'It is just culture'

Eight young people’s perception of the gender roles in Zambia

Mikaela Nyman
## Title

'It is just culture'; eight young people’s perception of the gender roles in Zambia

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## Abstract

This study explores eight young people’s perception of the gender roles in Zambia, Lusaka. In this study I have asked the informants to define the genders and the result were that the genders are defined based on the biological sexes. The genders therefore become homogenous based on the male and female sex. The regulations of the genders were traditionally also based on assumed ‘biologically natural characteristics’. As I argue in this study that gender roles are social constructed I also present the socialization processes in the Zambian culture regarding initiation ceremonies and premarital ceremonies, which visualizes the regulations of the gender roles and the importance of marriages as it implies social status and identity.

The young informants’ perception of the gender roles was based on a complex intermixture between the cultural norms, the Western influences and their own life experiences. This means that Zambian society is changing in response to external as well as internal influences and that globalization both facilitates change and may create problems, as different values and norms collide. The informants recognized a need of change in the perception of the gender roles due to the issues that the gender hierarchy contributes to. This study also discusses the fact that cultural norms causes lack of knowledge about sexual issues, which have devastating consequences. The informants argued that the cultural perception of a man as superior and the woman as inferior caused gender based violence, domestic violence and the HIV-epidemic to continue. Based on the informants awareness that many of the social challenges exist because of the patriarchal norms in society I argue that this awareness indicates that a change is in progress.

## Keywords

Gender roles, young people, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, Zambia, Christianity, gender based violence, domestic violence.
When I first came to Zambia, I had an introduction with my supervisor at YMCA of Zambia. I was in Zambia on an internship with the Swedish YWCA-YMCA and was assigned to be in Zambia for six months and participate in activities that YMCA of Zambia arranged. At the introduction my supervisor told me about the Zambian culture and when I asked about the meaning behind the different cultural expressions he simply answered “it’s just culture”.

This thesis is named “it is just culture” because sometimes, most of the times I would say, we do not consider what our culture is or why we recreate the same patterns over and over again. This became obvious almost immediately when I arrived to Zambia in September 2012, as I am a very curious and a questioning person, when I started asking about the Zambian culture the response I usually got was “it’s just culture”. They said it as if it was not that interesting or not that special – it was just a way of doing things or it was just the way things were.

So, what is culture? For me there is nothing just about culture, everything has a meaning. But like my supervisor I think most of us rarely think about the underlying meaning of the cultural expressions and practices. We go on with our lives, living in that culture we were socialized into, without realizing why we do certain things and without realizing we have a choice to make regarding the reconstruction of culture – as it is always in a changing process. Just because something has been, does not mean it cannot change. There is of course a process but the process goes on every second of our lives. Culture is our daily life, but we are in control of it and how it should develop. If we want a change, we need to take action and be active in the process for it to succeed forward.
Acknowledgement

I want to thank the informants for participating in this study and all my friends in Zambia for sharing their knowledge and perception of the Zambian culture. I also want to give my appreciation to YMCA of Zambia and the young volunteers. I am grateful to YWCA-YMCA Sport and health association of Sweden, YWCA-YMCA Triangle association of Sweden, Borlänge YWCA-YMCA and YWCA-YMCA Östgöta region association, which granted me scholarships for my internship in Zambia. I thank Åsa Nilsson Dahlström, Senior Lecturer at Linköpings University, who has not only been a good teacher but a supporting mentor throughout my education to become a social anthropologist. Finally, I want to thank my family, my dear friend Ulrika Söderberg and my fiancé Jonathan Mubanga for their love and support to me.

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Stockholm, August 2013
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Introduction

This study presents eight young people in Zambia and their perceptions of the gender roles and the socialization processes of gender roles. The importance of cultural norms and gender roles to be able to understand the HIV/AIDS-epidemic is widely recognized. This study discusses the fact that young people in Zambia lack knowledge about sexual issues due to the cultural norms regarding sexual issues. It is therefore important to understand the socialization process of how gender roles are constructed in Zambia and how the genders interact with one another.

Uubuchende bwa mwaume tabutoba ingaanda.

This saying in Bemba (one of the many tribes in Zambia) means “when a man commits adultery a home can never be broken, but if a woman commits adultery a home will be broken”. This saying does not just apply for the Bemba tribe but is a norm representing the traditional Zambian culture. The gender roles contain different ‘roles’ as there are different regulations and expectations from men and women. To understand the socialization process of the gender roles I studied both the initiation ceremonies and the premarital ceremonies. The socialization process revealed the importance of marriage regarding identity and social status. One of the informants in this study, Kimberly, summarised the preparations for marriage by stating the fact that women undergo more premarital ceremonies than what the men do.

A woman is given about a month, how to take care of your man in bed, how to behave towards the man [...] But the man is not so much focused like that. [...] Men are just taught to be a man. Make babies only!? No, well, that’s the thing culture in Zambia it’s a heavy load on the woman. And in a marriage, if a woman is found cheating it’s a big issue! [...] With the man it’s different. [...] A man can do whatever he can do, a woman can’t go outside just how she wants. [...] like a woman are too weak, I don’t think so.

Kimberly expressed her frustration regarded the regulations and expectations for men and women and, as Kimberly said, the gender roles in Zambia are often connected to the biological concept of sexes of ‘male’ and ‘female’. This study discusses the perception of ‘gender roles’ as biologically natural due to that gender in the Zambian culture are defined by the biological sex. This perception also includes assumptions of expected characteristics from ‘men’ and ‘women’ which are considered to be ‘biologically natural’. But as the Swedish social anthropologist Fanny Ambjörnsson states, the fact is that ‘gender’ is a social construction which depends on cultural norms and interaction. The social construction of gender roles creates a gender structure based on the perceptions of what is

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3 Informant Jamie
4 Informant Kimberly
5 Connell, R.W., Maskuliniter, Bokförlaget Diadlos AB, 1996, p. 40
considered to be ‘masculine’ and feminine’. In this study I will explain how the gender roles in Zambia are created thought socialization processes and how the gender roles interact with one another – and as well which cultural norms are connected to gender.

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[Title translation made by the author: *In a class of its own - gender, class and sexuality among high school girls*]
The internship at YMCA of Zambia

I have been a member within YWCA-YMCA of Sweden since I was a child, and as YMCA is the world’s biggest youth association it offers a lot of opportunities. I applied for the six months long programme of internship and was assigned to travel to Zambia and participate in the activities that YMCA of Zambia was arranging. I was based in Lusaka at YMCA of Zambia’s National Office. When I arrived in September 2012, it was not what I had expected and the first months were hard. There were no activities going on at YMCA except for the youth meetings twice a week. I was waiting for a health project to start; a project that was first named ‘Multi Countries Health Initiative’ and later changed into ‘Act 2 Live’. The project is being implemented in five counties and the project is supervised by African Alliance of YMCA.

When ‘Act 2 Live’ finally started I participated in the training for the young volunteers who were going to implement the project. The project were several months delayed and by the time I arrived to Zambia the project should have had been ready to be implemented. YMCA had trainings for ‘Act 2 Live’ in Lusaka, Liteta (Chibombo) and Kitwe, where there is local branches of YMCA. I participated in all the three trainings.

‘Act 2 Live’ is a project that focuses on the neglected health issues among young people. A pre-study was made by YMCA to investigate the situation. It was not a surprise that the neglected health issues among the young people are HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), STI’s (sexual transmitted infections) and malaria as these are health problems that are affecting the whole population of Zambia. YMCA:s intention was to change the attitude towards young people at the health clinic, as the pre-study showed that when young people do not get the help they need when they seek help for sex-related issues. The goal with the training of the young participants, also called “peer-educators”, were to have educated youth going out in the societies (compounds) to talk about the neglected health issues with other young people. By having the two way approach – advocate for more youth friendly health clinics, and for the “peer-educators” to increase information and knowledge about the neglected health issues – ‘Act 2 Live’ wanted to improve the health of young people. ‘Transformative masculinity’ was a concept that was discussed during ‘Act 2 Live’ as a method to change the gender roles. Africa Alliance of YMCA has developed this concept.

By promoting peer initiatives, intergenerational dialogue and working with the media, AAYMCA is supporting the youth to re-order and shift from masculinity that relies on dominance and abuse to one of mutual respect and understanding.

In my own understanding it is about recognising women’s rights – and this does not just apply for men but women also need to know their rights. As will be discovered further in this study, it is not easy to implement a change within the patriarchal structure. Therefore the discussion about ‘transformative masculinity’ was expressed in terms that the man, as ‘the head of the house’, needs to take more responsibility over his family and in the society by respecting and loving women: in the sense that a ‘real man’ should follow the Bible that says one should be faithful in the marriage and

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7 YMCA-YMCA stands for “Young Women’s Christian Association – Young Men Christian Association”. In Sweden the two associations are joined together but internationally YWCA and YMCA are two separate associations with their own world alliances.
8 I pleaded for the pre-study for 6 months and I have still not received it, but the article of Warenius et al. present the same facts as the pre-study from YMCA of Zambia claims to do.
9 Africa Alliance of YMCA. What we do; transformative masculinity. [www]
that a ‘real man’ should not abuse his wife. This is a desperate endeavour for change in the masculine role to not be dominant and superior against women, in a culture where the patriarchal structure is fundamental.

After the ‘Act 2 Live’-training in Lusaka there was a sport event, meant to be a ‘kick off’, in one of the many compounds. Despite a good opportunity to actually start the project for YMCA decided to wait for the sport events to also take place in Liteta and Kitwe before Lusaka should start implementing ‘Act 2 Live’. Several weeks passed by and nothing was happening, and then just when everyone was expecting ‘Act 2 Live’ to start being implemented YMCA met an internal crisis. I stepped in as Director of Programmes and an enormous process of changing YMCA started. ‘Act 2 Live’ was at the beginning to be implemented when I was entrusted through my ideas. Despite that YMCA was facing a crisis it became possible to move forward with the project thanks to the fact that the young people were motivated and innovative. It was amazing to work close with the young volunteers and together we created new visions for YMCA – and before I left Zambia we had several new activities coming up. The internship was an incredible life experience and I learned a lot from the YMCA of Zambia and the young volunteers.
**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to study the young people’s perception of the gender roles in Zambia and particularly within Lusaka as that is where the eight informants were living. From my own perspective, as having grown up in Sweden, the gender roles I got to see in Lusaka seemed very static. I also got the feeling as early as my first month in Lusaka, based on how I saw people behaving and interacting, that the gender roles were not just about keeping up appearances. Later on I got to understand that there is very specific behaviour expected from a man and from a woman. Therefore, I got very curious about the socialization process for becoming an adult. But the main reason of the socialization process is not really to just become an adult – it is a preparation for marriage. Both culture and religion, approximately 75 percent of the population is Christians, value marriage because marriage represents identity and social status.

As the Swedish social anthropologist Fanny Ambjörnsson, I am also influenced by a post-structuralist perspective which distinguishes biological sex and socially constructed gender roles. Ambjörnsson applies Judith Butler’s, an American philosopher, theory that ‘gender’ is not the same as biological sex but that ‘gender’ is socially constructed depending on cultural norms and interaction. However, Butler also states that ‘sexes’ are socially constructed as well. Butler argues that to be able to study the social construction of gender a heterosexual context is required, to understand the interactions between body, gender, sexuality and desire. Her theory, the *heterosexual matrix*, visualizes the regulations for gender roles by taking the cultural norms into account – on the basis that the heterosexual relationship is a ‘normative gender structure’. Due to the normative gender structure, the social construction and reconstruction of gender roles “can therefore be described as a form survival strategy in a mandatory system”. Therefore, it can be stated that all cultures construct ‘gender’ based on the cultural norms through interaction in social processes. Ambjörnsson’s PhD thesis is a study of the construction of gender among adolescent girls. As Ambjörnsson demonstrated the gender roles’ importance in her study, this study is an example of how the socialization process in Zambia socially constructs ‘gender roles’.

This study focuses on the socialization processes, both initiation ceremonies and premarital ceremonies, to understand the cultural regulations on the genders. The Zambian cultural structure is based on a patriarchal structure including age hierarchy, which in reality means that (especially older) men hold the position of authority. I wanted to gain an insight into young people’s perception of the gender roles, as well as what their own expectations were on the gender roles. Due to the enormous HIV/AIDS-epidemic in Zambia I also wanted to study the connection between the lack of knowledge about sexual issues and the gender roles, and how this affects the informants as young people. A study made in Zambia 2002 among secondary school students in Kitwe showed that the

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10 Taylor, Scott D., *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, (Culture and Customs of Africa), Greenwood Press, 2006, p. 27
11 Taylor, p. 96
12 Ambjörnsson, p. 12
13 Ambjörnsson, p. 15-16
14 Connell, p. 55
15 Even the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski demonstrated diversity between cultures in terms sexuality and how the characters were created. C.f.: Malinowski, Bronislaw, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, 1927, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
16 Ambjörnsson, p. 305
students did not have adequate information about sexual issues.\textsuperscript{17} The lack of knowledge about sexual issues, according to this study, is because of the cultural norms regarding sexual issues.\textsuperscript{18}

World Health Organization has stated that gender inequality causes health problem among women but it “is relevant not only to women themselves, but also has an impact on the health and development of the next generation.”\textsuperscript{19} The importance of cultural norms and gender roles to be able to understand the HIV/AIDS-epidemic is widely recognized – and despite the recognition the efforts to implement programmes to influence gender roles interactions with sexual behaviour is inadequate.\textsuperscript{20}

Cultural norms and gender roles, based on gender hierarchy, has also been found to cause gender based violence and domestic violence. This study also discusses the dominant behaviour of men in Zambia as leverage to maintain the gender hierarchy.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, it is therefore important to understand the socialization process of gender roles in Zambia and how the genders interact with one another.

\textsuperscript{18} Warenius, et al., page 535
\textsuperscript{19} World Health Organization, (WHO), Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, Today’s Evidence Tomorrow’s Agenda,2009. [WHO/IER/MHI/STM.09.1], p. 2
\textsuperscript{20} Jobson, p. 233
\textsuperscript{21} Connell, p. 106-107. C.f.: Warenius, et al., p. 533
**Method**

This study’s fieldwork and interviews are conducted between September 2012 and March 2013. From the beginning I thought that due to the fact that I was in Zambia on an internship, funded by YMCA of Sweden, was going to make it difficult for me to also be a social anthropologist and to do this study – but it was not. The first factor that I thought was going to make it difficult for me was the fact that I was on an internship with an association. When I was accepted to the internship programme I talked to YMCA of Sweden about that I was going to do a study for my master’s degree during my time in Zambia. I asked them if they wanted to be a part of this study, but the answer was no. My internship was not what had been expected, or what YMCA of Sweden had promised me, and when I told YMCA of Sweden the response where that I should try to find something to do. The second factor was when I had the vision of this study ready and I was asking eight young members at YMCA of Zambia if they wanted to be informants for my study. As I was there on an internship I thought the informants would be reluctant but they were not as I explained that this study has nothing to do with either YMCA of Zambia or YMCA of Sweden.

The methods used in this study are qualitative: field work/participant observations and interviews. I asked four young women and four young men to participate as informants to this study. I did not consider their tribe origin but I selected the informants based on religion and age – the informants are Christians and between the age of 19 to 28. To protect the identity of the informants I have chosen to not reveal their tribe origin or the specific names of the Church they belong to, as well as I of course have given the informants alias. The interviews were conducted individually and at a private place where the informants could speak freely without being overheard by anyone. The interviews’ occurred continuously during the six months I was in Zambia. I recorded the interviews and transcribed them and thereafter I analyzed the interviews. In this study I have used a lot of citations from the interviews to be able to visualize what the informants have said – as the purpose with this study was to gain the informants’ perception of the gender roles. The interviews with the informants were open-structured interviews with different themes with subqueries. The first theme was family structure: I asked about the informants’ family members and their childhood. The second theme was gender roles: I started by asking the informants how they define culture and then I asked the informants do define ‘a man’ and ‘a woman’. I asked about the informants’ family and tribal traditions (including initiation ceremonies), and about their own perception of the gender roles (by exemplify the static gender roles by asking the informants about their opinion about “the woman’s place is in the kitchen” and “the man is the provider”). The third theme was about puberty and sexual issues: I asked the informants when and where they first got information about sexual issues. Then I asked about the traditional way of addressing puberty and sexual issues and where the informants’ seek information about these issues today. I also asked the informants’ about what they thought about abstinence, condoms, abortions, prostitution and homosexuality. The fourth theme was connecting gender roles and sex more specific: I asked the informants’ if and who they can talk to about gender roles and sexual issues, I asked how their Church discusses the gender roles and if the Church addresses sexual issues and if so how. I also asked the informants’ if they thought there is a need for more information about gender roles and sexual issues. The fifth and last theme was the informants own experiences of relationships and sex. The last question I asked the informants was what they thought about the future for the young people in Zambia. Before I ended the interviews I always asked the informants if they wanted to add something or if they wanted to ask something. Two of the female informants asked me about the Swedish culture and as well about my own
relationships and my sexual experiences. I handled this with simply answering their questions of course, as I got to ask them questions they should also get to ask me questions.

The fact that I am white and a woman made it easier for me as a social anthropologist to do this study. White people are often seen as outspoken and free-minded and the fact that I am a woman made both the male and female informants’ comfortable talking to me – in the Zambian culture it is more common or accepted for a woman to talk to younger people about sexual issues than for a man to do so. If I had been a man it is unlikely that I would have been able to conduct interviews with the female informants’. The fact that I am in the same age of the informants, or just a few years older than some of them, was also an advantage in this study due to the age hierarchy in Zambia. In other words, if I had been ‘older’ the informants might not have been as comfortable and outspoken.

All through my time in Zambia I learned something about the culture every day, as I was at YMCA and during my spare time with friends who were in my own age. To live in another society for a long period of time as I did in Zambia meant that I had a daily life and interacted with people, this provided me with experiences. It contributed to give me knowledge and understanding of the Zambian culture and as well the informants’ perceptions. I also had the opportunity to ask friends about different cultural aspects – of course I was specific by asking them if I could use the information they provided for this study.

