,
> contributing to a reduction in the fertility rate. Levels of family planning
> knowledge and use have increased significantly. There have also been
> efforts to increase education levels, as it is widely recognized that
> improving access to education for girls has many positive benefits for
> development, including reducing fertility. An objective of Zambia's draft
> Reproductive Health Strategy was to achieve a lower level of population
> growth by ensuring improved access to 12 years of education for all,
> especially for girls and women (Solo, Luhanga and Wohlfahrt, 2005, p.
> 8)

As critically noted by Bendix and Schultz (2018);

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Today's population politics echo past predictions about the dangers of 'overpopulation'.However, the focus is not solely on global numbers, as in the era of the 'population bomb' but on the supposed too many young people, mainly in parts of Africa and South Asia.___ curbing young women's fertility is a priority for many policy-makers and organizations.____Donor-driven development, as well as strands of environmental activism, have ushered in urgent calls for population reduction to lessen the future impacts of climate change. This occurs in the name of empowering women, uplifting the poor, and protecting the environment. In many cases, the language of social justice or human rights is used to obscure the narrow focus on population reduction (but) continues to stigmatize the poor while states retract from the provision of public services (Bendix, 2018, p.4).

Global networks such as international organisations and NGOs have equally legitimated the reduced role of the state in service provision. They are seen as the new form of government or governing. However, Ferguson states that less of government does not mean the state is weak or has disappeared. Instead, they have "increasingly gotten out of the business of governing" (Ferguson, 2006, p. 39). In analysing "state and non-state actor relations" on governing, Ferguson (2006, p. 93) argues that both parties "operate within a profound transnationalised global context that makes the construed and fictive nature of the vertical topography of power increasingly visible", opening up new ways of research. In other words, as much as NGOs are non-governmental, they are also largely internationalised. This internationalisation affects and often appears in contradiction with the local setting. There is a tendency of these international organisations to push for a homogenised global culture in addressing social problems. The global "elimination of teen pregnancy and child marriage" agenda is a typical example as it does not synchronise with the African setting. In the Zambian case, unlike the invention of missionaries with an evangelical "Christian" mission, the modern missionaries are the NGOs supported by WHO, Zambia is caught up in a conflicted web of issues entangled by the effects of colonialism-mixed British and local customs, and contradictions between "Christianity" and indigenous traditional practices. Thus, Zambia's true identity is deeply lost in this complex web.

Apart from the UN agency bodies, there are many NGOs involved in adolescent sexual and reproductive health, especially targeting young girls/teenagers. These organisations found themselves on the scene after the liberalisation of the economy

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when the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) defeated Kaunda's humanism and one-party era in 1991. Simultaneously, Zambia was declared a Christian nation by the then president, Fredrick Chiluba. This declaration was the doorway to church bodies' involvement in both the national and social affairs of the country. Even though many church bodies existed pre-1991, like the Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ), the Catholic leagues, CCZ and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), there appears to be a meagre record of their policy or national involvement and participation during Kaunda's humanism era.

However, post-1991, as mentioned earlier, saw several NGOs dominating the policy and advocacy domain on teen sexual reproductive rights in Zambia. For example, FAWEZA was formed in 1996 by the then Minister of Education to ensure girls get access to education, while NGOCC was formed much earlier in 1985, following the United Nations World Conference on Women with an agenda to advocate for women's development and gender mainstreaming. Even though it existed in the Kaunda era, seemingly its role became more significant in the 1990s. Both of these organisations have played a major role in advocating for girls' rights and advancement in education, as well as the campaign on ending Child Marriage in Zambia. They played a key role in advocating for the re-entry education policy. For example, FAWEZA retrieved 460 girls back into school in 2019. The girls were also provided with financial support to pay school fees (FAWEZA, 2019).

Following the campaign on ending child marriage in Zambia, in 2016 NGOCC made a submission NGOCC to the president on its position concerning the legal and policy framework for child marriage in Zambia. They wrote;

the Marriage Act establishes the legal age for marriage at 21 years but allows for marriage below this age with consent of an adult. Further, the proposed Marriage Bill of 2015 defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years and gives the legal age for marriage as 18. The Bill in section 16 (1) provides for void marriages which include marriage to and between people of below minimum prescribed age for marriage and the non-consent from both parties in a marriage. These propositions are good in that they will enhance the protection of the child, especially the girl child, from being forced into marriage at a tender age. The marriage Bill in section 49 provides for the recognition of foreign marriages as civil marriages in Zambia. The Bill in section 49 (a) states that a marriage will be considered valid if it is contracted in accordance with the law of a foreign country. This provision by implication means that in an event that a child is married off in another country that does not restrict on the age of marriage, once such a married child comes to Zambia, that marriage will be valid. NGOCC is of the considered view that this provision be deleted from the Bill because if enacted as such, it will be open to abuse (NGOCC, 2016, p. 6).

Furthermore, in 2019, NGOCC, in collaboration with the government, the Ministry of Gender and other partners, held a regional summit on ending child marriage.

Figure 6: Regional Summit on Ending Child Marriage

In another engagement held in Mumbwa (a town in the southern part of Zambia), the Executive Director of NGOCC stated that;

child marriage is a *national crisis*. We need to work together to ensure that we fight child marriage in our country. We even have representatives from the chief…in other areas where we have [been] implementing this program, the chiefs have banned child marriage. We are hoping that with this committee's intervention, we can work towards that. We are not just looking at withdrawing girls from marriages and sending them to school. We are also looking at introducing some empowerment programmes targeting the families where the girls are coming from. We want the committee to continue engaging these families so that parents are involved (Mwanakatwe, 2019).

In response to the comments by the NGOCC director, Mumbwa town council chairperson stated;

We acknowledge that the problem of child marriage is a serious one. Every time you visit the hospitals, especially during important days like when taking Christmas hampers or visiting New Year babies, you will find that over 50 per cent of the mothers are under age. If you find those that are of age, again, you will find that that will be their second or third child. Implying that when they had their first child, they were still under-age (Mwanakatwe, 2019).

In line with retrieving girls from marriage, in 2020 YWCA-Zambia reported having retrieved 18 girls in the Northern Province of Zambia from early marriages, aged between 13 and 16 years (Mupeta, 2020). World Version International-Zambia and Plan International-Zambia have also embarked on similar "activism" to end child marriages in Zambia.

In the following section, I highlight and discuss detailed responses gathered from the selected NGOs' views and perceptions about teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. The data is presented under the following themes; *the perceived view of teen pregnancy and child marriage; how and when the problem become such a serious problem; practices on teen sexuality, motherhood, and marriage during the "humanism era"; NGO influence on reproductive health policy in Zambia; Zambia as a Christian nation and the role of the church in teen sexual activity; opposition to advancing organisational agenda/goals/beliefs; likelihood of achieving aims and agenda; best policy approaches to tackling child marriage and teen pregnancies in Zambia; views combining traditional, Christianity and modernity ideas about young motherhood, teen sexual behaviour and marriage; and key summary points on the debates about teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia and Africa.*

I begin with the trade Union's responses and discussion.

ORGANISED PROFESSIONS: BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS' UNION OF ZAMBIA (BETUZ)

BETUZ is a teacher's union that covers primary and basic education (grades 1-9). It was formed in 1997 and is mandated to promote and advocate teacher's labour matters. The union also works closely with the Ministry of General Education on all education matters, including policy for basic education in Zambia. Below are excerpts from the questionnaire sent to the union's deputy secretary-general to give specific information on the union's stance on teen sexual matters. BETUZ is a key stakeholder in the education sector and contributes to the formulation of education policies. Therefore, it was relevant to understand the union's perspective on this particular subject matter, including implementing the controversial CSE.

The questions asked in this interview were similar to those asked to the other non-state actors presented above but specifically tailored to the Union. They were as follows; *The trade union's perspective on the teen pregnancy and child marriage situation in Zambia; the Union's role in influencing policy, advocacy, collaboration and challenges faced; teacher response to CSE implementation; Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation and its impact on CSE and the re-entry policy; the Union's position on access to sexual reproductive health rights for pupils; and the Union's perspective on the best policy approaches to tackling the teen pregnancy and child marriage problem in Zambia.*

IMPLEMENTATION OF CSE AND INVOLVEMENT OF BETUZ

The information gathered from this questionnaire gives the position and stance of the BETUZ on teen sexual matters. The union maintains the same views as those expressed by the other non-state actors that teen pregnancy and child marriage are serious problems. They stated that *"We have taken up the fight against teen pregnancy as it is detrimental to the welfare and wellbeing of mostly the girl child's education"* (BETUZ, 2020)*. The union also shares the same views with the Ministry of General Education on preventing teen pregnancy by promoting abstinence in schools and teaching good morals.

On the controversial debates about condom use in schools, following other organisations like CHAZ and the National Aids Council (NAC), BETUZ said they are "totally against" providing condoms in schools and other reproductive health services that would encourage sex activities among pupils. This corresponds with their statement against the distribution of condoms in schools reported in the newspaper in 2017 (Lusaka Times, 2017b). They said that condom distribution in schools contradicted the Zambian Christian values promoting abstinence before marriage. It was further pointed out that such an action championed by civil society would dilute societal values with the inception of modernity.

Concerning the union's role in influencing policy or advocacy, they pointed out being involved in campaign activities against teen pregnancies in collaboration with the Education Coalition, and also that teachers have generally accepted implementing CSE in the education curriculum even though some studies (Zulu et al., 2019) still show resistance as the "sex talk" remains a not so public debate/discussion agenda, particularly in Zambia. At the same time, the BETUZ Deputy Secretary-General recommended going back to traditional sex education by stating that "we must get back to old traditional teachings, no sex outside marriage and the teaching done by aunties, grannies". This suggests the value of initiation ceremonies that were the first point of sex education and knowledge upon puberty and in some cases prior to puberty for young girls and boys.

Notably, despite the acceptance of CSE by the teachers, it was pointed out that due to the Christian declaration, some mission schools did not support the re-entry education policy as sex before marriage is not acceptable or allowed. Thus, the role of the church or the Christian declaration was decisive in these cases.

The emphasis was on marriage first before sex, marking marriage as an entry point to sexual activity. As such, the age one engages in sexual activity is determined by marital status, not by how old or young you are. Thus, the "abstinence before marriage" agenda may effectively prevent teen pregnancy or delay sexual debut among young people but not necessarily eliminate child marriage.

Another important point observed by the union is the government's lack of consistency in tackling teen sexual activities. As the respondent states, "while the Ministry of General Education focuses on abstinence, [Ministry of] Health want the young to access reproductive health services" (BETUZ, 2021). This corresponds with discussions

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on the Ministry of Health provision of contraceptive services versus the Ministry of General Education's "abstinence for all pupils" mandate, as highlighted in chapter eight. These contradictions and clashes further complicate policy direction and present unclear messages to the target population.

THE PERCEIVED VIEW OF TEEN PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA (NON-STATE ACTORS' PERSPECTIVE)

Teen pregnancy and child marriage a national crisis

There appears to be a general consensus that teen pregnancy and child marriage constitute a national crisis in Zambia. As one of the NGOs stated, it is a "national crisis" based on the statistics, not an exaggerated or misplaced social construction. National Statistics, they argue, show proof.

> National Statistics show proof. It is true if we go by the number of school children who get pregnant every year. This is also common in communities, especially rural and peri-urban, to find pregnant teenagers. Some Provinces are worse than others, e.g. Eastern province (YWCA, 2020).

The underlying "problem" of teen pregnancy and child marriage is seen to be poverty.

> Poverty mainly and the absence of alternative economic empowerment options. Social influences such as peer pressure, especially in rural areas. Culture also plays a part arising out of girls' teachings during initiation ceremonies by counsellors. Absence of regulated boarding facilities in schools, thereby rendering girls vulnerable to older men luring them with money etc (NGOCC, 2020).

However, the ZDHSs from 1992-2018 show a decline in both teen pregnancy and child marriage rates (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018). A question was posed, if the statistics are going down, can teen pregnancy and child marriage still be considered a serious problem in Zambia? In response to this question, despite the declining prevalence rate, the NGOs agreed that it can still be considered a serious problem. As one NGO pointed out, the statistics are not reliable.

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It is still serious because the statistics are not reliable as they do not include a lot of unreported cases due to facilities being scarce. They mostly capture school dropouts or a few who are able to access health (YWCA, 2020).

Similarly, FAWEZA (2020) said;

it is unfortunate that the decline was only during this [2013/14] period currently, the number is going up, and that is the reason why it still remains a big problem. If this decline was maintained, this was not going to be an issue.

In line with this view, NGOCC's (2020) position was that;

at 31% prevalence, child marriage remains a serious problem in that as much as that number of girls are being kept out of the potential of progressing to productive levels where they can meaningfully participate in various levels of national development. Child marriage has the potential to hinder those who fall prey to this to fall off the school system and subsequently out of gainful employment prospects.

From the responses given above, statistics are used to back up the proclamation of a national crisis but, at the same time, they are not the only marker of the problem. As shown by the NGO responses, there is a different interpretation of the statistics which seems to back up their stance/position on the issue. Statistics themselves may not tell the whole story but are open to the interpretation of the storyteller. Thus, while policy actors may use official statistics to show the existence or seriousness of a problem, they may also selectively choose which indicators to use and the ones to ignore (Birkland, 2011) as well as the period. A longer period of decades often shows a different perspective.

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SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE AGENDA

There are two ways in which society comes to learn of its troubles/problems through the use of indicators as evidence and events (Birkland, 2011)**.** Policy actors use indicators/statistics/numbers to advance, make known or highlight their ideas and beliefs or agendas. This is drawn from the concept of bounded rationality, social construction and NPF (see chapters three & nine). According to Birkland (2011, p. 179);

> the changes in indicators need to be interpreted and publicised by interest groups, government agencies, and policy entrepreneurs, who use these numbers to advance their preferred policy ideas**.**

On the contrary, the problem may not be necessarily defined by high or low statistics but by prevailing conditions or an event.

When and how did teen pregnancy and child marriage become such a "serious problem"?

This is one of the questions that prompted this research. Tracing the newspaper archives, the teen pregnancy and child marriage topic in Zambia became popular in the news around 2012. This is confirmed by NGOCC (2020) "[it started] around 2012, and this led to [the] formulation of Ending Child Marriage Strategy in Zambia in 2016", while FAWEZA (2020) cited the problem resulting from the statistics.

> Teenage pregnancies especially were seen as a problem in Zambia at the time the Ministry of General Education started producing the Annual Statistical Bulletin (**indicators)** highlighting numbers recorded every year in schools.

It seems the decision to publish data from the government might have precipitated national attention. Meanwhile, CCZ (2020) pointed out the problem of an occurrence that "the impact on perpetuating poverty **(event)**, creating health challenges for the girl child". These two organisations suggest internal factors were at play. They show that both the statistics and the occurrence of teen pregnancy and child marriage supposedly impact poverty, thereby setting the scene for the topic to get onto both the global and national agenda.

According to the views of YWCA (2020), the organisation's international advocacy "brought to the fore the issues of girls and women. Under the Commission Status of Women Annual gathering at the UN level, countries shared the issues and common

agenda notice". As for NGOCC (2020), they expressed that *"the focus to retain more girls in school and to accelerate their progression into secondary and tertiary levels **(event)** has contributed to heightened attention on teen pregnancies and child marriage".*

FAWEZA (2020) narrated that the organisation was formed in 1996 as part of its longstanding agenda to increase access to education for girls. They said;

> more girls were dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancies and child marriages **(event).** The main goal was to reduce barriers that hinder women and girls' access to education. The major goal was also to ensure that education-related policies and laws were gender-responsive.

In the case of NGOCC (formed much earlier than FAWEZA) in 1985, their agenda begins with a much broader focus on women's empowerment and gender equality, and much later on teenagers*.*

> The agenda has always been promoting women's empowerment for gender equality, and in the early days, the focus was on galvanising a critical mass of women to work together in advancing women's rights as human rights. It was a push for recognition of women's contribution and how women could be made an integral part in addressing poverty as well as mitigating the impact of the disease on the situation of women. Another focus from those early days was on promoting more women in decision making positions for policy influence and improving service delivery. In 2012 NGOCC push for sustainability through the promotion of increased young women's participation led to its strategic focus on young women in the network. The agenda on teen pregnancies and child marriage was included as a priority focus in relation to promoting girls' education (NGOCC, 2020).

