Gender inequality and HIV/AIDS in Zambia

-A study of the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS

Ida Bah
ABSTRACT

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Author: Ida Bah

Today it has been estimated that 40 million people worldwide are carrying the deadly virus known as HIV. Despite the fact that the virus can affect men and women alike, an increasing proportion of people living with HIV are women and girls, and this proportion is continuing to grow. This writing is dedicated to explore the factors that drive the epidemic.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as to enhance our understanding of what is it like to be a young woman in Zambia, a country where the HIV/AIDS epidemic has hit hard. The research is done through a qualitative study with secondary sources and interviews as means of collecting data. The point of departure is theories of gender inequality, where the patriarchal structures and men’s domination over women are explained.

The result of this study is that gender inequality, the subordination of women and men’s predatory behaviour are major contributors of the epidemic, the larger numbers of women with HIV/AIDS and the women’s younger age.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, Gender, Inequality, Women, Zambia
## ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAMFED</td>
<td>Campaign for Female Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIDD</td>
<td>Gender In Development Division</td>
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<td>GRID</td>
<td>Gay Related Immune Deficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIWOMADI</td>
<td>Livingstone Women Make a Difference</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWAAV</td>
<td>Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>The Joint United Nations HIV/AIDS Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZDES</td>
<td>Zambia Demographic Health Survey EdData Survey</td>
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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

_I definitely think that my fear of HIV has an enormous impact on my view of relationships. It is not worth the risks. So many guys are unfaithful...men are so selfish and they can’t control themselves. It makes me feel such a negativity towards men. I mean, women are as much humans as men, so why can’t we be respected?_  
- Mwangala, a young woman in Zambia

AIDS is now the leading cause of death among people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-nine years in Sub-Saharan African countries, and the disease is spreading rapidly across the globe, particular in other parts of the developing world. However, what we are witnessing now might only be the beginning of this epidemic. According to UNAIDS the epidemic will not reach its peak until the year of 2050 and this means that three million people dying of AIDS this past year might only be the tip of the iceberg\(^1\).

At the beginning of the epidemic men outnumbered women among persons infected with HIV and the virus was at one point not even considered a threat to women. This fact has however drastically changed. In most regions, an increasing proportion of people living with HIV are women and girls, and this proportion is continuing to grow.

This signifies that the fight against AIDS cannot not only concern health but also gender-equality. In order to stop the continued spread of HIV we need to understand why more women are facing a greater risk of being infected. Thus, the fight against AIDS must address the factors that drive the epidemic. It is my hope that this writing will serve as a little contribution to the understanding of the underlying social factors behind the higher HIV/AIDS prevalence among women. I also wish to give voice to young women in Zambia in order to enhance our understanding of their situation.

\(^1\) Wijkman. Available at: http://www.aidsiframtiden.se/_upload/Slutdok-eng.pdf Retrieved January 2005
1.2 Purpose and Research questions

Gender inequality is a worldwide phenomenon that is not only destructive in itself, but also convey vicious effects. After complex measures that include life expectancy, wealth and education, the United Nations Development Program has stated that there is no country that treats its women as well as it treats its men. This means that women and men do not live under equal conditions in most parts of the world.2 Nobel prise winner, Amartya Sen asserts that gender inequality restricts women’s freedoms in different ways and does not only make women’s lives gloomy but also often shortens their lives.3 According to UNAIDS (The Jointed United Nations HIV/AIDS Programme) women are in addition disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Worldwide, women constitute a growing number of the HIV positives and in Sub- Saharan Africa female victims have outnumbered the number of men with AIDS.4

Being aware of this knowledge leads to the question of whether there exist a relation between the two destructive phenomena of gender inequality and the growing number of women infected by HIV. In the search for an answer, the purpose of this study is consequently to comprehend the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as well as to reach an understanding of what it is like to be a young woman in a country where the epidemic has hit as hard as it has in Zambia. This is done through:

A) A description of the present HIV/AIDS situation
B) An exploration of how gender inequality makes women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS
C) An evaluation of the perception of young women in Zambia towards gender inequality and HIV/AIDS.

The questions this study is devoted to are grouped according to the three groups above.

- What is the present HIV/AIDS situation?
- Why are women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men are?
- How do young women in Zambia perceive gender inequality and HIV/AIDS?

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2 Nussbaum.2000. Women and human development. p. 31
3 Sen, 1999. Utveckling som frihet. p. 29-30
1.3 Delimitations
The study of HIV/AIDS and gender are both vast spanning fields and it is impossible to cover all relevant areas of the topics in one paper. The questions that are being answered, the material, method and delimitation of this study have thus been chosen under the impact of the given requirements and magnitude of writing the paper.

Several topics have been chosen to be excluded from this paper; the medical aspect of the disease, to what extent the epidemic have been securitized, or actions that have been taken as preventive means will not be accounted for in this paper. I have limited my study to concern to explore some social factors that drive the epidemic and to evaluate the perception of some young women towards HIV/AIDS and gender inequality. Young women were chosen to focus on since they belong to the group were the HIV prevalence is the highest. In addition, few studies have been made where voices of young women, especially urban ones, have been heard. It might be worth stressing (concerning chapter 6) that the aim of this study was not to quantify responses but an attempt to draw a picture of how some women, in one part of Africa, thought and felt about HIV/AIDS and gender inequality at a particular time.

1.4 Previous research
HIV/AIDS cannot be considered of having been known of for long but yet research is being conducted in several fields and at various levels. Since the first HIV case was encountered during the 1980s’ intensive research about the virus, its effects on the body and the search for a cure have been conducted. However, with time AIDS is no longer considered as a mere health issue and so during the last decade social science studies make up an essential part of what has been written about the epidemic.

Relevant for this study is that a magnitude of studies has been made with the topics HIV/AIDS and gender. Rita Abrahamsen has investigated the socio-economic impact of AIDS on poor urban households in Zambia and argued that AIDS affects women disproportionately.\(^5\) *AIDS, Sexuality and gender in Africa* by Baylies is another example. In this study responses to AIDS in six communities in Tanzania and Zambia are explored with a focus of what can be done by women in order to put a stop to the epidemic. Peter Aggleton and Hilary Homans studied how young people in England perceive HIV/AIDS\(^6\) and Mwale

\(^6\) See Aggleton, Hommans, 1996. *Social aspects of AIDS in AIDS and the grassroots*
and Burnard accounts for the perception of rural women in Africa towards HIV/AIDS\(^7\). Both of the latter mentioned studies main focus lies however to determine how much knowledge people have about HIV/AIDS and how this knowledge could be improved, which is not the case for my study.

UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) together with among others WHO (World Health Organization), publish yearly reports on the epidemic in relation to various topics. Since these and most other studies are large scaled, quantitative and done on larger population it gave rise to the thought of doing a qualitative study in order to reach a deeper understanding and let the women’s voices be heard. Further, few studies have been made about HIV/AIDS with a focus on young women, and even fewer on urban young women. It is my hope that in this study the real lives of women will not get lost in the text leading to an enforcement of the status quo of inequality.

In my opinion some social science studies lack the voice of the persons who actually live under the circumstances being described. I believe that my study with the purpose of exploring the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as evaluating how young women in Zambia perceive gender inequality and HIV/AIDS will contribute to the understanding of what life is like for a young woman living in Zambia which is one of the world’s countries where the devastating epidemic has hit the hardest. It is my hope that this paper will give insights where previous studies have not, and thereby serve as a little contribution to the debate.

1.5 Disposition

The methodological framework of the study is presented in chapter 2. My reasoning of the chosen methods will be accounted for in this part as well as how this study has been conducted which includes data collection such as secondary sources as well as interviews. My theoretical approaches to gender inequality will be accounted for in chapter 3. This study have been made with a theoretical framework built on feminist approaches. Carole Pateman’s sexual contract theories about the relation between the sexual contract and women’s subordination to men have been selected as the theoretical framework as well as the four sphere’s of inequality originating from Lena Gemzöe accompanied by other theorists. Chapter

\(^7\) See Mwale/Burnard (1992) *Women and AIDS in rural Africa*
4 will account for Zambia in brief and an overall picture of the HIV/AIDS situation in Africa and Zambia will be conveyed. In chapter 5 the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS will be explored and this chapter is followed by an evaluation of young women’s perception towards HIV/AIDS and gender inequality in Zambia, in chapter 6. The conclusions of this study can be found in the 7th and final part of this study.

2. METHOD AND MATERIAL

2.1 Introduction
Science strives to understand how the world functions. This paper is dedicated to understand how gender inequalities make women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and partly devoted to enhance our understanding of the perception of young women in Zambia towards HIV/AIDS and gender inequality. Understanding means that there is insight in what is being studied. The researchers role is to get to know and live the part of people’s experiences and world of thinking and thereby understand people’s actions. By entering into people’s perception about the world, by receiving knowledge of what meaning people tie to the phenomena she is surrounded by, we will also win the understanding of her actions. To understand how the world is linked together means to have knowledge of what phenomena are linked together with each other. The understanding can then give us the possibility to control the world surrounding us.

2.2 The Case Study
Case study is one out of several different ways of doing research and it has been the method found suitable for this study. One definition of the method is: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context.” When choosing case study as a method one studies social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case. The case under study can be a person, group, process, society or any other unit of societal life. Case studies differ from other types of qualitative research by being intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system.

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9 ibid. p. 54
10 ibid. p. 70
11 Stake, cited in Merriam, 1998. Qualitative research and case study application in education p. 27
12 Merriam, 1998. Qualitative research and case study application in education p. 19
A variety of facts will through the case study method be interrelated to a single case and a unitary character is given to the data being studied. According to Yin, case study methodology is ideal for situations where the investigator has little control over events and where the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, which is the case for this study.

2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions
According to Yin, the interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. The interviews often tend to be guided conversations and not structured questions and the stream of questions in the interview tend to be fluid rather than rigid. The decision of which type of interview to use for a study often falls upon the desired amount of structure. For this study semi-structured interviews (as Merriam refers them to) were desired. Case study interviews often have an open-ended nature, which allow the researcher to ask not only about facts, but also to ask the respondents about their opinions and thoughts. This type of interview was chosen since it enabled me to be face to face with the respondents and ask specific questions in the areas to be covered, but I also had the freedom to probe until I felt I had gained a sufficient amount of information of gender inequality and HIV/AIDS in Zambia as well as the perceptions of the nine young women as expressed in their own words. Since the technique of data gathering was semi-structured, not all the respondents were always asked the same specific questions, but the main areas to be covered were explored, thus enabling the responses to be categorized. The interviews with the persons working with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues where conducted at their workplace. The interviews with the young women were carried out in a place chosen by the women themselves in order to increase their comfort. The interviews were continued until the information was considered to be sufficient and this point was usually reached after 1-1½ hour. Notes were taken during all of the interviews. However, four out of the nine interviews with the young women were also recorded on tape.

14 Yin. 2003. Case stud research, design and methods. p. 8-9
15 Yin, 2003. Case study research, design and methods p. 89
16 Merriam S, 1998. Qualitative research and case study application in education p. 72
Berg, refers to this type of interviews as semistandardized interviews see Berg, 2001. Qualitative research methods for the social sciences p. 79
17 Yin, 2003. Case study research, design and methods p. 90
Content analysis of the interviews was done and this used notes and recorded words as the source of data. Content analysis was made after separating the answers to each question into categories of similar content. Finally all the data were accounted for in one category or another.

2.2.2 Selection and choice of respondents

The snowball method was used in selecting the persons working with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues as well as the nine young women. After the first person was selected, one after one were asked if they could suggest another person who would be relevant for the purpose of the study. According to Denscombe this method includes the advantages of that the number of respondents grows fast as well as making the nominated persons feel more comfortable since they were recommended by someone they knew.

Finding the nine persons who work with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues in governmental departments as well as in NGO’s, was easy since the small problems to conduct the interviews did not concern their willingness to let me interview them. Though, given that my time in Zambia was limited and I wished to interview several persons, problems mostly arose due to differing opinions concerning punctuality of time, to put it mildly. However, the interviews were successfully conducted despite of this.

When I arrived to Zambia people warned me that I might experience difficulties finding young women who would be willing to let me interview them about sensitive subjects such as HIV/AIDS, sex and other personal issues. I did not find this to be true. People were very open and wanted to share their thoughts and experiences with me. Thus, finding women who were willing to let me interview them was surprisingly easy. However, I know that this good fortune was unfortunately not common for other students who were conducting research in Zambia while I was there. I believe that I owe this luck to my African background and the color of my skin. Some of the respondents expressed their joy and pride over that I had roots in Africa and that I thereby was ‘one of them’. I believe that their feeling of us having this in common facilitated the data collection for this study.