For this study also rely on participatory observations. I participated in a ‘kitchen party’; which would not have been possible for me to participate in if I had been a man as men are not allowed to participate. My advantage of being a woman also gave me access to gain knowledge about how women interact with each other and their perception of marriage and gender roles. I asked colleagues and friends for help to be able to also attend the specific premarital ceremony that the bridegroom goes through but unfortunately the opportunity never came. This could be because of the fact that I am a woman, and because I am white, as it can be seen by traditional men as inappropriate for me to have knowledge about what advice the bridegroom’s mentor is giving to the bridegroom. I had to accept that there were just some certain contexts where I was allowed to do participatory observations and field work. However, I also did participatory observations during ‘Act 2 Live’, as I was a participant and not a facilitator. And at the youth meeting that was held twice a week I gained knowledge and insight to the Zambian culture and the social challenges that young people are facing.22

The term ‘gender roles’ is often connected to the biological concept of sexes of ‘male’ and ‘female’, and the expected characteristics which are considered to be ‘biological natural’.23 The term ‘gender roles’ has been argued to be insufficient because it implies that there are only two separate and homogeneous roles of the sexes. This implies a consensus between the gender roles which makes it hard to discuss the structure of power. Instead, ‘gender interactions’ is a preferable term because it discusses what is expected to be masculine and feminine and how the social relations interact with one another as well as it takes other social variables into account.24 Despite that I agree that ‘gender interactions’ would be a preferable term, I use the term ‘gender roles’ in this study due to the fact

22 In this study, with other words, I have not used materials from the occasions when I was facilitator at YMCA of Zambia.
23 Connell, p. 40
24 Connell, p. 44
that the cultural norms and expectations are based upon the biological sex in Zambia. Because only two sexes are recognized in Zambia, gender roles designate the discrete entities of ‘males’ and ‘females’. I have chosen to adhere to the local discourse about genders, and I therefore talk about ‘gender roles’ in the study. I want to emphasize the fact that ‘gender’ in itself is a social construction that creates and recreates through interaction in social processes.\(^\text{25}\)

During this study it became obvious to me that few studies have been made in Zambia\(^\text{26}\), especially regarding gender roles. However, there have been countless studies made in Africa regarding gender roles and HIV/AIDS and I only address a few of them as the purpose with this study was to study the (young) informants’ perceptions of the gender roles in Zambia. Therefore I have chosen to restrict this study to maintain the focus on the informants.

\(^{25}\)Connell, p. 55

'Welcome to Zambia'

Zambia is one of the most peaceful countries in Africa. During the first years after becoming an independent state, from United Kingdom in 1964, Zambia came to have an essential role against imperialism and colonial domination and South African apartheid. Even today Zambia “is looked upon as an important example of Africa’s democratization in the last 15 years”\(^{27, 28}\).

Zambia’s population consists of 73 tribes, but despite the high number of tribes it is a high interaction and tolerance between the tribes. During the colonial era the mining regions came to be urbanized and different tribes became to interact regularly. Due to the urbanization process during the colonial era Zambia is now one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.\(^{29}\) The cultural interaction in urban areas has made the culture increasingly homogenized.\(^{30, 31}\)

The colonial era entailed that ‘conservative’ Christianity, as Taylor state, spread throughout Zambia. Religion has thereafter become a vital part of a Zambian’s identity;\(^{32}\) approximately 75 percent of the population in Zambia are Christians,\(^{33}\) which also have contributed to a homogenized population. However, the globalization causes a collision between the traditional values (including Christianity) and the Western values – as Zambia becomes more modernized and urbanized through the globalization. The fact that cultural traditions interact with Western influences is a vital factor in the process of change.\(^{34}\) The Western values are therefore challenging the gender hierarchies and the cultural norms in Zambia.\(^{35}\)

During the twenty-first century the challenges in Zambia increased; droughts and food shortage, economic dislocation, increasing unemployment, poverty and the HIV/AIDS-epidemic. HIV/AIDS is an enormous problem in Zambia among the sexually active in Zambia between 16 percent and 19 percent are infected with HIV.\(^{36}\)

Africa is the only region in the world where girls and women outnumber boys and men among those living with AIDS.\(^{37}\)

\(^{27}\) Taylor, p. ix (preface)
\(^{28}\) After the independence it was important for the new government to unite the country hence President Kaunda claimed that despite origin tribe everyone was ‘Zambian’. C.f.: Taylor, p. ix-x (preface).
\(^{29}\) Taylor, p. ix (preface)
\(^{30}\) Taylor, p. x (preface)
\(^{31}\) As English is the official language the different tribes does not have any trouble communicating, with exception for some part of the rural areas.
\(^{32}\) Taylor, p. 39
\(^{33}\) Taylor, p. 27
\(^{34}\) Taylor, p. 39
\(^{35}\) Taylor, p. 91. C.f.: Warenius, et al., p. 535
\(^{36}\) Taylor, p. 105
\(^{37}\) Warenius, et al., p. 542
The informants

This is a short presentation of the informants about their childhood and their families, and as well how Christianity is being practised within their families.

Kate

Kate was born in 1992. Her parents separated when Kate was just a baby and Kate lived with her grandmother (her father’s mother) due to that her mother could not afford taking care of her. When Kate was 6 years old her father deceased and Kate had to move out from her grandmother’s house to go and live with her aunt (mother’s sister). Kate said that she missed her mother and that she felt lonely at school when ‘everyone else’ was talking about their mothers. In 2004 Kate started living with her mother and she still lives with her mother together with a niece and a cousin. Kate explained to me that her family is Christians and that they go to Church every Sunday, as well as they pray every morning and every night. They also pray and thank the Lord when something good happens and to ask for guidance when something bad happens.

Amanda

Amanda was born in 1992. She grew up with her grandmother, due to that her father had deceased and her mother was not able to take care of her, and the mother lived in another town. Amanda grew up with her cousins as she calls her ‘siblings’. She has one biological brother. Amanda lives with her ‘brother’ (cousin). Amanda is Christian and she goes to Church every Sunday.

Rachel

Rachel was born in 1992. She comes from a big family with seven siblings and grew up with four cousins. Rachel’s uncle died (father’s brother) and then the children to the uncle came to live with Rachel’s family. A few years after the cousins came to live with Rachel’s family her mother died, at that time Rachel was only 7 years old. Rachel lives with her father and some of her siblings and cousins. One of her siblings died a few years ago. Rachel is Christian and she tells me that the whole family used to go to Church together when her mother was still alive. She explained to me that when she and her siblings and cousins were growing up they had a hard time understanding the purpose with going to Church but eventuality they all came to understand the importance of being close to God.

Kimberly

Kimberly was born in 1984 and grew up in a big family with two sisters and three brothers. Her father died in 2005 and Kimberly explained to me that the father’s death lead to financial insecurity and that she needed to both work and applied for scholarships to be able to continue her education. Kimberly explained that in her family everyone is Christians but that they go to different Churches, but every Sunday evening they all discuss what had been said in the different Churches.

Tristan

Tristan was born 1990 and has seven siblings, but one of the sisters past away in 2012. He grew up in a rural area close to Kabwe but had to move to Lusaka and live with an aunt due to the financial struggle at the farm where he grew up with his parents. Both parents were alcoholics and Tristan explained that because of the alcoholism the parents fought a lot and there was a lot of domestic
violence. His father abused his mother, but it was only the mother who abused Tristan. He said that living with his aunt and her family in Lusaka is not like living in a loving family. He said it only provides shelter, but that he is grateful to his aunt as she made it possible for him to go to school – if he had stayed at the farm with his parents it would not have been possible for him to go to school. Tristan said that his family is Christians and when he was living at the farm his mother used to take him to Church. But as his mother was an alcoholic and when her condition became worse they all stopped going to Church.

**Oliver**

Oliver was born in 1993. He grew up with his parents and he has six brothers and one sister. He lives with one of his older brothers. He explained to me that his childhood has been good and that despite that there have been periods of financial struggles his family has always managed and all of his older siblings have gone to college or university. Oliver’s family are Christians and his parents are members of the management board at their Church. He said it has been important for him to have his own relationship to Jesus Christ and that it is helping him to find his way in life.

**Dominic**

Dominic was born in 1988 in the northern province of Zambia. Because of financial struggles his parents could not take care of him, Dominic also had two older sisters, so his grandmother (father’s mother) took care of him. Both parents died during the time he was living with his grandmother. When Dominic was 3 years old he was taken in by his uncle (father’s younger brother) and came to live with his family in Lusaka. Dominic compares it with being adopted and told me that he sees the uncle and his wife as his parents. He grew up with three cousins who he calls his ‘siblings’. Dominic explained that his ‘parents’ were both alcoholics for a long time during his childhood and that domestic violence was a part of the everyday life. His ‘father’ abused his ‘mother’ and Dominic himself was abused by both his ‘parents’. When the ‘parents’ divorced in 1997 Dominic decided to continue living with his ‘mother’ and his ‘siblings’. He is still living with his ‘mother’ and the ‘siblings’ together with a friend to his ‘mother’ and her children. Dominic said that his family is Christians and that they go to Church every Sunday and his ‘mother’ helps out at Church with different things.

**Jamie**

Jamie was born in 1990 and he has ten siblings in total, including half-siblings from the father. He was born in a rural area close to Kapiri Mposhi where his parents have a farm. Due to financial struggles, he had to come down to Lusaka and live with his aunt and her family. He said his aunt is like a parent and he still lives in her house with his cousins. Jamie explained that his family are Christians and that his aunt is active in the management at Church, but that they all go to different Churches.
What is culture?

I think culture is about the daily activities to what you believe in within a community, or maybe a tribe. Yes, that’s what I think. 38

This is how Tristan answered what culture is during the interview and he meant that when we do something on a daily base we repeat the same patterns of activities, and as we can see that it works we also believe in those patterns of activities and we find comfort in what we know and are used to doing. Rachel explained to me that culture is how people live and that how we live becomes what we believe in. Jamie answered, very similarly to what Tristan said, by saying that culture is a way of doing things and he also explained to me that the way of doing things can differ so therefore we have different cultures. Rachel took it even further to explain that cultures can also differ within themselves, I think she was looking for the term subcultures with the meaning that culture is so complex within itself too that you cannot say any truth about for example the culture in Zambia.

So, what did my supervisor at YMCA really mean when he said “it’s just culture”? I had to ask my informants.

At times, it depends, maybe the person has done something bad then they say ‘it’s just culture’ it’s a way of escape. Then also a way of showing off when you have done well, ‘we are that good’. So it depends on the situation. 39

Tristan explained the saying “it’s just culture” by way of how people act within the culture. If culture is the daily patterns of activities it means we are used to seeing the different behaviours and different actions by people and therefore it is something obvious about how people can behave or act. This means we are not very chocked or surprised when someone acts in a certain way. Tristan said that the saying can relate to both negative and positive thing and as all patterns of activities are not just positive or good in a culture it does not chock or surprise more or less when a negative pattern of activity is happening. It is just the way people behave or act, therefore the saying goes “it’s just culture”.

It’s the way they live, I think. 40

Kimberly meant that the saying “it’s just culture” refers to the way people live, which can be analyzed to be the patterns of activities that defines what culture is.

38 Informant Tristan
39 Informant Tristan
40 Informant Kimberly
Coexistence

Adam and Eve – man and woman

To understand the gender roles it is vital to understand the definition of what makes a ‘man’ and what makes a ‘woman’. ‘Gender roles’ is often connected to the biological concept of sexes of ‘male’ and ‘female’, and the expected characteristics which are considered to be ‘biological natural’. But ‘gender roles’ are not the same as biological sex – gender roles is social construction by the cultural norms through interaction in social processes. Judith Butler’s theory, the heterosexual matrix, visualizes the regulations for gender roles by taking the cultural norms into account – on the basis that the heterosexual relationship is part of a ‘normative gender structure’. Thus, the normative gender structure with static homogeneous definitions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ causes the gender roles to become each other’s opposites. The American sociologist R.W. Connell adds to this statement by also explaining that the homogeneous gender roles are based on the gender differences, and therefore the gender differences are being exaggerated and other social variables are not taken into account. I want to stress the importance of understanding the impact that the cultural norms have, including socialization processes. Ambjörnsson explains that to act by the cultural norms regarding gender roles can be “described as a form survival strategy in a mandatory system”. In other words, the homogeneous gender roles lead to predetermined gender identity where the individual is unable to explore an alternative identity.

Rachel explained a ‘man’ and a ‘woman’ by the biological design; that the ‘man’ should have male sexual organs and that the ‘woman’ should have the female sexual organs. What I found especially interesting was that she stressed that a ‘woman’ should be able to give birth, but she did not say anything about the ‘man’s’ ability to make a ‘woman’ pregnant. That makes me think about the International Women’s Day when a colleague of mine at YMCA told me her friends do not congratulate her on this day because she is not yet a woman because she has not given birth. For me I grew up thinking a ‘woman’ is someone that has reached puberty and have started her menstruations.

Well the understanding of a woman, the woman’s mind think so much wider than a man’s mind, so I feel a woman is a flexible person, and very fragile. Who should understand a man, even when he is wrong cause men don’t see...women thinks in dimensions like 3D but men sees one side and are more precise, strict. [...] A woman is so many things.

Kimberly said that “a woman is so many things”, in other words a ‘woman’ is very complex and therefore hard to define I assume. Later in this study it will be discussed that a ‘woman’ is not just complex because of her personality or mind, as Kimberly stresses, but because she needs to be “many things” because of the expectations she has upon her due to the cultural standards.

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41 Connell, p. 40
42 Ambjörnsson, p. 15-16
43 Connell, p. 44
44 Ambjörnsson, p. 15-16
45 International Women’s Day the 8th March every year.
46 Informant Kimberly
A woman is simply someone who is supposed to complement the man. And not do everything a man can. [...] I believe what a man can do a woman can also do.\textsuperscript{47}

Oliver explained straight to the point what the cultural view of a ‘woman’ is; she is to “complement the man”. But Oliver also made sure that I understood that a ‘woman’ should not do things that a ‘man’ does, in other words there a different actions expected or allowed for a ‘man’ and for a ‘woman’. And the regulations of the gender also include different social spaces within the society.

It is not easy to define a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’, but it seems it was a little harder for the informants to define a ‘woman’ than to define a ‘man’.

A woman [...] oh, I don’t have a definition for that. Who is a woman? [...] A person that loves and cares a lot.\textsuperscript{48}

Kate had troubles to define a ‘woman’. In the definition of gender also lays certain expectations, as Oliver explained that a ‘woman’ should not do things that a ‘man’ is supposed to do. But it is not just actions but also certain behaviour or character that is expected from ‘women’, like Kate stressed when she said that a ‘woman’ should be loving and caring.

I think it’s the same with a woman [...] [as it is for a man]. She should be a provider, she should be understanding, loving and caring. Because it’s only when they have those qualities that they won’t make people around them suffer.\textsuperscript{49}

Dominic stressed not only like Kate that a ‘woman’ should be a loving and caring person but also that a ‘woman’ should be an understanding person. For me the most interesting part is when Dominic continues to also explain that the ‘woman’s’ qualities effects the people around her, as it is the expectation that a ‘woman’ should make the husband pleased and to raise the children in the family. I will get into this more later on. Tristan also explains the expectations of a ‘woman’ in such a way that we can also understand further what Dominic was talking about.

From my culture, it’s just culture [laugh], a woman should be tender. We expect a woman to be in the house, give the kids a good up bring [...] and to really just respect the husband. [...] The way I look at it, in our culture it so much about degrading the female part, the mothers, even if they have good ideas. But I feel everyone should be given the opportunity. There is times when a woman have better ideas and solutions. So I feel they should be given equal platforms.\textsuperscript{50}

Tristan provided with a bigger insight about what is expected of a ‘woman’ and it adds to what Dominic was saying in the sense that even if a ‘woman’ is inferior to the husband she does have a big responsibility to please her husband and to give the children in the house a good upbringing. Tristan explained that it is common that women are not often listened to by their husbands and Tristan even used the word “degrading” to emphasize the inferior role that women has, which means also that a woman does not always have a opportunity to chose but she needs to follow the obligations that comes with her gender. I will continue discussing this further in the study.

\textsuperscript{47} Informant Oliver
\textsuperscript{48} Informant Kate
\textsuperscript{49} Informant Dominic
\textsuperscript{50} Informant Tristan
Oliver explained that a ‘woman’ in the Zambian culture is often seen as someone who is supposed to complement the ‘man’ but she is not supposed to be on an equal level as a ‘man’ because she is not permitted to take part of the same activities or social spaces as a man. Tristan made me understand that the expectation of a ‘woman’ is that she should know her place, which is in the house with the children. So, who is a man and what is expected of him?

A man...maybe I will use the definition of the Bible, head of the house.\(^{51}\)

Kate explained the ‘man’ as someone who is the head of the house, by what she means that he is holding the position of authority. According to the Bible, Adam was created by God first and Eve second. Does that make Adam preferable?

A man is male [laugh] I think a man should be a person, well according to the Bible, for how I understand it, it’s someone who should take more responsibility over a lot of things. [...] to understand a woman, love her and when he loves her he’s gonna give her equal rights.\(^{52}\)

Kimberly adds to Kate’s definitions of who is a ‘man’ and continues to explain that a ‘man’ has more responsibilities than what a ‘woman’ has. If the ‘man’ is “the head of the house” as Kate said it might make sense that the ‘man’ also has more responsibilities to provide for the family. But Kimberly also explained that a ‘man’ should be an understanding and loving person (just like most of the informants described how a woman should be) and if he has those qualities he will not be dominant towards the woman but give her equal rights. I wonder, can a man still be ‘the head of the house’ if he gives the woman equal rights? And how equal are they if the equal rights have to be given by the man to the woman? This will be discussed further in the analytical summary.

A man...okay, I have grown up knowing a man is one who are a step higher than the wife, who a woman fears, that’s our culture, that’s how a man deceives to be. A person who is able to protect, have a position like a job, a certain position that a woman should not have. But I feel with [...] the exposure we are getting especially this generation [...] we know a man is not one who are supposed to intimidate a woman. We are getting to understand a woman and a man should be equal. Okay it’s difficult for us to adopt this western culture but for me I follow what the Bible says but I feel for what has been happening in our culture, it has led to gender based violence. A real man is someone who respects his woman.\(^{53}\)

If the cultural tradition is like Oliver has explained; that a ‘man’ is someone that the woman fears as he is dominating over her and she is inferior to him, how would society view a man who gives his woman equal rights? Oliver said that the young people his age are getting to see that the gender roles could be different and he thought the gender roles should be different as he said “a real man is someone who respects his woman”. The young people might be seen as just young and inexperienced but that is to be ignorant to the fact that they have also grown up within a family and that they do have experience of the gender roles.

I am not gonna say this cause I am a man but because of what I feel, because of what I’ve tested, because of what I have seen and because of what I have experienced. A man should be responsible, responsible in the sense that a man by all means should be a provider, for both the people around him and for him himself. He should understand that he was brought, I am

\(^{51}\) Informant Kate  
\(^{52}\) Informant Kimberly  
\(^{53}\) Informant Oliver
Christian so, brought to this earth to be a nurturer not a destroyer, so a man should be loving, caring, understanding, slow to anger, yeah that and a lot of other things.\(^{54}\)

Dominic stated very clearly how he thought a ‘man’ should be from his own experiences and said that a ‘man’ should be a nurturer, this also includes a lot of responsibilities. A ‘man’ should be a provider, but not in the sense that he is just “the head of the house” but also that he should care and I understand Dominic in the way that he wants a ‘man’ to be concerned about people around him, that is mainly his family.