The victims and villains

The publication of news on teenage girls dropping out of school in the newspapers in Zambia has contributed to the wide attention the topic has attracted. Teenage girls are pointed out as victims of early sexual activity and marriage. Parents and older men have been blamed and seen as the "villains" perpetuating the practice, but boys are mentioned too as villains. "Men are the primary villains. Followed by boys who are influenced by society to think girls have no say in matters of sex and marriage. Gender power relations influence men to be villains" (YWCA, 2020).

Thus, from the NGO perspective, girls have to be "rescued" from this situation, and they (NGOs) would appear to be the "heroes" rescuing girls from the villains through empowerment programmes. At the same time, the government points to the

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youth themselves as problematic by not upholding good morals. In 2012, the First Lady said;

> today's generation is sold out to alcohol, drugs and pornography. It has become common place to hear many of our young people are hooked to very bad and disturbing vices such as crime, prostitution and vandalism' (Zambia Daily Mail, 2012).

Another event shocked the nation in 2017 when the newspapers reported 70 teenagers alleged to have been engaging in alcohol and sexual activities at a sex party (Chisunka, 2017). It was reported that all 70 teenagers were apprehended, locked up and charged with conduct likely to cause a breach of peace. A few weeks later, the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) raised concerns about young people engaging in pre-marital sexual activities leading to moral degradation and urged parents to monitor their children's activities (Mwale, 2017). Therefore, there is blame assigned to young people as perpetrators of the degradation of moral values. Young people are most labelled for sexual promiscuity as a target population, while the adults would be doing the same things but not receive the same harsh judgement and condemnation.

HUMANISM: PRACTICES ON TEEN SEXUALITY, MOTHERHOOD, AND MARRIAGE

I posed the question: What would you say were the practices on teen sexuality, motherhood and marriage in the humanism era? Some of the responses were:

> In the past, common practices were that females were viewed as lesser beings, and since awareness of women's rights was low the women, accepted these things as normal (FAWEZA,2020).

> The extended family system was much stronger, traditional values and principles were treasured and upheld (CCZ, 2020.)

> Information was not for everybody but for those perceived to be mature. Women were mostly the custodians of such teachings. It was taboo to speak about sexuality in public (YWCA, 2020).

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Teen sexuality was still rife but largely remained secretive to families who mostly proceeded to facilitate "arranged marriages" for the girls to seemingly avoid family embarrassment. Teen motherhood was then somewhat validated through arranged marriages, which mainly also involved under-aged girls. Mostly many families followed customary marriage arrangements, which mainly involved girls under the age of 18 (NGOCC, 2020).

Three key issues emerge from the above responses. Firstly, sex was not a subject of public debate or discussion. Talking about it was a taboo, only done in secret and reserved for those who reached puberty or were about to enter into marriage. Information about sex would be given when one was considered mature enough to understand it. This would be done during initiation ceremonies, marking a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is safe to say that sex education existed traditionally in the form of teachings with hidden meanings (parables and tales) for different age groups (Rasing, 2003). Thus, teachings with moral lessons to prevent boys or girls from engaging in early sex activities were passed on by grandparents or an elderly aunty/uncle. This proved to be an effective traditional way of controlling sexual debut among young people. However, this practice has now been replaced with modernised sex education that gives explicit safer sex options for young people to choose from but is also repressive preaching on abstinence.

Secondly, teen sexual activity was still common and permissible under marriage, although not much on this has been written in Zambia. Child marriage is not a millennial thing but has existed globally, since time immemorial (Furstenberg, 2007). In many parts of the world, pregnancy before marriage was frowned upon. Thus, after marriage, sexual activity and childbearing, especially among girls, were upheld and approved regardless of age. Marriage was seen as a pathway to sexual activity. In other words, it is safe to say that teen pregnancy was not an issue under the "confines" of marriage. Notably, the existence of "teens" or teen children per se as a stage, I argue, is itself a western invention. In this context, marriage was not viewed as a "child" marriage as long as one reached puberty. Child marriage was rather said to occur in the case of marriage before puberty (Mensch et al., 2006).

Thus, puberty symbolised maturity and a sign that one was old enough to be married. This is linked to the local conception and interpretation of "adulthood"

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described by Schaffnit et al. (2019) (see chapter on literature review). This local conceptualisation of marriage remains rooted in most rural communities. As a matter of democracy and principle, no agent or government should force people to adopt their customs. It is also the case that what happens in Africa is seen as a custom, whereas in Europe the word 'custom' is not used. This Eurocentric gaze is often uncritically absorbed by local NGOs.

Thirdly, the ethos of strong family ties and traditional values are still upheld in African families. For example, in the more "modern" South Africa sangomas are recognised as traditional healers by the state even though they specialise only in indigenous healing methods.

The extended family was strong, meaning that no child was said to have no parents even if the biological ones passed on (YWCA, 2020). Each person was a keeper of the other. Community responsibilities helped to uphold good morals. This meant that a child did not only belong to the biological parents but the extended family, neighbours and the whole community. Every elder had a responsibility to watch over, control, correct, modify and discipline the behaviour of a child in accordance with traditional values. Kaunda's humanism sought to build on a societal foundation that valued interdependency and extended community as opposed to capitalist privatism and bourgeois individualism of the British-style welfare state based on the nuclear family.

Thus, he noted, "In our villages or tribal systems, we have always had a system of social security with relatives looking after their own in a time of need" (Cited in Larmer, 2019, p. 156). In this way, the behaviour was collectively monitored by the community and thereby forming strong traditional systems of accountability. All these three elements are connected in that they define the cultural fibre of perceptions on marriage, family and motherhood. Over time, due to sensitisations and championing of women's rights and girls' empowerment, with the support of anti-gender-based violence legislation, such arranged marriages were considered human rights violations and child abuse.

QUESTION: How have the practices continued, and what lessons can we learn from past experiences?
RESPONSES:

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We need to uphold our traditions and beliefs. We had taboos that frowned upon certain behaviour (CCZ, 2020).

We are learning that when people lack information about an issue, they will live with it as a normal practice (FAWEZA, 2020).

Past experiences rendered many women and girls to be discriminated against under culture and traditions. Women and girls were part of the male dominion and were not treated as independent beings without the approval of the male folk. This has contributed to the gender inequalities that we are seeing now, in addition to the negative socialisation where women are still lagging behind in various development processes. So the main lesson is that in order to adequately fight teen pregnancies and child marriages, we critically must look at social norms and their impacts on the perspectives of women and girls. There must be a serious discourse on interrogating the impact of culture and traditions on the general behavioural tendencies in communities. It is also important to make the custodians of culture and tradition an integral part of initiatives to mitigate teen pregnancies and child marriages (NGOCC, 2020).

From the responses above, it is clear that there is a change in how sex practices are perceived. Part of it is credited to modernisation and unrestricted access to information ever since the bloom of different social media platforms. The human rights movement and the inception of sex education have also changed the attitude towards sex. There are more liberal approaches in addressing the condemned sex indulgence "problem" among teenagers/young people. But at the same time, not every segment of society agrees with the modern sexual approaches to tackling teen sexual activity. The traditional system is in constant disagreement with the modern way of doing things. This is due to socialised constructs deep-rooted within the value system which are difficult to unlearn. Thus, as the path dependency concept stipulates, some things still remain unchangeable, while others change over time.

Here the emphasis seems to dwell much on an undesirable "impact" of tradition and culture, especially against the female folk. There appears to be an agreement that social norms, traditions and customs have largely put women in a vulnerable and disadvantaged position. From a global perspective, men are said to have historically assumed dominion over women. The concept of male dominion bore feminism in order

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to maintain male domination. Thus, this position leaves women with few rights and less freedom and, in order to overcome this state, social norms should be viewed as constructs.

What this means is open to interpretation from where one is standing. In the case of the global gender equality agenda, as prescribed both in the UN Millennium Development Goals and UNSDGs, the feminist movement appears to generally speak against social norms, cultural and traditional practices as violations of women's rights. Specifically, gendered social norms are said to regulate the sexual behaviour of females, which makes them susceptible to early pregnancy, teen pregnancy or child marriage and sexual violence (Svanemyr, 2019). In as much as these social norms appear unattractive and inappropriate, they also play an important role in altering what might be described as social misconduct.[34]

Moreover, it is rarely pointed out that social norms can be double-edged. There are some social norms that seek to protect the sexual interest of young people, but this is also dependent on individual responsiveness (an individual may choose to or not adhere to the norms). For example, Zambia, as a Christian nation, incorporates a combination of dominant societal norms influenced by both Christian and traditional beliefs. One such consistent norm is abstinence, "no sex before marriage" for both males and females regardless of age. At the same time, just because this is a dominant norm, it does not mean it is followed. A study conducted in Zambia by Heslop and Banda (2013) showed that young people indulge in sexual activity secretly.

However, the message delivered by the International community seems to suggest that anything to do with tradition, especially in the African context, is designed for harm and not good. African tradition and culture appear to carry dominant-negative constructs. These constructs start with how Africa as a continent is construed in the globe. African tradition is perceived to be backward, uncivilised and almost tantamount to the practice of witchcraft (Mbembe, 2001; Ferguson, 2006; Mensch et al., 2006).

Thus, most international organisations and lobby groups in the name of "human rights" have created unchangeable constructions about African social norms, traditions

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[34] This covers all manner of behaviour (including sexual conduct) which is considered inappropriate in a particular community.

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and culture. For example, this can be seen from both national and international documentation, which blames traditional practices for increased teen sexual activity, where child marriage is described as a "harmful" traditional practice without fully examining and understanding the context or setting in which it occurs. It is clear that African culture and tradition is inferior to the Western one (Gausset, 2001). If the same so-called "harmful" practices were replicated in the Western culture, they would not be despised or strongly condemned. They would be assumed to be an infringement of individual freedom rather than a human rights violation.

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF NGOs

QUESTION: How has your organisation influenced adolescent sexual reproductive health policies in Zambia since its formation?

RESPONSES:

> FAWEZA advocated for the enactment of the re-entry policy and the formulation of the ending child marriage strategy. We worked with like-minded organisations such as NGOCC, YWCA to have a bigger voice on the same [Re-entry policy]. FAWEZA was advantaged to effectively lobby for this policy because our membership mainly constituted government workers from the Ministry of General education, so we had internal allies with which we worked (FAWEZA, 2020).

> We have been advocating for policy formulation (we now have the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategy and related action plans). NGOCC also undertook a research to determine the availability of youth-friendly spaces in health facilities and has been advocating for the same. Zambia now has a mandatory requirement for youth-friendly facilities and services. NGOCC, through some of its members like PPAZ [Planned Parenthood Association Zambia], has continued offering related services, including community sensitisations and awareness. Advocacy for Re-entry Policy, formulation of comprehensive anti-gender based violence Act, revision of the Penal Code, the Gender Equity and Equality Act, and the adoption of the Ending Child Marriage Strategy 2016-2021 together with its Action Plan (NGOCC,2020).

Summary

All three (FAWEZA, NGOCC AND YWCA), despite having different organisational goals and objectives, meet at the same point in the end. They all played a role in the re-entry policy and the strategy for ending child marriage in Zambia. There is a collaboration

from the NGOs and a shared vision of the problem as well as the policy advocacy strategies. Notably**, "**even when a problem is on the agenda, there may be a considerable controversy and competition over how to define the problem, including the causes and the policies that would most likely solve it" (Birkland, 2011, p. 173)**.**

In terms of the power dynamics, in this case, it is difficult to point out which organisation dominates and has more power in influencing any of the named policies, even though NGOCC made a submission to the government on the strategy to end child marriage, and has appeared to be more visible in the media in influencing its agenda on many issues not only to do with teen sexuality but generally advancing women's rights and development. As Birkland (2011, p. 174) states, "to influence policy is not simply a function of who makes the most technically or rhetorically persuasive argument", but power is more than this.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

QUESTION: What would you highlight as major contributions to policy change and the church's influence under the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation in 1991?

RESPONSES:

The declaration made many churches go into a slumber and compromise, thereby losing their prophetic voice (CCZ, 2020).

The influence was porous because many people became pastors and used the church as a source of income. There has not been any positive change in response to the issues being discussed. Sexual Gender-Based Violence and Child sexual abuse continued and increased. In the early '90s, a month hardly passed without reporting cases of sexual abuse by pastors (YWCA, 2020).

I posed the question: As a church body, what is your stance on teen sexuality, comprehensive sex education and family planning?

We promote biblical values of abstinence but do not shy away from providing information about safe sex practices (CCZ, 2020).

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> To include the education [comprehensive sex education] in the curriculum. This should be consistent from primary school (YWCA, 2020).

> Contribute [the church] towards behaviour, attitude and mindset change, incorporate relevant messages in its sermons and worship (CCZ, 2020).

> The church is expected to interpret and teach the truth on the issues of [romantic]relationships because many people in Zambia are strong believers in what is taught at church (YWCA, 2020).

ANALYSIS

From the responses given above, due to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, there is a strong belief in Christian values and ideas of proper sexual conduct over a lifecycle (sex only within a Christian marriage), whether they are upheld or not. However, the declaration did not change social behaviours to suit biblical teachings. As pointed out earlier, some critics questioned this declaration arguing that it was a political strategy (Njovu, 2002; Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola, 2008a; Sishuwa, 2020).

One of the issues that have sparked continuous controversy is the "safer sex practice" option for young people in a Christian nation like Zambia. There is a contested divide between the church itself and also selected stakeholders, with one side promoting safer sex practices (for example, the use of condoms) and strict abstinence before marriage. Interestingly, CCZ mentioned promoting abstinence but also provided information about safe sex practices. This is consistent with a statement made by the then organisation's Secretary-General in 2014, in which CCZ publicly supported the use of condoms in school. As stated,

> the organisation sees nothing wrong with the distribution of condoms, especially in secondary schools, as it can safeguard pupils against sexually transmitted infections and early pregnancies. People should not be against the distribution of condoms in various schools as it is not a bad idea. Condoms actually do more good than harm (Mulenga, 2014)

Meanwhile, in 2017, CHAZ spoke out against the distribution of condoms in schools reported in a newspaper article titled "The Church against school condom supply"

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(Musika, 2017). CHAZ said they promote behaviour approaches such as abstinence before marriage and do not support the supply of condoms to teenagers. Similarly, NAC also opted for behavioural change approaches such as CSE and not the distribution of condoms in school (Zambia Daily Mail, 2017a).

Notably, despite the sparks on the topic of the distribution of condoms in schools, it is unclear which civil society or NGOs planned to conduct this activity or if it was done. However, the government sought to clarify matters by disassociating itself from the activity. The Minister of General Education stated that the government did not approve or authorise any organisation to distribute condoms in schools. He also mentioned that it was the Ministry of Health's duty to do that, not the Ministry of General Education (Chongo, 2017).

Church bodies/church-based organisations have faced opposition to their organisational approaches. For example, CCZ (2020) stated that "the expectation is that we should become very liberal in our approach", while YWCA (2020) said that;

> Religious beliefs and some traditional teachings have brought conflicts among some communities when carrying out our work. Statutory laws vs customary laws. For example, the age of marrying a girl.

NGOs occasionally find themselves in a cultural clash, mostly in rural communities.

> Community perception of saying mothers getting back to school, which the majority thought, would encourage teenage pregnancies. Traditional leadership who thought we were interfering with their tradition. However, due to increased awareness slowly, there is a positive mindset change among these leaders (FAWEZA, 2020).

> Initially, the influence of culture and tradition were strong, where it was felt that marriage was the preserve of the family to decide for the girl child. There was no value attached to education with a strong bias toward educating the boy child (NGOCC, 2020).