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18 Berg, 2001. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* / p. 37

19 Denscombe, 1998. *The good research guide* p. 16
The nine young women who were selected for this study are all from Lusaka. The ages of the respondents vary from 21-26 years. They belong to different tribes and thereby also have different mother tongues, however, all of them speak very well English, which is the official language of Zambia. It was important to me that the respondents did not experience difficulties of speaking English, since I did not want to use a translator (due to fear of misinterpretations and information being lost during translation which could affect the validity of the results). This problem was avoided by selecting women who are attaining or have attained college and/or university studies and thus have no problems of expressing themselves in English. I am fully aware of that another selection of respondents, for example non-educated women might have given another form of results.

2.2.3 Informal conversations and field observations
This study includes some general observations. The experience and the impressions I got during the time I spent in Zambia consisted of a lot more than interviews and have contributed to my understanding of gender inequality and HIV/AIDS in the Zambian society. I made an effort to talk to as many people as possible while I was there and always kept a notepad with me so that I could write down what had been said after the interesting informal conversations. Some of the interviews with the young women were conducted were the respondent was living and this includes a moment of participation which is important when trying to understand a community of another cultural context.

2.2.4 Validity and Reliability
Validity is primarily concerned with the genuineness of the source material and if the data reflects the reality and cover the crucial matters. Meaning that my study cannot be taken to reflect the truth unless it really is what it appears to be. It is thus, very important that the researcher evaluates their sources.\(^{20}\) The validity of the study can be considered high since the young women who were interviewed are naturally the best source of information about their own experiences and perception concerning gender inequality and HIV/AIDS. As are the persons working with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues also a good source of information about the situation of Zambia, as they not only work with the issues but also are apart of the Zambian society.

\(^{20}\) Berg, 2001. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* p. 240
Another problem that arises is reliability, which refers to the accurateness of the data collected. In other words, if the study is repeated will it yield the same results? According to Sharan B. Merriam this is something that can be difficult when it comes to social sciences since human behaviour never is static\textsuperscript{21}. The idea of always receiving the same answer of a question when it is posed at different occasions is built upon a perception that the individual is static in his/her perceptions, acting and points of views. According to Trost this perspective complicates interviews since the human being is not static and this means that the answers are not necessarily the same every time the question is posed which is something kept in mind for this study. Reliability is one of the biggest problems with qualitative interviews meaning that I as the researcher must be able to show that my results are reliable.\textsuperscript{22} This means that I must make my data collection reliable and relevant for the study.

Concerning the interviews with the young women (as they talked about their personal perceptions and experiences) I am in many ways different from the respondents. There were differences in country of origin, cultural and socio-economic background, to mention just a few. To what extent these differences had an effect on the interviews remain unknown, but it is of importance to mention that there has been an awareness of these factors throughout the study. Actions have been taken to minimize possible methodological problems. For instance awareness of that there might be cultural misunderstandings made me extra cautious and in case of doubt, I have made efforts to clear all misunderstandings. The interviewer effect has also been considered as the reliability is at risk according to Kvale if the interviewer influences their informants too much.\textsuperscript{23}

2.2.5 Objectivity

The researcher will always affect the subject studied. This is certainly the case in qualitative study as in this case when the researcher takes part of the instruments.\textsuperscript{24} I have been influenced by previous knowledge and by my cultural bias. Being aware of this, I have throughout the study considered its effect on the study and tried to minimize it. However, the fact that I come from a different culture may have made me less prejudiced in some aspects, since I was not limited by the social norms of the community.

\textsuperscript{21} Merriam S, 1998. *Qualitative research and case study application in education* p. 205
\textsuperscript{22} Trost. 1997. *Kvalitativa intervjuer* p. 100-102
\textsuperscript{23} Kvale. 1996. *Interviews* p. 235
\textsuperscript{24} Denscombe. 1998. The good research guide p. 208
Any study of this sort involves decisions about the meaning of people’s responses. This is, by nature a qualitative study and any such study involves the researcher making some sort of interpretation of what is being said by the respondents. Also, in this study there were times when interpretations between languages had to be made. However, I feel that these limitations are met by me not attempting to ‘read between the lines’ in the analysis.

I simply offer the words of the respondents whilst remaining aware of the inherent pitfalls of such an approach. In the end, a qualitative research data do not speak for themselves. I as the researcher have to find my own outcome and has to be prepared to stand by that outcome. On the other hand I hope that I offer a clear picture as possible into the process of data collection and analysis.

2.3 Secondary sources
For the contextual description in chapter 4, Zambia and HIV/AIDS, as well as the exploration of the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in chapter 5, secondary data have been used. It exists plenty of related background literature and there is a plethora of widely scattered and not differing information on the spread of the epidemic into societal sectors, countries, and regions. As far as possible, I have double-checked the secondary information in the literature with other reports and writings. The main publications are collected from UNAIDS and researchers working within the area of HIV/AIDS such as Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside.

2.4 Ethics
The ethical aspect of the study must be considered in all qualitative studies, especially when it concerns subjects like HIV/AIDS and gender inequality. Kvale accounts for three points: informed consent, consequences and confidentiality.25 These ethical aspects have been a consideration all through the research process, from the creation of the questions to the finished result. All of the respondents were informed of how the material would be used and the nine young women were assured of confidentiality. The women are with their permission only mentioned by their first name, but no other details are given that can reveal their identity. Before commencing the interview I informed the women of the sensitive subjects that would be discussed and encouraged not to answer questions which made them feel uncomfortable.

They were informed that they could stop the interview at any time and encouraged to ask questions throughout the interview if something was unclear.

2.5 Generalizations
Concerning chapter 6 in particular, voices of young women, it is worth mentioning that the sample interviewed in this study cannot be claimed to represent the overall picture of how young women perceive HIV/AIDS and gender inequality, but the results can be compared with future studies on a similar subject. The point is to present a picture of how some people viewed a situation at a particular time. The aim of this study is not to generalize from the findings to a larger population but to allow the findings to stand as they are.

2.6 Analysis
The analysis of chapter 5 commenced with identifying elements from secondary sources as well as interview notes that subsequently were categorized into the four spheres of gender inequality and thereafter analyzed. 26

The analysis of the young women commenced with identifying elements from the interview notes of the young women. Five categories were identified and elements coded. The five categories or themes will form the basis for evaluating the perceptions of young women regarding HIV/AIDS and gender inequality.

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26 The four spheres of gender inequality are accounted for in chapter 3, the theoretical framework.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will outline the approach, which will operate as a framework for the rest of the thesis. The chosen theoretical framework originates from the theory of the sexual contract by Carol Pateman and the four societal life-spheres where gender inequality is evident, which are accounted for by Lena Gemzöe in her book *Feminism*. Given the purpose of this study, to explore the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as to enhance our understanding of how young women in Zambia perceive gender inequality and HIV/AIDS, I believe that the sexual contract is suitable as a means for understanding the foundations of the patriarchal structures that enables men’s right over women and women’s subordination, and that the four spheres of gender inequality facilitates the enhancement of our understanding as well as the visibility of gender inequality.

3.2 The sexual contract

The sexual contract is a critique of the discussions of the social contract, which view person’s political and/or moral obligations as dependent upon a contract between them to form society, and that free social relations take a contractual form. However, social contract theories are nearly as old as philosophy itself and have not been spared from critiques from a variety of philosophical perspectives, critiques that will hopefully continue to make us think and rethink the nature of our relations as well as of ourselves.

Feminists have argued that what social contract theory presents, is an incomplete picture of our moral and political lives, one that only tells half of the story. (It does not exist a simple definition of feminism, however, in general feminism seeks to change the patriarchal structures and way of thinking, and believe that this is possible. Feminism takes women’s experiences seriously as well as the impact that theories and practices have for women’s lives.) Carol Pateman is one person behind feminist arguments concerning the substance and viability of social contract theory.

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27 There might be complaints about my use of feminism in singular since there exist several different feminisms. I however use feminism in singular to refer to the tradition of thought in its entirety. As does Lena Gemzöe in her book, *Feminism,* p 12

In her 1988 book, *The Sexual Contract*, she states that there exists a more fundamental contract beneath the idealized social contract, a contract that concerns men’s relationship to women and reveals that civil society has a patriarchal structure.

The original contract is a sexual-social pact (the original pact is sexual in the sense of establishing access by men to women’s bodies and because it establishes men’s political right over women) but the social contract theory has ignored that half of the story is missing. A story that can help us understand ourselves and the social world. According to Pateman, the social contract is a story of freedom while the sexual contract is a story of subjection. The sexual contract reveals men’s patriarchal right over women and how modern form of patriarchy is established. Civil freedom is thereby a masculine attribute and depends on patriarchal right\(^29\).

One reason of the neglect of the sexual contract is that attention has only been directed to one of the spheres of patriarchal civil society. The social contract accounts for the public sphere of civil freedom while the private sphere is not considered to be political relevant. The marriage contract (whereby women are subordinated and husbands have the right to exploit them) is thereby not considered to have political relevance. Pateman further states that, without the private sphere the public realm can never be fully understood\(^30\). The sexual contract has most likely been neglected or hidden since it threatens patriarchy and thereby the power men have over women.

### 3.3 The four spheres of gender inequalities

Lena Gemzöe asserts that there is a structure of gender inequalities and this structure is evident within all parts of society. In her book, she accounts for four societal spheres where gender inequality is evident in Sweden\(^31\). Though, I believe that the four spheres are applicable to more societies where patriarchal structures establish and maintain the male domination over women and with this in mind I will use the four spheres as analyzing instruments in the subsequent chapter.

\(^{29}\) Pateman, 1998. *The sexual contract* p. 2
\(^{30}\) ibid p. 3
\(^{31}\) Gemzöe, 2003. *feminism* p.16-20
Before I will explore the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, a brief description of the four spheres where gender inequality is visible is considered necessary.  

### 3.3.1 The sphere of politics and economy

Women as a group is economically and politically subjugated and has lower salaries and less democratic influence than men at all levels of society. Such a society where women have less power than men at all levels will according to Maria Wendt Höjer and Cecilia Åse, result in a society that is constructed upon discriminatory principles. Despite the fact that women today formally have the citizenship rights as men have, it does not mean that women and men are equal in practice. Women’s political representation is in most countries low and can hence not be said to represent its people equally. Women and men are in addition not equally distributed among the political areas. Women mostly work within areas such as care, social-, equality -and family politics. They pursue questions such as violence against women, abortion, pornography and prostitution. While the men dominate within tax-, finance- and defense politics. This politic is equivalent to the division of traditional female and male areas of responsibility. However, if women gained power their political interests and issues, Gemzöe states, would be taken seriously. The fact that there are no women where the power is evidently reinforces the depiction of women as less competent and less valuable than men. Mona Lilja offers one explanation to why women do not seek to enter politics. She asserts that the subordination of women may to some extent be caused of women’s way of identifying themselves since the women are socialized into a discourse where the men are great and women are not. Women accept this discourse and let it become part of their identity and she states that this is why some women might see the low female political representation as natural. She refers to Foucault who stated that the individual listens, internalize and pass on the discourses of society, and conclude that power relations do therefore not only concern the amount of decisions made but about women’s identities that are ranked low, their limited options to act and their subordinate self-image.