The informants have provided the perception of what makes a ‘man’ and what makes a ‘woman’, both the cultural and their own perception. It was hard for the informants to define the genders and Rachel in particular summarized the definition of ‘man’ and ‘woman’.

People would behave differently depending on what kind of person you are [...] talking about behaviour people are just different.\(^{55}\)

I think Rachel is right that people do behave differently depending on personality, but as the informants have told it is also a certain behaviour that is expected for a ‘man’ and a certain behaviour that is expected from a ‘woman’. And we all learn as young children what we are supposed to do and what we are not supposed to do – we are socialized into the cultural norms and values and the gender role is a part of that socialization process.

**To become an adult**

As in much of Africa, young people are exposed to conflicting values as the country becomes more modernized and urbanized [...]. Historically, in most ethnic groups, initiation ceremonies marked the transition from childhood to adulthood. Over a period of several weeks, initiates were secluded from the community while a selected tutor explained their role in society and taught them about sexual behaviour and pregnancy [...].\(^{56}\)

The first signs of becoming an adult I would say are when one reach puberty and that is why I asked my informants how it was for them when they reached puberty. Traditionally, when a boy or girl reaches puberty they go through an initiation ceremony, but due to different factors this is uncommon in urban areas like Lusaka nowadays. Instead it is tradition to for a boy to talk to his uncle or his grandfather and for a girl to talk to her aunt or her grandmother about puberty and sexual issues. According to the Zambian culture “is considered a completely inappropriate topic for discussion between parents and their children”\(^{57}\). I have come to understand that it is also in some cases approved that a boy can talk to his aunt or grandmother, but I never heard about that a girl could talk to her uncle or grandfather. Once again there is a special role that a woman and a man should have and certain behaviour that are just not allowed according to the culture.

Despite the traditional way of informing young people about puberty and sex the majority of the informants (Jamie, Amanda, Dominic, Oliver, and Kimberly) got their first information about puberty and sex in school. Since 1993 education about HIV/AIDS is stated in the curriculum for Zambian schools, but in reality it is irregular and the fact remains many elder people do not see it appropriate

\(^{54}\) Informant Dominic  
\(^{55}\) Informant Rachel  
\(^{56}\) Warenius, et al., p. 535  
\(^{57}\) Taylor, p. 116
to inform young people about sexual issues. Jamie explained to me that the traditional way of talking about puberty and sexual issues was different in his case as he was living with his aunt and she became more like a mother. This made it difficult for him to talk to her about it and as he lived far away from his other relatives there was no one to talk with. Jamie told me it is common with so called ‘extended families’ in Zambia, which I also saw living there, as many families are split up – due to for example unemployment/poverty and death (by for example AIDS).

The informants who did get information about puberty and sex in the slightly more traditional way were Tristan and Kate. For Tristan it was his older sister telling him about puberty. He has an explanation to why his older sister did talk to him about puberty and sex too:

My sister used to tell me about it cause I used to look like a girl before puberty [...] She used to say I would be very handsome after puberty, I hope I am [laugh].

Tristan thought his older sister talked to him about puberty and sex because he looked like a girl. From my experiences in Zambia, in some cases siblings can talk about puberty and sexual issues but for an older brother to talk to his younger sister about puberty and sexual issues would most certainly be considered inappropriate.

In Kate’s case it was her aunt, mother’s older sister, who told her about puberty and sex, which is the ideal traditional way of informing a girl about it. Kate told me what her aunt said:

‘Now when you have your menstrual you can get pregnant so take care of yourself. It’s a gift God has given you so don’t waste it’.

I asked Kate what her aunt meant with “so don’t waste it” and she explained to me that the aunt was warning her to about sexual activity before marriage both because God does not allow it and because of the risks of getting infected with HIV; and that she would then have to live with it for the rest of her life. The aunt had also warned her about STI’s, which could lead to infertility even if she could be cured from the disease itself. To be able to give birth is something that is expected of a woman and as I have explained before, from the discussion about what makes a woman, a lady that have not given birth might not even be defined as a true woman by traditional standards. Kate also told me about deterrent tactics and myths concerning sexual acts. For example, Kate was told as a young adolescent to not let men touch her breasts because if she let a man touch her breasts they would grow down to her feet. Kate said that she thought these deterrent tactics are wrong and that “we should be talking the truth”. It is common with myths and misinformation due to the absence of information. Warenius et al. also states the fact of misinformation as their study showed that “some respondent seemed to believe that it was more harmful to use condom than to have unprotected sex”.

Rachel is the only informant who did not remember the first time she got information about puberty and sex, but she explained to me that the initiation ceremonies vary depending if you live a rural or urban area. In the rural areas there is still more traditional ceremonies practised like the old initiation rites for boys and girls, but in urban areas like Lusaka especially it is a change taking place.

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58 Warenius, et al., p. 535
59 Informant Tristan
60 Informant Kate
61 Warenius, et al., p. 538
I want to recall that marriage represent identity and social status in the Zambian culture (including religion) and the socialization process is a long process preparing for marriage.\textsuperscript{62}

**To become a woman**

According to both Taylor and Warenius et al. practically every tribe in Zambia has initiation ceremonies for girls and it is when a girl start having menstruations that she is taught according to the traditions of her tribe. The main purpose of the initiations is to prepare the girl not only to just become a woman, but it is central to remember the expectations of a woman – she is to marry and be a good wife and a good mother.\textsuperscript{63} \textsuperscript{64} As it is considered inappropriate for a child to talk to the parents about puberty and sex, I asked Kimberly what she thought about it.

> I don’t really know the reason why we need to talk to relatives, but it’s just the way it is. But how do I talk to someone I am not used to talk to? I think my mum is the best person. Because even about boyfriends in our tradition you don’t talk to your mum, you talk to your aunt or grandma, but I have always talked to my mum. [...] So I do go to my mum and tell her I will spend time with him, she’ll ask me where he lives and I tell her so she feels safe too. [...]\textsuperscript{65}

Kimberly was the only informant that could talk to her parent, in this case her mother. Kimberly explained that it was due of the family structure; that her other relatives lived far away so it was also a matter of convenience. I also want to share what Kate said when I asked her what she thought about the traditional way of talking about puberty and sexual issues.

> I think it’s a great idea really because sometimes parents feel embarrassed to talk to us about such things. So if you are free and your aunt is free you can ask any question and it will be answered. [...] It’s supposed to stay between you and the aunty.\textsuperscript{66}

The informants told me it is something ‘obvious’ and predetermined that it is the aunt, uncle, or grandparents that they should talk to about puberty and sexual issues. According to Taylor, the mother chooses an elderly woman to be the daughter’s banacimbusa, a mentor that will teach the daughter so that she becomes a good woman. It is not necessarily just one mentor, it could be more, but what is important is that she is married and a mother and that she is “considered wise and are respected”.\textsuperscript{67} Neither of the informants mentioned such arrangements. However, I have come to understand that it usually happen when a young woman is getting married. Then she is given a banacimbusa, a female mentor, who is to guide the bride thought the premarital ceremonies. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The period of the initiation ceremony may vary depending on tribe, some tribes like Lunda and Luvale it can be even up to a year and for other tribes like Bemba, Kaonde, Chewa and Tumbuka it can be for only a few days. It also varies if the initiation takes place where the girl lives or if she is

\textsuperscript{62} Taylor, p. 96  
\textsuperscript{63} Taylor, p. 116  
\textsuperscript{64} Warenius, et al., p. 535  
\textsuperscript{65} Informant Kimberly  
\textsuperscript{66} Informant Kate  
\textsuperscript{67} Taylor, p. 116
sent to the village from where her family originates or to the province of her tribe. Kate also explained this to me.

[When girls have their first menstruation they are] also taken away from [the] family. For some time, months. Here in the city cause of school like two weeks. They teach you how to be a woman, how to take good care of yourself. Also a ritual that are practiced in the eastern province is that the clitoris of a woman has to be pulled, because she is supposed to be taught when she is 11 or 12 years old. So by the time she matures there will be no need [to tell her that part]. [...] It helps push the baby when you are to deliver, and for excitement, for sex. [...] So it becomes longer. And also it holds the man’s penis during sex. It pulls the penis in place I hear.

I think it is interesting what Kate told me because of the answer she gave me about why girls are told to pull their clitoris; it is a preparation for childbirth and for pleasing the husband during sex. Female circumcision, or female genital mutilation, is not practised in Zambia but it is very common in other parts of central and eastern Africa – I was even told it is forbidden in Zambia. But as Kate said, it is her tribe’s tradition for girls and women to pull their clitoris. Taylor also provides with the information that scarification and stretching of the outer labia are practiced in some tribes, as the Luvale and Kaonde. Taylor also mention another tradition that teaches young women “how to tighten the vaginal opening trough specific exercises and the use of traditional herbs” in some other areas of Zambia, like in the Eastern province. As I have stated before, the initiation ceremonies is not just about becoming an adult but it is a preparation for becoming a good wife and mother.

In short, sex and sexuality together form an essential dimension of the initiation process, and the training is significantly oriented towards pleasing the male partner.

I totally agree with Taylor and this statement will also show authenticity when I get into the specific premarital ceremonies for women.

**To become a man**

Despite the fact that many tribes in Zambia practice initiation ceremonies for girls the initiation ceremonies for boys are not as common and when initiation ceremonies are practised it is not as complex as it is for girls. Initiation ceremonies for boys are actually mainly just practised in the north-western province.

 [...] when a boy reaches puberty, 10 or so, we are taken to what they call *mukanda*, taken for circumcision. [...] After [that] you get taught how a man are suppose to behave, not be too close to women, we are told when a woman is cooking you are not supposts to be there. [...] 

As Oliver explained, and this has also been noticed by others, the *mukanda* ceremony is a circumcision ritual for boys “that marks their symbolic transition into adulthood”. It is mostly

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68 Taylor, p. 116  
69 Informant Kate  
70 Taylor, p. 116  
71 Taylor, p. 117  
72 Taylor, p. 115  
73 Warenius, et al., p. 535  
74 Informant Oliver  
75 C.f.: Turner.  
76 Taylor, p. 115
practiced among the tribes of Luvale, Luchazi and Chokwe. The *mukanda* ceremony is not only about circumcision but also about how a man should behave, like Oliver said. Taylor states that the *mukanda* ceremony is “signaling both the beginning of manhood for the initiate and the end of a mother’s obligation to her son”\(^{77}\). This despite that the boy might only be around 10 years old or at the age of 12 as Taylor states. Oliver explained that after the *mukanda* ceremony the boy who has now become a man is not allowed to sit close to women – which might also include his mother as according to tradition he is not allowed to sit or talk to her in public anymore.\(^{78}\)

The tension between the son and the mother can be described using Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytical term the *Oedipus complex*. According to Freud every child goes through a phase, in the middle of their childhood, when they become emotionally confused which includes a desire to sexually possess the parent of the opposite sex and rivalry and hate towards the parent with the same sex. Freud meant that this especially applies for boys due to the connection between castration anxiety and the complexity of masculinity.\(^{79}\) Despite that the Oedipus complex does not provide a universal analysis of masculinity or genders roles,\(^{80}\) it enable me to explain why a boy after the *mukanda* ceremony is expected to keep a distance to his mother. An important factor to this is that the Zambian culture’s homogenous gender’s contains awareness of sexuality as it is defined by the biological sexes. This means that when a young boy is becoming a man, due to that he is being looked at as a sexual being, needs to be socialized and controlled. The sexual tension does not only regard the son and the mother but also applies for the daughter and the father. Kimberly explained to me that she was told to not sit in her father’s lap anymore after she had her first menstruation. Thus, according to the Zambian culture the child and parent of opposite sexes should have a physical distance. However, the sexual tension between children and parents in Zambia is not just physical but also the psychological due to the fact that it is seen as inappropriate and taboo for parents to talk about sexual issues with their children. Ambjörnsson discusses the American sociology Nancy Chodorow’s theory about gender in relation to sexuality. Despite that it can be argued that Chodorow’s theory is also, like Freud’s theory, too general and static, it can provide a base perspective of gender and sexuality. Chodorow’s theory is compromised formation of the Oedipus complex and based on the hypothesis that gender identity, for both girls and boys, is created by the relation to the mother – as she traditionally is the first nurturer. She argues that the girl will identify herself with the mother, which will make the girl define herself though closeness and empathy, whereas the boy comes to define himself in contrast to the mother due to the separation from the mother. Chodorow argues that the heterosexual meeting, when a boy and girl is sexually mature, makes the gender roles develop further due to that the girl seeks autonomy and the boy seeks closeness.\(^{81}\) This is one perspective of how gender identity regenerates. It is difficult to apply a theory like Chodorow’s on any society that practices avoidance between older children and their parents and expect that the interpretation is the same everywhere. Ritual avoidance can very well just be about respect between an older child and its parent, or taboos that might not have to do with sexual tension, but perhaps with marking that the child is not old enough to be separated from its parents and start developing towards adulthood. However, as the gender roles are defined by biological sexes in the Zambian culture it could create a sexual tension between children and parents due to

\(^{77}\) Taylor, p. 115  
\(^{78}\) Taylor, p. 115  
\(^{79}\) Connell, p. 22-23  
\(^{80}\) Connell, p. 34  
\(^{81}\) Ambjörnsson, p. 18
that the parents expects a heterosexual behaviour. But I state that this sexual tension is, just as the gender roles, a social construction.

As I have explained before, there are certain social spaces depending on the social norms for men and women. I find it very interesting when Taylor also claims that boys are taught how to “tend to their homes and households” during the mukanda ceremony. Despite the fact that the initiation ceremonies for both boys and girls are very secretive for those who are not participants the informants do have knowledge about them. So my argument is that if boys were taught how to manage a household at least one of the informants should have heard about it; based on that the informants still has a lot of knowledge about the initiation ceremonies.

They don’t really say it but that’s the whole thing. I took part of it in 2007, it seemed just okay then, I hadn’t really thought about these things yes, I hadn’t related it to gender based violence and that, it’s still fine but there is something wrong, this whole mentality. […] It’s backwards, conservative. It’s not all bad, some things are of value but this mentality needs to change. […] They are changing. Before they used to take you to the bush and not see anyone but if you saw a woman you were supposed to grab her and rape her. Because you are supposed to be naked when you are at this place so if a woman see you, he needs to rape her obviously. Those are just the traditions then, because no one is supposed to see you.83

Oliver does not have any friend that has been through the old traditional initiation rite but I asked him how he would have felt in that situation if a woman had seen him naked and he explained to me that he would not have a choice because he would have been forced by the elder men to rape that woman. He explains further:

It was very barbaric before, but things have changed and are still getting more modern.84

Oliver explained that the initiation ceremonies are changing, and even the whole socialization process. He said it becomes more and more common that the circumcision is done during the baby’s first year and therefore the whole ritual is changing. As the adolescent boy does not go with the elderly men to the bush for example he does not get the same strict socialization of being dominant towards women.

Tristan told me as he grew up in Lusaka that the relatives he lives with did not follow the traditional initiation rites and it was his own decision to get circumcised. He told me he chose to get circumcised to protect himself from diseases as he was sexually active. Tristan explained that many people believe that circumcision protects against STI’s and HIV but that that is not true, he told me that circumcision just lowers the risk of getting infected. Due to the lack of knowledge and information many young people do believe that circumcision, as well as the initiation ceremonies, protect from getting infected with STI’s and HIV.85 The information about sex and sexual health during the initiation ceremonies is very incomplete as the Zambian culture (and Christianity) does not accept premarital sexual activity. The initiation ceremonies are not generally practiced within Lusaka based in the informants’ statements and the information in school about sexual issues are not adequate or

82 Taylor, p. 115
83 Informant Oliver
84 Informant Oliver
85 Warenius, et al., p. 539
accurate. Jamie stated that the Zambian culture expects certain behaviour from the genders and connected this with how girls and boys are being raised. He criticized the cultural norms, as he thought it is neglecting boys as there is more focus on the girls’ socialization process.

This is where the problem is [...] when we talk about gender roles I think we are talking about what a girl is expected to do, in particular, what a boy is supposed to do. Now in our culture, there is certain roles expected for each gender and individual. A girl at a young age could be taught how a lady should behave in the society, even how to relate to elderly people. Even a boy. But our culture are so lenient on a boy. More attention on a girl, a boy is left alone [...]. A boy is taught when he is about to get married. He could then talk to uncle or grandfather and be told a man should behave like this and be able to handle this, should take care of a woman like this [...] Just a theory. A girl has grown up with that as a lifestyle. A girl knows her role. [...] I think it’s just appropriate even boys should be taught. The older culture would prepare a boy too, but right now a boy is not prepared. If you look at a girl, the girl is prepared all the time so you see the neglect on the other part. 

It is Jamie’s perception that if the boys are being neglected it will cause imbalance between the genders and in society. At the same time, as Dominic said “people expect so much from a man”. Thus, Jamie argues, the culture in Zambia has defined gender structure but without suitable socialization the younger generation may not be able to live up to the cultural expectations of gender roles. Further in this study I will discuss the need to change the gender structure.

Summary

The informants definitions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ is based on the biological concept of ‘male’ and ‘female’, which is also being connected to Christianity – God created man and woman to complement one another. The homogeneous roles of the sexes are seen throughout the socialization processes, including the initiation ceremonies. There are certain characteristics and behaviour expected from a man and from a woman that are considered to be ‘biologically natural’. Since the informants have been socialized into the cultural norms it sometimes affects their own perceptions – despite that they do not completely agree with the cultural definition, or the regulations, of the gender roles.

The informants stated that the traditional initiation ceremonies; including mentorship into adulthood by relatives, for boys and girls are inadequate due to the cultural norms regarding sexual issues. And despite that schools in Zambia are expected by law to provide information about sexual issues the informants stated that the information is not adequate or accurate. Which is also what Warenius et al. state in their study. Thus, the construction of gender roles contribute to a lack of knowledge about sexual issues, which leads to the continuing of the HIV-epidemic as well as other issues connected to sexual health.

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86 Warenius, et al., p. 535
87 Informant Jamie
89 Warenius, et al., p. 535
The relationship between a man and a woman – paradise?

The initiation ceremonies are different depending on what tribe one belongs to and depending on if the initiation ceremony takes place in the rural areas or in the urban areas. As I have stated the initiation ceremony is directly related to marriage and Rachel gave me an illustration of how it could be in the rural areas and just how directly related the initiation ceremonies are to marriage. Rachel told me about her cousin who lives in a village.