There is a massive campaign to change the "mindset of traditional thinking" even though its roots are centuries old, and there are few signs that it is disappearing. As mentioned earlier, the picture painted is that all traditions and cultures are harmful and should be eradicated as part of a developmental teleology mixed with Christian messianism to rapidly catch up with the West. There has been no distinction from the NGOs between what is considered bad or good. For example, what can be preserved as

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an African identity versus what potentially yields harm to the welfare of girls, women or society?

There is also a narrow understanding of what makes a good life and what the "normal stages" of a good life ought to be. Only one message is presented; the adoption of a modern capitalist way of living (western culture), creating a homogenised global culture. Thus, this sets a trend that suggests the western culture is the preferred, better way of life while the African one remains inferior. Instead of working with the grain of tradition and what has worked, the NGOs are looking for "game-changers". This leads to my next question about "eliminating" child marriage.

ELIMINATING CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA

QUESTION: How is this achievable? Can the same be said about teen pregnancy?

The stock responses were;

It will require multi-stakeholder participation, moving towards complimenting instead of competing and confronting one another (CCZ, 2020).

It is not achievable because we still have a high level of poverty, access to basic social needs are a challenge, and the legal system is not being applied effectively. There is a need to harmonize the statutory and customary laws on age and marriage (YWCA, 2020).

We work with traditional leaders, we build their capacity and raise awareness on what the law says in regards to this issue and in turn, the leaders educate their subjects and come up with by-laws to fight child marriages. On teenage pregnancies, we work with the Ministry of General education in the roll-out of comprehensive sexuality Education (FAWEZA, 2020).

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Child marriage is a multifaceted problem, and if all sectors played their part in eliminating it, it is possible to do so. The summit [the regional summit on ending child marriage] brought together girls, civil society, government, traditional leaders, school system, health experts, and traditional leaders - all to reflect on their contributions in ending child marriage. Therefore, if resources are put together coupled with a commitment to actualising initiatives for girls' emancipation, child marriage would be a thing of the past (NGOCC, 2020).

Summary

When examining these responses, a common theme is that we need consensus among many actors, much like the standard NPM governance discourse. The state alone cannot do it, and neither can anyone "sector". There seems to be an acknowledgement from the NGO's perspective that preventing teen pregnancy and ending child marriage is not as easy as stated on paper. As YWCA importantly noted, "ending child marriage is not achievable due to poverty". Access to basic social needs, contradictory legal frameworks, and many other factors complicate the issue. While NGOCC points out that child marriage is indeed a multifaceted problem, many factors need to be considered. In addition to this, CCZ calls for multi-stakeholder participation if ending child marriage is to be achieved.

All these responses, however, fail to reformulate the "problem" or even ask what the problem is or how pregnancy in itself is not directly the problem (Weatherley, 1987; Nathanson, 1991; Rhode, 1994; Kristen Luker, 1996; Lawlor and Shaw, 2002; Wilson and Huntington, 2006; Duncan, 2007a). Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson (2019) state two further critical points that hinder this agenda (ending the child marriage movement). Firstly, there is a high degree of autonomy in marital decisions among young people and, secondly, is a high value placed on marriage and attaining respect and social status. These two factors have been ignored in the ending child marriage campaign as the focus of this campaign insists on preaching against harmful traditions and cultural change behaviour programmes. This corresponds with Rice (1981) who claims that to understand teenage sexual matters, one must stand in many places. It calls for a helicopter view that examines many other factors in the environment, including the social and economic conditions. Similarly, many scholars (Weatherley, 1987; Nathanson, 1991; Rhode, 1994; Kristen Luker, 1996; Lawlor and Shaw, 2002; Wilson and Huntington, 2006; Duncan, 2007a) advance this view by arguing that teen pregnancy occurs in rural communities

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which are already disadvantaged and lacking in development. Thus, this makes the elimination agenda unachievable if other dimensions of the problem are ignored.

Another important point worth noting is the challenge of multi-stakeholder participation. Wide participation is necessary and significant for problem resolution; however, it comes with many dynamics. The trouble with wide stakeholder participation is that, like much of the pluralist political science theory, it ignores powerful elites who decide the agenda and suppress other issues (or what is called non-decisions). Groups/policy actors consist of policy monopolies that dominate the policymaking domain (Herweg, Zahariadis and Zohlnhofer, 2018). There are always powerful groups that dominate the policy domain and manage to keep other issues off the agenda. "Policymakers are assumed to have problematic preferences and are subject to manipulation"(Sabatier, 2007, p. 70). Thus, there is a group that manipulates and one that is manipulated. The powerful groups often manipulate other groups through shared beliefs or ideas and ideologies, which are strategically used to back up an agenda or particular solution (as briefly discussed in the previous chapter).

In the Zambian case, the fundamentalist Christian stance and approach to tackling teen sexual activity is the more preferred solution despite some Christian NGOs (YWCA and CCZ) seemingly promoting safe sex practices. As such, Christianity taking centre stage means that other groups advocating for safe sex approaches stand a lesser chance of being heard. This makes problem-solving even harder. Without consensus, we see mixed messages that create confusion among young people and the responsible key actors and stakeholders themselves.

POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEEN PREGNANCY IN ZAMBIA

I asked the question below to elicit broad strategies but also focus on the democratic rights of women to have children (a collectively valued right).

QUESTION: Teen pregnancy and child marriage remain deep-rooted in most African societies, including Zambia. As such, marriage is held in high esteem,

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and motherhood is seen as a desirable thing among most women. What do you think are the best policy approaches to tackling child marriage and teen pregnancies in Zambia?

RESPONSES:

> Harmonise statutory laws and customary laws on marriage, engage custodians of traditions and customs to reform marriage law customs, keep adolescent girls in school create "safe spaces" for girls. Ensure multi-sectoral collaboration against child marriage, generate evidence for decision-making (CCZ, 2020).

> Implementation of the already existing laws is the first step. Engaging all different stakeholders (YWCA, 2020).

> Zambia has adequate laws in place, but the challenge is implementation, so currently, the best approach is to ensure that, as a country, we effectively implement the laws and policy. Also, the need to harmonize statutory law and customary law so that these two speak to each other, especially on the age of marriage and the definition of a child. We are happy that the constitution, which is the supreme law, is now very clear on the definition of a child, so other laws must comply (FAWEZA, 2020).

> Role Modelling, creating champions in traditional leaders, affirmative action in girls' education, programs to encourage keeping girls in school, promotion of government-supported and regulated boarding facilities, encouraging economic empowerment interventions for communities such as entrepreneurship opportunities, among others (NGOCC, 2020).

Summary

In analysing these responses, we can see that some of them are standard responses and others self-serving efforts at social engineering to fit a universal western model of family and being a woman. It is interesting to see what they ignore in their narratives.

Motherhood/childbearing, marriage and family regardless of age are indeed deep-rooted in societal norms not only in Zambia but on the entire African continent, as research has proven (Frahm-Arp, 2012; Menon et al., 2018; Kane et al., 2019a; Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019; Baba, Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020). The NGOs mainly

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propose implementing marriage law reforms that protect adolescents/children/young people and the engagement of different stakeholders (especially the involvement of the traditional sector) as some of the best approaches to tackling the problem. But approaches attempting to harmonise the customary traditions and the modern legal framework (constitution) still need to maintain, preserve and respect indigenous practices. As such, it becomes challenging to implement policies that are incompatible with the social structure. This all makes policymaking complicated; thus, the policy becomes symbolic. It is well formulated on paper but in reality inapplicable.

Moreover, considering that most of these modern policies are set at the international level and not according to the localised environment and context is another barrier to achieving suitable policy approaches. This corresponds to the international relations theory that explains how;

> international norms influence states, the role of international organizations in disseminating new international norms and models and the efforts of activists to change social understandings and social movements (Gilson, Orgill and Shroff, 2018, p. 17).

The significant role played by international organisations like WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF as far as setting global norms for the marriage age and teen sexual activity forms part of the puzzle to solving the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Africa.

COMPLEXITIES, CLASHES AND DILEMMAS: CHRISTIANITY, MODERNITY AND TRADITION

QUESTION: Given the complexity of clashes in the legal framework between customary and constitutional laws on marriage, as well as the values of Zambia as a Christian nation, what can you propose as the best method/way of combining traditional, Christian and modern ideas about young motherhood/parenthood, teen sexual behaviour and marriage? In response, NGOs argued;

> There must be ongoing dialogue involving traditional, Christian, health, social and community stakeholders to tap into the best practices from each sector (CCZ, 2020).

Harmonising all the information into statutory law for all to follow
(YWCA, 2020)

Harmonise statutory law and customary law so that these two speak to each other, especially on the age of marriage and the definition of a child. We are happy that the constitution, which is the supreme law, is now very clear on the definition of a child, so other laws must comply (FAWEZA, 2020).

Having intergenerational dialogues about culture and tradition, promoting exchange programs between urban and rural young women and girls groupings, and the formation of young women networks as spaces for peer learning and information exchange (NGOCC, 2020).

There are two points I would like to highlight. Firstly, the clear message presented here from all the NGOs is the harmonisation of values and beliefs. As pointed out earlier, the Zambian culture is shaped by a combination of beliefs. Harmonisation may not be achieved where one belief is considered "superior" to the other. Moreover, given ethno-regionalism in politics and its mixing with politically aligned religious sects and groupings, any dialogue is bound to be met with suspicion.

In this case, Christianity, through the influence of colonialism, tends to take the upper stage, but there are still so many competing versions from the different denominations (Catholics, Protestants and others). Dialogues are at best a deception and at worst self-serving activities for NGOs. Even though the constitution provides "supreme" guidance, loopholes and clashes are bound to occur.

Secondly, there have been clashes and contradictions in approaches to tackling teen sexual matters from different segments of society. The NGO front is inclined to promote modern international approaches such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and other safer sex practices, with a realisation that sexual activity is real among young people, and we cannot escape this reality. Some segments of the church (those NGO-nised) agree with this reality too, while most stick to the biblical teachings of "sex before marriage is a sin".

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To reiterate, the traditional system is similar to Christianity but a bit more complicated. Generally, early sex practices, especially before puberty, are forbidden, but most importantly sex is secured by marriage. As for the government's stance, it "depends" on many factors, often to do with getting more votes or maintaining "good books" with the international community by adhering to international agreements no matter the cost.

Examples of these discourses can be seen from the clashes in views on the implementation of the CSE in the education curriculum in Zambia targeting grades 5-9 school pupils. This topic has sparked a lot of controversy on the African continent, and different governments have questioned its intentions. The Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, an interdenominational church body, also spoke out against the CSE, claiming that it would expose pupils to sexual activities that are against the order of nature, and the ministry should withdraw it until there is a wider consultation (Lusaka Times, 2020b). Furthermore, on the traditional side, a pan-African traditional leader, paramount chief Chitimukulu of the Bemba-speaking people of Zambia, also expressed his displeasure with the rolling out of the CSE in early primary grades (Lusaka Times, 2020a).

Meanwhile, despite the opposition from the government, tradition and the church, CSE was supported by some organisations and coalitions like the National Aids Council (NAC), National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ) and the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC). ZANEC further mentioned in a press statement that they had reviewed the content of CSE, and it was in line with the national values as well as being age-appropriate (Lusaka Times, 2020d). They also said CSE was introduced because of the high rates of teen pregnancy, and there was no evidence to suggest that it can lead to increased sexual activity among the targeted group. In support, NAQEZ said that;

> We can't see anything anti-Christian in these two documents. For the record, this kind of education was prompted by extensive research data indicating alarming numbers of school dropouts due to early pregnancies among primary and secondary school girls. It is also important to state here that before the Ministry of General Education adopted the framework for sexuality education, the Church and Civil Society Organizations were part of the validation process (Lusaka Times, 2020e).

Providing contraception to promote "safe sex practices" as a way to prevent teen pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted infections remains controversial. While

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the government (Ministry of Health as stated in chapter eight) is under pressure to scale up access to family planning services for young people, the opposition stands firm. This opposition is often mistaken to linger mainly in rural communities/areas, but there is more strong opposition exerted even in urban areas. Most of the opposition can be seen using the phrase "Zambia is a Christian nation". This would imply that the church stands against ideas that contradict the faith.

On the contrary, in 2018, to support the MOH's agenda, CHAZ held a family planning workshop with religious leaders aimed at discussing family planning advocacy and clearing out misconceptions about the church's position (CHAZ, 2018). To this effect, CHAZ has compiled ten submissions from different denominations stating their position on what methods of family planning they support[35]. Some churches highlighted supporting natural methods only, others both natural and modern, while others left the choice up to their members. However, the position on teenage and adolescent access to family planning was not clearly stated.

Meanwhile, the paramount Chief Chitimukulu expressed strong opposition to the adoption of modern sex approaches and attributes the rise in early marriage to what he calls the "liberalisation of sex". In an interview reported in the newspaper, he said that "the free distribution of condoms in schools has contributed to what he termed the liberalisation of sex among children who are not ready for marriage" (Mwitwa, 2015). He pointed out that the inception of democracy and human rights paved the way for the freedom to engage in sexual activity by young people. In an article published by Lusaka Times online newspaper, he wrote;

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[35] The churches include; Beracah Arise Bible Church, The Church of God Missions, Islamic Council of Zambia, Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Mpongwe Baptist Association, The Pilgrim Wesleyan Church, The Salvation Army, The Reformed Church in Zambia, Zambia Anglican Council, and The United Church of Zambia. https://www.ccih.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Zambian-Church-Positions-FP.pdf

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> consequently, in the introduction of ''democracy'' to Africa, the capitalist exploiter also cleverly included the ''liberation of sex'' as part of a package of "democracy''. And as usual, we have fallen prey and swallowed the bait, and we are now experiencing the random distribution of condoms in Africa! In fact, the Ministry of Health and NGOs are the culprits since they give contraceptives such as condoms to teenagers of any age upon demand. I have always been greatly disturbed at the so-called ''successful'' indiscriminate distributions of condoms irrespective of age. It is very clear that condom distribution in schools only means encouraging teenage pupils to be more and more sexually active (Sosala, 2019a)

Additionally, Paramount Chief Chitimuku pointed out that NGOs carry externally influenced agendas in which they are boxed in and are bound by stipulated rules imposed on them.

> The truth is that the civil society groups are given programmes by their sponsors on strategies _____ they are boxed in a coffin-like narrowness of vision and thereby suffocate their creative imaginations. Admittedly, some of the individuals in the civil society groups have the best brains, but they have to follow instructions. And hence there is loss of sovereignty over self; loss of power, dignity, morality and debility (Sosala, 2019b).

Summary

In partial agreement with this intriguing anti-imperialistic statement, it seems clear that most NGOs advance internationally homogenised agendas (conforming to the new global norms) without taking much consideration of the indigenous contextual circumstances of a particular local setting and background. Macho-modern sexual attitudes and culture accessible via the internet have been found severely wanting in so far as it promotes the rampant objectification of women.

However, the campaign on ending child marriage seeks to uproot the main cause - the traditional African "mindset", which is not the root cause of the problem. Indeed, as argued by many scholars, being pregnant can be construed in many ways. Premature "problem" definitions and already-made solutions such as "eradicate harmful traditional practices like child marriage" limit problem-solving.   There are many factors that need to be uncovered to gain more insights into the issues underlying teen pregnancy and child marriage. Therefore;

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change agents [policy makers] need to have a fundamental understanding about the target group's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values, and cognitive systems before designing efforts to address health issues (Tinago et al., 2018, p. 1510).

Another point to note is that there are divisions by different segments of society in terms of what to and what not to submit to. Controversy, oppositions and contradictions in approaches to teen pregnancy and child marriage exist not only between the government and the different non-state organisations/actors but also within the already weak state-implementing apparatus itself. Calls for multi-sectoral approaches to tackling the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage do not address these problems. Where does this leave policy action considering the mixed messages presented? Which policies should be followed and which ones should be abandoned or not paid attention to? Do the state or "non-state actors" lead? These questions raise fundamental issues for thinking about policy intervention and its failure or even why some "public problems" seem unsolvable. They become chronic problems that continually appear on the agenda (Peters, 2005).