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32 The names of the spheres have been slightly changed during translation. The spheres have also been strengthened by other feminist theorists.
33 Lindén, Milles, 1995. Feministisk bruksanvisning p.188
34 Wendt, Höjer, Åse, 2003. Åse, Politikens Paradoxer p. 55
35 Gemzöe, 2003. feminism p 16
36 Eriksson, Hettne, 2001, Makt och internationella relationer p 135 Mona Lilja’s study of female identity and decision making in Cambodia seeks to understand how the power relations between men and women are created and recreated through the discourses of society.
Gender inequality is also evident within the employment market, which is substantially segregated between men and women. Women carry out work within the public sector, which have low value, and low paid work within industry and commerce. The different way of valuing women and men’s work consequently yield immense differences of salaries between men and women within all occupational groups. Women’s vulnerability in working life becomes especially evident considering their low salaries, bad conditions and that they are in addition poorly represented in unions.37

3.2.2 The sphere of family

The family is often considered to be central to women’s lives and to the determination of gender inequality. Despite of whether admired or disliked, the family is conventionally thought of as a pillar of stability and as essential to social order.38 Despite the fact that there have been many changes during the last decades of the concept family and that there are many kinds of families, the family has been described by scientists such as Gemzöe as a sphere that is characterized by an unfair work-division between men and women where domestic work mainly remains women’s work. Women work outside the home to a higher extent instead of merely being in the privatized patriarchal production relations at home, and men have commenced to carry out work within the sphere of the family, but not to corresponding proportions. Women do most part of the household and care for the children, a work that is unpaid and does not give social status.39 Walby points out reasons to the changes of the production within the households, on one hand they are a result of the expansion of capitalist production, and on the other hand, the changes are a result of pressure from feminists and other forces with gender aspects and due to changes in the state.40

According to radical feminists, the private sphere of the family is characterized by violence and abuse of women.41 If this is the case then why do women go into such exploitive relations? Walby emphasizes the importance of how women’s commitment to the family cannot be understood at an individual level unless there is an understanding of the limits of options. She states that marriage is of material interest to most women given that alternatives are often lacking. Once married, women who have committed themselves to the household

37 Gemzöe, 2003. feminism p 17
38 Walby, 1990, Theorizing Patriarchy p 61
40 Walby, 1990, Theorizing Patriarchy p 61
41 Wendt, Höjer, Åse, 2003. Politikens Paradoxer. p 41
have a real material interest of staying married to their husband since they have no alternative way of making a livelihood since job opportunities are lacking due to patriarchal structures in the employment market.42

According to Mona Lilja, Foucault stated that individuals are shaped through a network of encouragement and retaliation. This theory might explain why women choose to get married and internalize the picture of a soft and quiet woman, despite the fact that it to a certain aspect mean that they adapt to a role of less status and subordination. Lilja asserts that it exists a picture of what it signifies to be a woman and a man and the ones who can measure up with the expectations and reflect the stereotypical ideals become awarded.43 This signifies that a man will be cheered and admired when they strong loud and a woman will be appreciated when she represent the image of soft and obedient.

A family also reproduces what it contains. Just as a family can be a school of virtue it can also be a school of gender roles that nourishes attitudes that not only make new families in the image of the other but also affect the bigger social and political world. This influence goes in both directions according to Nussbaum, since the family and the values it has is created by the laws and the institutions that concern issues such as rape within marriage, child custody, child rights and women’s economical and political rights.44

### 3.2.3 The sphere of culture

Ideas about masculinity and femininity are part of the ideas that make up the patriarchal structures and can consequently be found in all areas of social relations and evidently within the sphere of the culture. Women are culturally subordinated through by the surroundings.45 According to Mariann Andersson, women see most things including themselves through the eye of the man. Women’s own problems and the surrounding is interpreted form the viewpoint of the man. In literature, movies and theatre, in school and in the media men portray them and the world. Through culture women’s passivity are indirect encouraged while and men’s activity is. Women merely see men act while they themselves are mostly portrayed as decorative sex symbols that strengthen their passivity and distorting their self-image.46

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42 Walby, 1990, *Theorizing Patriarchy* p 87-89
45 Lindén, Milles, 1995. *Feministisk bruksanvisning* p.188
46 Andersson, 2002, *Vägen ut* p 24
A view of the woman is thereby being transmitted through the culture. Women’s unpaid work within the home is an expression of the low valuing of women’s work and experiences. This view that is being transmitted is a view where women’s efforts are made invisible and are considered as meaningless. Women are through culture often viewed upon as objects, insufficient and untalented. This indoctrination consequently hinders them from reaching independence. Women are enticed to believe that their value concerns pleasing the man. From birth women grow up with society’s cultural, moral and traditional straitjacket. This is however done without being noticed and women end up believing that it is part of their own nature despite the fact that it will restrict them and eventually may make them wither away. Mariann Andersson asserts that the cultural heritage is the woman’s oppressor and therefore laws or other constraints are no longer needed to keep the woman subjugated thus the slave has his/her master within him/herself.

3.2.4 The sphere of male violence

The definitions of kinds of male violence are debatable. One option is to adapt the definition of the women themselves which would include the extent of the impact the violence had had on them. Male violence against women includes sexual crimes, rape, wife beating and men’s sexual abuse of women and children, and are the most open and brutal form of oppression against women. Brownmiller state that while not all men rape, one doing so is enough to frighten all women. Women are reduced to bodies and are appeared to be objects solely there to please men. Maud Eduards refer to men’s abuse of the woman body as the utter most expression of control, subordination and restricted possibility of action. She states that women will not be able to join civil society and be independent citizens until they are free from being abused and objectified and consequently have the power over their own bodies.

Not to be forgotten is also that when coming to terms with why men are violent against women, questions such as whether men are violent as a consequence of their power over women or in order to gain power over them, one also needs to ask what the state does in order to protect women from this terrorism. Most people would probably not exemplify relations of men and women with male violence but according to Sylvia Walby, male violence against

47 Gemzöe, 2003. feminism p. 18-19
48 Andersson, 2002, Vägen ut p 25
49 Walby, 1990, Theorizing Patriarchy p 135
50 Gemzöe, 2003. feminism p. 19
51 Eduards, 2002. Förbjuden handling p. 82
women is to be expected from a social structure of patriarchy. Walby further asserts that male violence against women is common and the fear women have of for instance rape is very realistic, she however stresses the fact that it is wrong of women to fear strangers since male violence is more common from men women know. She emphasize that male violence against women is a form of power over women, but it cannot be understood without taking account to what the state does, for instance naming violence as criminal.

The structural inequality is evident in all parts of society and this highlights one of modern feminisms most important insights: gender issue cannot be reduced to concern one single aspect of society.

3.3 Definitions
In order to simplify and avoid misunderstandings while reading this paper some definitions will be accounted for below:

*Gender* is a term used in this study and in this paper it refers to the socially constructed roles men and women live under. It also wishes to stress that gender roles and the power men hold over women is a social construction, which therefore can be changed.

*Gender equality* a situation where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to and benefit from socio-economic, cultural and political development, taking in to account their similarities and differences.

*Patriarchy* - a system of social and cultural structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

When using *men* and *women* as for example in the sentence above, I certainly do not mean that every man is an oppressor nor do I wish state that every woman is exploited. When using *men* and *women* I refer to them as a group.

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52 Walby, 1990, *Theorizing Patriarchy* p 128
53 Walby, 1990, *Theorizing Patriarchy* p 143
54 Gemzöe, 2003, *feminism* p. 19
4. ZAMBIA AND HIV/AIDS

In order to reach an understanding of a phenomenon we need descriptions and explanations of it\(^{55}\). With this in mind this part will commence with a brief account of Zambia. This part is followed by a description of what HIV/AIDS is and the present HIV/AIDS situation on a global and specifically on a Zambian level.

4.1 Zambia in brief

Zambia, previously called Northern Rhodesia, achieved independence from UK in 1964. Zambia is a landlocked country covering an area of 752 614 square kilometers and is surrounded by eight countries; Zaire, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Angola.

(Figure 1: Source: Utrikes politiska institutet, www.ui.se)

The Zambian population is estimated to be 10.4 million divided among 72 different tribes or ethnic groups. Life expectancy at birth has recently been estimated to be 35.18 years (male 35.19, female 35.17).\(^{56}\) The official language is English but 72 other languages are also spoken, the biggest are Bembe, Njanya and Tonga.

The majority of the people follow either a form of Christianity or a traditional African religion. Zambia is one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the population, 58\%, lives in the cities\(^{57}\).

\(^{57}\) SARDC, 1998. Beyond inequalities. p. 15
When Zambia gained independence in 1964 close to all women were illiterate and one third of all the men.\footnote{Landguiden, Zambia available at www.landguiden.se retrieved April 2005} Fortunately the education system was improved. Today a majority of the adult population of Zambia (85 percent) has attended school, but many of these adults do not complete primary school. One in two (52 percent) Zambian adults have completed primary school or have attended school at the post-primary level.

Despite the fact that Zambia has natural resources such as copper and fertile land Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries after decades of economic crisis and heavily debts. More than 70\% of the population of Zambia lives below the poverty line.\footnote{Sweden abroad, http://www.swedenabroad.com/pages/general____17066.asp retrieved March 2005} Zambia’s economy is not capable to support the population growth or the burden HIV/AIDS related issues (such as decline in worker productivity and rising medical costs) place on the government’s resources.

4.2 What is HIV/AIDS?

The story of HIV, as we know it, began in 1979 when doctors in the US had found clusters of previously very rare diseases. It was first reported and published by the US Center for Disease Control in Atlanta in June 1981. The number of cases rose rapidly and the scientist soon realized that they were dealing with something they had never seen before. The first known cases were among homosexual men and as a result of that the disease came to be called GAY-Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome (GRID). However as scientists started to find cases among other groups it became evident that this was not a ‘gay disease’ and thereby named it AIDS, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome\footnote{Barnett, Whiteside. 2002. AIDS in the twenty first century. p.28}.

HIV is an abbreviation for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It belongs to a virus-family called retroviruses. The virus causes infected cells to translate the viral genetic material called Ribonucleic Acid (RNA), into another form called Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), which it uses to infect new cells. It is the white cells, T lymphocytes, which is an essential part of the body’s immune system that HIV attacks. The body becomes increasingly unable to resist other infection with the destruction of the immune system cells. As the body’s defense system weakens, symptoms appear combined or alone and some of them are: chronic fatigue or weakness, minor skin infections, diarrhea, respiratory problems, swelling of the lymph nodes and/or sustained weight loss.
As the immune systems further weakens more severe diseases appear, such as tuberculosis, cryptococcal meningitis, pneumocystic pneumonia and cancers\textsuperscript{61}.

The period between HIV infection to the onset of chronic AIDS related illnesses vary from country to country and from person to person. Poverty, nutrition, access to health care antiretroviral therapy and general living conditions, are all some key factors that are influencing the pace of the development to full blown AIDS\textsuperscript{62}. It is estimated that the median time from infection to development of AIDS in industrial countries is 10-11 years. In sub-Saharan African it is estimated to be 5-10 years, and most infected children will die before their fifth birthday\textsuperscript{63}. The differences between the poor and rich worlds also apply to the rich and poor people all over the world since people, who are able to eat enough nutritious food, avoid stress and who are not exposed to multiple infections will live longer\textsuperscript{64}.

Fortunately for humankind HIV cannot be transmitted through air or water. Instead human behavior is the causal variable of its spread among people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, heterosexual transmission is the main mode of transmission\textsuperscript{65}. HIV can be prevented since it is a disease that can only be transmitted through contaminated body fluids. The virus has to enter a body in sufficient quantities for a person to be infected and this can happen in the following ways: Unsafe sex, transmission from infected mother to child (during pregnancy, delivery or while breastfeeding), use of infected blood or blood products, intravenous drug use with contaminated needles and other modes of transmission involving blood for example bleeding wounds\textsuperscript{66}. The infection can be prevented through condoms (or abstinence), sterile needles and blood screenings. However, as will be explored in the coming chapter, socio-economic contexts are also an important consideration. Poverty, lack of education and prejudice exacerbate the epidemic’s manifestation in a society.

Today a vaccine or a cure to HIV/AIDS does not exist. The medical community has thus far failed to produce any successful treatment. Despite unprecedented investments into research and development for a vaccine, the medical breakthroughs in fighting the disease have been confined to expensive treatments of already infected patients.

\textsuperscript{61} Ahwireng-Oben. 2003. The impact of HIV/AIDS on African economies p. 5
\textsuperscript{62} Kalipeni, 2004. HIV and AIDS in Africa. p. 271
\textsuperscript{63} Ahwireng-Oben, 2003. The impact of HIV/AIDS on African economies p. 6
\textsuperscript{64} Barnett, Whiteside. AIDS in the twenty first century. 2002. p.34
\textsuperscript{65} UNAIDS, 2004 report on the global AIDS epidemic. p. 31
\textsuperscript{66} Barnett, Whiteside. 2002. AIDS in the twenty first century p.38
Not that many years ago, AIDS was first and foremost considered besides as something new and serious, as a medical problem. Both the situation and the view are now changed. HIV/AIDS is the most devastating disease that the human kind has ever met. In 20 years 25 million people have died due to AIDS. This means that approximately 1 million people die each year\(^{67}\). The epidemic is also infecting young people disproportionately. Young people in the ages of 15-24, account for half of all new infections worldwide.\(^{68}\)

![Estimated number of people newly infected with HIV during 2004](image1.jpg)

![Estimated deaths due to HIV/AIDS during 2004](image2.jpg)

(Figures 2 and 3: Source: Aids epidemic update: December 2004)

According to UNAIDS there are today globally 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS, 37 million of them are adults and 2.5 million children under 15 years\(^{69}\). AIDS is today responsible for claiming over 3 million people’s lives in Sub-Saharan Africa. This mean that the disease kills ten times more people than the entire continent’s armed conflict combined\(^{70}\). According to Global AIDS Alliance an African is killed every thirteenth second by AIDS and a child dies of AIDS every minute\(^{71}\). With only a few exceptions such as Uganda and Senegal, the epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to get worse instead of better.