I have a cousin, she lives in the village [...] and she told me the elder, not really your mum, but friends to your mum, aunties or grandma, they will put you in a house [...] they will teach you for a period of time. Some go back to their lives and some marry from there. [...] According to what she said. There is a ceremony, when they are done with the teaching they make her dance on a high platform, so people can come and see and buy gifts [...] so when they are dancing if there is a man who likes you he can make you come down and that’s final, he’s your husband. [...] So after the ceremony his parents and yours will talk and arrange the marriage.\(^{90}\)

It might not be as directly related in the urban areas as it might be in the rural areas in the way that a young girl can get married immediately after her initiation ceremony, but the preparations are there and it is all about the marriage.

The way to marriage

[...] if I am getting married of course I can’t go directly to my parents and tell them, if I want to get married I go to my aunt and she will tell my mother. That’s how it is. The man propose to me, we date, I tell my aunt or anyone close to my mum and after they have been told they arrange for my boyfriend to come home and pay lobola [bridewealth]. [...] My dad needs to agree to the lobola and he has the final say if we can marry. There are situation where the father says no but usually people do marry from love now a days. [...]\(^{91}\)

Amanda explained that if she had a boyfriend and he proposed to her, she would go and tell that to her aunt and the aunt would inform Amanda’s parents. She explained further that it would then be arranged for her boyfriend to come to her house and discuss the bridewealth with her dad. But as far as I have come to understand, and Taylor agrees, it is the boyfriend’s uncle or grandfather that usually comes to the young woman’s family’s house to negotiate the bridewealth – in Nyanja called lobola and in Bemba it is called nsalamo. I will use the term lobola as I have come to be used to that term. Lobola is today mostly symbolic but is used by the majority of the Zambian tribes.\(^{92}\) For the Bemba’s lobola, or nsalamo as they call it, has historically been the same as it is even today – it is a sign from the man who has proposed and his family to the woman’s family that his intentions are serious. For other tribes it might of course have had another meaning to it, as for the Tonga’s it had a very vital purpose. The lobola in the traditional Tonga culture is paid with cows due to the “importance of cattle to Tonga culture”\(^{93}\) as Taylor claims. Taylor explains that the exchange of cattle for the daughter should not be seen as a business operation but more like “a form of compensation

\(^{90}\) Informant Rachel
\(^{91}\) Informant Amanda
\(^{92}\) Taylor, p. 97-98
\(^{93}\) Taylor, p. 98
for the lost labor that married daughter represented.”94 To understand lobola I asked Rachel what she thought about it.

I think, first I never understood it, why should someone pay? It’s like selling you off or something like that. I used to think like that but with time I find that I am okay with it. It’s a good practice cause my part of understanding, it’s just shows how you appreciate the family for the woman. [...] It’s also a form of a seal, symbol. If someone feels you shouldn’t be married it’s supposed to be returned. So it’s also something like a contract. [...]95

But there are still problems with lobola. The first problem I see is that lobola is not just a symbolic gesture of appreciation as Rachel stressed, but I see it as compensation to the woman’s family – to be compared with the old traditions of the Tonga when lobola was paid with cattle. The lobola is usually a lot of money and many families cannot manage to pay the lobola and if they do, the result is often that the marriage starts off financially constrained. Taylor also addresses this problem and I also got to know about it during my time in Zambia. I never heard about any couple getting married without lobola, but Taylor claims that more Westernized families “will waive the payment altogether, or, increasingly, the Westernized children will refuse to participate”.96 I found it very interesting as I never heard about this during my time in Zambia; maybe due to that it can be inappropriate to speak about as it is not following their tradition. However, if Taylor is right the situation for newly married people would certainly be easier. Many people struggle to find jobs and it is very hard to make enough money even if both husband and wife are working. Taylor explains the second problem very precise:

Although it is not the intention, the higher the value of the payment, the greater the risk that the bride is viewed as a commodity, and the facto ownership of her passes from father to husband. Not surprisingly, this presents some genuine gender conflict, particularly in the contemporary period [...].97

As Taylor have explained the second problem; that despite that lobola is not intended to be a payment for the woman there is a risk that when a man feels he and his family have paid a high price the man can start treating the woman as property, or like a slave, instead of treating her like his wife. During my time in Zambia I did hear about men being willing to pay a lot for girls that had been to university or/and college as it was a sign of status in the society to have a woman that had been educated, but as far as I understood it was more of a “trophy wife” than anything else. Although more women in Zambia are getting educated, when they get married the traditional regulations for women as wives are still valid and may prevent well-educated women from working outside of the household.

When lobola is accepted by the woman’s family the couple becomes engaged. I learned in Zambia that there are three premarital ceremonies that a bride should go through to become a good wife. As I have explained earlier the woman has grown up being socialized into becoming a good woman and this is the final ceremonies to prepare her for marriage.

94 Taylor, p. 98
95 Informant Rachel
96 Taylor, p. 98
97 Taylor, p. 98
The first ceremony is the *amatebeto*; a ceremony where the bride learns how to cook. It is very common that people from different tribes get married and therefore *amatebeto* often means that the bride must learn how to cook the bridegroom’s tribe’s traditional food. Depending on tribe/tribe’s and traditions, the cooking can include only the bride and her female relatives as participants or also allow the female relatives of the bridegroom to participate in the cooking. The *amatebeto* includes preparing a lot of different dishes as the food is to be brought to the bridegroom’s family. But it is only the female relatives that go to the bridegroom’s family – the bride is not allowed to come with them. Once again depending on tribe/tribes and traditions the bride’s female relatives can or cannot stay to and join the big dinner party. Either way, when the food is given to the bridegroom and his family the women are singing and dancing and celebrating. The symbolism of every act in the ceremony is about if the bride is going to be good wife – the female relatives are not only representing the bride but also themselves as a matrilineal descent. This means that the female relatives acts with pride and confident. According to Taylor the Bemba tradition at *amatebeto* also includes that one of the bride’s female relatives washes the hands and feet of the bridegroom to show that the bride comes from a line of women that knows how to take care of a man. The bridegroom is guided during this ceremony by an elder man, a mentor called *bashibukombe*, who is often an uncle but it does not necessarily have to be a relative. As I explained that every act is a symbolic gesture from the bride’s female relatives, the *bashibukombe* also pay close attention and analyze the acts and behaviour of the bride’s female relatives. I understood during my time in Zambia that this ceremony was done a few weeks before the wedding, but traditionally this ceremony was done several months before the wedding.\(^\text{98}\)

The next ceremony is in Bemba called *ubwinga* and that is the ceremony for when the bride, and sometimes also the bridegroom, learns how to “dance in bed” as my female friends in Zambia used to call it. In other words, *ubwinga* is a ceremony for learning how to have sex. In some tribal traditions the man are taught about sexual activity during his initiation ceremony (when he is circumcised). But as the initiation ceremony for men are changing and most boys decide themselves if to get circumcised or not, most men are not taught about sexual issues or how to please the woman in bed. However, the focus is on the woman to be able to please her husband. During my time in Zambia, I did hear that both the bridegroom and the bride could participate in the ceremony of *ubwinga*, but it seemed to be happening very rarely.

It used to be tradition among the Bemba that the *ubwinga* included participation from both the bride and the bridegroom. The ceremony takes place at the bride’s house or at any of her female relative’s house, and the to-be married couple are taught together and then separately as well.\(^\text{99}\) I only learned about *ubwinga* as the second premarital ceremony for the bride. Just like the bridegroom is given a mentor, *bashibukombe*, the bride is also given a mentor (as I mentioned discussing the initiation ceremony for girls) called *banachimbusa*. The bride is kept in a bedroom and the *banachimbusa* is accompanied usually by two or three other woman as well to teach the bride how to “dance in bed”. According to what I learned the bride is naked and the women are teaching her and showing her what to do, how to move her hips up and down so that the husband is going to enjoy the sexual act. The practice is mainly done with the bride lying on her back as the man is supposed to be on top of

\(^{98}\) Taylor, p. 99  
\(^{99}\) Taylor, p. 100
The ceremony last for a whole night and are usually the night before the wedding or before the ‘kitchen party’; that I will explain more about now.

Taylor does not mention ‘kitchen parties’, which surprised me as it was a very popular ceremony based on my own perception. A ‘kitchen party’ is an event for when the bride receives presents for the household and the kitchen; just as the name of the ceremony reveals. I was invited by a friend to come to her uncle’s bride’s ‘kitchen party’. In the big building, usually used as a sport hall, there was over a hundred women sitting and waiting for the ceremony to start. I was wearing a traditional chitenge dress and I sat down at one of the many odd chairs. At the front of the big hall there was a tent, just like the ones used in Sweden for having BBQ outdoors, with no walls but only a roof. As we all were waiting for the bride to arrive, the banachimbusa talked in her tribal language and my friend translated for me. The banachimbusa spoke about the rules for the ‘kitchen party’ and the regulations of being a woman. Then another woman read from the Bible about the woman’s role as well. After that the bride finally arrived. The bride was covered from head to toe in a big chitenge so that no one could see her as the female relatives led her in, while they were singing and dancing, to the hall and under the tent where she was put to sit on a mattress on the floor together with an elder female relative. Then the banachimbusa continued speaking about the woman’s position: “even if the woman has an education from the university, she should never think she is better than the man! She must respect her husband and be submissive and devoted to her husband!” She continued explaining that a woman’s role is to be a good wife and to satisfy her husband’s needs. Then suddenly my friend told me to come with her outside, while a lot of women on my side of the hall also got up and walked out. Outside the hall the bridegroom and his male relatives had arrived. Everyone gathered around the bridegroom and started singing and dancing and we walked back into the hall again and to the front were the bride was sitting with her elder female relative. We stood around the tent, singing and clapping our hands. The bridegroom went down on his knees in front of the bride – he looked extremely confused and kept looking back to receive directions about what he was supposed to do. Then he began to slowly scroll the bride’s chitenge from her feet and up to finally reveal her face. Everyone was calling out of joy and when the bridegroom kissed his bride the cheering got even higher. Then the bridegroom gave the bride a gift basket with detergent, dish clothes, toilet mops and several of things used to clean a house. The bride also gave a gift to the bridegroom, which was a big cake. The man was sitting on a chair and the woman kneeled in front of him. Everything has a symbolic meaning, and as the banachimbusa had declared earlier the woman is inferior to the husband. It can be perceived as a sign out of respect that the bride kneeled in front of the bridegroom, or it can be a sign of submissiveness – which will be discussed further on. After the gifts had been shared the bridegroom and his male relatives left the ‘kitchen party’ as no men are allowed to be there during the whole ceremony. A big buffet was then served at the back of the hall and everyone lined up to get something to eat. When I had finished my food the banachimbusa started calling out the names of those who had brought gifts to the bride. Those who had brought a gift had to go up to the banachimbusa and dance with her to the traditional drums that some elderly women sat drumming on. At the same time I saw all the photographers leaving the hall and I asked my friend why they were leaving and she explained to me that if the men see the women “dance like this” they will not be able to control themselves but will rip of the women’s clothes. The banachimbusa then pulled up her two parted dress so that her stomach showed to show how the stomach is supposed to move when dancing, according to my friend. My pulse started beating faster and faster, because I came to realize I was going to be called up to come to the front and dance with
the *banachimbusa* as I of course had brought a gift to the bride.\textsuperscript{100} She was a woman with a lot of character so I have to admit I was intimidated by her – and to dance in front of all these women! And to not go up and dance would be an insult so I did not have a choice. My name was then called out and I went to the front. The elderly women drumming looked and laughed at me; the white *musungu*\textsuperscript{103} in a *chitenge* dress. The *banachimbusa* grabbed hold of my hips, it felt like she was checking if my hips was strong, and began to tie a *chitenge* around my hips. She looked very sceptical and said “let’s see what you’ve got! Try to follow my moves”. The elderly women started drumming and it felt like I had just had an arthrodesis. The *banachimbusa* moved her hips to the right and then to the left and I followed her; like if I was having an aerobics class. It felt like doing the hula hoop as a child. All the women in the hall started cheering and laughing. The *banachimbusa* gave me a big hug after the dance and as I went back to my chair people greeted me. When all the names of those who had brought gifts had been called up to dance the ‘kitchen party’ was over and people started to leave. The main purpose with the ‘kitchen party’ is for the bride to receive kitchen wears but also for the bride’s female relatives to demonstrate that the bride comes from a respectable matrilineal descent, as it is also the same during *amatebeto*. Depending on tribe and traditions the bridegroom’s female relatives are invited to the ‘kitchen party’, as it was for this one I was invited to.

I asked Oliver what he thinks about ‘kitchen parties’ and he said:

> I feel they are okay because that’s our tradition and I haven’t seen anything wrong. Kitchen party’s helps a woman build a kitchen and they give gifts to the couple but particularly to the woman as it’s for the kitchen.\textsuperscript{102}

I find it interesting that Oliver manage to speak about ‘kitchen parties’ as the men are only allowed to participate for a very short while during the whole ceremony. So I had to tell him about my experience at the ‘kitchen parties’ I attended and how the *banachimbusa* spoke about the woman’s role and I asked him what he thought about it.

> That’s a problem because you find this older people sometimes they are still backwards, they still have that mentality that a man should be superior to a woman. But that’s not the case.\textsuperscript{103}

It seems that Oliver thought that there needs to be a change in the perception of the gender roles and how the relation between a man and a woman should be like. During this exploration of the premarital ceremonies, it seems that the main focus is to prepare the bride. When I asked Oliver about the preparation for a man to get married he told me:

> For the men they are given this person, an older man who are supposed to tell you how to be a husband [...] how to treat your wife, how to treat your in-laws, [...]. Just a big talk, but what is good is if you have an argument with your wife you can call this person to come and try to help you solve the problem.\textsuperscript{104}

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\textsuperscript{101} “Musungu” means “white foreign person”

\textsuperscript{102} Informant Oliver

\textsuperscript{103} Informant Oliver

\textsuperscript{104} Informant Oliver
It seems that the bridegroom is not prepared in the same extent as the bride for marriage. I asked Kate what she thought about that a woman is more prepared into marriage than a man and she said:

I think it’s really unfair on that part and I think it leads to problem within the marriage. [...] During circumcision I know men are told, especially from our province, told so many things but also a woman are told so many things [...] A woman is taught how to handle the house but you find that a man is ignorant of these things because he’s only taught for a few days, a few days is not enough! And as well, they say the man is the head of the house, so you do not know more than the woman does.105

Kate explained to me that the men in her tribe learn a lot when they go for the initiation ceremony. But as many do not practice that anymore and the few days that the bridegroom is prepared with his bashibukombe, his mentor, Kate said that the preparations for the bridegroom is not enough. When I asked Tristan what he thought about the preparation for the man into marriage he had the same opinion as Kate had.

That’s a badness. It’s a disadvantage. They prepare a woman but the head of the house is a man, so it comes back to nothing. Yes, cause I am the head of the house and then I am not prepared for the marriage, whatever I decide should be considered but whatever a woman decides who is prepared for a marriage it’s up to me as the head of the house, so I feel that’s why there is confusion within marriages.106

The informants agreed that the preparation for the bridegroom is not enough and that the man should be more prepared. Dominic was the only informant that directly questioned what the bride and bridegroom are taught during the ceremonies before they get married.

It’s okay to teach her these things before she get married, but sometimes it’s also about what they teaching us! And also what we are getting from the people who are teaching us. [...] Is this what the people are telling me the right thing or...? And nobody comes up to us men and teaching us. [...] The only person that prepares the groom for the house is [...] the man who is in charge of taking the dowry to the bride’s family, the one who negotiates the lobola. [...] He doesn’t really teach you much but handle that.107

Dominic stated the importance of also questioning the traditions and the teaching during the premarital ceremonies. And he adds that the bashibukombe is mainly just responsible for the lobola to be paid to the bride’s family. Thus, the preparation for the men, according to the informants, is that the bridegroom is given an elderly man as mentor called bashibukombe and this man is responsible for the lobola and have “a fundamental talk” with the bridegroom so that he knows how to be dominant and handle his wife. However, the bride is being prepared in several ceremonies as the informant has stated.

105 Informant Kate
106 Informant Tristan
107 Informant Dominic
The big day and the way forward

As Zambia is a Christian country the wedding itself is generally similar to the western weddings; meaning the wedding ceremony takes place in a Church and the bride, *banabwinga*, has a white wedding dress and the groom, *bashibwinga*, has a tuxedo. The guests can be over a hundred people; both dressed in more western formalwear and in traditional dresses made by *chitenge*. But there is also the option of civil ceremonies. In the rural areas it is more common to have traditional wedding which goes under customary law, and it might also be the only option for those living in the rural areas. According to government law a person needs to be 21 years old, or if younger have a written consent from a parent or guardian, to be allowed to marry. But according to customary law there is no age limit for marriage and as women usually marries men that are older than them this means that when married through customary law the girl could be as young as 12 years old. Another problem with getting married through customary law is that there is no paper work on the marriage which means that the woman does not have any rights, for example when it comes to be able to divorce or to object if the husband wants to marry another woman as well. Polygamy is not common in Lusaka for example but in the rural areas it is still practiced. If a woman is married according to the government law and the husband wants to marry another woman through customary law the wife can divorce him but if they are married through customary law she will end up with nothing if she divorces him (the husband will usually also keep their children) and in the rural areas she might even be stigmatised. I will discuss divorces further in the next chapter.

After the wedding, usually the first day after the wedding, both families and friends meet for a ceremony called *ukulula*. This is a ceremony practiced in all the tribes in Zambia. The ceremony is about giving the newly wedded blessings and good luck wishes, and if the newly wife is moving to another town to live with her husband it is also a moment of saying good bye.

Taylor writes about yet another ceremony called *ukwingisha shiyala*, which means “to let the son-in-law enter”. It is not very common today as the Zambian culture and its traditions are becoming more westernized but it could still be practiced in the rural areas where tradition is still much stricter. Taylor explains that it could take years before the son-in-law is allowed to come to the wife’s parent’s house and be fully accepted, if it at all happens.

As I got to know about the traditional preparations and ceremonies for the bride and the bridegroom during my first months in Zambia I was wondering how the young people perceived the gender roles – and what to me was a clear distinction between the genders. I would say that Kimberly was the female informant who was the one most upset with the distinction and the gender roles.

A woman is given about a month, how to take care of your man in bed, how to behave towards the man [...] But the man is not so much focused like that. [...] Men are just taught to be a man. Make babies only!? No, well, that’s the thing culture in Zambia it’s a heavy load on the woman. And in a marriage, if a woman is found cheating it’s a big issue! [...] With the man it’s different.