In further thinking about the way forward, I asked, What key points would you like to emphasise on the debate about the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia and the entire Africa?

Some of the notable responses follow;

Access to condom use by teenagers and Comprehensive law on Sexuality to protect underage marriages(YWCA, 2020).
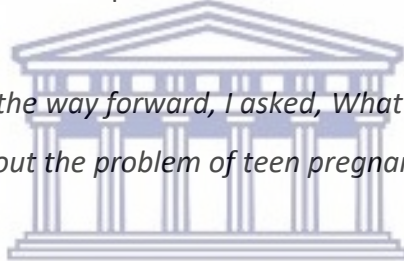
Traditional and faith leaders are very influential in Zambia and play a bigger role in influencing societal change. However, there is inadequate participation of these leaders in activities aimed at eliminating vices perpetuating child/forced marriages and teenage pregnancies in their communities. The 2016-2022 National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages in Zambia recognises traditional leaders as key stakeholders that can assist the country in fighting child marriages. Furthermore, teenage pregnancies affecting children of school-going age still remain a challenge, especially in rural areas and at the primary school level, as a result of adolescent girls engaging in early sexual debut and child marriages for economic survival. Therefore, there is an urgent need for deliberate remedial measures to abate vices perpetuating child marriages enabling girls to remain in school and complete their education (FAWEZA, 2020).

It is important to understand the socialisation aspects that perpetuate child marriage and teen pregnancies. Economic vulnerabilities are key drivers of child marriage and teen pregnancies, and it is important to address this. In order to win the battle against child marriage and teen pregnancies, girls and young women must be brought into the centre of the discourse so that their views are laid on the table for policy options. Communities must also be made an integral part of finding community focused and centred solutions, including the parents, the traditional leaders, the church, health and education experts in programming (NGOCC, 2020).

Summary

The views expressed by the NGOs are similar both in defining the problem and ways of approaching it. The voice from the NGOs is to promote safe sex practices, comprehensive marriage laws to protect girls and beware of the kin role that socialisation plays in shaping the sexual behaviour of adolescents and young people.

Understanding the broader local conceptualisations of pregnancy, sex, marriage, and family are a critical element in gaining insights into teen sexual behaviour and activity. Tinago et al. (2018, p. 1516) point out that "pregnancy is not simply the physical state of carrying a child, but also includes the sociocultural beliefs and practices associated with carrying the child". Such beliefs, for example, include shared notions like "a child is a blessing" or "a child secures a marriage", "a child is symbolic of achievement", "a child is a source of joy and fulfilment", and the belief that a child carries forward the name and bloodline (as some studies have highlighted) are all important

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factors in understanding conceptualisations of childbearing, pregnancy, motherhood/fatherhood and parenting whether in the context of marriage or not. These factors cannot be simply controlled by re-inventing social norm approaches that aim to eliminate deep-rooted social behaviour which has come to be part of people's lives. An alternative approach is to understand the context of the situation and whether it is a problem for the people affected or not. If it is indeed a problem, the solutions to the problem should not be discussed at the international level but should be generated by the people affected by it themselves.

CONCLUSION

The first section of the chapter introduces the NGOs and selection criteria. The inception of globalisation and Zambia's 1991 liberalisation set the scene for increased non-state actor participation trickling down to adolescent reproductive health. Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation provides the foundation upon which Christian values set a standard for appropriate behaviour, for example, the commonly cited "abstinence before marriage". Arguably, the modern missionaries are the NGOs backed by international actors. Below I present three main arguments.

Firstly, I argue that from around 2011 political figures have seemingly seized on evangelical sexual politics backed by non-state actors with human rights (understood in western terms) pressure on the state to show results and meet globally set targets. The non-state actor advocacy centres on liberal modern approaches to address teen sexual behaviour while taking a Malthusian economic development and moral stance. Safe sex practices like the use of condoms and the inclusion of CSE in the education curriculum from primary (Grade 5) to secondary school are supported to prevent teen pregnancy and STIs. Ironically, the trade union and the MoGE's position on the CSE is clearly embraced, but they do not support the provision of condoms in schools. In this, we see a blurred standpoint that sends an unclear message.

Secondly, Zambian culture and tradition play a critical role in moulding and shaping behaviour (including sexual behaviour). The traditional values uphold the principle of virginity and sex after marriage, similar to the Christian values in this respect. Puberty marks the rite of passage and a transition from "childish" behaviour to that of adulthood and maturity. In the traditional culture, generally, maturity is marked by puberty,

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meaning that age is not a factor. This also means that sex is permissible after maturity but supported in the confines of marriage. In the same way, sex in Christianity is only protected by marriage, not age. Only the constitution legislates on the matter of age. The legal age to get married in Zambia is 21 years. On paper, this is seen to be the supreme law. However, practically, people in rural communities follow the customary law, which is marked by puberty, not age.

Nonetheless, there is a general consensus from all segments that child marriages should be discouraged. This externally driven message has penetrated through the traditional leadership to treasure educating girls rather than marrying them off for short-term economic gain. Parents are often seen as the villains perpetuating child marriages. What is overlooked is that, in these modern times, parents have become less influential as socialisation agents move from family to peer and social media influence as well as increased advocacy of individual sexual freedoms (human rights movements, for example, access to family planning and abortion services).

Thirdly, traditional leaders are now playing a critical role in discouraging child marriage in their communities. However, this responsibility does not only lie with the parents or their traditional leaders but also in the choices the teenagers make themselves. As pointed out by paramount Chief Chitimukulu, parents are not always to blame for child marriage as the elite-centered government has failed to bring quality education to rural communities (Mwitwa, 2015). Notably, the problem of child marriage appears not to be fully understood. It is still not clear what are the underlying causes of the practice in specific communities.

There is a need to revisit the constructs that parents are selling off their children, traditional practices permeate child marriages, and older men are preying on young girls. Child marriages occur between peers as well (Mann, Quigley and Fischer, 2015). Rather than dwelling on the single view of the classified "villains", more insights should be drawn from understanding the context in which these marriages occur. In the case of peer child marriages, who is the victim, and who is the villain? How does marriage, motherhood, or parenthood affect their way of life or sustain livelihoods? Gaining such insights can provide a clear path for policy intervention (see chapter nine where I discuss in detail alternative ways to think about the problem).

In conclusion, this chapter shows that the international adoption of modern-driven methods to deal with teen pregnancy and child marriage do not fit into the Zambian setting. The policy interventions on teen sexual matters are in contradiction with Zambian values and culture. This has some negative implications for policy intervention and government spending on programmes that do not yield fruitful outcomes. Hyper evangelism in the face of uncertain economic prospects (and the converse of great wealth from windfall copper prices) and a fragile state are part of the historical context. Thus, there needs to be more research to understand the dynamics and complexities of teen sexual matters in order to devise evidence-based policy interventions in line with the local context. Policy interventions are based on false assumptions, and divine intervention and erratic government spending on programmes amid corruption will not yield fruitful outcomes.

CHAPTER 9: THE CONTEMP0RARY PATH TO CONSTRUCTING PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter pulls together the overall problematisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. Indicators/statistics and particular events, and deep assumptions and tendencies have defined the path of the problematisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage. The preceding chapters have shown that policies are not without tensions and contradictions. The different kinds of representations in any one policy may conflict with and even contradict each other (Bacchi, 2009, p. 4). This is evidently seen in the conflicted government's problematisation and solutions to teen pregnancy and child marriage. Studying the path of problematisation of an issue helps to unravel alternative views rather than rely on taken-for-granted views, which only lead to recycling problems as well as solutions.

The term 'problematisation' involves "standing back" from "objects" and "subjects", presumed to be objective and unchanging, in order to consider their "conditions of emergence" and hence their mutability (Bacchi, 2012, p. 1). In simpler terms, the concept of problematisation seeks to make sense of "problems" through historical conjunctures, practices, and processes. Thus, in the context of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia, problematisation means reviewing how the issue has come to be categorised as a serious problem over the past decade. I refer to Bacchi's (1999) way of analysing problematisation by carefully examining problem representation in public policy. Bacchi (2012, p. 4) states that "every policy or policy proposal is a prescriptive text, setting out a practice that relies on a particular problematisation.___[Therefore], it is possible to take any policy proposal and to 'work backwards' to deduce how it produces a problem".

This chapter will expand discussions on the AHSP, CSE, and NSECMZ to review the problem representations according to Bacchi's WPR approach. It addresses objective three; to explore alternative problem representations and definitions of teen/adolescent sexual behaviour and the government's policy response focusing on selected teen/adolescent sexual-related policies (2012-2016).

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM REPRESENTED TO BE? (WPR)

In line with the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), bounded rationality, and social construction concepts, each represented group pursues ideas that benefit their stance or organisational values. However, the WPR takes a different dimension within the confines of the social construction framework.

> It makes the case that, among the many competing constructions of a 'problem' that are possible, governments play a privileged role because their understandings 'stick' their versions of 'problems' are formed or constituted in the legislation, reports, and technologies used to govern. Hence, these versions of 'problems' take on lives of their own. They exist in the real (Bacchi, 2009, p. 33).

The "What's the problem represented to be?" approach to policy analysis is not concerned with intentionality. Rather, the task is to identify deep conceptual premises operating within problem representations (Bacchi, 1991). Bacchi (1999) asks six questions that help unpack problem representations in policy using the WPR approach. (i) What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy? (ii) What assumptions underlie this representation? (iii) How has this representation of the "problem" come about? (iv) What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently? (v) What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"? (vi) How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted, and replaced? (Bacchi, 1999).[36]

Question 1: What's the problem represented to be?

This question addresses the particular issues that led to policy intervention. There could be multiple issues represented in one problem. It is important to look at the specific issues and identify what the dominant issues are being represented. I will start by presenting the global view of the adolescent pregnancy and child marriage problem in Africa, specifically since it is a problem that has attracted a global outcry. The statement below is presented from a global perspective of what the problem is.

Text one (Global view)

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[36] I have repeated the questions in this chapter so that the reader does not have to go back to the theoretical chapter where I first introduced the WPR approach.

Child marriage can have devastating effects on individual girls and their (future) children: Typically, it cuts short or ends a girl's education, compromises her reproductive rights, sexual health, future employment and earnings, and perpetuates personal and community poverty. ***While gender inequality, poverty, tradition and lack of education are acknowledged as root causes of child marriage, the mapping showed a rich diversity in how child marriage is interconnected with local traditions and rites***. These include female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), notions of family honour, puberty (menarche), virginity, parental concerns surrounding premarital sex and pregnancy, dowry pressures, the perception that marriage provides protection from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and the desire to secure social, economic or political alliances (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018, p. 9).

Text Two (National view)

The issue of child marriage, defined as the legal marriage or informal union before the age of 18, has globally been identified as one of the major detriments to development and a major impediment to the realization of human rights. Zambia has not been spared from this: 31 % of women marry before their 18 birthday. Relatedly, adolescent girls continue to die from complications arising from early childbearing, and both girls and boys continue to drop out of the school system before completing their education, therefore reducing their chances of escaping poverty. The Government of the Republic of Zambia, working in partnership with stakeholders, has embarked on the programme to end child marriage, officially launched in 2013. The Ministry of Gender has the responsibility of coordinating the national efforts against child marriage while also addressing the vulnerabilities as well as the consequences associated with marrying off children. In carrying out the above interventions, my Ministry is responsible for strengthening coordination at all levels: raising awareness on child marriage; facilitating the review of policy and legal frameworks related to children and marriage, building capacities of stakeholders at all levels, mobilising funds and facilitating service delivery related to addressing the vulnerabilities and consequences of child marriage. In order to strengthen the national response to ending child marriage, my Ministry, working with stakeholders, has developed this National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage. This document outlines the strategic focus for the period 2016 to 2021. *(Forward by the Minister of Gender*, Ministry of Gender, 2016, p. iv)*.

The impact of teenage pregnancy on the lives of both the young mother and the child are significant and pose great health and developmental risks for both. The ***children of adolescent mothers are more likely to be stunted and malnourished and less likely to live beyond their 5th birthday. The young mothers themselves experience complications and are less likely to be able to provide fully for their children, particularly as they most often drop out of school once falling pregnant***. There is a worrying, rising trend of dropouts related to pregnancy recorded in Zambia, with 16,000 girls leaving school due to pregnancy: only about 50% return after delivery and despite the policies in place allowing and encouraging re-entry (Ministry of Gender, 2016, p. 7).

Text Three (National view)

The main health-related problems facing the adolescents in Zambia include; common health problems, including communicable and NCDs; and ***behaviour related health problems, including early and unprotected sex, sexual abuse, early marriages and pregnancies, unsafe abortions,*** drugs and alcohol abuse, trauma/accidents and violence, and unsafe cultural practices (Ministry of Health, 2011a, p. 10).

Zambia is a multicultural society, which embraces and promotes cultural diversity. However, certain cultural and religious practices are detrimental to the health of those affected. In this respect, unsafe cultural practices affecting adolescents include sexual cleansing, forced teenage marriages, and unsafe traditional male circumcision practices. These practices are also driven by gender disparities and social norms (Ministry of Health, 2011a, p. 13).

Statement by First Lady, Dr Christine Kaseba-Sata (2012)

Today's generation is sold out to alcohol, drugs, and pornography. It has become commonplace to hear many of our young people are hooked to very bad and disturbing vices such as crime, prostitution, and vandalism," Dr Kaseba said. She appealed to the youth to strive to live healthy lifestyles by avoiding alcohol for those below the age of 18, abstaining from sex and shunning crime no matter the desire for money. Dr Kaseba said: "You should focus more on education for that alone will bring release of most shackles of life. Knowledge will empower you to start creating the future for you. A good education is what made me (Zambia Daily Mail, 2012).

Statement by the Vice President of Zambia- Inonge Wina (2018)

Child marriage continues to deny our girls their basic fundamental rights, a chance to be children, to be able to choose when and whom to marry, including living a life free of violence and sexual abuse. Of the 20 countries with the highest child marriage prevalence rates in the world, 15 are in Africa, with prevalence rates ranging from 31 per cent to 75 per cent. Ending the practice of child marriage by 2030, which is the target set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, will require acceleration of efforts, without which more than 150 million girls will be married before their 18th birthday within the next 12 years (Lusakatimes, 2018a)

Statement by First Lady, Esther Lungu (2020)

Early marriages and unintended pregnancies continue to ravage our country, especially in rural areas. And shamelessly, parents even encourage this by separating the two children from their families to live as husband and wife, especially when a girl falls pregnant, all in the name of damage (Lusakatimes, 2020)

Both the global and national problem representation highlights cultural and traditional practices as the root cause of child marriage and teen pregnancy, although, at the national level, Zambia being a Christian nation, adolescent pregnancy in this respect becomes an issue of immorality.

Historically, African sexuality has been described as harmful (Gausset, 2001; Nyanzi, 2011). The HIV/AIDs pandemic accelerated these depictions of culture, such that the HIV infections were tied to and blamed on harmful cultural practices. For example, polygamy (as an African practice) would be perceived as a more dangerous sexual behaviour than homosexual practices (in western countries)(Gausset, 2001). The same negative cultural constructions continue to be applied in the child marriage elimination agenda. This aligns with the dominant constructs about Africa and the western cultural monopoly discussed in chapter five. Similarly, child marriage itself is seen as a harmful traditional practice (as earlier pointed out), but also other traditional practices like puberty initiation ceremonies (discussed in chapter seven) are said to perpetuate early marriage and early childbearing, which are considered serious problems.

Question 2: What assumptions underlie this representation?

This question helps to unpack and understand what underpins the identified problem representations, for example, the assumptions made, the taken-for-granted views/ideas and what remains unquestioned due to these taken-for-granted views

(Bacchi,2009). In this approach, assumptions refer to the background "knowledge" of the taken-for-granted views. Therefore, it becomes possible to identify the conceptual premises that reinforce specific problem representations by examining conjectures (Bacchi, 2009). In addressing this question, Bacchi (2009) recommends thinking beyond national and cultural boundaries by identifying key concepts, binaries, and categories used in the problem representation.