\(^{67}\) Plan Sverige, *Barnens Framtid*, 4:03 p. 23


\(^{69}\) ibid p. 36.

\(^{70}\) Holbrooke, Richard C. *Battling the AIDS Pandemic*. Available at: http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0700/ijge/gl02.htm retrieved January 2005

4.3 HIV/AIDS in Zambia

HIV spread very quickly throughout the Zambian population during the 1980s and the HIV prevalence among Zambian adults had already reached high levels by the early 1990s. The virus continues to infect many Zambians. According to most recent evidence, about 15.6% of the entire adult population ages 15-49 is infected. It means that one person of six is HIV-infected, making Zambia one of the seven most seriously affected countries in the entire world. The HIV prevalence is twice as high in urban areas than in rural areas. In Lusaka, where this study was conducted, the HIV prevalence is 22% in the ages 15 – 49. In 2002 the HIV prevalence rate among 15-49-year-olds was more than 23% in urban areas and in rural areas the percentage was 11. More and more adults as well as children are becoming newly infected every day and if current prevalence continues, more than half of today’s 15-year-olds will die from AIDS. The number of deaths caused by AIDS has been high and it is not stopping. This year it is estimated that more than 900,000 persons of the Zambian population will be infected. In 2004, more than 255 Zambians were dying from AIDS every single day.

As mentioned previously the proportion of HIV/AIDS is not a gender-neutral disease. Women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa. Of the people affected with the virus, women constitute 58 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNAIDS this gender imbalance is higher among young women. Girls are three-to-four times more likely to be infected than boys.

4.4 HIV/AIDS and women in Zambia

The catastrophe of HIV/AIDS has hit women and girls harder than men and boys. According to UNAIDS, this trend is most marked in places where heterosexual sex is the dominant mode of transmission. Africa is the only region where women and girls outnumber men and boys among persons living with AIDS. As in other parts of Africa, heterosexual relations also dominate HIV transmission in Zambia. Sexual contact accounts for 78 percent of the HIV transmission, however mother to child transmission accounts for 21 percents out of all transmission in Zambia, making thousands of children infected as their life starts.

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72 The UNAIDS recommended measure to understand the extent of HIV in a population is HIV prevalence among 15- to 49-year-olds
75 UNAIDS, 2003. Accelerating Action against AIDS in Africa. p. 21
According to the Zambian National AIDS Council report, 70 percent of the countries 870,000 HIV-positives are women. HIV-infection rates among young women ages 15-24 are 4 times higher than those for young men in the same age groups. Prevalence among women is highest between the ages of 25 and 34 and male prevalence is highest among the ages 35-39.

There are biological reasons to why women are more physically susceptible to HIV infection than men are. Thin mucus lining that is easily torn during intercourse covers the vagina and the cervix. These tiny cuts, that at times cannot even hurt or be seen, allow HIV to enter the body easily. The seminal fluids also have a much higher concentration of the virus. These can stay in the vagina for hours after the intercourse and thereby increase the risk of infection. Young women are more susceptible to infection than older women before menopause. Young girls vagina, which is not fully mature, is further easily torn during sexual intercourse and child delivery. In fewer words, this means that a woman, by comparison with a man, is at a higher risk of infection by sexual contact with an infected partner.

4.5 The present situation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Now, more than twenty years since the first AIDS case was found 25 million people are dead and 40 million people worldwide are living with the virus. And the virus is continuing its destructive course, destroying people’s lives as well as the very fabric of society. The epidemic is spreading across the globe, but Sub-Saharan Africa is the region where HIV prevalence is the highest. The main mode of transmission is heterosexual sexual relations and in recent years the HIV prevalence has increased the most among women. In Africa 57 percent of the people infected are women and in Zambia 70 percent of the countries infected persons are women. The fact that there are biological reasons to why women are more physically susceptibility to HIV infection is far from the only once fuelling the epidemic among women. The reasons to why women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men are will be explored in the subsequent chapter.

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77 Plusnews, Plus news web special on international women’s day- gender and HIV/AIDS. Available at: http://www.plusnews.org/webspecials/womensday/zam040305.asp February 2005
5. THE LINKS

5.1 Introduction

Out of Zambia’s total population about 51 percent are women. Despite the fact that the majority of the population is female, gender imbalances, which do not favour women, exist in Zambia’s socio-economic, cultural and political spheres. The inequalities not only prevents women from effectively contributing to and benefiting from the development processes, but as will be explored below, also makes women more vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that is continuing to spread throughout the country. Since more and more women continue to be infected with HIV, there is a need to focus on the factors that contribute to women’s vulnerability and risk.

I will explore the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Zambia by using the four spheres of inequality, which were accounted for in the theoretical framework of this study.

5.2 The sphere of politics and economy

Women are under-represented at all levels of decision making especially in Government, Parliament, the private sector, religious groupings, boards and other institutions in the community of Zambia. Since 1991 the government states that they have made an effort in appointing more women in management positions in various Government institutions.80 The government of Zambia is committed to the implementation of affirmative action in order to improve women’s participation in decision-making positions and to reach the set goal of 30 percent representation of women in decision-making positions at all levels. Today, the female representation has remained low at 12 percent.81 As late as 1996 the government passed a land act, which should guarantee women the possibility of being landowners. Agriculture is a key sector in the Zambian economy and women are the main producers and providers.82 However, the land act also allows customary laws which mainly give land ownership to men83. As such, women are likely to be rejected because of the customary law. Under customary law, women use the land to cultivate crops or for livestock grazing but the land...

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82 SARDC, 1998. Beyond inequalities, p. 23
83 Before independence from the U.K. in 1964, Zambia had two different legal systems, one for Africans and one for Europeans. Today Zambia law integrates both legal systems: customary law and statutory law. In general, customary law grants significantly fewer rights to women than statutory law. Human rights watch. Suffering in silence, p. 55
does not belong to them, it belongs to her husband. Upon divorce or if the husband dies, the husband’s family inherits the land and the woman is left with nothing.

It is thus clearly visible that more needs to be done to ensure that women who compromise the majority of the Zambian population are proportionally represented at all levels of decision making. Women’s interests and needs will very likely not be properly represented in organs where the majority are overwhelmingly men. According to Maggie Nanyangwe, deputy director at LIWOMADI (Livingstone women make a difference) Zambia needs equal representation of women and men in government as women are the one who can understand other women’s suffering and take the necessary means to stop it.84

After decades of economical crisis, Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries. Although poverty is widespread throughout the country, it is predominantly rural and affects women to a higher degree than men.85 Men receive a much larger share of remuneration from waged salaried employment. With only 20 % of women in the waged labor force, it is estimated that more than 90% of wages and salaries are paid to men.86 The low economic status of women creates dependence on male partners. Julius Silupumbwe at SWAAZ described the situation in these words:

_A huge amount of women lack incomes and the women make up a high percentage of the unemployed in Zambia. If women would get jobs they will be worse and paid less than that a man would earn._87

A cause of unemployment among women is the lack of education. Although most Zambian adults have attended school, there are sizeable differences between the male and female population. 20 percent of the women have never been to school while 9 percent of men have never attended school. The total years of schooling also reflects the overall gender gap in educational attainment: men have completed an average of 7.0 years of schooling, compared with 5.3 years among women. Women are thereby also less likely than men to be able to read: 60 percent of women and 81 percent of men are literate. The gender gap in literacy, however, decreases from older to younger persons, with literacy rates among young adults age 15-19 at

84 Interview with Maggie Nanyangwe, Deputy Director, LIWOMADI Livingstone April 1, 2005
87 Interview with Julius Silupumbwe, programme officer, SWAAZ. Lusaka April 5, 2005
58 percent for women and 70 percent for men, compared with literacy rates among older adults age 45-49 years at 58 percent for women and 91 percent for men.\textsuperscript{88}

All of the persons I interviewed whom work with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues focused on the need to provide girls with education as a way to address the AIDS crisis. Data suggests that staying in school can help protect girls from HIV infection. A World Bank report on education and HIV/AIDS in Africa states:

> Education is among the most powerful tools for reducing the social and economic vulnerability that exposes women to a higher risk of HIV/AIDS than men. Girl’s education can go far in slowing and reversing the spread of HIV by contributing to poverty reduction, gender equality, female empowerment, and awareness of human rights. It also has crucial implications for female economic independence, delayed marriage, family planning, and work outside the home.\textsuperscript{89}

The report supports the vital importance of girls having access to education, as well as boys, as a way to inform and protect themselves against contracting the virus. The trend however, goes in the opposite direction according to Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba, Programme manager for CAMFED (campaign for female education). She says that when a family has limited resources and has to choose between educating the boy or the girl most parents choose the boy. Girls are likely to be pulled out of school to care for sick family members or to have to provide financial support for their families. The reasoning behind preferring to send a boy to school also comes from the thinking that a girl does not need education since she is supposed to get married.\textsuperscript{90} Chilumba Nalwamba who is the development adviser for HIV/AIDS at the ministry of Education in Zambia told me about her own experience:

> My father did not understand why I should go to school and get an education. He believed that it was a waste of time and money. He used to say – “She cannot bring anything good, she will just end up pregnant!” But now I have my education and I can do a lot of good for my village, so I proved him wrong.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{88} ZDES, 2002. \textit{Education data for decision-making}. p.15-18
\textsuperscript{90} Interview with Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba, programme manager for CAMFED, MoE, Lusaka March 22 2005
\textsuperscript{91} Interview with Chilumba Nalwamba, development adviser for HIV/AIDS, MoE. Lusaka 23 April 2005
The implication is that many girls are denied the right to inform themselves about their sexual and reproductive rights and options.

As is the case elsewhere in Africa, there is a strong link between poverty and HIV/AIDS in Zambia. AIDS affected families suffer harsh economical problems due to illness and death among breadwinners and having to take care of orphans. This has led many women and girls to seek alternative sources of income for their families. All too often this means having to trade sex for survival.

According to Alfred Katewa Silwazwe, Director of standards and national programmer of HIV/AIDS at the minister of Education, girls who have lost their parents to AIDS suffer more from stigma than a boy who have lost his parents to AIDS. People tend to treat a boy better and give him a chance while they see girl as an orphan who is probably infected.

*A boy will always have it easier to earn money. People are more willing to give a boy a job. But for a girl it is as sad as it is common that she will see no other option than to sell her body.*

“Sugar daddies”, older men who persuade girls into having sex with them by offering gifts or money, is a widespread phenomenon that also puts girls and young women at serious infection risk. The HIV epidemic seems to be pushing these men to seek increasingly young girls on the assumption that, the younger the girl is the less like is it that she will be infected. According to Mary Kantemba at Save the children Norway:

*...men with money who are HIV positive are a big problem...they think that girls are too innocent to suspect that the men could be infected. This is the selfishness of our men and girls are not made aware of their rights.*

Sexual relations with various people will naturally put one at risk of contracting the virus. Prostitution is thereby a very risky behaviour. In urban areas female prostitution is prevalent. It is not illegal to sell sex but it is illegal to solicit for customers, to use brothels and to live of

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92 Interview with Alfred Katewa Sikazwe, Director of standards and national programmer of HIV/AIDS, MoE, Lusaka April 4, 2005
93 Interview with Mary Kantemba, save the children Norway. Livingstone April 1, 2005
the earnings of the person who is selling her body. However, there is no clear line of definition between the term prostitution and women who rely on several boyfriends for material support. Statistics of frequency of female sex workers were not found but more than 17% of sexually active men in the 15- to 24-year-old age group paid for sex over the previous 12 months, and only two out of five of these young men were using condoms.94

5.3 The sphere of the family

*When my daughter’s husband died, she had to get remarried. And she did, but the new husband did not like the children from her previous marriage. So what did my daughter do? Well she left her children with me.*  - Violet

Marriage is considered to be a natural part of life in Zambia and to be married is still crucial for many women. It has such an importance that women are willing to give away her children in order to please the new husband. The importance of being married was also indicated by that women I met were concerned and showed signs of great unease by the fact that I, at the age of 25, did not have any plans of getting married. Cecilia Chouba, youth coordinator at YWCA, describes marriage in Zambia as a relationship that is not based on friendship but a contract which forces the wife to see her husband as her boss and the husband views his wife as mere property.95 This view results in that women have heavy workloads; they are responsible for bringing up children as well as all the work within the household and pleasing the husband. Generally, women lack complete control over their lives since they are taught from early childhood to be obedient and submissive to males, particularly males who command power such as a father, uncle elder, guardian or brother.