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108 Colourful printed traditional texture.
109 Chapter 50 of the Marriage Act. Taylor, p. 96
110 Taylor, p. 96
111 Taylor, p. 100
112 Taylor, p. 101
A man can do whatever he can do, a woman can’t go outside just how she wants. [...] like a woman are too weak, I don’t think so.\footnote{Informant Kimberly}

The cultural norms for how a woman should behave and her status results in that she becomes inferior to the man. Kimberly explained the duties that are included in the expectations of a woman become inequitable. Jamie also shared his perception of the premarital ceremonies and said:

I think the gender roles should be revisited. [...] We are just teaching one part. [...] Boys are being neglected. Roles are there, you can never do without the roles, there are certain things expected to be done. But the other thing is when gender balance comes in [...] [the duties of the household is] not to be restricted to one part. [...] As a man there is certain things I need to know. I need to know how to take care of a lady. I need to be taught. I should not look at you as you belong to me but I should respect you as a woman. I should know my role, it is to protect you. I should protect my wife. Not beat my wife for example. I should listen to my wife, she’s a partner, she’s a friend. That’s how a man should view it.\footnote{Informant Jamie}

Jamie stated that the gender roles should be revisited. Due to that Jamie first state that the ‘roles’ are static he contradicted himself as he said that the expectations and duties can change. Can the gender hierarchy change without redefining of the gender roles? This will be further discussed in the analytical summary. Although, Jamie argues that the gender roles need to become more equal in the sense that a man and woman should complement one another in their relationship.

\textit{Summary}

Marriage is very important as it represents identity and social status in Zambia. The ceremonies prior to marriage visualize the homogeneous gender roles even clearer than what the initiation ceremonies showed in previous chapter. The regulations and expectations within the gender roles increase with marriage.

The bride goes through three steps; \textit{amatebeto} for learning to cook, \textit{ubwinga} for learning “how to dance in the bedroom” or rather how to please her man when having sex, and the ‘kitchen party’ for receiving supplies for the household. And her mentor, \textit{banachimbusa}, teaches her throughout these ceremonies. Despite that the bridegroom participates in receiving the food after the \textit{amatebeto} together with his family I would not call this a preparation ceremony for him into the marriage, as well for when it comes to the ‘kitchen party’. Sometimes the bridegroom participates in the \textit{ubwinga} ceremony but according to the informants it is not common. Thus, the bridegroom’s mainly premarital ceremony is the fundamental talk with his mentor, \textit{bashibukombe}, where he is taught how to be a man. The informants said that this talk is mainly about establishing the gender hierarchy; that the man is superior to the woman. Due to the gender hierarchy, based on the patriarchal structure, the marriage two actors consist of ‘the superior man’ and ‘the inferior woman’.

The premarital ceremonies are very different for the bride and the bridegroom. However, this chapter also demonstrates how the Zambian culture is being influenced and intermixed by Western culture. The informants did not object the premarital ceremonies but stressed the importance of also preparing the bridegroom for the marriage. Kimberly stated that the role of a woman, due to her inferior role, is “a heavy load”. All the informants believed that the lack of preparations for men can
cause problems within the marriage. With keeping in mind that the gender hierarchy is fundamental, I argue that the informants to some extent are being influenced by gender equality but, as will be stated further, it is also due to the informants’ own experiences.
To live by the religion or the culture?

When I was in Zambia I went with a friend of mine to church several times and I was chocked over the comprehensive focus of the Devil. The priest preached about the importance of praying and of having a personal relationship with Jesus for protection against the Devil. When I was walking home one day from YMCA I meet a young girl and somehow we started discussing my shock and discomfort regarding the focus on the Devil. This young girl explained to me that I need to realize that the Devil is real, that I should not ignore the reality of the Devil. So, I had to ask her how she knew that the Devil is real and she told me to open my eyes and look around! “We have poverty and HIV! This is the work of the Devil!” She explained to me the importance of prayer so that God will save us from the Devil’s work and bring salvation. This conversation was of great value for me as I came to understand the desperate need of hope and faith due to poverty and the HIV-epidemic. As I have stated earlier, the importance of cultural norms and gender roles is widely recognized to be able to understand the HIV/AIDS-epidemic. But within the cultures there are also self-created explanations due to the despairing need for hope. I asked all the informants if they have had any relative or any close friend that had deceased from HIV/AIDS and everyone said yes. HIV/AIDS are an enormous problem in Zambia and among the sexually active in Zambia between 16 percent and 19 percent are infected with HIV.

[...] this still places the number of infected to millions, a staggering number of infections in any country, let alone in a poor country with an undeveloped health care system and a population ill equipped to cope with the problem.

Taylor’s description of the HIV-epidemic in Zambia correlates with my own observations and experiences. Many families are split up due to the HIV-epidemic and it is also one of the reasons for why Zambia has so many street children. Taylor estimates the number to be over 600 000 orphans in Zambia. I never got a number of the street children in Lusaka but I was several times to YMCA’s Street Children Center and I also saw a lot of street children walking around in Lusaka. In Zambia the family is very important and the family is a social security. Therefore a lot of families help out by taking relatives’ children into their homes and provide for them, despite the fact that the family itself so often are struggling financially. The Zambians call it “extended families”. Still the problem remains because not every family can afford or have space to take in another child.

There is a direct connection between the gender roles and the high percent of HIV-infected in Zambia. Despite the fact that Zambia is a Christian country and approximately 75 percent of the population are Christians many do not just live by the religion but also, of course, by the culture. According to the Bible you are not supposed to be sexually active before marriage and when you are married you are not supposed to have sex with anyone but your husband or wife. If people where living by the religion, and if they were perfect, the percent of HIV-infected would be much lower or

115 Another example of handling the HIV-epidemic, see: Wickström, Anette, Virginity testing as a local public health initiative: a ‘preventive ritual’ more than a ‘diagnostic measure’, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.) 16, 532-550, Royal Anthropological Institute, 2010.
116 Jobson, p. 233
117 Taylor, p. 105
118 Taylor, p. 105
119 Taylor, p. 105
120 Taylor, p. 27
actually go to zero. But people are not perfect, and in Zambia people do not just live by religion but also by culture as they are intermixed together.

**Infidelity**

People are constantly encouraged to follow the Bible but the religion and the culture do not always correlate. Despite that the Bible condemns infidelity the culture does not criticize a married man who engages in extramarital sex. As I have explained earlier polygamy is not common in Zambia today, especially not in Lusaka if maybe still practiced in the rural areas, but instead it is culturally accepted that a married man has one or even several girlfriends and sexual partners. There is vital cultural similarities between polygamy and extramarital sex as both practices are a symbolism for who is a ‘real man’. If condoms were used in greater extent the HIV-epidemic would not be so severe, despite multiple sex partners. The concern of proving to be a ‘real man’ also increases the risk of infection due to myths as condoms could impair the sexual performance. However, men still depend on their wives’ care which also could cause men to withhold information about their HIV-status.  

I came across extramarital sex/relationship for the first time when I and a friend of mine met a friend of his family; a man at the age of 50 years old. He was accompanied by two other men who also were in the same age as himself and two ladies who were my age, i.e. around 25 years old. The man said he wanted to introduce us and so he did, and when he came to one of the ladies he said “and this is my babe”. First I have to say I did not understand what he meant by “my babe”, but then I understood that this lady was his girlfriend. My friend later told me that the man is married and has three children. I was surprised as according to my own cultural norms it is taboo. I asked my friend what he thought about the fact that the man did not even seem to be bothered or ashamed and my friend replied me and said that the man should be ashamed. My friend explained that a man should provide for his family, not take the money somewhere else or just enjoy the money himself; because the man has a responsibility. And, my friend continued, a man should be faithful to his wife as the Bible clearly states. My friend explained to me that it is very common that older men have girlfriends at the side of their marriages. So I asked my friend why young women agree to be mistresses and my friend answered me by telling that they get money, clothes and other things that they would want to have. Some men even go to the colleges and universities to meet young women to offer them financial support in exchange for a relationship. As far as I have come to understand the character of these relationships varies, the married man and his girlfriend can have a social life together or not but the main idea in general is to have a sexual relationship.

Kimberly explained to me that it is common for men to seek girlfriends at colleges and universities. Several older men, that could be her father as she stated, have approached her and asked for a relationship but Kimberly had strongly declined. However, a friend of her has a relationship with a married man, also called to as ‘sugar daddy’, and the friend receives money and clothes, and taken out for dinner occasionally. Kimberly thought these relationships between a married man and a

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122 C.f.: Hampshire, Kate; Porter, Gina; Mashiri, Mac; Maponya, Goodhope; Dube, Sipho; *Proposing love on the way to school: mobility, sexuality and youth transition in South Africa*, Culture, Health & Sexuality, Vol. 13, No. 2, February 2011, 217-231, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group).
girlfriend is to be compared with prostitution, but explained that prostitution has another label. Another aspect of this issue is that many girls finance their education by the relationship to the ‘sugar daddy’. Rachel explained to me that men are not ashamed of the fact that they are cheating on their wives, and argued that marriage is a commitment. Taylor also states that the practice of married men having girlfriends as nothing that is stigmatized or wrong according to the culture.

This is such a commonly accepted practice, in fact, that one can regularly see even prominent, married men out at night with their female companions; such encounters inevitably become something of an open secret in the community. [...] Ironically, in this age of HIV and AIDS, it is less risky to have multiple sex partners in the context of a polygynous marriage than it is between unmarried partners.123

When I asked my informants what they thought about that a married man according to culture is allowed to have extramarital sex everyone said it is wrong and that people should live by the Bible. But the informants explained to me that it is a part of the culture; regardless of tribe as I came to understand.

Uubuchende bwa mwaume tabutoba ingaanda.124

This saying in Bemba means “when a man commits adultery a home can never be broken, but if a woman commits adultery a home will be broken”. It clearly demonstrates the diverse rules for man and woman. But the saying does not only apply for the Bemba tribe but is a common norm for all the tribes in Zambia.

One of the things that mum and dad used to have fights about was the issue of having women on the side. And I saw how she felt, she was crying all the time. It was a sorry sight. It wasn’t a good thing, so I wouldn’t want my woman to experience that or to go through something like that. Or cry because I have disrespected her. [...] Especially the kind of woman that I’ve chosen to bring into my house, cause when I say I want you to be in my house I am gonna give myself to you all heartedly. And then I decide to go and get another woman it means I disrespect you and I’ve broken you. I think...it’s terrible.125

Dominic told me about his experience of growing up with a father who was unfaithful to his wife (Dominic’s mother). He stressed the point that a man has a responsibility to take care of the woman and that he also should respect her. All the informants were unanimous that infidelity should be unacceptable. But in a culture where the men are dominant and in position of authority it becomes very difficult for women to claim respect and rights.

123 Taylor, p. 96-97
124 Informant Jamie
125 Informant Dominic
The woman’s place is in the kitchen and she should be submissive, or?

I have grown up believing that, but I have seen other cultures and it’s so different [...] ‘The woman’s place is in the kitchen’ I feel is very very discriminating. A woman may be submissive to her husband but to just be placed in the kitchen is very wrong. It’s like a woman should not be educated [...] it doesn’t help us at all.¹²⁶

Oliver explained to me that he has grown up believing that a woman’s place is in the kitchen, or the house, but that he feels that it is wrong. He said that an uneducated woman would not “help us at all” and I interpreter that as if women are not educated the society will not change to be able to solve the problems of the society – such as HIV-infections and poverty.

[...] there is no problem for her to be in the kitchen but I don’t agree the only place for her is in the kitchen.¹²⁷

Rachel does not think that the only place for a woman is in the kitchen, but according to culture that is the woman’s primary social space. Taylor explains that the daily life for a woman and for a man is very different as their duties are very different. For women, both for those who live in rural areas and urban areas, their duties are focused within the house and include duties such as cleaning the house, cooking and doing the laundry. According to culture a man should not engaged himself in these activities as they are seen as “women’s work”.¹²⁸ The saying “the woman’s place is in the kitchen” does not just mean that a woman literally should be in the kitchen, but it also indicates the bigger picture of what is expected from a woman. I asked Kate about the obligations in a relationship she said:

A man should never beat a woman. He should care for her. And then a woman should never insult her man or embarrass him, especially not in public.¹²⁹

Kate stated that the obligations of a man in a relationship is to treat her well, not to beat her but to care for her, and that the obligations of a woman is to respect him. In my interpretation, what she said is that a woman should not question the man in public but remember her role towards the man. I want to emphasize that as women are being socialized into the cultural norms with the regulations of their ‘gender role’ they also get to maintain the gender hierarchy; as it is perceived to be legitimate.¹³⁰

During the health project ‘Act 2 Live’ at YMCA a quote from the Bible was discussed, and it goes as follow: “the woman shall submit to her husband and the husband shall love his wife”. It was very interesting how the young people during ‘Act 2 Live’ interpret this quote so I decided to also ask my informants about their perception.

Most people would relate ‘submission’ to slavery but I rather look at it in a different view. I feel ‘submission’, it should not be slavery, I feel ‘submission’ should be you committing yourself to this person, respect this person. If you look at ‘submission’ like slavery, you wouldn’t make the Bible seem like that. I don’t feel that’s what the Bible mean because a woman and a man should

¹²⁶ Informant Oliver
¹²⁷ Informant Rachel
¹²⁸ Taylor, p. 94
¹²⁹ Informant Kate
¹³⁰ Connell, p. 101
be complementing each other. [...] A man should really love his wife and not abuse her in any way. [...] The husband should respect his wife and listen to her view as well.  

Oliver explained to me that the ‘submission’ should not mean a woman is to be a slave to her husband, but it is to give him respect. And in some way all the informants spoke about ‘submission’ as the woman should respect the husband.

‘Submission’ it’s not that a man should sub-treat a woman, ‘submitting’ is respecting [the] man and caring for [the] man, looking out for his needs and also a man is reminded to love cause a woman naturally loves, you don’t have to tell a woman to love, she loves naturally but for a man he needs to be reminded [that] he is supposed to love.  

Kate explained to me that it is natural for a woman to love, but that it is harder for a man to love and that is why the Bible has to remind the man that he is supposed to love his wife. Kimberly also talked about love and she said that “love is the key”. She said that if the man loves his woman she will submit and if the woman submits the man will love his wife. And she stressed the importance of support and understanding between a man and a woman. Tristan explained to me that a woman should submit to her husband, but that it should be in “a favourable condition and environment”. He said that ‘submission’ is a way of understanding each other but that the woman should not disobey the husband. But Tristan adds that the husband should understand that the woman for example might not want to have sex every night and that she should not have to feel forced.

Amanda did not interpret the Bible as that a woman must agree to whatever the husband decides.

Even I have the right to speak but I have to speak sense. [...] The Bible says “the husband shall love his wife”. You know Mikaela, if I love you I should listen to what you have to say. So the husband should listen and respect his wife. The husband should also submit to the wife for the love that he has for her.  

Amanda was the only informant to state that the husband should also submit to the wife. According to the Zambian culture, of what I have learned, this is very provocative – but it is also a sign that the younger generation of women are speaking up and do not want to be mistreated. Amanda also explained to me that it is high time that people start understanding the Bible “differently and the way it’s supposed to be”. She argued that ‘submission’ is not to obey but it is to respect – and that those who interpret ‘submission’ as obedience will make it seem that God want women to be slaves to men. She was very upset and she continued to argue that if women were meant to be men’s slaves it would not be written in the Bible that “the husband shall love his wife”. Rachel spoke about ‘submission’ in a similar way as the other informants, as she also interpret that the Bible says that the woman should respect her husband. She explained to me that as the man is “the head of the house” he is there to protect you; “at least you could give him some respect”.

Dominic said to me that people just interpret the Bible the way that suits their own agenda. He thought it should be understood as there should be “a balance between a man and a woman”. He said that he thought it is terrible that people think that a man is superior a woman and said that both are supposed to be there for each other and support each other – equally. Jamie claimed, in the
same way as Dominic did, that ‘submission’ as being inferior to the husband is not what the Bible says but it is the cultural request. But, another cultural saying is “your wife is your second mother”. This does not only refer to the woman as a care giver that should be submissive, but it implies that a man should have as much respect for his wife as he has for his mother. A friend of mine explained, “in the same way that a man respects and appreciates his mother for the love and care that she gave him as a child, the same respect he should give to his wife as she will take care of him and their children”.134

An interesting fact is that even if age is an important status marker in Zambia the woman’s position in society does not improve in reality despite her age. Men might kneel to an elderly woman and avoid eye contact as a sign of respect, but “an elderly woman would typically be expected to serve the man first [and] see to his needs”135. I met a few elderly women that would be regarded to have high status in the society, but they were still just women when it came to the expectations of the gender roles – “women are nearly always subordinate to men”.136 That is “just culture” in Zambia.

**The head of the house**

As previously stated, the traditional definition of a man is as ‘the head of the house’. This means that the man is superior and the woman is inferior. Rachel explained to me that men in the Zambian culture often are dominant due to the fact that it is part of the elderly people’s mentality – which leads to a recreation of the regulations of masculinity from generation to generation. Tristan explained to me that being dominant and being ‘the head of the house’ is a misinterpretation of the Bible. Kate, however, argued that it is the same in every culture and every society, the man is always superior the woman. Rachel explained that the man is dominant because of the fact that “the man is usually the one who needs to protect the woman”. I find Rachel’s statement a good example of how gender hierarchy is being legitimate by the cultural norms and ideals. However, gender hierarchy is a social construction, as the gender roles, and can change as the conditions for maintaining the leading position in the society change.137

> The treatment that we get is very harsh [...] and we think it is normal, we take it into the house and the society.138

Dominic explained to me that boys get a harsh treatment and as no one question the mentality, as Rachel called it, the same behaviour is recreated by being socialized to next generation. The informants do not agree with the dominant role of the man.

In a society of patriarchal structures with gender hierarchy where the men are dominant it is common that some men become actively dominant in the sense of violence becoming a leverage to maintain the dominant position.139 But, the dominance and violence is a sign of imperfection due to the fact that a “legitimate hierarchy would have the reduced need of suppression”,140. Men can be seen as “stakeholders who wants to defend their position”, and the structure depends on the

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134 C.f.: Simpson, p.585
135 Taylor, p. 95
136 Taylor, p. 95
137 Connell, p.101-102
138 Informant Dominic
139 Connell, p. 106-107
140 Connell, p. 108 (Translation made by the author)
individual man’s values in relation to women. Nevertheless, the gender roles in Zambia do contribute to gender based violence and domestic violence. All of the informants except for Amanda, have experienced domestic violence: Kate told me she was beaten by her aunt who she lived with from that she was six year until she became twelve years. Kimberly said she was beaten by her father as a child when he was still alive and by her younger brother a few years ago. Rachel has been beaten by her father. And Oliver said he had been beaten by his brother. If the man is ‘the head of the house’ – the authority – then it must also be considered as his accountability if domestic violence occurs. Dominic, Jamie and Tristan had not just been beaten by their parents but they also experienced gender based violence as children due to that all their fathers abused their mothers.