KEY CONCEPTS IN ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE DEBATES

Bacchi (2009) states that policies have key concepts, binaries, and categories that give deeper meaning to problem representations. Key concepts used in problem representations help break down the different meanings attached to the problem. Bacchi (2009, p. 8) defines concepts as "abstract labels that are relatively open-ended". For example, the key concepts used in the adolescent pregnancy and child marriage problem are "poverty", "education" (drop-outs), "immorality", "health" and "abuse" (Intimate Partner Violence) (discussed in the literature review chapter). All these concepts define different notions of the problem according to specific fields. Thus, it is important to analyse how these concepts are used strategically to justify the problem.

BINARIES IN ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE

Identifying binaries in problem representations helps assess the balance/imbalance of what is being presented.

> What is on one side of a binary is considered to be excluded from the other side. In addition, there is a hierarchy implied in binaries. One side is privileged, considered to be more important or more valued than the other side (Bacchi, 2009, p. 7).

As research has shown (globally), binaries in adolescent pregnancy debates involve; negative/positive, unplanned or planned, harmful/unharmful, health/unhealthy, wanted or unwanted, rational/irrational, and morality/immorality. But the dominant side of the story is that adolescent pregnancy is unplanned, unwanted, unhealthy, and harmful. Child marriage is also perceived as unwanted, forced, and harmful. The other side to the story that these teenagers/adolescents make rational choices to become mothers or find marriage as a more attractive option is often dismissed. Some adolescents see pregnancy or marriage as a positive thing, which is overlooked and ignored in policy debates

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(Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Kristin Luker, 1996; Duncan, 2007b; Arai, 2009b).

This leads to people categorisations, in which governments/states tend to control specific target populations. For example, both globally and nationally, the adolescent pregnancy problem is described as problematic for young people by the international community, the African Union, and the national government, including many different stakeholders without many of the people affected by it having a say. This is because the problem is already defined for them (the disadvantaged and powerless group), as well as the solutions.

CATEGORIES/TARGET POPULATIONS

Similar to Schneider and Ingram's (1993) social construction and target population, people/citizen categorisations include age categories like adolescents/teenager/youth, disease categorisations, and gender/sexuality categorisation (Bacchi, 2009). Binaries work in conjunction with categorisations of most often disadvantaged groups who have no power or influence. In Schneider and Ingram's social construction of target populations, certain groups are described as dependants, but also this group has less power or influence. The youth category may be seen as both victims and deviants. For example, moral decay is closely linked to increased sexual immorality among young people in a Christian nation like Zambia. The Zambian youth are grouped as perpetrators of immoral behaviours against the nation's Christian values. The Minister of National Guidance and Religious Affairs and other political actors have often called out the Zambian youth to refrain from entertaining immoral behaviour in the media. Similarly, campaigns against pre-marital sex are emphasised and targeted more at the youth category than other age groups not married.

Thus, teenagers are labelled as sexually active and should be prevented from the destruction of sexual activity until married. At the same time, another binary is that, since teenagers are sexually active, they should be informed about sexual activity as early as possible (CSE) and also provided with adolescent/youth-friendly sexual reproductive health services. Chapters eight and ten detail parliamentary debates and conflicting views on permitting/promoting safe sex methods versus not permitting access to family planning or the distribution of condoms.

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In terms of the ending child marriage agenda in Africa and other parts of the world where it is prevalent, there is further complexity in the global definition of "child marriage" (as discussed in chapters four and five). The global standard definition of child marriage as described by UNFPA (2012) is anyone in a formal union under 18 years in a formal or informal union involving a spouse of the same age or older than 18. Many African governments, including Zambia, have adopted this global definition without considering the localised concepts of a "child", "adult", or the term "marriage" itself. Bacchi (2009, p. 58) points out that "'youth' needs to be considered a socially constructed category. There is no universal meaning of 'youth'. Rather, the content of the category is determined by social, cultural, and historical context".

Thus, ideas and views about who is a child and who is an adult cannot be measured or determined using a standard scale or definition. In this case, international or global categorisations make problem representation problematic.

Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about?

The main goal of asking this question is to explore the "conditions that allow a particular problem representation to take shape and to assume dominance" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 11). It has to do with tracing the genesis of the problem, how it was viewed in the past as to if it was an issue or not, and what mechanisms have developed over time in addressing the issue. "Policy gets made in response to problems, but what is perceived as problematic is itself not fixed, and changes over time" (Gilson, Orgill and Shroff, 2018, p. 21). This question allows us to think historically about the problem presented. The goal here is to "challenge teleological accounts that tend to enshrine what is established in the present as what must be, accounts that constrain the possibility of change"(Bacchi, 2015, p. 139).

This closely relates to the concept of path dependency, in that history matters in explaining present-day situations. However, the way child marriage is viewed today does not represent how it was viewed in the past because of political, economic, and social changes over time. Therefore, it is important to point out that perceptions, views, ideas, and social norms change over time even though some traditions or behavioural traits may remain the same.

THINKING HISTORICALLY ABOUT ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE

As stated earlier, policy problems typically have a path-dependent character and are seldom new. They make it onto the agenda through an event or indicators. For an issue to become recognised as a problem, it has to also have an emotional effect, as explained in the theoretical framework chapter. For example, teen pregnancy was not seen as a problem in the USA until after the 1960s when the teenage childbearing rates seemingly recorded an increase, and it was declared to be a "serious" problem (Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Rhode, 1994; Kristin Luker, 1996; Furstenberg, 2007).

Meanwhile, in the UK, the obsession with teen pregnancy came after the 1980s, following the same trend of increased teen pregnancy rates (Arai, 2009a). Teen pregnancy was seen as the main cause of social exclusion among young people in the UK. This led to the first policy intervention (Teen Pregnancy Strategy (TPS)) to address teen pregnancy in 1997. However, Arai (2009a) points out that in the previous eras, the concern was more on the marital status of a woman, not the age at which they got pregnant. Thus, teen pregnancy was not significant in policy, but single motherhood was a concern.

If unwed/single motherhood seemed unwelcome, it would imply that child/early marriage should have been welcomed and not seen as a problem. To confirm this, for example, in the USA, Furstenberg (2007) states that few teens were having children, but more were choosing to have children outside marriage.

However, the history of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Africa and Zambia, in particular, does not date back as far as that of the USA and UK. There appears to be scarce documentation of the genesis of the problem. It can only be assumed that the recognition of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage as a problem in Africa only began after the ICDP in 1994 (as stated in chapters four and five). It is safe to say that the alertness/awareness or recognition of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage as a problem in Zambia only reached its peak between 2012-2016. Before that and certainly, after independence having children was celebrated as part of the nation-building renaissance, and any family planning was rejected as "neo-colonial" populationism. Youth, in particular, were venerated under humanism, whereas after the 2000s, they became labelled as a scourge and threat.

However, government interventions and programmes to address adolescent pregnancy and child marriage were formulated much later. As highlighted in chapter six, the first policy that listed adolescent sexuality as a priority was the 2008 National Reproductive Health policy, then later the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2011-2015, and finally the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2016-2021.

In the Zambian case, the problem was framed in a range of incoherent statements by different ministers. It was left to mainly the wives of Presidents to make media statements that made headlines and where the issues were presented in very crude ways in terms of the immorality of youth in general, lack of guidance from parents, and moral decay. In the meantime, as already pointed out, the indicators between 1992-2014 (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health and ICF International, 2014) showed a decline in adolescent pregnancy rates and the age at first marriage.

Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?

Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently? This question seeks to extract limitations in these problem representations. What other issues are ignored or overlooked. "A key intervention here is to ask - what fails to be problematised?___ The objective, therefore, is to bring into discussion issues and perspectives that are silenced in identified problem representations"(Bacchi, 2009, pp. 12–13). This question explores binaries in which one view dominates the other and is ignored or not considered to matter. Examining and assessing the other untold side of the story helps unveil relevant factors that need not be excluded from the debates. For example, in adolescent pregnancy research and policy documents, harmful cultural practices are considered one of the causes of teen pregnancy and child marriage as opposed to exposure to pornographic material in the age of increased internet access. There are many silences about the problems that are not explored in the problem representation of teen pregnancy and child marriage.

THE SILENCES IN THE PROBLEM REPRESENTATION

The previous chapter discussed three government interventions from three different policy approaches tackling adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. Each of these ministries, the MoH, the MoGE, and the MoG, describe different problem representations. For the health sector, they see the problem resulting from behavioural

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related problems such as early and unprotected sex as well as unsafe cultural practices (as highlighted in Q1). The Education sector sees pregnancy as a cause of school dropout. Chapter eight highlighted the Minister of Education stating that CSE was introduced as a strategy to prevent teen pregnancy by providing comprehensive sex knowledge in the school/education curriculum. While the gender sector sees child marriage as a form of gender-based violence, it hinders development and is the recipe for poverty among young persons. Thus, according to the Ministry of Gender, the solution to the problem is to eliminate child marriage, which also helps prevent teen pregnancies and ensure that girls and boys are in school.

However, there are three issues that are left unproblematic and not talked about but could be significant in defining the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage. Firstly, while the international community and the government see teen pregnancy and child marriage as a problem, it is unclear if the affected target group sees it in the same way (negatively). As the literature has shown (Arai, 2011; Linders and Bogard, 2014; Mwape, Patricia, et al., 2014; Knox, 2017; Stark and Stark, 2018; Al-Kloub et al., 2019; Kane et al., 2019b; Baba, Salifu Yendork and Atindanbila, 2020), teen pregnancy may also be experienced positively, childbearing may be considered a blessing, and it may be planned as opposed to unplanned or unwanted. Yet, this view seems not to be considered in the problem representation.

Secondly, what if getting pregnant or getting married is a rational choice as opposed to forced marriage, as some studies have shown (Preston-Whyte, 1991; Mkhwanazi, 2010b, 2014; Mann, Quigley and Fischer, 2015)? Mann et al. (2015) highlight that their study (in rural Zambia) found the most common form of child marriage occurs between boys and girls in the same age range who decide on their own to marry. The element of personal choice is ignored as the blame is often attributed to parents marrying off their children or forcing them into unions with older men for financial gain. Understanding why some adolescents/teenagers choose pregnancy or marriage could provide more insights relevant to policy intervention.

Thirdly, as already mentioned, traditional practices are perceived to be harmful, and there appears to be no mention (silences) of good/harmless traditional practices that can help grow and groom young people into responsible citizens. Historically, African culture is perceived negatively, as discussed in chapter five, hence most often traditional

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African practices are seen to be harmful, including initiation ceremonies for boys and girls.

In chapter seven, I highlighted debates on puberty initiation ceremonies that have sparked controversial views. Some find them detrimental as children transit to adulthood, while others find them irrelevant, abusive, and a gateway to increased sexual activity and early marriage. For example, the strategy for ending child marriage in Zambia seeks to raise awareness of the possible dangers of child marriage but does not mention traditional practices that could help facilitate this goal. It focuses on facilitating change rather than enhancing positive pre-existing beliefs or practices that reduce children's vulnerability. As is the case globally, the struggle against the profound influence of advertising media on children as mass consumers means that many are looking to local traditions and community forces to take back their children from the McDonaldisation of youth in which the anti-globalisation agenda takes many forms.

Fourthly, the vision of the strategic plan states, "A Zambia free from child marriage by 2030"(Ministry of Gender, 2016, p. viii). The plan is to eliminate child marriage by raising awareness of the dangers of child marriage. However, this seems more of a preventive strategy than eliminating one because the plan does not offer any intervention for those (adolescents/teenagers) who are already settled in their marriage. However, some organisations such as FAWEZA and YWCA have reported successfully retrieving girls from marriage and enrolling them in school. But what is left unproblematic is the effect or implication of breaking/separating the family. What implications does this have on social structures regarding spirituality/religious beliefs (divorce is not encouraged), financial support, mental and psychological effects?

Lastly, the assumption is that adolescent pregnancy and child marriage are both the cause and consequences of increased school dropout. The assumption is that once a girl gets pregnant, she drops out of school or, once married, she automatically drops out of school to take care of the family. But the government introduced the re-entry policy to give girls a chance to go back to school after pregnancy. However, even after this intervention, few girls return to school (Mwansa, 2011; Simmons et al., 2019; Phiri and Machila, 2020). This indicates that many other factors need to be looked into to address school drop-out. There are also silences on other challenges, for example relating to distance, the quality of education, the motivation to go to school, lack of school

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requirements, and educational facilitates. These are some of the factors that contribute to school dropouts. The other silence is that of poverty and inequality – a national scandal that is obscured by religious fundamentalism and the inability of policymakers to have a rational discussion free of religious obscurantism. Furthermore, Blystad, Moland, et al (2020) found a "binary" discourse on the Zambian teen pregnancy and child marriage problem. Furthermore, Blystad, Moland et al. *(2020)* found a binary discourse on the Zambian teen pregnancy and child marriage problem.

> The dominant and publicly endorsed discourse presenting teenage pregnancy as a problem and schooling as a solution operated side by side with a clear, albeit not as loud informal discourse, that communicated alternative views and understandings of early childbearing. We saw that the parallel discourse commonly took the form of commentaries on how "parents" would entice their children to marry - and receive the bridewealth - rather than go on with their schooling, or on the manner in which "girls" wished to marry and get pregnant rather than go to school (Blystad, Moland et al., 2020, p. 8).

I have suggested that instead of binary, there are multiple discourses. Thus, understanding the alternative options can help define the problem to craft appropriate policy interventions.

Can the problem of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage be thought about differently?

Having outlined the silences and what is left unproblematic/ignored in the problem representations, there are main grey areas that require attention for policy intervention. Thus, I have constructed five alternative ways of thinking about the problem of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia.

Firstly, although teen pregnancy biologically affects girls more, the opposite sex too has a role and a part to play in it. Most programme interventions are centred on girls due to their vulnerability and deep-rooted gender norms. Yet, there needs to be more effort to construct the problem as a social and economic issue for the country as a whole. The burden is placed on those elites who fail to decrease inequality and poverty by stealing money for rural development. Raising awareness of male involvement in sexual reproductive health is another way of situating the issue. For example, both the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan and the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage are silent on approaches targeting male involvement regarding teen pregnancy and child

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marriage. The problem should not only be seen from the girl's perspective but also from the boy or man involved in pregnancy and young marriage. Questions need to be raised about how youth can be directly represented in parliament and govern their own lives.

Secondly, an alternative to the adolescent pregnancy and child marriage "problem" is to explore the corrosive marketisation effects of globalisation and capitalist media in terms of modern changing attitudes and behaviours towards sex and sexuality rather than putting the blame on harmful traditional practices. Communities might want to take back their children from corrosive pornographic capitalist media, but how this happens needs to be carefully thought through. In the USA, the Christian neoconservative critique takes on authoritarian forms, and this is also the direction the Zambian Christian community seems to be taking.

Thirdly, intergovernmental relations at play create another problem, presenting unclear and conflicting problem definitions. Mixed messages on safe sex practices are constantly present in adolescent sexual activity debates. For example, the MoH's approach to "preventing" adolescent pregnancy includes access to services that promote safe sex practices like the use of condoms and contraceptive options for those sexually active. This contradicts the abstinence-only Christian approach endorsed by Zambia's declaration as a Christian nation. Even though not all faith-based organisations agree with this view, some like YWCA and CCZ support safe sex practices, as highlighted in the previous chapter (nine). Thus, rather than presenting sexual activity as the problem here, unprotected sex should be separated as a problem leading to unwanted pregnancy or STI infections. The abstinence-only approach appears problematic as it is restrictive and potentially unachievable in a context where statistics show a sexually active target group.

Fourthly, regarding victims versus villains and forced marriage, it is necessary to avoid simplistic blaming of parents, older men, and traditional practices to explore why adolescents/teenagers willingly choose marriage or starting a family (as studies have shown in some cases). We cannot take it for granted that all child marriages are forced, as purported in some reports. It becomes important, therefore, to examine why marriage and starting a family may appear more attractive to adolescents/teenagers than going to school/education (Schaffnit, Urassa and Lawson, 2019). As I argue, given historical circumstances or given conjunctures in economic fortunes can lead to decisions about marriage or pregnancy.