A change is starting to come about in the urban areas, however, when a girl reaches puberty in the rural areas it is still a custom that she is not allowed to look a man in the eye since that is considered disgraceful, neither is she allowed to talk to a man unless he asks her to.96 This is clearly a problem of great magnitude as women have not been taught to say what they want and do not want nor feel that they have the right to.

95 Interview with Cecilia Chouba, youth coordinator at YWCA. Lusaka April 6
96 Interview with Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba – Programme manager for CAMFED, Lusaka March 22, 2005
For many women, their economic security, sometimes their very survival is dependent on the support of their male partner. The dependence on men for economical reasons has lead to a necessary acceptance of male behaviour. Many women’s ability to control their exposure to HIV may be limited by their financial dependence and their subordinated position. As Julius Silupumbwe, Programme Officer SWAAZ, Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia put it:

*It is ok for a man to be promiscuous. But it is inconsiderable for a woman to be. A man can very well come home to his wife after have had sex with someone else and demand sex from his wife, and the wife is in no position to refuse him sex, even though she knows that her husband have had sex with someone else and might have been infected with HIV or any other STD.*

According to Maggie Nanyangwe, Deputy director of LIWOMADI, Livingstone women make a difference, the Zambian woman is considered as a second class citizen and the most important thing that can happened to a woman is to get married regardless of various circumstances. Consequently, the Zambian woman is prepared to take risks just to be or to stay married so that she is seen as normal in society. Women are usually in no position to negotiate for safe sex, due to the fact that they have been brought up to be submissive and not been allowed to take place or let themselves be heard.

Some men would be very offended if a woman asked him to use condom. Requests for safer sex can be made, but if they are ignored most women will have few options as Wallen Simwaka, journalist at Zambia Daily Mail put it:

*Men in general have girlfriends. The wives know about it but most of them feel like there is nothing they can do about it. They are dependent on the men and they have nowhere to go... if the woman would confront her husband about his adultery he would probably tell her to shut up and threaten her by saying that he would go back to his girlfriend.*

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97 Interview with Julius Silupumbwe, Programme officer at SWAAZ. Lusaka April 5, 2005
98 Interview with Maggie Nanyangwe, Deputy Director, LIWOMADI Livingstone April 1, 2005
99 Interview with Wallen Simwaka, journalist at Zambia Daily Mail. Livingstone March 31, 2005
5.4 The sphere of culture

The status of the women is very low in Zambia. Women and girls are very disadvantaged and the reasons are known. Zambia is a culture of men.

-Alfred Katewa Sikazwe, Director of Standards and National Programmer of HIV/AIDS, Ministry of Education, Lusaka April 4, 2005

Women and girls live under heavy cultural constraints in Zambia. Within the culture women are looked down upon and often treated as a second-class citizen. Many traditions and practices impede efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS related issues. A girl is taught form a very early age to be submissive, quiet and to obey men. This is a big problem because girls have not been taught how to say no, nor how to say what they want and what they do not want. Women end up believing that that is the way it is supposed to be. As a result women cannot say no to sex, and not request safe sex if the man does not want to use protection.

It is still not accepted for women to talk about sex. When Dumasseh Mfula, consultant at HIV in the workplace programme, talks about sex people still get very surprised and a bit shocked. According to her: ‘that we don’t talk about sex is an obstacle in the fight against AIDS’. But fortunately it is getting easier since more and more people are becoming aware of the importance, especially the necessity of being able to talk about sex and HIV/AIDS with your children. However, despite the fact that people are starting to talk, matters pertaining sex can still not within most families be discussed openly with parents, but only through intermediaries. Sexual matters can usually be discussed with an aunt, uncle or grandparents. The grandparents are the ones who are mainly responsible for sex education which usually occur during initiation ceremonies.

Most of the tribes in Zambia have two initiation ceremonies at two different stages of life. The first one, that is mainly for girls take place after the first menstruation. During her schooling she is taught by an older relative how to look after herself as a grown woman and how to please a man. Some women are thus taught at a young age how to please a man sexually, however, according to Cecilia Chouba, youth coordinator at YWCA, a woman cannot say that she wants to have sex. If she would tell her boyfriend that she wants to have sex with him she

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100 Interview with Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba – Programme manager for CAMFED, Lusaka, March 22, 2005
101 Interview with Dumasseh Mfula, Consultant-HIV/AIDS at the workplace. Lusaka, March 22, 2005
102 Mary Kantemba, Save the Children Norway, Livingstone April 1, 2005
will most likely be dumped or be called names, such as bitch or prostitute. This leaves the woman in a situation where it is not accepted to want to have sex and neither is it acceptable to refuse to give the boyfriend or man sex when he wants it.

At the initiation ceremony a girl is also taught about “dry sex” whereby girls and women attempt to dry out their vaginas in an effort to provide more pleasurable sex to men. The dryness is achieved by using herbs and ingredients that reduce vaginal fluids and increase friction during intercourse. Given the likelihood that dry sex will cause tears and cuts in the vaginal wall, the practise clearly increases the risk of HIV transmission. The initiation ceremonies do not necessarily have to be a bad practise given the fact that some traditional leaders are nowadays becoming sensitised to the need to integrate HIV/AIDS education into these ceremonies.

The second initiation ceremony is meant to prepare women for marriage and to teach them more about sex and childbearing. She is also taught how to have sex and to never refuse her husband sex. However, while the bride is taught how to please her husband with cooking and how to please her husband sexually, the bridegroom is taught what to expect from his wife to be. If the wife does not live up to expectations the husband can send her home to her parents where she will have to see traditional leaders for more training.

Another cultural practise that fuels the necessity for women to accept men’s promiscuity is Lobola which is a bridal price that the bridegroom pays to bride’s father. Many are of the opinion that this places a woman in a position where she is considered to be a bought property of her husband and not an equal partner. According to Maggie Nanyangwe, Deputy Director of LIWOMADI (Livingstone women make a difference) this has results such as the woman cannot decide when to have children or whether to have them, when to have sex, or whether to have safe or unsafe sex.
Sexual cleansing is yet another cultural practice that makes women vulnerable to HIV infection. If a husband dies it is believed that the widow must have sex with a close relative of her deceased husband. If she does not get cleansed in this way it is believed that she will go mad. If a woman will be able to marry again the new husband will often demand that she has been cleansed. Sexual cleansing is a custom that is slowly eroding because of the HIV transmission risks involved and the knowledge thereof but it is still common and not only in the rural areas of but also in the urban areas of Zambia.\(^{108}\)

An additional cultural practise that may fuel the epidemic is Mpokeleshi, which could be translated to sex-helper. The sex-helper is usually the wife’s younger girl relatives who have to have to help their relative by having sex with her husband. This is a tradition that also is coming to an end because of the epidemic but it is still common in the rural areas of Zambia.

5.5 The sphere of male violence

Justine\(^{109}\) is 11 years old and I met her at the children crisis centre of the YWCA. She was brought there by the social services after that she had reported her uncle of sexual abuse. Her uncle was supposed to take care of Justine and her two younger sisters while her mother had to go out of town for a while. But Justine’s uncle does not know what it means to take care of a child. He raped her and her two younger sisters and also infected them with HIV.

The problem of child abuse has grown to devastating proportions. According to the Minister of Youth, Sport and Community Development, Mutale Nalumango, up to 70 child-abuse cases were being reported to the police daily in 2003, and the majority of these were girls who had been sexually abused\(^{110}\). An alarming increasing number of abuses against girls come from members of their own families.\(^{111}\) One cause for the high number of child abuse is men’s targeting for young girls who they assume are HIV-negative, based on the myth that is spread in the southern parts of Africa, that having sex with a virgin will cure AIDS. In addition, Sexual violence is fuelled because the semen after intercourse with a child is valuable for


\(^{109}\) The real name of the child is not used in this paper.


\(^{111}\) Interview with Cecelia Chouba, youth coordinator, YWCA, Lusaka April 6, 2005
traditional healers who use the fluid to make medicines. There are thus men who rape young girls in order to sell the sperm.\textsuperscript{112}

Despite the fact that several cases of sexual abuse are being reported, many are kept in silence. Those knowledgeable about sexual abuse of girls repeatedly described to me abuses of uncles, stepfathers, and cousins. However, the family often hides the abuses by relatives and girls are silenced. Girls who try to tell another adult family member about abuse they are suffering from are often silenced and told not to bring shame upon the family. Shame and stigma upon themselves that some girls associate with sexual abuse is also a serious constrain to reporting, including the stigma associated with possible HIV infection. \textsuperscript{113} Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba, programme manager for CAMFED, informed me of cases where teachers have abused girl students. But the shame associated with rape discourages families from reporting the abuse. Often the girl herself is blamed for instigating the abuse. According to Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba, programme manager for CAMFED: “Society blames you and the legal system does not protect you. If a relative sexually abuses a girl, they want to hush it up. Culture teaches us to keep quiet about it”\textsuperscript{114}

But it is not only young girls who are raped, older women also fall victim. According to a study made by the demographic and health surveys about violence against women in Zambia, one in six women reported having ever been raped by a man\textsuperscript{115}. The study also point out that raped women who were or had been married had most commonly been raped by the current husband/boyfriend (37 percent) followed by a male friend (16perecent).\textsuperscript{116} When a woman is raped people usually say that she asked for it or caused it by a mini skirt while a man is said to have exercised his manhood. In the case of incest it is usually kept a secret.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{112} Interview with Maggie Nanyangwe, Livingstone April 1, 2005
\textsuperscript{113} Interview with Mary Kantemba, Save the children Norway. Livingstone, April 1, 2005
\textsuperscript{114} Interview with Mathilda Fikoloma Mwamba, programme manager for CAMFED. Lusaka March 22, 2005
\textsuperscript{115} The study compromised a total of 5029 women in Zambia.
\textsuperscript{117} Interview with Cecilia Chouba. Youth coordinator YMCA, Lusaka April 6, 2005
5.6 Why women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men are

Gender inequalities within the four spheres are evident. Not only are the gender imbalances an obstacle for women’s empowerment and emancipation but the imbalance and the subordinate position also makes women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Due to discriminatory laws and social beliefs, many women are dependent on their men for financial support and may therefore be forced to have unprotected sex, where the alternative is having their financial and social support cut off. It is difficult for women to challenge their partner’s behaviour because of the social and economic status. The subordinate status of women and girls makes it difficult for them to negotiate for safe sex and to take steps to protect themselves against contracting the virus. Especially given the fact that cultural and social conditions prevent girls from receiving education where they can learn about their rights and how to stay uninfected by HIV. The empowerment by education could be one step closer to end the economic dependence on men and the necessity to accept certain male behaviour. The situation in Zambia has resulted in the paradox that women who are married are at a high risk of infection because of male promiscuity that seems to be tolerated by social and cultural norms.

Beyond women’s subordination there are a number of cultural practices that take on added risks in the era of HIV/AIDS: dry sex, sexual cleansing and Mpokeleshi are such traditions. These are practices which can facilitate the spread of HIV. In addition, difficult economic conditions due to lack of education and tough employment market compel girls and women to sell their bodies in return for money or gifts which also put them at a high risk of being infected.

Every person I interviewed who works with HIV/AIDS or gender issues mentioned sexual abuse of women and girls as a very common problem in the fight against HIV/AIDS. That the abuse has become such a widespread violation is frightening and appalling. Rape without a doubt is the worst manifestation of gender inequality, not only destroying ones life in itself, but in Zambia where the HIV prevalence is extremely high, any sexual relation can carry a high risk of HIV transmission. Shortly said; gender inequality heightens the vulnerability of females to infection and makes it difficult to protect themselves.
6. VOICES OF YOUNG WOMEN IN ZAMBIA

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this part of the study is to explore the perceptions of young women in urban Zambia towards HIV/AIDS and gender inequality as part of exploring the links as well as to enhance the understanding of what it is like to be a young woman in Zambia today. The analysis of this part began by identifying the major categories of the information that emerged during the interviews. These were the following categories:

- Perceptions of gender inequality within their families
- Perceptions of marriage
- Perceptions of HIV/AIDS
- Perceptions of Zambian traditions
- Perceptions of being a woman in Zambia

At a number of occasions the respondents share very similar perceptions and in order to facilitate the reading, I have let one or a few respondents represent a perception. For the sake of clarity direct quotes from the respondents’ interviews are italicised.