My father used to beat up my mother. [...] We could see how our mother was beaten up, she could try to defend herself but of course our father was stronger. [...] It felt like our mother could really take care of us when she could defend herself. Tristan explained to me that he was scared when his parents fought. As his mother could not defend herself from the father, Tristan knew she would not be able to protect him and his siblings either so he felt unprotected. The informants have experience of violence and the interaction between cultural norms and gender roles do lead to domestic violence and gender based violence. This discussion will continue in the next subchapter.

Divorces

As I explained earlier about lobola, bridewealth, the old traditions amongst Bemba for example the lobola could be repaid to the husband by the wife’s family if she decided to divorce or separate from her husband. Traditionally divorces, or separations, were not as taboo as it came to be when the population of Zambia started to convert to Christianity.

The diffusion of Christianity predictably altered the existing social mores about right of divorce. Especially all the Christian churches frowned up, or in case of Roman Catholicism, forbade divorce except in the most extreme circumstances.

Taylor explains the commitment between two people who marry according to Christianity; where a couple swears to God to live the rest of their lives together and that this commitment is a promise not just to one another but also to God. The religion altered the culture and the culture instead came to perceive divorces as taboo. But as culture is constantly changing, this situation has also changed in the way that people do not necessarily view marriage as a permanent relationship. Today “divorces is now fairly common”.

It is today very rare that the lobola has to be repaid. When I asked a friend about it the explanation was that if a man that asks his ex-wife’s family to be repaid will be seen as less of a man, a poor man or even a greedy man. If a man asks for the lobola back he will bring shame to his family (and so is the case even if the divorce is because that the woman wants to divorce the man).

141 Connell, p. 106-107
142 Warenius, et al., p. 533 C.f.: Simpson.
143 Informant Tristan
144 Taylor, p. 102
145 Taylor, p. 103
146 Taylor, p. 103
To understand the divorces further I want to mention a few examples of the most common reasons to why a married couple divorces – despite that the reasons may be as many as there is married, or ex-married, couples. Taylor explains that “a frequent basis for divorce relates to sexual matters”\textsuperscript{147}. It regards both performance and reproduction – as marriage is supposed to bring children. When a married couple is childless the infertility is more often than not blamed upon the woman, which is “merely another indicator of the lower status of women in Zambian society”\textsuperscript{148}. Earlier I explained that married men often have extramarital sex/relationships. Infidelity is another cause for divorces. Interestingly it is fewer women than men that sue for divorce.\textsuperscript{149} I was told in Zambia that it is up to the woman to keep her husband at home instead of going out; if she cooks food well he will come home, if she “knows how to dance in bed well” he will not need to go elsewhere. This puts a lot of pressure on the woman; especially also due to the fact that if the husband is cheating he gets infected with HIV and also infects his wife. In other words, if the woman is a good wife she will be protected from being infected with HIV by her husband. It is important to remember the woman’s role as a wife, she is to be submissive and there are certain expectations. Therefore, if a woman denies her husband sex, or unprotected sex, it could result in being abused or in a divorce.

If you find out your husband is cheating and you tell other people, they will just laugh at you! She has to accept it and respect it. [...] She can risk getting infected.\textsuperscript{150}

Tristan explained to me that usually if a woman “complains” about that her husband is cheating people will just laugh at her as she is being “childish”, because the man can do what he wants and the woman has to accept that. But Tristan does not agree with the cultural norm that a man can do “whatever” he wants and he explained to me that the consequences of infidelity can mean getting HIV-infected.

Another common reason for divorces is gender based violence, or “spousal abuse” as Taylor puts it.

 [...] the fact [is] that there is a high social, if not legal, tolerance for such abuse, particularly in rural areas.\textsuperscript{151}

Taylor states that it is “socially tolerated” that a man can abuse his woman, especially if she is not doing what is expected of her.\textsuperscript{152} As stated earlier, this is due to the cultural acceptation of the gender roles structure were the man is dominant and as he in the position of authority, the man is allowed to take actions that he considers to be required.\textsuperscript{153} Dominic remembered when his parents got a divorce. He was just 9 years old and he explained to me the reasons were due to the fact that his parents were both alcoholics and his father regularly abused his mother. Dominic continued to explain that as his mother could not do anything about the fact that her husband was beating her and he said that her frustration and defencelessness must have been the reason to why she also abused him and his siblings.

\textsuperscript{147} Taylor, p. 103
\textsuperscript{148} Taylor, p. 103
\textsuperscript{149} Taylor, p. 103
\textsuperscript{150} Informant Tristan
\textsuperscript{151} Taylor, p. 103
\textsuperscript{152} Taylor, p. 103
\textsuperscript{153} Connell, p. 107
The only place that she could hit back was us. I hated her for that since I was growing up, because she put us through hell! [...] I hated them both.\(^{154}\)

Dominic meant that gender based violence can cause domestic violence. He argued that as the woman gets abused without being able to defend herself she will be frustrated and want to also feel in control, whereas she starts abusing those inferior to herself – the children. But it was not only his mother that abused him, his father also did. Dominic said he viewed his father as pathetic as he thinks that no matter what the situation one is never allowed to use violence.

The fundamental gender hierarchy also contributes to that women accept their inferior position, which also includes “accepting the accept abuser’s definition of them as incompetent and helpless”\(^{155}\).

Simply because divorce is legally and culturally and religiously permissible is not to say, however, that couples have a cavalier attitude towards divorces or that there is not significant costs involved in going through it.\(^{156}\)

Taylor explains that despite the fact that divorces are common, the consequences can be brutal especially for women as their status in the society is already considerable low. Divorced women often get stigmatized and lose their property and the custody of her children, especially if the marriage was according to customary law, no matter if she was the one to sue for divorce or not.\(^{157}\)

**Summary**

This chapter have discussed the cultural norms and the interaction between the culture and religion. Despite that the Bible condemns infidelity it is culturally accepted for a married man to have extramarital sex. The informant’s unanimous opinion was that infidelity should not be accepted and that the man should respect his woman. But due to the patriarchal structure with the man as ‘the head of the house’ the women is regarded as inferior. However, the cultural norms also affect the men of course and could also be perceived to pressure men to behave as a ‘real man’.

Dominic claimed that people interpret the Bible the way that suits their own agenda and therefore women are being forced by cultural norms to be submissive to men. Thus, the gender roles in Zambia contribute to gender based violence and domestic violence and the HIV/AIDS-epidemic. Therefore the informants argue that the interpretation of the Bible should change and that the cultural norms should include respect for women. The Western values do influence, but based on the informants experiences I also argue that the change also comes from within the Zambian culture due to a desperate need of change.

\(^{154}\) Informant Dominic

\(^{155}\) Connell, p. 107 (Translation made by the author)

\(^{156}\) Taylor, p. 104

\(^{157}\) Taylor, p. 104
Reality check

World Health Organization, WHO, has stated that gender inequality causes health problems among women due to their limited access to information and health care.\(^\text{158}\)

Globally, the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age [between the ages of 15-49 years] is HIV/AIDS. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection due to a combination of biological factors and gender-based inequalities, particularly in cultures that limit women’s knowledge about HIV and their ability to protect themselves and negotiate safer sex.\(^\text{159}\)

It is crucial to realize that women’s health problems also have “an impact on the health and development of the next generation.”\(^\text{160}\) The major health problems among young people, in many parts of the world, are related to lack of knowledge about sexual issues; such as unwanted pregnancies, abortion, STI’s and HIV.\(^\text{161}\)

Government policy in Zambia states that all sexually active men and women should have access to reproductive healthcare and information (Ministry of Health (MoH) 1997).\(^\text{162}\)

Despite the government policy that information and healthcare should be available it is not, and it all comes back to the cultural norms. The Zambian culture, as well as Christianity, do not approve of premarital sex, therefore it is difficult for young people to get accurate information and to be able to protect themselves from health problems related to sexual activity. In other words, young people are often facing adulthood without proper guidance.

Data from the Zambian Demographic Health Survey (Central Statistic Office (CSO) et al. 2003) show that the median age for sexual debut is around 17 years for both boys and girls and that approximately 18% of girls and 27% of boys aged 15-19 years have had sex before the age of 15. Government policy in Zambia states that all sexually active men and women should have access to reproductive healthcare and information [...] but, in practice, young people have limited access to such services [...].\(^\text{163}\)

The society’s ignorance of the fact that young people are sexually active before marriage causes young people unnecessary health problems that could have been prevented if adequate and accurate information had been given. A study made in Kitwe in 2002 show that young women at the age of 20 lacked the knowledge about how a woman gets pregnant, and both girls and boys did not know how HIV is transmitted.\(^\text{164}\) During ‘Act 2 Live’ with YMCA I also recognized the fact that young people lack even the most basic facts about sexual issues and sexual health. And at one of the youth meetings at YMCA there was a passionate discussion between the participants that it is only the people who “sleep around” that get infected with HIV in particular but also STI’s.

Due to the fact that young people lack knowledge about sexual issues and sexual health, I asked the informants about their sexual experiences, relationships and where they seek information about sexual issues. Jamie had sex the first time when he was 18 years old with his girlfriend. They have

\(^{158}\) WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 1  
\(^{159}\) WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 2  
\(^{160}\) WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 2  
\(^{161}\) Warenius, et al., p. 534  
\(^{162}\) Warenius, et al., p. 534  
\(^{163}\) Warenius, et al., p. 534  
\(^{164}\) Warenius, et al., p. 538
only had sex twice and both times they used condoms. Tristan has had so many girlfriends according to himself that he lost count, but after a moment of for reflection he managed to state that he has had more than five girlfriends.

I was 19 years [the first time I had sex], after my circumcision. You know when people buy a car they take it for a road test [laugh].

Tristan told me that it was after his circumcision that he had sex for the first time. Tristan explained to me that he has not has sex with all of the ex-girlfriends but that he has had sex with other ladies too. Dominic said that he has sex with four ladies, which only one of them was a girlfriend. Dominic had another approach than Tristan, as Dominic has been abstaining after he got circumcised two years ago.

Kimberly was 26 years old when she had sex for the first time. She has had five other Boyfriends before she meet the sixth boyfriend who was the one she decided to have sex with. She is the only informant who has had sex without a condom, but she told me she have gone for HIV-testing as well as the young men she have been sexually involved with. Amanda told me that she had sex for the first time last year, 2011, with the young man that was her boyfriend at that time.

I talk to my friends and older people. Not really my relatives but those who are older than me, experienced people who are married. A friend of mine, she tells me ‘men are like this, sex and all’.

Only three of the informants are still virgins, Rachel, Kate and Oliver. Rachel told me that she has been dating a few young men but that she has never been in a serious relationship. She told me that she is a little shy and she does not know how to approach a young man that she likes. Oliver has had a few girlfriends but he has never had sex. He wants to stay safe and not need to worry about the risks of getting infected. This is the same argument that Kate also made, she is choosing to abstain so that she can have a “free mind”. It surprised me that that no of the informants that are still virgins expressed the abstaining as something related to their belief in the Bible, but instead the main reason they stressed was to stay safe and not get infected with STI’s or HIV.

All of the informants said that when they seek information about sexual issues they rely on their friends. Tristan explained to me to be certain that he get accurate information he compare the different information that he receives from different friends.

I have friends. I trust them so I know they would give me the right information.

Rachel said that she trusts her friends and they would give her the right information if she asked them about sexual issues. But how does one know if other people have accurate information? Consequently, young people are having sex without having accurate information or if at all any information. And, it is important to also remember as stated earlier that the HIV-epidemic in Zambia is affecting practically every family.

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165 Informant Tristan
166 Informant Amanda
167 Informant Rachel
**Condoms**

People are encouraged to follow the Bible and people are not supposed to be sexually active before marriage, so how do the young informants perceive abstinence? And what is their opinion about the use of condoms?

Rachel explained to me that as a Christian her opinion is that people should follow the Bible, which does not allow premarital sexual activity. Amanda explained it the same way, and both Amanda and Rachel explained that condoms are “okay” as they protect from HIV and STI’s. But they also stressed that condoms also can be used for family planning which they both thought is good. Both Jamie and Dominic said as well that condoms are good as they protect from HIV and STI’s. Tristan explained to me that condoms are good because abstinence is not as easy as it can seem.

Abstinence is good in terms you don’t put yourself at risk. But as a man I know as a human being you want to have sex and all, it’s hard. So if you can’t abstain you use a condom. [...] The Bible is right about abstinence if you live [according to] the Bible, [if] you pray a lot God will guide you. But it’s not easy to live by God’s terms. [...] You desire so you will leave God’s principals so what do you do to protect yourself when you are far away from God? [...] Use a condom. According to the Bible it’s wrong, but reality is different.168

I have to agree with Tristan, reality is different because people are being sexual active before they get married and even with other people than the partner that they are married to – otherwise the HIV-epidemic would not be as severe as it is. Of course the best way to be protected from HIV and STI’s are to abstain, even if as Tristan said it might not be easy. Kate said she has a “free mind”, she does not have to worry about getting infected, as she is not being sexually active.

Yes, stay safe [abstain] and don’t have to worry. I have a free mind. [...] The Bible being against condoms... Well, the Bible doesn’t talk about condoms.169

People are constantly interpreting the Bible in different ways and Kate made it clear that the Bible in fact do not speak about condoms. Oliver explained further to me what the Bible does say and what he thought about abstinence and the use of condoms.

I feel for me abstaining is still the best way regardless of people’s views. Condoms are good for people who can’t abstain to avoid STI’s and early pregnancies. [...] I haven’t really read the Bible saying ‘use condoms’ but the Bible is against sex before marriage or sex outside marriage. [...] Some people feel circumcision are good cause they think it’s okay to have unprotected sex, it’s not 100 percent protection. [...] Condoms are good because they help people to not get infected.170

All the informants had a positive attitude towards the use of condoms, despite their religious beliefs, because they all argue that people need to stay safe from getting infected with HIV and STI’s. Despite that the religion and the culture do not allow premarital sexual activity the reality is different, people are being sexual active before marriage and some people are cheating even when they are married. One could say “it is just reality”.

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168 Informant Tristan  
169 Informant Kate  
170 Informant Oliver
Abortion

Jamie told me that he always has condoms with him, he keeps it in his wallet and he said that for men it is “okay” to be moving with condoms, but if a woman was to be moving with condoms she would be viewed as promiscuous. Which can be related to the fact that it is usually the man who takes the initiative to sex, according to the informants. Unmarried young people are often denied contraceptives at health care centres as premarital sexual activity is seen as extremely inappropriate – to that extent that it is “often met with denial, prohibition and silence”\textsuperscript{171}. As a result, many have to rely on the ‘safe period’ as a preventive method, with early and unwanted pregnancies being a growing concern.\textsuperscript{172}

I also came to understand that ‘safe period’ is a widely trusted contraceptive method during one of the youth meetings at YMCA. The arguments were that a woman does not ovulate after her menstrual period so it is “impossible” for her to get pregnant during the week after her menstrual period –“and it is true because our sisters said so.” When I asked the youths how they knew that their sisters had accurate knowledge the answer was “she knows because she herself is a woman”. As said before, young people lack knowledge about sexual issues – that also includes girls and women. And the so called ‘safe period’ is not safe!\textsuperscript{173}

Finding from [a] study in the Western Province in Zambia, showed that induced abortion among girls was a substantial public health problem. The most common reasons for induced abortion were the fear of being expelled from school and parents’ reaction, primary because the pregnancy would bring shame to the family.\textsuperscript{174}

The unwanted (premarital) pregnancies leads to that the lady cannot continue her education and she is facing the fact that she might become stigmatized and so even by her own family. In Sweden an adolescent girl could, provocatively put, “just get an abortion”. But in Zambia abortions are forbidden – except for when the woman’s life is in danger if she delivers the baby, but still the law is strict and the woman needs to see three doctors that can certify that the woman would not survive the delivery of the baby.\textsuperscript{175} A friend of mine also told me about women doing “bush-abortions” which means that the woman goes to the bush, and by herself or with the help of another woman, shoves something sharp up her vagina to exterminate the foetus. This procedure often leads to the woman becoming infertile or in worst case that she bleeds to death according to my friend. Other women take strong pills and coke for the body to reject the foetus. My friend explained to me that many girls and women feel very ashamed when they get pregnant without being married – some even commit suicide.\textsuperscript{176} Therefore I asked the informants what they thought about abortion as it is forbidden in

\textsuperscript{171} Warenius, et al., p. 534
\textsuperscript{172} Warenius, et al., p. 534
\textsuperscript{173} C.f.: Vårdguiden, Tema; Sex och relationer; preventivmedel; Billingsmetoden, avbrutet samlag, säkra perioder, p-dator och amningsmetoden. [www] The Stockholm Health Care Guide [www]
\textsuperscript{174} Warenius, et al., p. 534
\textsuperscript{175} According to information I received from the informants, friends and colleagues.
\textsuperscript{176} WHO states: “Suicide is among the leading causes of death for women between the ages of 20 and 59 years globally and the second leading cause of death in the low- and middle-income countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region. Suicidal behaviour is a significant public health problem for girls and women worldwide.” C.f.: WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 3
Zambia and if it would be better if the law changed and that young women could abort safe and legally. And what about if a girl or woman got raped, should she be allowed to abort?

I totally condemn that personally. [...] I would not abort [...] because I would never find peace. 177

Amanda clearly thought abortion is bad and when I asked her what she thought about changing the law to make it legal for, for example, a 13 year old girl who had been raped to do a safe abortion she said to me that she herself would not abort the foetus.

I would still not abort. I think I would go counselling and accept and move on, it was not my fault and the baby is not to be blamed either. 178

Kate, Dominic, Jamie and Rachel told me they agree with the Zambian law. Rachel explained to me that even if a woman was raped she was going to “learn to love her baby”. Tristan thought that a girl or a woman that had been raped should be allowed to abort if she wanted. Kimberley also thought that abortion should be allowed if a girl or a woman were raped, and she even said that abortion should be allowed depending on the woman’s reasons why she wants to do an abortion. When I asked Oliver what he thought about abortion he said:

We need more information to understand the good of abortion. It’s not all bad, it’s only a bad picture that are given that’s why you find people not willing to listen. [...] But I would want more information to understand it. 179

Oliver’s comment about the lack of information about abortions is correct – as there is a lack of even the most basic information about sexual issues amongst young people in Zambia. In other words, there is a need for more information about sexual issues as accurate information about condoms/contraceptives would lower the unwanted pregnancies and HIV- and STI’-infections.