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Suppose pregnancy or marriage is a rational choice. In that case, it might not be seen as a problem to these young people as understood from the government's perspectives and other organisations. This itself calls for an unbiased re-evaluation of whose problem it is and if it is indeed a problem among young people since few studies have encouraged such thinking to emerge. Could they be made to think it is a problem because the authoritative Christian society and some adults think it is a problem? As I have shown for Zambia, drawing from other scholars to uncover the problem and understand the discourses we need to analyse this problem from the perspective of who defines it and what they seek to benefit from a particular problem representation (Bacchi, 1999; Birkland, 2011; Weible and Sabatier, 2018).

In Zambian, the benefit of advancing this agenda has to do with fitting into the global standard/fight against child marriage, thereby winning the support and favour of the international community. This was evidently reported by the then Minister of Gender (chapter eight) when she spoke about Zambia being praised for its proactiveness in the fight against child marriage, and the financial support received due to this achievement, thereby attracting donor funds. This may explain why child marriage has been declared a "national crisis", even though the statistics show otherwise.

Fifthly, the preference to "prevent" teen pregnancy and "eliminate" child marriage should be viewed differently. Teen pregnancy is seen as a serious public health issue not only from the health profession lens. Even though it is not particularly a "disease", when it concerns young people, it seems to be treated like one when it comes to adolescents/teenagers. The issue of age and pregnancy-related complications generally applies to every woman, but it has been said that young/adolescent mothers are more at risk of certain maternal complications. At the same time, research (Arora et al., 1994; Godha et al., 2016; Moraes, Likwa and Nzala, 2018) has shown other maternal-related complications exist in the much older age groups (more of this discussion is presented in the literature review). This implies that maternal-related complications affect all age groups, not only one particular target population. Thus, it is more helpful to focus on how best to deal with maternal complications and provide the required advice to specific target groups rather than labelling adolescent pregnancy as a public health problem or clinical condition. As stated in chapter four, access to health facilities and monitoring pregnancy among adolescents remains problematic and challenging in most developing

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countries rather than pregnancy-related problems (Mahavarkar, Madhu and Mule, 2008; Cherry and Dillon, 2014). Moreover, Lawlor and Shaw (2002) warn policy actors about labelling teen pregnancy as a public health problem and ignoring/overlooking the moral and social context. Thus, I argue an alternative way to look at the problem is to assess the pre-conditions that set the scene for maternal-related complications, such as the health systems capacity, poor diet, and access to quality reproductive health services for young people.

Lastly, an oversimplification is assumed that adolescent pregnancy and child marriage are the only cause and consequence of increased school dropout. The assumption is that once a girl gets pregnant, she drops out of school, or, once married, she automatically drops out of school to take care of the family. But the government introduced the re-entry policy to give girls a chance to go back to school after pregnancy. However, even after this intervention, few girls returned to school (Mwansa, 2011; Simmons et al., 2019; Phiri and Machila, 2020). This indicates that many other factors need to be looked into to address school drop-out. As stated above, there are silences on, other challenges relating to distance, the quality of education, the motivation to go to school, lack of school requirements, and educational facilitates. These are some of the factors that could contribute to school dropouts. The other silence is that of poverty and inequality – a national scandal that is obscured by religious fundamentalism and the inability of policymakers to have a rational discussion free of religious obscurantism. Furthermore, Blystad, Moland et al. (2020) found a "binary" discourse on the Zambian teen pregnancy and child marriage problem.

Question 5: What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

Problem representations produce certain effects that disadvantage target groups and benefit others, creating an imbalance or injustices that may not be noticed or acknowledged.

> The overall goal is to be able to say which aspects of a problem representation have deleterious effects for which groups, and hence may need to be rethought. There is also the intention of providing a means to consider the long-range impact of policy interventions in terms of social change (Bacchi, 2009, p. 18).

As we stated earlier, one view dominates the other in binaries, thereby limiting avenues for broader problem-solving. This question seeks to interrogate the effects of

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problem representations " in order to see where and how they function to benefit some and harm others, and what can be done about this" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 15). In answering this question, Bacchi (2009) suggests using three ways of assessing problem representation effects; discursive, subjectification, and lived effects.

DISCURSIVE EFFECTS

"Discursive effects are those created by the limits imposed on what can be thought or said within particular problem representations" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 69). This implies that the dominant constructs described in questions 1 and 2 limit or blind us from unconventionally thinking about a problem (like Gramsci's idea of hegemony and common sense). As Schneider and Ingram (1993) state, social constructs have a way of dominance that leads to practices and beliefs that grow to be unquestionable, especially if instituted by powerful forces. Hence, this approach challenges taken-for-granted assumptions, viewing a problem in an unpopular and unwelcome way. These taken-for-granted views are left unquestioned, leading to hidden dimensions of the problem that provide relevant insights to understanding the problem. "If some options for social intervention are closed off by the way in which a "problem" is represented, this can have devastating effects for certain people"(Bacchi, 2009, p. 16).

This is seen in the Zambian scenario. As a Christian nation, limits are imposed on what can be said and thought about sex or sexuality. Even though not every Zambian is a Christian, every citizen is meant to think the Christian way. With the re-enforcement of the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs headed by a reverend, sex before marriage, homosexuality, and other sexual orientations are demonised. This path has limitations on how sex and sexuality are viewed in Zambia despite the reality that these forbidden practices are prevalent. This position has put the Zambian government in conflict with international human rights advocates and certain organisations but aligns with neo-cons like USA former president Trump. Due to this stance, even the CSE has attracted controversy among the clergy and within the government itself, causing divisions (for example, the CSE is perceived to be against Christian values). Sticking to one dominant view limits different avenues for minority groups that suffer in silence and are excluded from the privilege of state protection and other social services that other acceptable groups enjoy.

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Another implication of the dominant anti-sex approach for young people can be linked to unsafe abortions (which is considered among the many health-related problems adolescents face in Zambia). Even though abortion is legal under certain strict circumstances in Zambia (details mentioned at the beginning of this chapter), it is not socially and religiously acceptable. Those who are suspected of or found to have had an illegal abortion face both legal and social implications. They are disgraced, discriminated against, and stigmatised in public and in some cases, they may encounter violent attacks from the angry community (Haaland et al., 2020). Therefore, discursive effects tend to produce more problems than what is perceived as a problem resulting in dividing practices. In a broader context, these effects contribute to social injustice, inequality, and unequal distribution of social services and policy divide favouring certain groups while ignoring other target groups.

SUBJECTIFICATION EFFECTS

The subjectification effect has to do with "the way in which the problem representations within policies often set groups of people in opposition to each other" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 16). The subjectification effect maintains a subjective position based on how policies, social norms, or the social/political environment dictate. Bacchi (2009, p. 70) argues that "policies do not stand outside us but produce us as particular kinds of subjects through rewarding certain forms of behaviour". This means that policies divide or categorise society into two camps of political subjects formed through dominant constructs.

> Targets also are affected through many other aspects of policy design, such as rules, tools, rationales, and the causal logic that explains how targets relate to the problem definition (Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon, 2007, p. 96).

Thus, certain policy designs shape the experiences of target groups and how to think about problems. Policies that dwell on negatively construed behaviours of target groups have negative implications on policy effectiveness (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). For example, child marriage is declared illegal and unwanted, which means child brides are excluded from policy interventions like the strategic plan on ending child marriage which focuses on preventing the act to protect those not yet married but leaving those already married unsupported. This is similar to the group of sexually active young people

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labelled as immoral and doomed for hell as biblical principles forbid fornication (sex before marriage). They need to be spiritually transformed to align with the nation's Christian values. Additionally, it is important to construct a history of subjectivity to identify the transformations and factors that form the pedagogy, advice about behaviour and conduct, spiritual guidance and prescriptions on how to live (Winch, 2005).

The Zambian constitution does not protect people of different sexual orientations. This leaves this group of people with no sense of belonging and feel unwanted or abnormal because the government does not protect them. Such are the implications of subjectification effects that need to be reviewed in policy interventions on dealing with vulnerable, disadvantaged groups in society. This also leads to the lived effects of dominant constructs.
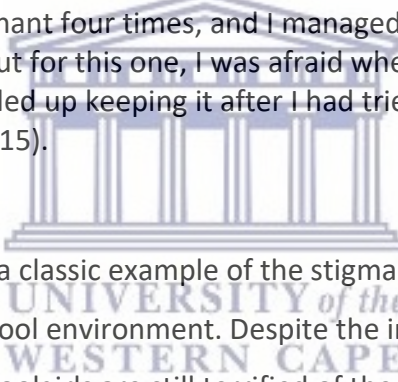
LIVED EFFECTS

Some lived effects harm others silently or overtly, especially if they are discriminating or stigmatising. These views are often socially unacceptable and against social norms. Due to dominant social constructs, people begin to live and experience life through unchangeable dominant constructs. It becomes almost impossible to question these dominant positions even in global policies. Effects of dominant constructs can have massive long-lasting impacts on a broader context. For example, colonialism left Africa in a path-dependent state. Most legal frameworks, policies, cultural practices/religious beliefs, administrative and political structures still follow the formal colonial systems. In chapter five, I argue that the dominant-negative constructs about Africa have affected the way research is conducted and that Africa maintains a position of disadvantage, stigmatisation and dependency. The effects of this are seen in Africa not having to maintain its identity, oppressed by a homogenised culture that conflicts with the local setting.

Bacchi (2009, p. 93) states that "directing attention to lived effects means thinking about the material consequences of identified problem representations for individuals' day-to-day lives".

The text below describes some effects of the negativity attached to pregnancy and abortion;

They all look innocent as they walk to school from Monday to Friday, but surprisingly, a few months later, we discover that two or three in that group are pregnant. These words of Sesheke district commissioner Mihupulo Yumei came following increased cases of schoolgirl pregnancies and abortions. As if that is not enough, when schoolgirls discover they are pregnant, they either consult a friend on how to get rid of the pregnancy, or they go to elderly women in the communities to help them abort._____ If you look at statistics from the district education office, you will discover that teenage pregnancies are a common feature, and these girls always find a way of getting rid of a pregnancy in order to go back to school. Unfortunately, most of these girls go unnoticed once they are pregnant because they have become professionals in procuring abortions. Although abortion in Zambia is legal on medical and social grounds, most schoolgirls in Sesheke resort to illegal means because legal services are inaccessible and unacceptable. The main reason girls resort to abortion for fear of being expelled from school and their unwillingness to reveal a secret relationship. For Kezia Sililo of McKillop township in Sesheke, getting pregnant whilst in school was the most humiliating experience she would not wish on anyone else. Ms Sililo says she had aborted three pregnancies before, and she did this because she wanted to continue with school. I got pregnant four times, and I managed to successfully terminate the three, but for this one, I was afraid whether I would be successful or not; I ended up keeping it after I had tried two times to terminate it (Nawa, 2015).

The above text describes a classic example of the stigma and trauma attached to getting pregnant within the school environment. Despite the implementation of the re-entry policy, it appears that schoolgirls are still terrified of the stigma and shame attached to pregnancy in school. Thus, they end up resorting to illegal means to resolve their sexual problems. Most adolescent policies are silent on addressing illegal abortions (bearing in mind the Christian views against abortion even if it is legal under special conditions) among frightened teens and adolescents. This is also one of the areas left unproblematic in policy intervention.

Additionally, the stigma attached to adolescent mothers is one of the challenges of the re-entry policy in Zambia (Mwanza, 2015; Simmons, Henning, Mumba et al., 2019). Young/adolescent mothers are stigmatised when they go back to school, as single adolescent motherhood is labelled as a bad thing. Since pregnancy is seen as such a negative thing, pregnant teenagers experience stressful pregnancy because of the stigma,

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disgrace and shame of pregnancy outside marriage (Katowa et al., 2017). In this case, it is not the pregnancy that is stressful, but the stigma and shame one brings upon the family. This stigma is not only associated with societal norms but also the nation's Christian values that preach against sexual immorality and fornication.

Question 6: How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced?

How has this representation been disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted, and replaced? In answering these questions, Bacchi (2009) points out that it is particularly important to interrogate the role of mass media and academic research in problem representations. The problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage trickles down from the global, continental, regional and national levels. The problem has been highlighted in several international reports, academic materials, national policy documents, documentaries, YouTube videos, and other social media platforms. The statements presented below are just a few of the many headings/titles that flood the newspaper media on the subject of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia.

How is the problem simplified, disseminated, and produced?

The following are a few headlines extracted from the news media;

"Youths Moral Degradation Worry Government" (ZANIS, 2010)

 "First Lady Dr Kaseba bemoans immorality among youths" (Zambia Daily Mail, 2012)

"First Lady calls for law to criminalise early marriages" (Lusakatimes, 2014b)

 "SADC Parliamentary forum bemoans child marriages" (Mwansa, 2015a)

 "Child marriage robs girls of childhood" (A. Mwansa, 2015)

 "Sex before marriage distorts young girl's future" (Kawanga, 2016)

 "Teenage pregnancies worry First Lady" (Nyondo, 2016)

"Teen sex sign of moral decay" (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 2017b)

"Let's be firm on morality" (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 2019)

"First Lady warns parents giving children in marriage" (Lusakatimes, 2020)

These headlines align with chapter eight's problem representation described in the selected policies addressing teen pregnancy and child marriage. Discussions on the matter have mainly involved the political office of the first ladies, NGOs and vocal newspaper columnists. The media (especially newspapers) presents a general picture of how adolescent sexual behaviour is generally viewed from a moral perspective. The media production tells who is to blame, what is the cause and what is the best solution.

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Adding to Bacchi's question of how/where these problem representations are produced or disseminated, it is also critical to look at "who" disseminates the information and how they defend it. Thus, it is the role of different actors and their position that solidifies dominant constructions. For example, a state-owned broadcasting service may not operate completely independently without the control of the government of the day. An example of this is highlighted in chapter six when the Information Minister instructed ZNBC not to air foreign shows with gay/lesbian or homosexual content in a newspaper article titled "Man kissing man, not for ZNBC" (Mwila, 2019).

The "who" is likely more important in convincing the single side of the story than where it is disseminated. Who says it matters more than how or where they say it. Like many other public problems, the commonly used platform for disseminating the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda in Zambia has been the newspaper (both online and hardcopy) and television platforms. As already mentioned, top politicians (first ladies, the president, ministers, chiefs, and local/international NGOs) have been the main actors defending the position of eliminating child marriage and preventing teen pregnancy. The people who have been championing this fight and talking about it in their speeches, parliamentary sessions, and conferences are part of why the topic has attracted attention. The authority used to declare child marriage as a "national crisis" (The Post Newspaper, 2014) makes a case for no other way to dispute the statement.
How is this position defended?

As stated in the previous chapters, a problem gains popularity through an event or indicators (Birkland, 2011). Notably, whenever the problem of adolescent pregnancy comes up, automatically statistics are mentioned. Most of the documents cite statistics to justify the problem of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. This is reported officially and unofficially, but the official statistics are presented through the ZDHS. For example, in chapter eight, the NGOs refer to indicators to show how serious the problem is despite the ZDHSs showing a decline in teen childbearing from 34% in 1992 to 29% in 2014/2018 (Zambia Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018). The statistics also show that 13% of women and 16% of men between 15-19 years already had sexual intercourse by age 15. On marriage, in general, statistics show a decline in marriage from 66% in 1992 to 55% in 2018 among women. Only 2% of women and less than 1% of men age 15-19 were married by age 15. The percentage of married

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women by age 18 has increased to 39% (this is attributed to education, i.e. the lower the age, the little the education).

Additionally, the median age at first marriage by women is estimated at 19 years (2018) from 17 years in 1992 between age 20-49. Although the ZDHS does not provide a direct indicator for child marriage prevalence, these general marriage trends give a picture of marriage occurrences in Zambia. The overview of these statistics do not indicate a rise in teen childbearing or early marriage; thus, they do not correspond with the high level of attention given to this topic.