6.2 Perceptions of gender inequality within their families

This category elicits the perception and description of the nine young women’s families and upbringing. In Zambia children usually live with their parents until they marry. Out of the nine respondents for this study, one is married and has children. The remaining eight respondents still live at home with their parents. All respondents described the gender roles within their families and their upbringing as well as their thoughts and feelings about it.

A majority of the respondents described their families and upbringing as unequal and I was informed of how they since early childhood and still up to this day are responsible for heavy workload at home while they are struggling for good school grades. A great majority of the respondents said that the household work within their families is not equally distributed between all the family members, leaving them with a much heavier workload than their brothers have. The young women did expressed feelings of annoyance caused by the different treatment given to them in comparison to their brothers.

In the respondent’s word:
African women are slaves! It might sound harsh but sadly enough that is the way it is...

...A woman’s values and chores are different from a man’s. In my home, I must cook and clean. While my brother is sitting in the sofa, resting. It gets annoying! He is just sitting there while I have to do all the hard work.

A majority of the respondents said that both of their parents but mainly their fathers are responsible for the gender inequalities within their families. One respondent said that her father screams if he sees her brothers in the kitchen, another said that her father is traditional in the sense that he does not want the roles of the women and men get blurred out. Despite the fact that the women did express feelings of great annoyance about the different treatment they were given in comparison to their brothers and the given roles that the men and the women have within their families, some of them expressed feelings of powerlessness and thereby feelings of having to accept the subordinate roles that are forced upon them. One respondent said:

I have tried to complain about the unfairness in my family, but then it is like...things don’t get to change. I can complain about it today, but tomorrow it is going to happen anyway. It is just the way it is here. You just have to accept certain things.

Some of the respondents wished to describe their families and upbringing as gender equal and having a family that valued daughters and sons equally as well as not making any difference of capabilities and responsibilities due to sex. However, the more they described their families, the more the equality faded away. I base this reasoning on the fact that the specific respondents told me that there is an emphasis on them cooking and cleaning since they are women. Further, despite the fact that both of their parents are working and both of them are likely to be tired coming home from work, their fathers can sit in the sofa and relax while their mothers take the roles as servants.

Only one of the respondents informed me of shared responsibilities and workloads within her family. She was the only one that could not recall being treated or brought up differently compared to her brothers, nor did she express feelings of being brought up unfairly compared to their brothers. However, the respondent informed me that the equality she perceives that her family is having is uncommon in Zambia as she compared her upbringing and her family’s view of women to her friends’ and relatives’ families. In her words:
Me and my brothers have the same amount of chores to do and thereby also the same amount of time to study. Usually the girls have to do a lot while the boys can do whatever they want to do...In my family we all are allowed to talk and we respect each other’s opinion, so we differ a lot I would say from other families.

The respondent was the only one of the young women who has for the most part been brought up by a single mother since her father died when she was 12 years old. When I asked her if she believes that the fact that her family is a female headed-household has lead to more gender equality, she firmly replies, no. When her father was alive he never made any difference between her and her brothers and he also used to cook, which is very uncommon in Zambia where as in many other places the kitchen is still considered to be a woman’s place.

Knowing how the women grew up and what gender roles they have in their families, I found it interesting to find out how they themselves want to bring up their children, if they have any. Differing from most of their parents, all of the women, some more than others, were very concerned about gender equality and the importance of bringing up children, despite of sex, equally. One respondent also said that if gender equality will be a reality she and other have to start treating their children equally since gender equality has to start from childhood.

The respondent that is married and have children did perceive her wishes concerning bringing up her children, one girl and one boy, equally very difficult to fulfil since she and her husband have different opinions concerning the roles and value of a man and a woman. In her words:

*I want my children to know the same things and be able to do the same things. I will not let my daughter be limited just because she is a girl. But it’s difficult because my husband does not help me. I can’t even talk about it with him. He doesn’t understand and doesn’t want to understand what it is like to be a woman here.*

Apart from bringing up children equally despite of sex, several of the respondents also found it of importance to be open to their future children and talk to them about sex and HIV/AIDS. Most of the respondents said that they have never talked about sex or other personal issues with their parents. In their view it is sad but considered abnormal for children and parents to be open to such an extent in Zambia. They, themselves however do not wish to be like their parents. They want to have a relation with their children where sex is not a taboo.
Some of the respondents mentioned the importance of being open and talk about sex within the families as an important step in fighting the spread of HIV.

6.3 Perception of marriage

As accounted for in the previous chapter, marriage is to many considered as an essential part of life and that many women marry due to financial reasons. I therefore wished to ask these women who are fortunate to study and will hopefully have a chance of being independent, what their perception of marriage is and if getting married is something of importance to them. As mentioned previously one of the respondents is married. However, all the respondents expressed their opinion and thoughts of marriage.

All of the unmarried young women, except one, would not mind to get married one day but they do not perceive marriage as an essential part of life. The exception, the respondent who is determined to marry were somewhat surprised of my question and quickly referred to the Bible which states that marriage is important and that she therefore perceived marriage as a natural part of life. She did not mention any direct problems of being in a marriage.

Poverty is as mentioned previously, often harder on women and girls. And many times women need to get married due to economical reasons as a means for survival. This was the case for the respondent who is married. Both of her parents where dead when she was sixteen years old and she was left with no other option than marrying a seventeen older man. She remembers her first years of marriage as horrible. She always had dreamt of studying and becoming a teacher but found herself not being able to leave the house. When she had her two children she felt better but it was still hard to take care of the household and bring up the children on her own without any help or interest from her husband. Her description of her marriage clearly indicated the subordinated status she has. In her words:

*Life is hard for a woman. My husband often reminds me that he is the head of the household and that he decides what I will do and not do. He often says that me and the children are a drawback.*

For the ones who are not yet married there is a fear of being limited within a marriage and many of them believe that they will be restricted in terms of what they will be allowed to do once they are married. A great majority of the respondents said that relationships with
boyfriends are not problematic but that the problems arise once they are married since from then on the husband knows what he should expect and demand from a wife. According to the respondents once a woman is married she must please and obey her husband and cannot go and try to follow her own dreams and goals. Most of them wish to get married one day but knowing the limits they must live under in a marriage they want to wait with marriage until they have reached some of the goals they have set for themselves. They want an education and time to enjoy the feeling of being on their own without a husband to please and obey.

To my surprise two of the young women said that they will take a submissive role once they are married. One respondent said:

*When I am married I will play the role as a wife. I will do what is expected of me. I will submit myself and I will do all the housework. I don’t want to complicate things.*

But a majority of the young women could not picture themselves having a submissive role and obeying their husband at the expense of their own happiness. This raises the question of whether Zambian women today have to choose between independence and submissiveness, or in other words, marriage and being single. In the respondent’s words:

*If I will get married it would be because I want to share the rest of my life with someone. And if get married I want to be able to be independent, especially if I marry a Zambian man, because here the husband has to have the upper-hand and make all the decisions including over me…I could never put up with having a husband who has the power over me. I rather be on my own than being controlled.*

However, despite the fact that most of the women did not perceive marriage as important to them, all of them did point out the pressure from society as something that makes them distressed. Despite the fact that they prefer being alone and have a chance of independence they admitted the fear they have of being viewed upon as abnormal.

The fact that it is very common that women marry someone due to need of support and security was again made evident by some of the responses of the young women. Several emphasized the wish to get married because of love. One respondent said:
I want to get married because I love someone and not because I want someone to take care of me, like some of my friends have done.

All of the respondents hoped for marriages with gender equality where they and their husbands would have shared responsibilities within the home and where both could have a career. One respondent said that there is a very slim chance of her having a marriage where she does not have to be submissive but she hopes that by the time she will get married, things will have changed. Sadly some of the respondents seem to believe that equality could come to existents as time passes by, however time itself will not bring about changes. Everything that is created by us must clearly also be changed by us.

Several of the respondents placed a great deal of emphasis on the problem of men’s extra marital affairs as a reason to why they do not look forward to marriage. One respondent said:

I really respect marriage, so much. But people here have really devalued marriage. I mean, how many married men do not have girlfriends? Married people should be faithful, but the men here do not seem to understand that.

Another respondent said:

When the wife of a neighbour of mine left town for a few days, the husband had prostitutes coming over to the house, and not one but first three and then later one that stayed the whole night. So when the wife came home, he probably made her have sex with him, and who knows if he got infected after the night with the prostitutes. It is so frustrating!

Most of the respondents share a very cynical view of men. Several of them firmly believed that men cannot be trusted in general and particularly not concerning faithfulness. According to a majority of the young women, men will eventually be unfaithful. This must mean that trust is not an essential requirement for most of the young women given that despite the fact that they do not trust their partners they still get involved in relationships. One respondent was convinced that a man cannot love one woman for a longer period of time and be faithful to her, but a woman is capable of such a love. Another respondent’s parents do not put any pressure on her to get married since they also fear that she would get infected with HIV given the fact of husband’s extra marital affairs. The two respondents, who held a more positive
perception of men and their capabilities in relationships, said that they were exceptionally fortunate to have found a good man who respects them and stays faithful.

6.4 Perceptions of HIV/AIDS
This category elicits the perception of the nine young women towards HIV/AIDS. Their comments convey a picture of what it is like to live in a city where HIV prevalence is 22%. All of the respondents expressed great fear of the epidemic and their responses indicate that they are exceedingly affected.

*It is definitely something that is on my mind constantly. Because as much as I am probably not infected, I have really close friends and relatives who are, so in this way I am also affected so it’s something that I think about most of the time. And it will affect you in one way or the other, mentally or emotionally. So it has a great impact on my life. It just makes me so sad. And with the prevalence as high as it is here, I know I am at risk. Every person you have sex with could have HIV and the fact that you never can be sure, affects your choices all the time.*

All of the young women were evidently affected by the epidemic. The thought and fear of it seldom leaves their thoughts. Some of the respondents brought up the frustration of people well informed of the situation of the epidemic, but still do not change their behaviour. The fact that people, who hold the knowledge of how the virus is spread and how one can stay uninfected still have not started to change their behaviour and attitude, made the respondents loose hope.

One of the respondents was willing to tell me her personal experience of the epidemic. The extract of the interview is a cruel reminder of how devastating the epidemic is and how it has lead persons to take desperate awful measures for what they mistakenly believe could be a cure.

*A couple of moths ago my little cousin was raped. She is only ten years old. It was my uncle who did it. He is HIV positive and so is my cousin now. She is only a child and now she is infected. She is given antiretroviral drugs, but they are so strong so her side effects are really bad. I often ask myself why he did it, but there is no answer*
While customary forms of marriage are still held as the ideal by many people, the interviews revealed that young people engage in sex well before marriage and given that they have had sex fuel the fear of being infected. The respondents were willing to talk about their sex life and the fear they have. Some of the women said they are able to be relaxed without thinking about the risk they were putting themselves at when they have protected sex. But for others, the thought of HIV/AIDS is especially present when having sex. It is something always at the back of the head, reminding them of the risk of contracting the deadly virus.

None of the respondents are, to their knowledge or their willingness to tell me, infected. But there are different alternatives of staying uninfected. They are usually referred to the ABC: Abstinence, Be faithful, Condom.

Two of the young women have chosen abstinence as the option of staying uninfected. One has chosen to abstain from sex as following the words of the Bible while the other have decided to wait to have sex until she feels she finds someone she feels she can truly trust, even though she doubts she ever will. The fear of HIV/AIDS has clearly affected the respondent as she abstains from relationships due to her fear of contracting the virus. Both of the respondents have had relationships where the boyfriends have pressured them to have sex and upon refusal the boyfriends ended the relationships.

The majority of the respondents have chose condoms as the means of staying uninfected. They admit that the best option would be to abstain but since that would not work for them they have promised themselves to never have unprotected sex. This raises the question of whether boyfriends are as positive of condom use as the women are. Their experience tells that men prefer having unprotected sex but upon request they are willing to use a condom. However, the responses do indicate that condoms are not used to the needed extent. Some respondents said similar worrying comments:

*A lot of my friends who are in a relationship say that they really love each other and therefore don’t need a condom.*

Despite the fact that the respondents do not feel that they have any problems requesting condoms, they do believe that it will change, as many other things, once they are married.
As mentioned previously women within marriages are often not in a position to request use of protection. This is also the case for the respondent who is married.