Prostitution

During night time in Zambia I saw a different side of the culture as I got to see prostitution in a scale that shocked me. Prostitution is also a big factor that causes the HIV-epidemic. All of the informants thought that prostitution is “bad”, as Kate stated it. Tristan explained to me that it is poverty that forces women into prostitution. Rachel told me that she has experience working at YWCA with former young women who had been prostitutes and she told me that the experience had made her appreciate her life but also that she asked herself what she would do if she “really needed money”. I ask myself, what if I really needed money ‘would I do it?’ But I would never wanna do it. It’s really a bad thing. [...] I think there are other things I could do. But I don’t like looking down on people. Despite who they are because behind every action there is a story, there should be a reason why someone is doing it. Best I could do is ask them why they are doing it and if I can’t provide a solution why should I condemn them?! 180

As Rachel stated that she is in no position to condemn the women who prostitutes themselves as she does not know the reason and she might not have a solution either, Kimberley also explained that there is a story and a reason to why a woman is selling her body.

177 Informant Amanda
178 Informant Amanda
179 Informant Oliver
180 Informant Rachel
It is not good, very wrong. You have a tag, like you are dirty. [...] People have a story behind. Some people are just lazy to understand the qualities they have inside so they just use their bodies to make money. But no excuse to put your life in danger. When I think about it I feel sad, and when I see them. When you have sex you create a bond, so how many bonds do they have? 181

According to Kimberly the woman is not just selling her body and putting her life in danger, but she is also giving another part of herself as Kimberly means that when you have sex with someone you create a bond. Kimberly is concerned about what that does to the women and I think Kimberly meant that the women are becoming traumatized. Dominic also gave his opinion about prostitution and sexual services.

Just because I am excited I can go out there and expose this woman, it’s not right. It’s the wrong thing to do. 182

Oliver told me he have had friends who have bought sexual services from prostitutes. Oliver said the Western influences brings both bad and good influences; the good influence is that it becomes easier to talk about sexual issues and to get information, but the bad influence is that the Western culture makes sexual activity appear as something “cool”. Oliver therefore feared that young people’s sexual curiosity will lead to ignorance and continue to spread the HIV-epidemic.

**Homosexuality**

As this study focuses on gender roles of ‘men’ and ‘women’, I was very curious about what the informants thought about homosexuality. I came to understand that homosexuals are badly stigmatized in Zambia and that the law does not allow homosexuality. During ‘Act 2 Live’ we discussed homosexuality and the participants got very upset and angry, it is an extremely sensitive subject. Homophobia can be derived from the homogeneous definition of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as they are defined from the biological sexes, and the biological reproduction of a male and a female. Therefore the homophobia can be seen as a sign of fear that there will be a disturbance to the gender structure – as it can be reflected as a treat against the patriarchal structure. 183

I really hate homosexuals. For me it’s disgusting. 184

Tristan explained to me that he “hates homosexuals”, but he was not sure why some people are homosexuals. The culture clearly stigmatizes homosexuals. I asked Kate, as she said that the Bible is against homosexuality, about the fact that the Bible also stated that one should be a good fellowman – which includes that one should not judge.

Both are important. First of all I would talk to her, I would try, try to convert her. If she doesn’t I can’t be friends with her. 185

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181 Informant Kimberly
182 Informant Dominic
183 Connell, p. 62
184 Informant Tristan
185 Informant Kate
Jamie explained to me that he condemns homosexuality, and, Kate also made this argument, that it is wrong as man and woman are meant for one another as God created us – which is rather an argument based on the biological sexes reproduction.

For me it’s weird. It’s a dumb action and behaviour. It’s taboo. I strongly condemn it. It’s wrong by nature.  

Jamie continued by explaining to me that he thought those who are homosexual have a biological problem as they do not like the opposite sex as they are supposed to. He explained to me that everything in this world is created by its opposites next to them such as life/death, light/dark, and then man/woman. Jamie’s statement was based on his idea of how the world is constructed, but in fact it is about the structure of his society as I explained earlier – something that does not follow the structural pattern can be perceived as a treat to the society’s structure and security.

Despite the fact that the culture stigmatizes homosexuality, within the culture there are also individuals that might not agree with the cultural norms.

I honestly haven’t grown up as a person supporting homosexuality. I feel sleeping with a fellow man or woman is wrong. Because that’s what it says in the Bible, it doesn’t say homosexuality is bad but you sleeping with a fellow man is wrong. But I still don’t judge. It would be wrong for me to judge. [...] I don’t really understand it. Some say it’s because of female hormones. I haven’t really thought about [what causes] it. [...] If it was a friend I would want to talk to them about it. I would wanna understand why.  

Oliver explained that he has grown up, been socialized, into the cultural norms of homosexuality as something that is wrong. But he told me that he does not know why someone is homosexual and that he would want to understand. Oliver also told me that he “just recently” had started seeing homosexuals going public; despite that he has never seen two persons of the same sex kiss in the streets. But he explained to me that things are changing in Zambia, the young people do not want to live oppressed and ashamed, so also when it comes to those people who are homosexuals and therefore people are “coming out” despite the fact that they are risking their lives.

When I asked Dominic if he could be friends with a homosexual person and he said:

As long as he is a human being! [laugh] Probably if we had something in common, or we can meet up halfway, 50/50, I have no problem with that. If he promise he’s gonna put up his best kind of behaviour when he is around me, I am okay with that. I won’t tell, I keep quiet, I won’t condemn him. But not if he goes public with it [...] because people are gonna start thinking I am gay too.  

Dominic would not have a problem with being friends with a homosexual person, as long as it is kept a secret. In other words, he does not want to be associated with a homosexual person as he might be at the risk himself to becoming stigmatized. When I asked Dominic about the stigmatization of homosexuals and if he thought that homosexuals should be accepted he said:

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186 Informant Jamie  
187 Informant Oliver  
188 Informant Dominic
I think the fact that they are human beings, the fact that this is happening, just let them be. They have decided to be like that, they have chosen that, and they have the freedom to do that.\textsuperscript{189}

Dominic thought that homosexual people should be respected and that their choice to be homosexuals should be respected. I got very curious and I asked Dominic if he also had made a choice to like women and he said:

\textit{What I prefer is what I like. I am not gonna choose something that I don’t like.} \textsuperscript{190}

To me it is obvious too that what you prefer is what you like, but how does one make that decision? I never really understood that from Dominic, but he finished this discussion by claiming that “their choice should be respected”.

Kimberly explained to me that as culture and religion is stating that a man and a woman belong together, and as it is a biological fact that a woman and a woman or a man and a man cannot make a baby it is not supposed to be that way. When I asked Kimberly what she would do if a friend came and told her “I am homosexual” she said “we have one in our class”. She told me that she is not scared of this person or that she pushes this person away, but that she keeps a distance. But if this person wanted to be her friend she would be able to be this person’s friend, and she would then want to take the opportunity to understand why someone is homosexual.

Rachel also said that homosexuality is wrong, but that she had a female friend that told her that she is homosexual. The friend had explained to Rachel that she understands that God condemns homosexuality and that she wanted to have another chance, so they prayed and Rachel explained to me that “only He can help her overcome such”. Rachel then told me that this young lady is now in counselling after telling her parents that she is homosexual. I was shocked that the young lady managed to tell her parents as homosexuality is extremely stigmatized and I asked Rachel, “so the parents did not kick her out of their house?” And Rachel explained to me:

\textit{It’s their child, Mikaela! You don’t kick out your child!} \textsuperscript{191}

Amanda surprised me when I started asking her about what she thought about homosexuality. She started by saying she condemns it – as God created man and woman “it is clear what God wants”. When I asked her why she thought some people are homosexual she said:

\textit{Okay, I don’t really know what causes that. But when I went to boarding school I used to see lesbians, and girls looking like men. [...] And an aunt of mine is lesbian, she is proud, I do condemn her but we have tried to talk to her but for her it’s just a lifestyle. She’s my aunt, the child to my grandma and when she was pregnant she really wanted a boy so she prepared for a boy, but she had a girl, but she kept treating that child as a boy. [...] We just talk, she explained to me, we are friends, she is normal and she’s not ashamed. It’s weird, she looks very handsome! [A] problem is that she has big boobs, she can’t hide them.} \textsuperscript{192}

The cultural values have an enormous impact on people’s perception and opinions. And as the stigmatization of homosexuality also makes people afraid to talk about it, despite their own
experiences and despite their own beliefs, the process to accept the fact that people are different is very complex.

**Summary**

This chapter have demonstrated the collision between the cultural norms and the Western influences. During the interviews about these issues that have been discussed in this chapter most of the informants first answered by stating the cultural norms and I had to ask them specifically what they thought themselves. This to me was a sign of the fact that the informants are a part of the cultural norms as they have been socialized into the cultural norms; despite their ambition to change the regulations of the gender roles as have previously been visualized.

The informant’s were concerned about the lack of knowledge about sexual issues and sexual health and they recognized the need of information – due to that young people is having sex. The cultural norms combined with gender hierarchy makes it difficult for young people to access information about sexual issues which causes health problems for young people. The cultural norms concerning gender roles also contribute to stigmatization regarding unwanted (premarital) pregnancies and homosexuality.
Change in perception of the gender roles

As previously stated; the globalization of Western values are challenging the traditional cultural values (including Christianity) — which are confronting the gender hierarchy.\(^{193}\) This is a vital prospect in a process of change.\(^{194}\) However, I also argue that another fundamental and essential component to enable a process of change is the young people’s experiences of gender roles and their perception of need to reconstruct the gender roles.

The gender roles definition by the Zambian traditional culture are homogenous with the man as ‘the head of the house’ and with the woman as submissive. Therefore the perception of a man is often that he is to be the ‘provider’ and the woman is his ‘helper’. But, what did the young informants think about this?

Okay, back in those days [referring to the Bible] things were easier and cheap, not like today. The economy has changed. [Before it was] lots of farming, lots food. So the woman could just stay at home and the man could afford everything. But looking at the way it is now, that could not work. A man could not do everything on his own. Nowadays everything is expensive, rents, food, children, school. Both needs to work and even in the house. Some men help out their women in the house, it’s good that a man helps out in the house.\(^{195}\)

Kate explained to me when I asked her if the man is the provider and the woman is the helper that “he is the head and she is the neck, so for the head to move the neck need to be able to move”. I claim that what Kate said is a way of saying that a man and a woman should complement each other, and this is the exact words that Oliver used when I asked Oliver if a woman can also be a provider he said:

Absolutely. I think both are both providers and helpers. A woman and a man is supposed to complement each other.\(^{196}\)

The woman and the man are supposed to complement each other according to Kate and Oliver therefore they are both provider and helper. Tristan explained to me that “a helper is also a provider”, which I think was a very interesting statement when compared with Kate’s and Oliver’s explanations that a man and a woman are supposed to complement each other. All the informants thought that a woman can also be a provider. But Jamie reminded that despite that both a man and a woman are both providers and helpers at the same time, the woman should be a woman and that the man should be a man. He explained it further with saying that a woman and a man should still have respect for each other and that it is still the man’s duty to protect the woman. Dominic explained that after his parents divorced he continued living with his mother and with his siblings. The mother then had to provide for her children and Dominic said that he highly respect her as he has seen that it has not been easy for her to be a single mother.

So I strongly think that both a woman and a man can be the provider.\(^{197}\)

\(^{193}\) Taylor, p. 91. C.f.: Warenius, et al., p. 535
\(^{194}\) Taylor, p. 39
\(^{195}\) Informant Kate
\(^{196}\) Informant Oliver
\(^{197}\) Informant Dominic
It was the common perception among the informants that a woman can also be a provider and that the man and the woman should be working together. As the man and the woman should work together they are both helpers and providers at the same time according to the informants.

I asked the informants how they perceive a relationship and how they would want their own future marriage to be. Kimberly said that a relationship is having same interests and that a couple is supposed to “stick to one another” – by which she meant that a relationship as well as a marriage is “for better or for worse”. Both Rachel and Oliver explained to me that a relationship is about understanding.

[There should be] mutual understanding, and if you have that you are not to place your partner inferior to you, you are supposed to respect your partner and understand.\(^{198}\)

Oliver explained that it is very important in a relationship that the both individuals try to understand each other and that to be able to understand each other there needs to be equal respect. He connected this with what we had been talking about earlier and said that no one in a relationship should be inferior. Rachel also said that as a relationship is a commitment “there should be regulations”. In other words, all of the informants thought that a relationship is a commitment where there should be equal respect and equal rules for the partners.

Kimberly was shocked when I asked her the question how she would want her marriage to be.

Wow [laugh] I would like it to be truthful, to trust each other. Communication is very important for a relationship to work. A good husband, children, live in a good area. [...] Even communicate about small things.\(^{199}\)

Kimberly talked about the importance of trust within her own future marriage, just as she talked about when we discussed relationship. She also talked about communication as an important foundation in a marriage. Rachel focused on understanding when I asked her about how she would want her future marriage to be.

[...] in my marriage I [am] really hoping for understanding between me and my partner. Because when people don’t understand each other it’s when other things gets to be troubles within the marriage. [...] Love should be there, so much love! Because when you love someone it guides you.\(^{200}\)

Rachel explained to me that she wants to have a marriage based on love and she explained to me that “love will guide you”. Kate also talked about the importance of love when I asked her expectations about her future marriage, but in a different way.

I would wanna marry. I know arguments would be there, but definitely we should sit down and talk about it. The cause and the solution, we talk and we sort it out. When a man loves a woman, the woman automatically submits. But if at all the man want to be a star even the woman will start competing so then is when you will find problems. When a man loves me he does not need to remind me to submit, automatically I will submit. That’s how it is.\(^{201}\)
Kate returned to “the woman shall submit to her husband and the man shall love his wife”, more or less. She explained to me that no relationship is perfect, as there will always be some arguments and that these arguments should be solved together by communication. However, she continued to explain that if man loves a woman she will “automatically submit” – but that it is up to the man to also truly love his woman and care for her, as Kate put it he should not be “a star”. I think that this is another way of saying that the man should not be dominant but that he will earn respect by giving love, and respect as well, to the woman and then the woman will give him respect too and he will still be “the head of the house” – but without being dominant to his wife. When I asked Amanda about how she would want her future marriage to be she said:

I would want my husband to understand me. If he loves me and I love him there is no need for him to go to other girls. Sometimes women also contribute that men go and find a girlfriend. Women can change when get married and don’t wanna have sex, so men go and find other ladies to have sex. Be there for your husband and he will be there for you too.202

Amanda explained to me that love should include ‘natural’ faithfulness. She also explained that it is not just the men who are imperfect when it comes to relationships and continued to explain that it is important in a relationship to be there for one another. But with this said, Amanda also stated the common cultural perception that it is the woman’s duty to please her husband and if she does not do so the man will have the right to seek extramarital sex. Despite the fact that the informants want the gender roles to change, it is obvious that the informants nevertheless have been socialized into the cultural norms and that it sometimes affects their own perceptions.

When I asked Oliver how he would want his future marriage to be he said:

I would really want my wife and I to be on the same level, but I wouldn’t really want to abandon our culture and traditions […]. I would want her to understand she is not inferior to me […]. Doesn’t have to be a hierarchy in the family but of course I want her to show me respect. We should be able to consult each other. […] My wife should be educated, it’s a part of development not just at an individual level but national. 203

I think what Oliver stated is very interesting. The problem caused by the gender roles does not mean that the Zambian culture needs to change completely, but the gender roles should be questioned and as Jamie said “the gender roles should be revisited”.

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202 Informant Amanda
203 Informant Oliver
The need to change

We need [to talk more openly about sex] because we know young people are not getting information or right information about sex. We have problems with HIV, STI’s, early pregnancies and so... Because they don’t really know. All the informants said to me that there is a need to change the way sexual issues are talked about, because people are not getting the accurate information as Amanda stated. More knowledge about sexual issues would lower the number of people infected by HIV, and as well would a new perception of the gender roles. The social construction of gender roles in Zambia causes many of the problems within the society.

The HIV-epidemic is affecting basically every family in Zambia. Despite this the Churches, in general, do not want to talk about reality but instead continues to preach about what the Bible says. Many Christians in Zambia consider condoms as something that creates promiscuity and that condoms are not necessary – as you are not supposed to be premarital sexually active and because you are supposed to be faithful when you are married. At the same time a married man can have a girlfriend without committing adultery in the eyes of the society, but instead focus is on the woman and that it is her duty to please her husband. Oliver told me that he wants to see a change within the Churches, because he does not agree with how the Church talks about the gender roles – Oliver states that the Bible does not say that the woman is inferior to the man. As stated earlier, the gender roles also contribute to gender based violence.

I think it’s very much needed, people need to transform. [...] [But] not only men, all of us. Not only men are bad.

During ‘Act 2 Live’ I came to understand, as Amanda said, that to change the gender roles in Zambia the approach needs to be focused on both men and women. Oliver explained to me that the solution is that people need to be more educated. However, Kate enlightened me about another problem due to that women are getting more educated.

Men like it when a woman don’t know her right but now when know they wanna put you in your place.

Kate told me that as women are getting more educated the gender based violence also increases. I remember the banacimbusa at the ‘kitchen party’ I attended who said “even if the woman has an education from the university, she should never think she is better than the man! She must respect her husband and be submissive and devoted to her husband!”. But despite that the elder generation is holding on to the cultural traditions and norms, the younger generation sees the need of change in the perspective of the gender roles.