Arguably, this decline has given hope to some actors that it is possible to eliminate child marriage and prevent teen pregnancy. But there is also insufficient evidence that proves the elimination method is the solution to poverty, school dropout, low educational attainment or a gateway to a successful life for young people. History has shown us that even developed countries like the USA and UK that tried to manage the "serious problem" of teen pregnancy in the 1960s did not successfully achieve the best results in their intervention strategies due to the misrepresentation of the problem as argued by many researchers (Weatherley, 1987; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale, 1989; Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Rhode, 1994; Furstenberg, 2003, 2007; Arai, 2011).

HOW COULD THESE DOMINANT CONSTRUCTS BE QUESTIONED?

The dominant problem representation of, for example, teen pregnancy as a sign of sexual immorality leading to moral decay constraints alternative ways to think about the problem. This has produced harmful effects that appear less helpful in problem-solving and more destructive, thereby creating more problems. Thus, question six also examines how such dominant constructs can be disrupted, questioned, and replaced. For this to happen, there is a need to deconstruct the dominant constructs, which can be achieved by reframing problematisations and producing knowledge. Bacchi (1999) points out that mass media and academic research play a critical role in knowledge production. Thus, the key here is to question the reproduction of knowledge (how these dominant constructs come to be accepted as truth) and change the narrative (by presenting alternative views). I argue that changing dominant constructs is not an easy task, especially in the African

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context (considering the discussion in chapter five on the negative constructions of the continent and its position globally).

Similarly, contesting the negative view about teen pregnancy and child marriage in a Christian stronghold nation like Zambia proves to be an equally hard task. Therefore, the problem representation on teen pregnancy and child marriage goes beyond the issue itself and is tied to Zambia's colonial past, and Africa's dispossessed position, which leaves Zambia and many other African countries weak and in a donor-dependent position. As discussed throughout, the teen pregnancy and child marriage agenda appear to be a global agenda driven by, firstly, the powerful global community and, secondly, by the national political leaders that seek to be aligned with the global agenda in order to reap financial benefits and acceptable global policy standing.

"We have to accept that, as researchers, we have work to do in ensuring that we do not simply buy into certain problem representations without reflecting on their origins, purposes, and effects"(Bacchi, 1999, p. 19). Thus, in questioning and replacing problem representations in the African context, colonialism is crucial and has been largely ignored in the theories of the social constructions of problems, policymaking processes, and African problems in particular. Having presented this broader perspective, the narrow view of the problem of teen pregnancy calls for more thorough examinations of the discursive, subjectification, and lived effects presented in question five. For example, the stigma attached to painting teen pregnancy as immoral and unacceptable in a Christian nation like Zambia leads to more panic, discrimination, and stigma, and denies sexually active teenagers/adolescents to reproductive health services that the Ministry of Health is mandated to provide all citizens regardless of age.

Moreover, targeting the so-called "harmful traditional practices" is deceptive as modernity and globalisation play a significant role in the evolving and changing ideas about young people's sexual attitudes and behaviours. It further helps to explore child marriage in a context where it is not "forced" as purported but rather a "personal choice" made by young people. Some young people might prefer marriage, parenting, or motherhood/starting a family before getting an education. How does this alternative conventional norm hinder young people's growth and personal development (if at all it does) compared to the general standard of using education as a solution to preventing

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teen pregnancy and child marriage? This is a central question for researchers engaged in examining these particular discourses.

Another important factor that needs questioning is the selective statistical problematisation of the issue, using indicators to justify the problem as a crisis even when it shows that the problem is, in fact, on the decline. For example, DHSs are the main sources used in quantitative studies (including global comparative studies) on adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. They are vital in presenting a broad statistical view of a population's fertility/sexuality trends and more. Nonetheless, these national surveys may not adequately provide sufficient data that accurately shows the extent of the problem pronounced as a "serious" problem without additional qualitative studies.

Thus, DHSs should not be seen as a benchmark for policy intervention but as a guide into in-depth research that helps to unravel contextual issues about the problem. It is from this point of view that social scientists should begin to question how statistics have been used to interpret and frame social problems. In particular, in the Zambian case, we have seen what the ZDHS shows and what is presented about the "seriousness" of teen pregnancy and child marriage, but the two cannot be reconciled. The numbers are used to accelerate how to think about the issue and policy intervention thereof. If the numbers are declining, but the issue appears to be even more visible, this presents an opportunity to embark on additional in-depth research.

CONCLUSION

Using Bacchi's WPR approach, this chapter discussed and expanded on Zambia's teen pregnancy and child marriage problem representations. The WPR approach focuses on problem-questioning rather than problem-solving. It is particularly relevant in the social construction frameworks as it questions taken-for-granted assumptions (dominant constructs). Thus, the aim of this approach is not to seek the best solutions to a problem but to examine six ways; (i) how these problems are defined and constructed; (II) assumptions about the problem; (iii) the origins of the problem; (iv) the different ways to think about the problem; (v) the effects produced from dominant constructs; (vi) and lastly the dissemination of the problem representation, how it can be questioned and replaced.

The WPR approach in this chapter helps deconstruct the damage caused by the one-sided dominant-negative problem representation of teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. The problem represented highlighted in *question 1*, speaks to the issue of "harmful" traditional practices and sexual immorality among the youth. The young people are perceived as perpetrators of national moral decay because of being overly sexually active against the nation's Christian values of abstinence before marriage. Thus teen pregnancy is seen as a sign of sexual immorality (due to modernity), but at the same time, the general blame is attributed to "harmful" traditional practices. In other instances, parents are blamed for forcing children into early marriage for financial reasons. Hence poverty is seen as one of the drivers of child marriage. What is left unproblematic (*question 4*) is that some studies show a different context of child marriage which is not forced and has nothing to do with traditional processes. This has been overlooked even in the strategic plan to end child marriages. This unbalanced representation of the problem tends to benefit certain groups at the expense of other (vulnerable or not so popular) groups.

Therefore, I argue that teen pregnancy and child marriage negative representations have benefited or been more convenient for political actors than the concern to prevent or eliminate what is perceived to be a danger to the well-being of young people. This is shown by the stigmatisation, and discriminatory tendencies produced by views that perceive teen pregnancy as a sign of immorality, ungodliness, shameful and unacceptable behaviour described in **question 5**. This has had implications on some of the policies (re-entry education policy), which attempt to clear the assumption that pregnant learners/pupils or teen mothers cannot complete their education while pregnant or married. However, as pointed out, studies have shown the difficulties (discrimination and stigma) encountered by girls who attempt to return to school after pregnancy or those in marriage. Seeking ways of thinking about addressing these issues can help reframe the problem for appropriate policy intervention to counter some of the deleterious effects.

Finally, *Question 6*, addresses the issue from a much broader perspective of deconstructing the negative notions about Africa, devaluing and distorting precolonial tradition because that's where it all begins. The reproduction of knowledge, in which academic research (application of Africanised concepts) plays a key role in reframing problem representation to suit the context. Trickling down to the problematisation of

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teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia, the one-sided problem representation needs to be questioned. There is a need to explore the harm/damage of labelling teen pregnancy as immoral and blaming child marriage on harmful traditional practices. Certainly, the policies in place create divides and segregation of categories. For example, sexually active young people are immoral and responsible for the nation's moral decay and are perceived as deviants, while those who abstain from sex until marriage are morally upright citizens. Similarly, the indigenous groups/tribes seeking to practice their traditions and customs are overtaken by the dominant Christian notions and values (enforced by Zambia's constitutional declaration as a Christian nation) that have come to control citizens' lives in all aspects (including private matters).

Moreover, the fragmented government policies controlling young people's sexual behaviour are confusing and conflicting. There is no clear message and position in tackling teen pregnancy and child marriage. On the one hand, Christian/biblical principles advocate "abstinence before marriage". On the other hand, the Ministry of Health's mandate seeks to provide sexual reproductive health services to sexually active adolescents to prevent unwanted pregnancies and infections.

Finally, this analysis reveals that the negative dominant representation and demonisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage potentially lead to stigma and discrimination, hindering the success of more progressive policies like the re-entry policy. This ultimately connects multiple streams of problems to do with access to adolescent sexual reproductive health services, including abortion services or the right to access education free without stigma or discrimination.

CHAPTER 10: CHALLENGING THE CONSENSUS AND REFLECTIONS

My interest in this research, as explained earlier, was motivated by the "moral panic" around teen pregnancy and child marriage which made headline news in Zambian media at a time when there seemed to be much bigger issues to tackle and when a surge of political evangelism also gripped the country. The newspapers, national television, international human rights agencies, and political actors particularly used phrases like "national crisis", a "major public health and social problem", and "teen pregnancy a serious problem". However, much of the media and policy discussion lacks a sense of longue durée, conflicted senses of space-time, and the paths that policy debates had travelled. This led me to look at archival materials, newspapers, policy documents, parliamentary debates, and interviews with non-state actors to gather data on how the matter has been construed over time and under colonial influences.

My analysis was guided by applying the social constructionist view to social problems and other concepts like bounded rationality, Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), path dependence, liberal imperialism, spatio-temporalities, and Bacchi's "what is the problem" (WPR) idea. A combination of these concepts formed the analytical backbone for the study. Even though I used these concepts, I still found that they fell short of fully examining the Zambian context, given that Zambia's history and complicated system of governance are largely drawn from traditional concepts of space and time, liberal imperialism/Christianity, and capitalist modernity and the civilising mission.

This research set out to explore the historical, social, and political construction of what I call "adolescent reproductive politics", focusing on teen pregnancy and child marriage in Zambia. Sexual mores, intimate relations, teen pregnancy, and child marriage in Africa have long attracted global and regional attention from the time of missionaries and colonial anthropology to current concerned international organisations (WHO, UNFPA, AU), advocacy groups, and health experts. The concern raised by many (global and national policy actors) is that teen pregnancy and child marriage have contributed to fundamental problems faced by young people, ranging from health, human rights, and social and economic well-being. However, it has also been cast as a major hindrance to eradicating poverty and national development. Young people have become targets of

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new populationism and social engineering policies, and this is often dressed up as human rights violations of the helpless girl child who needs to be rescued by liberal imperialists.

Therefore, in elite policy circles, there is an urgent consensus that teen pregnancies should be prevented (by all means) and child marriage eliminated. This agenda has been driven by UNFPA, WHO, AU, and NGOs, leading most African governments to formulate action plans to eliminate child marriage in Zambia. Zambia's Ministry of Gender has since implemented the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2016-2021), fitting into the global call to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Other significant policies addressing teen sexual behaviour include the controversial Comprehensive Sexuality Education 2014 (CSE), the re-entry education policy 1997, and the Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (AHSP).

However, the study's objective was not to evaluate policy implementation but rather to ask a number of prior questions and to historically analyse and examine the problematisation of teen pregnancy and child marriage. I also sought to examine terms such as "teen" - an essentially Euro-capitalist invention imposed onto Africa as part of its intellectual and moral hegemony.

This study is significant for academics (particularly African researchers) and policy actors because Africa has increasingly become the world's focus for research, but most of the research is conducted by non-Africans (Basedau, 2020). Although researchers have questioned the western styles of thinking "Africa", not enough rethinking of issues of time, space, youth and gender have been undertaken. However, some feminists (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Aniekwu, 2006; Tamale, 2011; Mohanty, 2013) have questioned the application of western feminism to black or African women because of differing beliefs and social norms. Similarly, this thesis has shown that it is important to question the western "taken for granted" problem constructions of policy issues around teen sexual matters in the Zambian context. Therefore, my main argument is that we must contest the dominant and narrow construction of the youth as "teenagers", and that "teen" pregnancy and "child" marriage lead to doom, failure and "social death". More broadly, we need to be critical of imposed western-capitalist norms of time and space that have been built around the central institutions of private property and the commodification of persons and nature. The question of the imposed universalism of western enlightenment

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with its capitalist entanglements also underlies this thesis. After all, it was in the name of the universal reason that colonial conquest, exploitation, and war took place.

This research specifically set out to answer; how policies about lifecycles, childbearing, age, sex, marriage, and the family were constructed and contested historically and how government and other actors (non-state actors) viewed and responded to the issue over time. What changes and continuities can be seen in how the problem has been perceived over time, and how could the problem be viewed differently today? What lessons can be learned, what has been silenced and what are the implications?

The findings mainly reveal a general consensus on the problematisation of adolescent/teen pregnancy from the government and non-state actors' perspective. As expected, both share similar understandings about the causes and consequences of teen pregnancy and child marriage as described in the literature. Five non-state actor organisations agree that adolescent pregnancy and child marriage is a "serious" problem in Zambia. It is also agreed that the issue gained recognition through foreign agencies/external influences, even though the ZDHS statistics show a decline in teen pregnancy rates from 1992-2018. Still, this decline has not changed how the problem is perceived. For the Kaunda era, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that teen/adolescent pregnancy in the past (under humanism) was not perceived as a problematic practice by the government (even statistics are silent on this), nor did the label "teen" exist. Official national health policy documents did not mention teen pregnancy or child marriage before it was first highlighted as a major issue in the National Reproductive Health Policy (2008). Although public discussion of sex was taboo in the Kaunda era, it was a major element of community processes of education of the youth during initiation ceremonies.

Thus, traditional elders were the custodians of sex education and graduation into adulthood. The principle of humanism prescribed social discipline and youth-related programmes that valued young people and taught them how to become responsible and accountable *community and national* citizens. The Humanism era was one of fostering a policy discourse of collective and communal responsibility for molding young people into good citizens and equipping them with the necessary life skills.

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This thesis suggests that these forms of collectivity and socialisation may offer a more effective path to addressing contemporary adolescent sexual-related matters like "teen" pregnancy compared to the individualised human rights and neo-liberal responsibility discourse.

Thus a specific spatio-temporal practice was located at the community level. In contemporary Zambia, sex has become more of a public/government issue and, simultaneously, a discriminatory moral issue. Young people are seen as a burden and block on economic development. As a result, changes have occurred in the education curriculum, with sex education moving away from "taboo" and "private spaces" to formal institutions of education (primary and secondary school) through CSE.

Most of the internationally funded women's movements began appearing after 1991 when neo-liberal ideas began to gain currency. These organisations pushed against the notion that sex, marriage and family matters (regardless of age) were more of a community matter than a "public" one. The European category "public", I argue, is unhelpful and has confused matters. This epistemic critique can be seen in the work of Adesina (2011, 2020) and Mamdani (1996) referred to in this thesis.

In this thesis, I am also using the term "Zambia" in a way that reflects its inner complexity and its construction as an artefact of colonialism. There have been bizarre struggles over who is Zambian, as Kaunda himself experienced. The many groups in Zambia share much but also have differences. In the thesis, I approached "culture" as neither cast in stone nor bounded since there are constant dynamic interactions between groups. There are deep struggles about dissolving and sustaining "culture" and the right to have collective identities and issues of who the custodians of "culture" might be. There are major democratic questions around the rights of historically oppressed groups to have "culture" and the different ways of valuing culture in the face of powerful forces of globalisation. The notion of "harmful" African culture, for example, might be contrasted with the harm from the hyper-commodification and hyper-visual regime of sex in the media and objectification of women (Nyanzi, 2011; Tamale, 2011; Mohanty, 2013) through the internet than these initiation ceremonies.

When it comes to who is to blame, the general consensus is that girls are the victims of a variety of forces (such as poverty, forced early marriage, harmful customs, especially in rural areas and so on). The argument that girls are "victims" is one-sided

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because this and other research have shown that early marriage or pregnancy may, in fact, be desired and is a socially acceptable norm in many cases. Social norms are not universal or global, and what constitutes "early" pregnancy or marriage cannot be standardised using a single age definition. It becomes critical to question how "early is too early" is constructed. As I have emphasised in this research, the different local conceptualisations of time and space and what it means to be a "child" or "adult" are critical. There are also issues around the liberal fetish of individual rights as against collective, cultural, or group rights. The "girl-child" is typically abstracted from the community.