My husband doesn’t not like condoms. If I would ask him to use it he would be offended and think that I accused him of being infected…He also refuses to get tested. He says he knows he is not infected in a way that it seems like he thinks hat he is immortal

All of the respondents who are sexually active say that they would never choose to have unprotected sex. But is it accepted for a woman to buy condoms? One respondent seemed nervous just imagining if someone would see her buying a condom and when I asked her why, she replies that a woman can not do anything in Zambia which can make people assume that she will have sex. Though, another respondent said:

I buy condoms. Of course people have opinions and start talking when they see a woman buying condoms, but the bottom-line is that it is my life and I am protecting my health. Hopefully by me doing it openly might encourage other women to also feel that they can do it.

The respondents expressed their thoughts and feelings about getting tested for HIV. Fear is the main reason to why some of the respondents have not gone for a test to find out their HIV status. The knowledge of that a condom never can give 100 percent protection from being infected, leaves the respondents with great apprehension. Some said that they truly want to get tested but cannot find the courage to do so. However, some does not want to find out their status.

Honestly, I don’t want to know. Because it freaks me out. You can get the results in 15 minutes and they say that as a good thing. But then I think to myself, that if I am positive my life will change in 15 minutes and I don’t believe in positive living so it would mean the end for me, and what would I tell my parents. They even think that I am still a virgin.

The fear is very understandable however not knowing ones status will, if infected, not only mean that medication will be started later, but could also mean the risk of infecting others. One respondent who have gotten tested shared her feelings of her experience:
I have gone for a test. And it is something that I will never put myself through again. The waiting was just horrible! I only waited for ten minutes but it felt like forever. It was the worst ten minutes of my life, and I just kept thinking, what if?

6.5 Perceptions of Zambian traditions

The elements that made up this category identified the perception of the young women about some Zambian traditions\(^{118}\); Dry sex, Lobola, Initiation Ceremony and Sexual cleansing. The elected traditions brought up different amounts of feelings and opinions during the interviews. Their perceptions could thereby be evaluated and come to indicate how some Zambian women perceive some Zambian traditions.

The women were concerned about the traditional practice of dry sex, which according to them is a practice where the woman’s objectification is exemplified as she is expected to please the man at the expense of her own well-being and pleasure. All of the respondents were strongly against the practice of dry sex and admitted it makes them feel like objects but yet they worry about not being dry enough when they have sex. Yet another example of how the women follow the set norm and their subordinated position at the expense of their own well-being. One respondent said:

When you listen to guys talking they say that a woman has to be dry for the man to have a good time. How am I supposed to stop my body from doing what it is supposed to do? It is really unfair. And it also makes me worry about if I am dry enough for him or not...maybe the guy will think I am too wet and then he will say that to his friends and they will make fun of me?

Some respondents did say that even though they themselves do not practice dry sex they know women who do. One respondent said that she never would make herself drier even upon a request for her to do so. She said:

There is a limit of certain things. We women have to put up with so much, so I will not do that as well.

\(^{118}\) The four elected traditions were chosen for this part of the study after being informed of traditions that may fuel the spread of the epidemic.
The respondents shared their perception of Lobola. They are not against the tradition in itself but they do would feel that a high price would make them feel like a bought property. They also fear that a husband can take advantage of the fact that he has paid the Lobola and therefore demand more of his wife since he actually has paid for her. All of the respondents believed that Lobola should be a token of appreciation and that parents therefore should not ask for a high price. In the words of one respondent:

...people tend to exaggerate it. It shouldn’t be commercialised like that. My ex boyfriend comes from Botswana, and he did not understand why a man has to pay money to the brides parents. He said that it would make me a possession and that a man can just destroy it and buy a new one as if the woman was an object. His opinion makes sense.

None of the respondents have positive opinions about the two initiation ceremonies. They perceive the latter one as a necessary part of a wedding, but it is one part of the wedding they wish they did not have to go through. Several of the respondents wished that they could run away and get married since they dread having to go through it. One of the respondents who earlier on had told me about her friends and relatives not approving of her personality said the following:

I really don’t want to go through it. I know that the women that will hold the ceremony will say that I need to change if I going to be able to keep a man. And they will say that I’m to stubborn for being a woman so they will probably try to whip the stubbornness out of me, literally...They also teach you things like, If you see your husband with another woman, do not do or say anything, you will just cause problems, and that every marriage has problems but you should never talk about them. It just indicates how unfair our society is.

One of the respondents addressed the importance and need to review cultural beliefs and traditional practises and let them be modified into a promotion of activities that prevent the spread of HIV. She said:

The government has come up with this policy that the ceremonies should include teaching girls and women about HIV/AIDS as well, so in that aspect it is good
All of the respondents were very much against the practice of sexual cleansing and some of them also expressed the unfairness and inequality concerning the compulsion of widows having to have sex with a relative of her dead husband. Though the respondents mostly stressed the gender inequality aspect of the tradition, all of the respondents also brought up the risk factor of spreading HIV and thereby perceive the tradition of sexual cleansing as a contributor to the spread of the epidemic. One respondent said:

*Fortunately people are starting to stop doing it because of AIDS. It must be one of the sickest traditions we have. That people still do it is just pure ignorance. How can they have sex without even knowing the status of the dead person?!*

**6.6 Perceptions of being a woman in Zambia**

This category elicits how the young women view the situation facing women in Zambia. All of the respondents perceive women as inferior in Zambia and that they are limited due to the mere fact that they are women. Many of them believe that life would have been easier if they would have been men.

The respondents felt underrated and are often not taken seriously because they are women. They have often felt put aside and that women are not believed to be able to make contributions. It was clear that the respondents envy the privileges, options and independence men have. They feel discriminated at the employment market where good jobs always go to men even though a woman would have had better qualifications. Despite the fact that they dream of having top positions one day, they doubt that they will. Some of the respondents said that they dreamed of becoming the first female president in Zambia, but they could not imagine Zambia having a female president during their lifetime. The respondents feel inferior and restrained by the structure of inequality that they experience daily, however, despite of this annoyance some of them did not feel that they knew what they themselves could do or how they could fight for gender equality.

The respondent who is married, convinced her husband to let her fulfil her dreams and study to become a teacher. However, it was not easy to convince him, it was to take several years before she could make him understand that the whole family would be better off if she also had an income. The respondent believes she knows why her husband did not want to support her decision at first. In her words:
...the main reason to why my husband did not want me to go to school and finish my education is because his jealousy and fear of loosing me. If the woman prospers, the man will fear that she will divorce him.

The husband’s unwillingness to let her study is one example of how men seek to maintain power over women and in this case keep the woman dependent on him. All of the respondents believed that men fear women who are strong and who would thereby be a challenge for the men to control. The respondents therefore believe that this is the reason behind independent women staying single, unable to find a man who would agree to a woman who would not accept a subordinate position without equality.

Zambia is experiencing changes. Despite the fact that they are so slow and close to invisible, people are affected. More and more women are literate and an increasing number also attend university studies. However, traditional practices are still in existence and this can cause conflicts and feelings of being caught in two worlds, as expressed by two of the respondents:

*It is hard sometimes, even confusing. Like for example, I don’t want to pull my lips*\(^{119}\). *They say that we have to have a certain length of our labia in order to please our future husband, but what does he do for me?... it is not a nice feeling by the way, but what are the men doing for us?! It is frustrating. I am studying hard to get my education but when I come home after I’ve been at the library for hours, my mother asks me if I have remembered to pull my lips today. At the end of the day what is the point of me going to school if I have to go back to my roots and do all of these old traditional things?*

Some of the respondents shared the feeling of being caught between two worlds, not being able to push forward and prosper because they feel that they are pulled back by the traditional view of what a woman is supposed to be and do. The structures and the set roles for women are deeply rooted and hard to change.

All of the respondents are as mentioned previously, studying at university level. The importance of education and knowledge is evident when it comes to knowing your rights as a woman. Some of the respondents addressed the fact that they are fortunate to be able to study

\(^{119}\) The respondents informed me of “Ukudonsa amalepe”, which is a practice where the inner labia are pulled daily in order to sustain a certain length of approximately 4 centimeters.
and having the opportunity to get to know their rights and to help them understand how wrong some parts of their society are. However, one respondent did mention the difference between her and other women who do not have the opportunity to study.

*But I am getting an education so there is a difference between me and the ones who are not so privileged, because they will probably spend their whole lives preparing to be a wife, pulling their lips and all of the other unfair things we have to do.*

Some of the respondents addressed the fact that poverty is especially hard on women. They pointed out that the poverty of Zambia compels women into marriage, as well as exchanging sex for money and gifts from sugar daddies. In the words of one respondent:

*The poverty here is...I can’t even put it to words, it feels like I’m locked in a prison and there is no key...it is harder for women especially women without education and you can’t do anything without money so they tend to look to men for finance, in one way or the other.*

Another respondent said:

*Women often really suffer and they marry as a means to an end. They don’t get married because of love. If someone comes a long and offers them a better life, they tend to take it, and once you do that, this man controls you literally. You can’t for example demand condom use or anything. This man is your bread and butter. You just have to accept everything he does, you have to give him what he wants when he wants while he can cheat or whatever.*

According to the respondents, it is common that young women receive gifts and money in return for sex with their “Sugar daddies”. One of the respondents had been tempted to have a sugar daddy when she was younger as some friends of hers showed the clothes and other gifts their sugar daddies had given them. The respondent did however never feel gifts could be worth the sacrifice of selling her body.

The respondents do not perceive society as a force, encouraging them to be strong and to strive to fulfil their dreams and hopes, but despite of this some still manage to find the strength within. They have hope for gender equality and a Zambia were women’s experiences will be taken seriously and women will be valued the same as a man. One respondent said:
I am a strong person and women are not supposed to be strong here. Some friends and relatives of mine tell me that no man will want to marry me. It is ok for men to do whatever they want to do, but women can’t and men feel inferior when a woman is strong. It doesn’t make me feel sad or depressed, quite the opposite it makes me more motivated to fight for equality.

Another respondent expressed the disappointment of the Zambian government which policies, in her opinion have too many words and not enough action.

The government has several gender policies. But the problem with Zambia is that they just talk, talk and talk but nothing happens. They don’t implement the policies that they actually come up with. But more and more women are actually getting to see that they can make the exact same contributions that men are making. So I think there is hope, but I just don’t know with the way the situation is. I will probably not live to see the difference but maybe our grante-grate grand children will be there to see the difference.

All of the respondents do believe that Zambia will become more equal. Some of them felt powerless and did not know what they could do to help the process, others were convinced and seemed to hope that it could be as easy as that women need to start showing that they do not accept the inequalities they are constrained by and learn to say no.

I think it is really up to the woman to say No! I do not want to do this or I am going to do this. Accept and respect my choice, and that’s it.

6.7 The perceptions of young women towards gender inequality HIV/AIDS

This part of the study is dedicated to determine the perceptions of some young women towards gender inequality and HIV/AIDS in order to explore the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as well as to enhance our understanding of their situation.

The nine young women who were interviewed found it difficult to be a woman at all levels of society. At the household level a majority of the respondent’s upbringing and description of roles in their families clearly indicates perceptions of gender inequality.
The women are given different treatment in comparison with the treatment given to their brothers. Among other things this means that they have a heavier workload because they are women while their brothers can rest. Given that they are women they are treated, valued, viewed upon differently and also have different expectations. The respondents did not find life as a woman easier outside the walls of the home. Many of them believe that life is easier for men, given that men are not limited and have more choices in life than women have. Though they feel limited now they know that marriage is something that will limit them to an even higher extent. Several of them mentioned that they wish to fulfil part of their dreams such as studying and feelings of independence before they get marriage, given the belief that the future husband will not allow them to do so once they are married.

The powerlessness of the women might, as is the case for the respondent who is married, also result in lack of sexual decision-making concerning the use of condom. The married respondent, despite the fact that she would not be surprised if her husband is having extra marital affairs, does not feel she can request protection, as her husband would be offended and accuse her of initiating that he is infected. As she married due to financial reasons she is dependent on her husband and leaving her with the alternatives of having unprotected sex even though her husband is putting her at risk of contracting the virus, or having her financial and social support cut off. Having no alternative she is likely to stay in her marriage due to material interest, particularly since she does not see how she could make a living and support her children.

The nine young women I interviewed are fortunate to study. This gives them the possibility of getting informed of their rights and also of HIV/AIDS, which is not the case to many women, particularly the ones living in rural areas of Zambia. However, does the fact that these women know how they can stay uninfected be an assurance of them staying HIV negative? I would say no. Due to gender inequality women are often not in the position to negotiate safe sex and the dependence on men for financial reasons compel them to accept men’s extra marital affairs which puts them at risk of contracting the virus. In addition to being limited and subordinated within marriage, the respondents also brought up men’s adultery as a factor behind their unwillingness to get married. According to several of them, men cannot be trusted and men will eventually commit adultery. Partners having multiple sexual relations definitely put the women at risk of being infected by HIV. The fact that many of the
respondents are in relationships or would not mind being in a relationship is difficult to understand given their cynical view of men who in their view cannot be trusted.