Oliver told me that a good approach would be if sex and gender roles could be discussed in the Churches based on reality as it would reach many people. Warenius et al. also recognizes the Churches influence on the society and states “they form an important potential resource for future

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204 Informant Amanda
205 Informant Amanda
206 Informant Kate
HIV prevention efforts. But due to that the age hierarchy is the controlling factor of the society young people does not have a platform to speak their mind. I want to give an example, during ‘Act 2 Live’ the facilitators were told to not advocate condoms as YMCA of Zambia have a policy to not even talk about condoms since YMCA is a Christian association and should therefore follow the Christian values – in other words, YMCA should only advocate for abstinence. ‘Act 2 Live’ is about addressing neglected health issues among young people (such as HIV and STI’s and unwanted pregnancies) but without being able to address this neglected health problems with information about sexual issues it becomes a paradox. Instead the focus was on ‘transformative masculinity’ which could be a good concept for achieving change to the homogenous gender roles, but it could also be too provocative in a patriarchal structure. YMCA of Zambia’s policies which were based on the cultural ignorance of premarital sexual activity resulted in that the lectures about ‘transformative masculinity’ became a desperate endeavour. The discussions about ‘transformative masculinity’ were expressed in terms of the man, as ‘the head of the house’, needs to take more responsibility for his family and in the society by respecting and loving women: that a ‘real man’ should follow the Bible that say one should be faithful in the marriage and a ‘real man’ should not abuse his wife. Instead of only using the Bible as a reference of how a ‘real man’ should behave it would also have been of great value to discuss the actual issues in society – with adequate information. Of course it is a process to change the cultural norms, but as YMCA is youth association I would have wished for YMCA to take a leading position based on the reality for young people. However, the facilitators of ‘Act 2 Live’ did address condoms – as reality shows that people are not abstaining, people are not perfect, and we need to deal with the reality. Despite good intentions from the facilitators, they also lacked knowledge about sexual issues and sexual health. During all the three ‘Act 2 Live’-training it therefore became more of a discussion about different ideas and hearsay instead of a lecture based on adequate information. Warenius et al. state in their study from Kitwe the need of developing “youth-friendly programmes for young people” and the need to “improve quality of health services”. ‘Act 2 Live’ represents an attempt to do this, but the power of the cultural structure is of course important to consider to be able to challenge and achieve a change.

I don’t see it changing now. Maybe people on the surface say that it’s changing, but when you go deeper... I’ve seen a lot of men going to colleges to get ladies [...] most of these guys are married. As long as things goes on we are seeing what older people are doing. Sometimes we learn through what we see. [...] In life we are just human beings and we like to look up to people, and so this is what we are seeing so we think it’s a normal thing to do. And it just goes on.

Dominic explained to me that he does not see the gender roles changing now. His point is, as people become socialized within the culture it is hard to question and to challenge the structure of the culture. The process to change the gender roles have a long way to go but it is clear that the informants want a change within their culture.

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207 Warenius, et al., p. 542
208 Warenius, et al., p. 542
209 Warenius, et al., p. 533
210 Informant Dominic
The way forward?

It is essential to address the health and development needs of adolescents if they are to make a healthy transition to adulthood.\footnote{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 3} WHO stresses the importance of guidance and support for adolescents into adulthood and that the societies have a responsibility to address health issues well known,\footnote{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 3} as sexual health issues and also violence.\footnote{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 2}

I asked the informants what they thought about the future for the young people in Zambia. Oliver said that he thought that things are moving in the right direction as more information is becoming available. But he also feared that the Western influence due to its openness about sexual issues will increase “casual sex” among young people and he stated that it is “important to remember the consequences of having sex”. Oliver thought that the HIV-infections are going to continue to spread and he stressed the importance of increasing the access to information.

Rachel thought that young people are going to be able to create a change. But she brought up the age hierarchy as a blockade for the young people to be active in the society and stressed that as the elderly people will come to die the young people will slowly be able to be more active in the society. And she added that as the elderly people die the traditions will also come to change. Still, Rachel did have worries about the future and she said:

I am a bit worried cause of what’s happening because people are getting more productive. Back in the times I don’t think this is how people used to be. It seems the more development we get the more dangerous it also gets. [...] People do not stick to one partner, they don’t take responsibility [...] the women’s situation is very bad. [...] What’s happening is everyone just wanna fit in and at the same time adopt to the Western culture.\footnote{Informant Rachel}

As Oliver fear the Western influence on young people’s sexual behaviour, so does Rachel. Rachel stressed that women’s situation in Zambia is “very bad” and connected this also with infidelity and gender based violence. Jamie was also troubled by the sexual behaviour among young people and explained very clearly to me what it is about:

In Africa, Mikaela, we do not read about [HIV/AIDS], we see it! We see people dying! It’s a do or die here. It’s a game, if you don’t play well it’s a death road. Unprotected sex means you are playing with your life.\footnote{Informant Jamie}

Jamie, as Rachel did too, stressed the infidelity of men as a main cause to the HIV-infections, but Jamie also said that women should “cover up” to not “tempt” and arouse men. I asked Jamie if he did not thought that men should be able to control themselves and Jamie answered me that both men and women have a responsibility; men should not be unfaithful and women should respect themselves by “cover up”. But Jamie thought that men are the key to reduce the HIV-infections.

\footnotetext[211]{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 3}
\footnotetext[212]{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 3}
\footnotetext[213]{WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health, p. 2}
\footnotetext[214]{Informant Rachel}
\footnotetext[215]{Informant Jamie}
Geoffrey Jobson states in his study conducted in South Africa 2006 that it is of great value to target “older men in interventions aimed at challenging gender inequality”. Jobson explains the age hierarchy’s influence on the younger generations and the high status that older men hold in the society. He continues to argue that inclusion of older men in the gender discussion by “supporting positive aspects of ‘traditional’ masculine identities” will lead to progress for gender-equality and as well reduce the HIV/AIDS-epidemic. Approaches regarding sexual issues as HIV/AIDS have tended to be based on the hypothesis of ’universal female subordination’ in Africa. This theory have relied on the African woman’s oppression as a standardize occurrence, without realizing the existence of cultural differences and without addressing the complexity behind cultural norms – which also undervalues women’s position in society. It is crucial to understand the complexity of cultural structures and its standards.

If men are to be ‘brought in’ in the fight against HIV/AIDS, more needs to be understood about their relationship to constructs of masculinity and about how this affects the way they perceive and experience their gender and sexuality. They need to be disabused of the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

As ‘gender’ is a social construction everyone in a society is participating in the creation and recreation of the gender roles. Therefore the conclusion has to be that a common understanding is necessary and crucial to achieve a redefinition and change of the gender roles. WHO’s report also have the same conclusion and states:

Experience suggests that this requires a gender equality and rights-based approach that harnesses the energy of civil society and recognizes the need for political engagement.

Dominic claimed that if young people were given accurate information about sexual issues they would be able to make better decisions. He said that the schools need to provide more and accurate information about sexual issues for the HIV-epidemic to decrease. Amanda stressed that the need for information in the rural areas available. She also pointed out the need for a more complex discussion in the society about gender roles to improve the quality of life. Kimberly said that she thought young people are rushing to become sexually active and that it is important to remember that “there is a time for everything and when your mind is ready”.

I feel like we are working on it and changing. The youths are not dominant like the older generation. We say no to what is wrong and yes to what is right. But in terms of sex, I think we are more sexual active so I think we are more depending on condoms.

Tristan meant that he is experiencing a process of change already. He said that the younger generation of Zambians do not approve of the dominance of a man as the older generation does.

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216 Jobson, p. 234
219 Simpsons, p. 584
220 Connell, p. 110-111
221 WHO, *Exclusive Summary: Women and Health*, p. 6
222 Informant Tristan
Tristan’s statement can be seen as: the younger generation have grown up in a fragile society with poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, gender based violence/domestic violence, and this simply means that young people have experiences and want to achieve a change in their culture and society.

We are really in danger if we don’t change our mentality, but if we do we will have a great society.\textsuperscript{223}

Kate explained that for a better future for the young people in Zambia to be possible the mentality needs to change, since she was referring to the gender roles and the problems in the Zambian society that are tied to the expectations and regulations of the gender roles.

Connell discusses the need for a mobilization based on alliance with a common interest between men and women.\textsuperscript{224} As earlier discussed, the patriarchal structure will defend its position if challenged by other groups of the society.\textsuperscript{225} It is important to remember that women are also socialized in to these cultural norms, that give men their superior position, and the power of cultural norms should not been taken lightly because this also explains the reason to why women also invest in and support the gender hierarchy.\textsuperscript{226}

**Summary**

This chapter have discussed the informants’ perception of the gender roles regarding their own future marriage and the unanimous opinion was that understanding is crucial in a relationship. Nevertheless the informants expressed perceptions based on both the cultural norms and values based on Western influences. Once again I want to emphasise that the informants have been socialized into the cultural norms and that the influences of the Western values contributes to a collision regarding their perception sometimes. However, I also argue that the informants own experiences also contribute to new perceptions of the gender roles. This will be further discussed in the analytical summary.

As the study from Kitwe, by Warenius et al., concluded that the secondary school students would welcome more information about sexual issues and guidance regarding relationships\textsuperscript{227} this study’s informants also recognize the desperate need of information about sexual issues. The informants expressed a concern about the future for the young people in Zambia and, as Kate said, that the mentality needs to change. The informants acknowledged the need for a complex discussion about gender roles to be able to change the issues that the gender roles cause in Zambia. As ‘gender’ is a social construction the conclusion has to be that a common understanding is necessary and crucial to achieve a redefinition and change of the gender roles.\textsuperscript{228}

\textsuperscript{223} Informant Kate
\textsuperscript{224} Connell, p. 228
\textsuperscript{225} Connell, p. 106-107
\textsuperscript{226} Connell, p. 231
\textsuperscript{227} Warenius, et al., p. 533
\textsuperscript{228} Connell, p. 110-111
Analytical summary

The Zambia culture is defined by its intermixture of the different tribes’ cultures and Christianity; that spread during the colonial era. The social construction of patriarchal structure was a common norm from both the original culture in Zambia and the conservative Christianity whereas Christianity came to be integrated to the Zambian culture. In other words, Zambia’s culture has been influenced from other cultures ever since the colonial era – but it is also about how the traditional culture accepts new influences contents. The Zambian society and culture today is characterized by a mixture of tribal cultures and Christianity, which started to spread during the colonial era. The social construction of patriarchy existed before the colonial area, but was emphasized with the integration of conservative Christianity. In other words, Zambia’s culture has been influenced from other cultures historically and today, and tribal and national culture has always negotiated external influences. The difference today is perhaps the speed with which new influences spread in Zambian society. Scott D. Taylor argues that the globalization with its Western values is challenging the patriarchal structure and the cultural norms in Zambia though a collision between the Zambian culture (including Christianity) and the modern Western influences. Warenius et al. also argue that as the socio-cultural context in Zambia has changed during the twentieth century especially young people “are exposed to conflicting values”. Zambia is a changing country but according to me not only due to the Western influences as there is an internal awareness that also creates the change – which I consider as fundamental for a changing process to be feasible.

However, the cultural norms regarding gender roles are a fundamental part of the culture. The informants have explained that the gender roles are traditionally defined by the biological sexes with endorsement from the Bible’s definition; as the man as ‘the head of the house’, which is the base for the perception of homogenous ‘roles’ with masculine and feminine characteristics regarded as ‘biologically natural’. The cultural norms, which construct regulations, regarding gender roles create a patriarchal structure with gender (and age) hierarchy, with the man as superior and the women inferior. The gender hierarchy, as the informants have explained it, is comparable with Connell’s term ‘hegemonic masculinity’; which means that the legitimacy of the patriarchal structure is based on cultural ideals and institutional power. The hegemonic masculinity maintains its leading position as the cultural dynamic allows it and invests in it – as the hegemonic masculinity is perceived to hold the legitimacy. However, the hegemonic masculinity and its legitimacy is also a social construction, as it is based on cultural ideals, which can change depending on the conditions for maintaining the leading position in the society.

As I have stated before, ‘gender roles’ is a social construction and by studying the socialization process, initiation ceremonies and the premarital ceremonies, the reconstruction of these roles and its regulations are visualized. According to the informants, the gender roles regulations cause, or add to, many of the social challenges. The cultural norms regarding premarital sexual activity causes lack of knowledge about sexual issues. The consequences of not having knowledge about sexual issues are devastating, as WHO also concur. It is critical that the Zambian society recognizes the

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229 Taylor, p. 91
230 Warenius, et al., p. 535
231 Connell, p. 40
232 Connell, p.101-102
233 C.f.: WHO, Exclusive Summary: Women and Health.
connection between the cultural norms/gender roles and the HIV-epidemic to be able to achieve a change.

In Africa, Mikaela, we do not read about [HIV/AIDS], we see it! We see people dying! It’s a do or die here. It’s a game, if you don’t play well it’s a death road. Unprotected sex means you are playing with your life.\textsuperscript{234}

In other words, the society’s ignorance of the fact that young people are sexually active before marriage causes young people unnecessary health problem that could have been prevented if adequate and accurate information had been given. It is critical that the schools in Zambia recognize their responsibility for educating young people about sexual issues. I agree with Warenius et al. that youth-friendly programmes needs to be developed and that the health system must improve of both regarding its attitude and quality towards young people. YMCA of Zambia’s health project ‘Act 2 Live’ had the purpose of advocating about neglected health issues concerning young people. Through the concept of ‘transformative masculinity’ YMCA could have created a debate within the society about gender roles, but unfortunately YMCA had a conservative Christian approach.\textsuperscript{235} The facilitator of ‘Act 2 Live’ disobeyed the YMCA of Zambia’s policy regarding condoms; which was based on good intentions. But the facilitators’ own lack of knowledge became a problem during the ‘Act 2 Live’-trainings, which is just another sign of the widespread lack of knowledge. If YMCA of Zambia had a different policy and an approach based on reality, which they according to me should have as a youth association, ‘Act 2 Live’ could have been pioneering.\textsuperscript{236}

The informants have also discussed the interpretation of the Bible’s definition of the gender roles and concluded that the man and the woman are supposed to complement one another – in accordance with the way they interpret the Bible. I discussed a quote from the Bible that goes as follow “the woman shall submit to her husband and the husband shall love his wife” with the informants. Oliver explained to me that ‘submission’ is not the same as ‘slavery’, despite to the cultural/religious perception of the woman as inferior, but that ‘submission’ is about commitment and respect. I think Oliver’s interpretation of the Bible shows the possibility of being able to achieve a change without challenging the religion itself. But as culture and religion has become united it is hard to separate the norms and distinguish them from each other. Kate stated that it is ‘natural’ for a woman to love, but that it is harder for a man to love and that is why the Bible has to remind the man that he is supposed to love his wife. For me this is a sign of the ‘biologically natural characteristics’ that are due to the biological sexes. The hegemonic masculinity and the homogenous roles do not just force the woman to submission but it also forces the man to become dominant – which includes the regulation of expressing affection or feelings. The socialization processes therefore also creates stereotypes where both genders become victims.\textsuperscript{237} Kimberly argued that

\textsuperscript{234} Informant Jamie
\textsuperscript{235} I argue that YMCA of Zambia had a conservative Christian approach due to that they did not challenging the homogenous roles and by the fact that they constituted to the ignorance of that young people are having sex, regardless of the cultural and religious norms.
\textsuperscript{236} One of the most effective approaches to change the gender roles would be for the Churches to acknowledge the issues caused by the gender structure, but due to the fundamental patriarchal structure I think it is unrealistic to dream of such in the current situation. Especially since not even a youth association as YMCA of Zambia can challenge the structure.
\textsuperscript{237} C.f.: Simpson.
‘submission’ and ‘love’ are intertwined and that they are depending on each other— in that sense Kimberly meant that ‘love’ is the solution for equal-respect between the genders. I think her perception is to be compared to a utopia. Instead I argue that focus needs to be on establishing equal respect and recognition of the human rights as the solution. All of the informants stressed the importance of equal respect in a relationship. Amanda stressed the importance of equal respect to the point that she even stated that it means the husband also needs to submit to the wife.

Even I have the right to speak but I have to speak sense. [...] The Bible says “the husband shall love his wife”. You know Mikaela, if I love you I should listen to what you have to say. So the husband should listen and respect his wife. The husband should also submit to the wife for the love that he has for her.

Due to the hegemonic masculinity this would be perceived as extremely provocative in Zambia – but it is a sign that the new generation of women are demanding respect. The informant’s were surprisingly aware of the gender roles affect regarding sexual health and gender based violence and domestic violence. During this study it became obvious that the informants struggle between the cultural norms, and the cultural regulations of what is perceived to be “right”, and the Western values and their own perceptions based on their life experiences. It is important to remember that even young people have experiences – they have grown up in a fragile society with poverty, unemployment, the HIV/AIDS-epidemic, gender based violence/domestic violence. It is clear the informants, and including many of the young people that I met at YMCA, wants a change in their culture and society regarding gender roles for a better future.

Although the common definition of a ‘woman’ and a ‘man’ in Zambia is based on the biological sexes, the informants argued that the regulations of the gender roles can change; as have been visualized in the discussion about ‘provider’ and ‘helper’. The informants argued that men and women should complement each other. However, as the definition of gender roles is based on biological aspects, including a perception that “a man should protect the woman”, it provides legitimacy to the hegemonic masculinity. This also includes the discussion about the perception that when “a [man] loves her he’s gonna give her equal rights”. If the woman has to receive her rights from the man (as ‘the head of the house’) it would mean that the man is in the position of authority and could simply withdraw the woman’s rights – in other words, they would not have equal rights. I therefore argue that the change also must include a redefinition of the gender roles to be able to achieve change in the regulations to the gender roles.

Geoffrey Jobson argues, in his study from South Africa, that it is necessary to approach older men by “supporting positive aspects of ‘traditional’ masculine identities” to achieve gender-equality and reducing of the HIV/AIDS-epidemic. I do recognize the value of addressing older men due to the patriarchal structure. However, on the basis of what the informants in this study have stated, and as well as my own perception after living in Zambia for six months, it is important to include as many as possible in the discussion about the gender roles. Jobson’s theory would probably be a good

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238 Kimberley said that if the man loves his woman she will submit and if the woman submits the man will love his wife.

239 Informant Amanda

240 Informant Rachel

241 Informant Kimberly

242 Jobson, p. 234
approach in the rural areas where older traditions are still practiced, which also means that older men are still in position of the main authority. However, in urban areas as Lusaka as this study has shown, the younger generation does not have a direct relation to the older generation because of social changes in society, including the splitting up of families and the break-down of traditional norms. I therefore argue that Jobson’s approach might not be the ideal course of action within the urban areas. As ‘gender roles’ are socially constructed, everyone in a society is participating in the creation and recreation of the gender roles. Therefore I argue, as Connell243, that a common understanding is necessary and crucial to achieve a redefinition and change of the gender roles. It is time to face reality!

I feel like we are working on it and changing. The youths are not dominant like the older generation. We say no to what is wrong and yes to what is right. But in terms of sex, I think we are more sexual active so I think we are more depending on condoms.244

Tristan’s statement is a representative summary the results of this study. As my study has shown, young people in Zambia are not just passively receiving influences and norms from the outside, but are continuously negotiating these influences in order to “say no to what is wrong and yes to what is right” as Tristan said. This means that Zambian society is changing in response to external as well as internal influences and that globalization both facilitates change and may create problems, as different values and norms collide. The informants are aware that many of the social challenges exist because of the patriarchal norms in society, and this awareness indicates that a change is in progress. I therefore argue that the awareness of the need for change will construct a new mentality and new perceptions of the gender roles in Zambian society.

243 Connell, p. 110-111
244 Informant Tristan
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