In addressing the question: who is to *blame?* We need a broader focus on the politics of policy. Parents, poverty, and bad cultural practices are blamed for the problem. The said solution to the problem is to "eliminate harmful traditional practices" rather than address inequality driven by corporate greed with the collaboration of an evangelic Zambian elite. The latter issues clearly need to be brought more to the centre of the policy agenda. I have therefore brought religion and state into the thesis in order to explore the ways that blame might be shifted and real challenges of Zambia obscured (see chapter five).

Moreover, the Zambian state apparatus is largely incoherent with conflicting messages and clashes within government policies and ministerial mandates. This, too, has more to do with elite politics than meeting people's needs. This has created confusion and unclear messages to the Zambian young people who are seen as perpetrators of national moral decay due to sexual immorality. My interviews with the Zambian trade union (BETUZ) also strongly points to these incoherent state policies and agencies.

KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION

Broadly, in Africa, research on teen pregnancy and child marriage seem to follow a path-dependent colonial style (as discussed in chapter two) that largely depicts negative constructions about teen pregnancy and child marriage. This negative view of harmful practices by powerful organisations like the WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF, has set a universal standard and solution to the problem overlooking the contextual background and local settings. The Zambian government has officially adopted a similar stance. Even government documents such as the strategic plan on ending child marriage rely heavily

on a one-sided view of statistical data. Partial representation of evidence can lead to flawed knowledge production (Wilson and Huntington, 2006). Wilson and Huntington (2006, p. 70) further add that "if society is really concerned about teen motherhood, then support rather than stigmatisation through the domination of science is a more compassionate and effective approach". In short, there appears to be insufficient evidence to substantiate the claim that teen pregnancy and child marriage is a "national crisis" but more importantly there are fundamental democratic issues of who gets to decide how the social clock is set.

The study fills the knowledge gap regarding problem questioning and policy intervention. I do not argue against the existence of the phenomenon but rather demonstrate how path-dependent dominant constructs/taken-for-granted views blind researchers and concerned stakeholders from critically analysing problems through a multidimensional lens. Few African studies (Haaland *et al.*, 2019, 2020; Blystad, Moland, *et al.*, 2020) use the social construction approach and do not question the problematisation linked to path dependence, colonial legacy, and extensive global pressure putting the entire Africa in an unquestionable inferior position and negatively construed view.

Thus, with complicated societal and political structures deeply rooted in its colonial past, Zambia cannot be studied adequately using US-based public policy models, frameworks, and theories. This calls for modifying and building Africanised public policy theories and research methodologies identifying with the unique African setting.

My scholarly contributions to advancing the debate are listed under five categories.

Firstly, this thesis contributes to knowledge through applying the international literature on teen pregnancy that argues against the negative depiction. I have referred to various scholars (Weatherley, 1987; Nathanson, 1991; Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley, 1993; Wilson and Huntington, 2006; Duncan, 2007; Furstenberg, 2007; Arai, 2009). Raising these questions for Zambia certainly adds a new perspective and alternative way to think about the current problematisation of the issue. In my analysis, I emphasise that it is inappropriate to suggest that teen pregnancy and child marriage is a crisis in Zambia, considering that studies have shown (Mwape et al., 2014; Mann, Quigley and Fischer, 2015; Patricia et al., 2017; Menon et al., 2018) the desire to reproduce is high among many females and marriage is considered the honourable thing to do. Both

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motherhood and marriage command respect in the Zambian culture and remain a very much deep-rooted social norm.

Secondly, my contribution is an attempt to add a historical perspective tracing the issue from the pre-colonial era to contemporary Zambia. I have shown that, over time, changes in ideologies from humanism to liberalisation have been contested and affect the governance of society and youth. Much of the international and Zambia policy literature lacks a sufficient sense of history, with many analysing only a decade of data to establish a trend.

Thirdly, I extend the critique of the dominant Eurocentric capitalist framing of what it means to be human and the continued domination of other countries seen as inferior and underdeveloped often because they have alleged harmful practices. There is much to be valued in African culture relating to African reproductive matters, young people and sexual matters. This calls for the Africanisation of reproductive health politics.

Fourthly, my findings revealed significant governmental inter-departmental conflicts and contradictions in their approaches to defining the problem of teen pregnancy and child marriage and its solutions. Although some studies have revealed these policy dynamics and the mixed messages, they do not adequately address matters in a deep context (structural and historical context). I also analysed parliamentary debates to get views from policymakers and their understanding of the problem. These conflicts reflect deeper unresolved questions about the post-colonial Zambian state and its elite. The fifth contribution is that I analysed the intersection of Zambia's politics of Christianity/religion, colonialism, and historical-structural challenges from a broader perspective. The general politics of the destabilised copper mining and the inception of the structural adjustment, rising inequality and de-industrialisation also form a critical context for a new politics of blaming the victim and a politics of distraction. However, linking history to the present, the politics of distraction apply as it is easier to blame "teenagers", "sex", and "immorality" for the utter failures of the Zambian elite policy actors and their penchant for evangelic politics.

In this regard, I draw on the works of James Ferguson, Miles Larmer and Michael Burawoy, some of the major writers on Zambia but whose most recent revisionist reflections have been pessimistic. I do concur with Ferguson's ideas on decomposing modernity into "multiple modernities" rather than a single way of viewing modernity

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(Ferguson, 2006). Here the temporalisation of spatial and societal differences is crucial – an angle I further explored in this study. The social construction of time and space depends on how each society defines it, and these definitions are in flux and contested. Each society defines, for example, the time to get married or the time for childbearing. There is no universal time or space for these constructions. Thus, it becomes important to study Zambia and the Zambia youth based on how time and space are construed to better understand social problems/issues.

Sixthly, given that policy studies can often be narrowly focused on specific sectors or issue-specific, I contributed to the field of policy studies by broadening and expanding the debates by looking at policies in health, education and culture. Lastly, few studies in the Zambian literature critically explore "what's the problem" because much research is donor-driven and has a narrow agenda. Therefore, in this study, I do not claim to provide the solution to the perceived problem but open or pave the way to explore alternative problem representations that have not been paid attention to rather than sticking to the internationally defined problem that does not apply contextual factors.

REFLECTIONS ON ZAMBIAN SCHOLARSHIP

As already noted, Zambia has attracted major international scholarly attention partly because of its exception trajectory around copper as well as a broader interest in British colonial history and the resistance to colonialism. Scholars such as Buraway, Larmer, and Ferguson have written extensively over some time and have shared their reflections on their own writing. Some local researchers like BJ Phiri (a historian) and Joseph Zulu, who specialised in community health systems research and adolescent sexual reproductive health, have written a fair share on Zambia.

Zulu's (2018, 2019, 2020) work mainly focuses on the health perspective and community integration. Zulu et al. (2018) argue for community-based interventions for strengthening adolescent sexual reproductive health - a view which I largely agree with as it added valuable insights to this thesis. Clearly, the Zambian youth cannot be separated from the community, which Kaunda started under humanism. However, Zulu's work does not fully analyse problem representations in adolescent sexual reproductive matters in a broader context (the focus is limited to health).

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I found the works of BJ Phiri (1991, 2001, 2017) interesting in getting a sense of Zambia's pre-colonial era. Phiri is also very aware that there are few local researchers on Zambia's history, and most of the scholarly work is dominated by non-Zambian researchers. His works focus mainly on democratisation and liberalisation, gender and politics, and religion. Phiri calls attention to exploring more of "civil society's role" (Englund, 2013) in social research, but I propose developing concepts around the community to further explore interactions, for example, power dynamics in agenda-setting by multiple non-stators as well as the state. Moreover, most of Phiri's historical work has not deeply analysed women's issues in the context of the family, the community, marriage, and tradition, and the Zambian young people appear to be absent.

Ferguson has extensively studied and written on Zambia, and his works provided valuable insights to strengthen the argument presented in this thesis. Unlike Larmer and Burawoy, Ferguson's urban studies further address issues of family, religion, women's status and marriage matters mainly in the Copperbelt rather than workplaces. For example, I agree with and advance Ferguson's views on the "open" Zambian definition of marriage (Ferguson, 1999). It is difficult to adhere to a standard definition of the right form and the right time for "marriage" when the Zambian definition of "marriage" itself is split and understood in different notions depending on the context and setting. Labour history has not adequately probed the sexualized dimension of workers and nationally oppressed populations. Gramsci's treatment of sexuality and labour was an important discussion of how work and family are interrelated and managed and experienced through the production of sexual subjects, gender and lifecycles.

Additionally, I agree partly with Englund (2013) that extensive work on Zambia's cultures, women, and traditions have not received much acknowledgement for its significant contribution. This proves a deficit in the Zambian literature and written history/accounts of indigenous cultural realities. With this in mind, I want to end with two recommendations fundamental to future research and Zambian scholarship.

Firstly, further exploration is critical in the context of constructing spatio-temporality. Where child marriage is a consensual choice between two people instead of the generalisation that it is forced by parents or by traditional processes described as "harmful" traditional practices. As I have earlier discussed, the notion of "tradition" is not

understood as unchanging but fluid. Africans before colonialism were spatially, linguistically and culturally mobile.

Taking this view does not mean I advocate for early marriage or teen pregnancy. However, I bring to light the significance of gaining deeper insights by examining the problem from multiple angles through the lens of multiple modernities and the historically informed conceptions of uneven and combined development (see Ferguson, 2006 pp. 190-193). As I have emphasised, there are many standpoints on the adolescent pregnancy and child marriage problem in Africa and Zambia (See chapter nine - under alternative problem representations). Viewing it only from one perspective and one set of spatio-temporalities narrows the path to problem-solving, leading to incompatible policy design and intervention.

Secondly, the need to thoroughly examine the taken-for-granted assumptions/dominant constructs about adolescent sexual and reproductive health behaviour within the African context is urgent. As this study has clearly shown, a knowledge gap exists in the African literature on the subject and indeed the same in the Zambian contemporary adolescent pregnancy and child marriage discourses. Thus, future studies in Africa and Zambia should focus on questioning/interrogating problem representations in policy intervention with a contextual outlook that puts global inequality and liberal imperialism in the spotlight. I agree with Tamale (2011), Smith (2012) & Phalafala (2020) that Africans need their own theorisation of indigenous knowledge based on African lived experiences. Phalafala (2020, p. 193) further emphasises that passed-on oral history has the potential to expand "our theorisation of world literature, grounded on temporality".

Thus, if we are to deconstruct the negative view of African history and how Africa is researched, the social construction of space matters (the spaces of community, public spaces and socialisation). Ferguson's fecund discussion of time (Why are Zambians waiting for a better future that will never come?) and my own discussion (of when is the right time for young people?) suggest there is no universal structure that determines the temporality of specific segments of humanity. It is therefore revealed that the problems of teen pregnancy and child marriage are rather much bigger than narrowly defined blaming of the youth for sexual immorality or blaming parents and "harmful" traditional practices.

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CAVEATS AND LIMITATIONS

Firstly, in this thesis, I emphasised the importance of problem-questioning of the dominant constructs. Instead of accepting a one-sided representation of the story about teen pregnancy and child marriage, researchers must fundamentally question the construction of the problem, who defines it and what agenda is behind it. Moreover, critically thinking through alternative problem definitions creates better chances of success in problem-solving and is a more democratic policy process. Therefore, holding this view does not suggest that I encourage adolescents and young women to become pregnant, mothers, or embark on early marriage adventures. This is not the message presented in this thesis.

Secondly, this thesis unpacked fundamental discussions of the other side of the story, factoring in context, background and setting. It highlights the conditions and circumstances in which teen pregnancy and child marriage are not perceived negatively. It is, therefore, inadequate to conclude that teen pregnancy or child marriage *per se* constitutes a national crisis. For example, the appalling poor conditions in schools are not sufficiently stressed as a factor in girls and boys prematurely dropping out. Additionally, the so-called youth-friendly policies have been drowned out by theological injunctions, conservative street-level bureaucrats and stigma.

Thirdly, I argue that we must rethink what it means to be a young person in Zambia without one-sidedly "importing" the Western policies and constructions of "adolescents", "teenagers", and "youth". The Zambian youth is largely tied to the community, and addressing any youth-related matters (including reproductive politics) requires understanding the community context. As such, the religion-authoritarian "elimination method" adopted by the Zambia state is certainly neither practical nor attainable in Zambia or Africa. Much has to do with improving the social and economic living conditions on a broader scale and paying attention to the socially derived sexual needs of young people. Thus, the binary categorisation of the "non-conforming" sexually active

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youth (labelled as the perpetrators of national moral decay) and the "conforming" non-sexually active groups among the young people is counter-productive.

Fourthly, in a conflicted Zambia, how do we re-problematise Zambia; how do we "fix" Zambia as a whole? Policy analysis should start by looking at these issues such as separating religion from politics, the economic structural and historical problems of dependency and inequality. The issues of the youth are largely linked to this broader context. Hence, more research needs to focus on some of these areas and their linkages. It is not very helpful to single out youth sexual matters and seek solutions to only address that.

The fifth argument is that there is value and added knowledge in scholarly research that is more historically informed, rather than a snap-shot approach to statistics and trends. From 1992-2018, the ZDHS statistics consistently show *declining* prevalence rates in teen childbearing and an increase in the median age at first marriage. Moreover, few studies in Zambia fully represent the problem and its occurrence over the longue durée. This leads me to conclude that there is a gap in research directly linking teen pregnancy and child marriage to the speculated health, education and poverty-related devastating long-life effects. Suppose such a claim is to be made, then there should be more investment into in-depth/qualitative research than the overreliance on statistics and quantitative studies that focus on short periods. It is important to prioritise this in analysing problem representations and competing spatio-temporalities. This tells us that understanding the history of the contested "social clock" can add much value to critically analysing contemporary problems.

In conclusion, this thesis examined and analysed the social and political construction of adolescent sexual reproductive health policies in Zambia. It unpacked the policy problems from a broader context embedded in Zambia's social, economic, political, historical and religious structure. The teen pregnancy and child marriage problem is a piece in a complex web of the politics of commodification, destruction of culture, religion and the dominant political elite projects of self-enrichment as well as higher-level global external force/re-colonisation.

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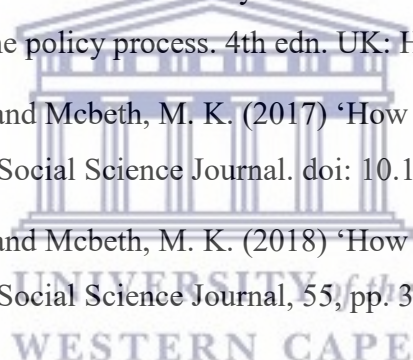
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APPENDIX I: Family Planning Trickery

Family planning: 'Trickery,' say Africans

FAMILY planning and birth control advice given to Africans in Southern Rhodesia is falling largely on deaf ears. Africans feel it is the European's trick to keep down the Black population and ensure White domination.

This view was expressed at the annual meeting last night of the Salisbury Family Planning Association by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. J. Z. Savanhu.

"It may be wholly unfounded," said Mr. Savanhu, "but that is what he (the African) believes."

The Association was doing sterling work in Harare African township but could not succeed fully unless it won the support of the African male.

"One of the things we want as men is to have as many children as possible to perpetuate our names," he explained. "A boy baby is greeted by his father with much more joy than a girl."

Addressing the meeting earlier, a prominent Salisbury doctor urged the association to enlist the help of the African Press to dispel fears and prejudices among its people regarding birth control, and spacing the birth of children.

He said religious denominations must be respected for their beliefs and scruples concerning birth control.

He criticised the Federal Government and other governments for not encouraging in any way the idea of family planning.

"We want ultimately that the African child should be as well fed, clothed, housed, cared for and educated as the European child," he said.

The aims of the three-year-old association are: "To build healthy, happy families; to increase happiness in marital and family relations; to improve the health of mothers and children and to encourage parents to space their children and to have only those children for which they can provide adequate food, clothes, housing, health care and education; to raise the standard of living and strengthen the quality of the population of the country."

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