While most of the women said that they fear the feeling of being limited and controlled by their future husbands, two of the respondents said that they would take the role of a wife once they are married, meaning that they will take a subordinate position. Their perception was surprising but also understandable. When their explanation stopped at ‘That’s the way it is’ and ‘I don’t want to complicate things’, my search for an explanation leads the thoughts to Foucault which Mona Lilja \(^{120}\) refers to where the separation of men and women are maintained through punishment and reward and where men and women who act according to the stereotypical ideals will be appreciated and encouraged. Less courage is required to deny one’s own rights and happiness in order to please a man at one’s own expense, than what it takes to go against the norms of society and refuse to take the position of an object to please a man. Perhaps this is also the reason to why some of the respondents stay with boyfriends whom they know they cannot trust and may put them at risk of contracting HIV given that the norm and what society expects from a woman in Zambia is to have been found by a man by her mid twenties. On the other hand, it may also be the reason to why women such as one of the respondent who describes herself as a strong woman who refuses to change might stay single since women and men who do not follow the set norm are punished, in this case punishment means staying single since some men might be intimidated by a woman that show her will and set up goals for herself and thereby do not measure up to the stereotypical ideal of what a woman is supposed to be.

There is obviously and very understandable a great fear of the epidemic that has infected more than one million people in Zambia. The epidemic and its effect seldom leave the thoughts of the nine women, especially as persons close to them are infected. None of the women were to their knowledge infected, however only one have been tested and knows her HIV status. Being aware of the HIV prevalence in Zambia and knowing that protected sex is not 100 percent sure, several of them live under a constant fear of not knowing if they carry the virus or not. However despite of this fear, or should I say because of this fear, the women cannot collect the strength to go for the test.

\(^{120}\) See the theoretical framework p 16
From the responses, various traditional factors also indicate the subordinate status of the woman. Out of the traditional practices that were brought up for discussion, the women were most hostile towards the practice of sexual cleansing. According to the women, the tradition of dry sex was also unfair and an example of women being sexual objects with the purpose of pleasing men at their own well being’s expense. None of the women perceived the tradition of Lobola as a negative one. However, if their parents would ask for a high price they believe that they would feel like any other possession and fear that the husband would treat them as such. The respondents did not perceive the two traditional initiation ceremonies as valuable. The respondents believe that girls are given sexual education too early and fear that this might cause promiscuity. Some mentioned that the initiation ceremonies cause more inequalities between men and women, as women are taught how to satisfy the men, while the men are taught what to expect from the woman. One of the respondents mentioned that the traditional ceremonies could be used as channels of safer sex education.

Gender equality is important to all of the women. The respondent who has children makes an effort to treat her children equally despite of their sex even though her husband does not support her. The remaining respondents who do not have children are also determined to bring up their children, if they have any, equally. One of the respondents mentioned the fact that it is important to treat boys and girls equally since gender equality starts from the childhood. All of the women have hope for gender equality even though they are aware of that changes of this magnitude takes a long time. Some of the women did unfortunately but understandably express feelings of helplessness when it comes to gender equality and did not feel that there is anything they can do to bring about a change, while others seemed convinced that it is up to the women to say no more, and not change in order to please a man and let a man control them. Despite that the women feel inferior, controlled and not respected by men they believe a change is coming. They base this belief on that their generation have, although also limited, more choices than their mothers, and more women are allowed by their men to study. They can thereby combine family life and a career of their own and stop the dependence on men and thereby reduce their risk of contracting the virus. To sum up, the one hand, the patriarchal structures are doubtless deeply rooted in the Zambian society and the gender inequality is making women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, but on the other hand, we can distinguish the commencement of a little glimmer of hope for gender equality as many of the young women who are the future of Zambia are determined to change their society for the better.
7. CLOSING COMMENTS

7.1 Concluding discussion

This study has been dedicated to understand the social factors behind women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. In order to answer the purpose of this writing, three questions were formulated; what is the present HIV/AIDS situation, why are women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men are, and what is the perception of young women towards gender inequality and HIV/AIDS. An account for the present situation of the epidemic has been given, an exploration of the links between gender inequality and women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as well as an evaluation of the perception of young women in Zambia towards HIV/AIDS and gender inequality.

It is evident that the spread of the virus is not a random event. This study has shown that HIV transmission is profoundly influenced by the surrounding social, cultural, economical and political environment. Women as well as other people who are struggling against poverty, discrimination, violence and illiteracy are especially vulnerable to being infected. This signifies that the fight against HIV/AIDS needs to apart from focusing on person’s individual behaviour of risk also address the underlying structures behind the spread. Women as everyone else, need to have control over their own bodies and mind and thereby also be able to control the risks they take and in so doing protect themselves from contracting the virus.

It is my belief that education, for both men and women, is essential if the structures of gender inequality are to be broken and changed. More and more women are being educated but the percentage of girls and women in school are still not equal to ones of men in Zambia. In addition, the girls and women who are studying do not have time to study because they are not given the time to. Given that household work and chores are not equally distributed among men and women, women and girls have a heavier workload within the household than men and boys have. Having limited time to study is bound to affect the study results, which in turn may affect the parent’s choice of whom they wish to pay education for (if they can afford any). And there we have a vicious cycle of gender inequality. If women are not given the opportunity to study and gain the knowledge they need in order to obtain independence, they are bound to not be able to break out of the dependency on men. Thereby the status quo of gender inequality is maintained. By keeping the women uneducated and unknowing of their rights the structures of gender inequality where men have the power are firmly maintained.
As was accounted for in the theoretical part of this paper, Mona Lilja asserts that people are affected by the societal discourses and this shapes the individuals identities, self image as well as the individuals will. This might compel women to think that gender inequality is natural since the inequalities have existed for so long that it is difficult to grasp its extent, but being informed of gender inequality being a social construction can change people, both men and women.

Discriminatory treatment of women is not a cultural accident. It is in itself a means for the oppression of women. Discrimination is the means by which men maintain domination over women. The male monopoly over decision-making, even at the household level is used to maintain privilege and male leisure. There are evidently cultural limitations that impede the control of AIDS. In Zambia, as in many other countries, men are literally supreme. Which has resulted in and is maintained by that women do not have a voice. The challenge is to find creative ways to change the social conditions that deny women the ability to have control over their own bodies as well as men’s behaviour and traditional practices that increase women’s vulnerability of contracting HIV. Social-cultural beliefs and practises, which subordinate women in society, may evidently make women more vulnerable to HIV infection.

According to the persons I interviewed and my own experience and observations during my time in Zambia, it is very common that men have extramarital affairs putting themselves but also their wives at risk of contracting the virus. Due to the subordinate status of the woman she is not in a position where she can negotiate for safe sex with her partners given that her fear of upsetting her husband does not let her fear contracting HIV. Though it is easy to question a woman who stays with a husband who might rape her, refuse to use protection during sex and that puts her at risk of contracting the deadly virus, one needs to take into consideration as has been stated by Sylvia Walby who’s point is presented in the theoretical framework, that women might have a necessary material interest since they do not have any alternative of making a living since the job opportunities are shaped by the patriarchal structures which are as said, maintained in the interest of the man.

Without apologies, men are a major contributor of the epidemic. During my time in Zambia I met young girls whom had been raped by men and infected with HIV. Some had been raped by strangers and other by their own family members. Men’s predatory behaviour is a main factor behind the rapid spread of the disease, the larger numbers of women with HIV/AIDS,
and the women’s younger age. As was accounted for in the theoretical framework of this study, Sylvia Walby pointed out that the woman is reduced to an object with only one purpose and that is to please the man. Though this pleasing can improve the quality of the man’s life, it is often done on the expense of the woman’s well-being. This objectification was also something that was expressed by the young women who perceive their society as one where only men have a fair chance of being respected, loved, appreciated, well in short, happy.

It is clearly important to promote men's understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to respecting the human rights of women. But there are fundamental questions; will men allow women to gain independence and power? And will men join the fight for equality even though it means that they will have to give away part of the power they today hold? Time will tell. However, it is essential that both men and women are joined in the fight for a world with equity and that both women and men are brought in to the struggle against AIDS. But the fight has to be in ways that entails a change of those inequalities of power which make women vulnerable. People need to understand that women and girls are the most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and until there is a greater degree of gender equality, the HIV prevalence will always be higher among women and the virus will continue its destructive course.

The oppression of women has to come to an end. It is just unacceptable that women are perceived and treated as objects, are sexually subordinated lacking the power over their own bodies, are raped, forced to have sex without protection and lacking the capacity to negotiate for condoms. Therefore gender equality is fundamental if we are going to win the fight against AIDS. The fight against AIDS has a long way to go and millions of people will contract the virus and millions of people, men, women and children will die. It is my belief that gender equality is crucial in order to stop the spread of the virus. Though it is important to remember that gender equality is a process that never can be finished as a state we can reach and then be put aside. As the patriarchal structures are maintained through discrimination and oppression, it is a process that goes hand in hand with the political, social and personal life, and as such it can ever be finished.
7.2. Suggestions for further research

In order to see if and how the perceptions of the young women who were interviewed for this study have changed, I believe that it would be very interesting to conduct a study where the same young women would be interviewed about the same topics at a later stage in their life to evaluate if and how their perceptions of gender inequality and HIV/AIDS have changed.

Secondly, I also see an interest of changing respondents. Instead of interviewing young women, it would be interesting to interview men in order to explore their perceptions of being men as well as their perception of gender inequality, gender roles and HIV/AIDS. Though there might be challenges for a woman to conduct interviews in a society such as Zambia concerning sensitive issues such as HIV/AIDS and gender inequality where men might not find it easy to open up to a woman.

As I am firmly convinced after conducting this study that gender equality lays at the heart of stopping the spread of HIV more research is needed concerning gender issues in order to enhance our understanding and from then on move towards progress.
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8.4 INTERVIEWS

8.4.1 People working with HIV/AIDS and/or gender issues

*Chouba, Cecilia* (2005-04-06) Youth Coordinator YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) Lusaka

*Fikoloma Mwamba, Mathilda* (2005-03-22) Programme manager for CAMFED (Campaign for female education) Ministry of Education. Lusaka

*Kantemba, Mary* (2005-04-01) Save the children Norway. Livingstone


*Nanyangwe, Maggie* (2005-04-01) Deputy Director, LIWOMADI, (Livingstone women make a difference) Livingstone

*Sikazwe, Katewa, Alfred* (2005-04-04), Director of standards and National programmer of HIV/AIDS, Ministry of Education. Lusaka

*Silupumbwe, Julius* (2005-04-05) Programme Officer SWAAZ (Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia) Lusaka


8.4.2 Young women

*Brenda* (2005-04-11) Lusaka

*Christine* (2005-04-13) Lusaka

*Jayne* (2005-04-07) Lusaka

*Kabanda* (2005-04-08) Lusaka

*Lillian* (2005-04-05) Lusaka
Mwaambe (2005-03-28) Lusaka
Mwaka (2005-04-09) Lusaka
Mwangala (2005-04-12) Lusaka
Vwa (2005-03-29) Lusaka
APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Themes covered during interviews with people working with HIV/AIDS and Gender issues are:
The Zambian culture and tradition
The Zambian society in terms of gender
The situation of women, including obstacles and problems facing women

Interview questions to the young women:
Do you live with your family?
How many family members are you in your family?
Did your parents bring you up differently from your brothers?
Are there any problems that you as a woman encounter in your daily life?
Do you think that you as a young woman are more limited than a man?
Do you feel that men have more options than you as a woman do?
What does your life look like in ten years?
What are your thoughts about HIV/AIDS?
Is HIV/AIDS in your thoughts often?
Do you feel threatened by HIV/AIDS?
When you meet someone new, perhaps a man you like, do you think about whether he is infected?
Do you feel that it is ok for you to talk about sex?
Is it ok for a woman to buy condoms? Would you feel comfortable buying condoms?
Is marriage important to you? If yes, Why?
Do you want to have children?
Do you have any specific concerns when it comes to bringing up children?
What is your opinion about bringing up/treating girls and boys differently?
If you will have children will you discuss HIV/AIDS and sex with them?
What is your perception and opinion of Dry sex?
What is your perception and opinion of Sexual cleansing?
What is your perception and opinion of Initiation ceremonies?
What is your perception and opinion of Lobola?