



BEING *IMPALUME*: A RELIGIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF BEMBA
MARRIED MEN'S CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY IN NORTHERN
ZAMBIA

By

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Declaration

I, Upendo Mwakasenga (219094796), declare that this dissertation, ‘Being *Impalume*: A Religio-Cultural Perspective of Bemba Married Men’s Construction of Masculinity in Northern Zambia’ is my work. Further, I declare that the sources used or quoted within this research have been adequately indicated and acknowledged in the bibliography. The research has not been submitted to any other learning institution apart from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus).

Signature.....

Date..... 21st July, 2022.

As the candidate’s supervisor, I approve this research for submission.

Signature..... Date.....

Name of the Supervisor: Prof. Lilian Chelo Siwila

Dedication

Firstly, I dedicate this dissertation with a grateful heart to God Almighty for seeing me through difficult times as the world underwent the COVID-19 pandemic. By His grace, I was able to pull through. Secondly, I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Musyani Sichone, for his spiritual, moral, and financial support throughout my studies.

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Abstract

According to Bemba traditional culture, there appears to be some religio-cultural contrast in place concerning the requirements and expectations of what an ‘ideal man’ is, and how this is perceived and measured by many people in religious and cultural spaces. The defining factors of a man as presented in Bemba matrilineal society seem to differ from how he is constructed in religious spaces, and this is a problem.

In Bemba matrilineal society, a married man will traditionally reside at the home of his in-laws. As a married man, and by this tradition, he is expected to build a house at his in-laws’ place, and is given a piece of land for this purpose while he lives with their daughter. Such marriage practice is for in-laws to assess their son-in-law, and determine if he is an ideal man for their daughter. The son-in-law therefore works very hard and looks forward to a time when the in-laws will call him *impalume*. In this research, I call this ‘the practice of *impalume*’, and use the term to indicate how an ideal man is constructed in traditional Bemba marriage.

Many masculinity scholars focus their studies on the evils of hegemonic masculinity—which is aggressive, dangerous, and deadly to women and children—and indicate that there is a need for redemptive masculinity; a form of masculinity which can help men shift away from destructive and harmful versions in favour of a life-giving form which protects women and children. Religion has further been blamed for reinforcing concepts of masculinity which are destructive or harmful.

The study attempts to understand the religious and cultural perspective of being *Impalume* for Bemba married men. An ideal man in traditional Bemba matrilineal society is called *Impalume*, meaning an ‘ideal man’ who is a courageous, strong, brave, and bold warrior; a man who is dependable, responsible and able to keep and protect his family. I was drawn to this topic through my personal experience as a theologian working among the Bemba people, finding that my interest in masculinity studies lies in the African context. This is an empirical piece of research, which employed qualitative methodology to collect data from the field in Kasama, the heart of the Bemba Kingdom. Three congregations from within the United Church of Zambia were selected, where married men living with their in-laws were interviewed over focus group discussions, using guiding questions. The study employed theories of masculinity, focusing on hegemonic, subordinate, and redemptive masculinity, using the concept of *impalume* to discuss the criteria of the ‘ideal man’ as understood both in Bemba culture and within the Christian context.

The objectives of the study, which helped me to shape this research, are as follows:

- To understand what it means to be *impalume* among married Bemba men, from their religio-cultural perspective.
- To explore the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men, and the implications of being *impalume*.
- To analyse potential redefinitions of *impalume*, in an attempt to provide positive concepts and perceptions of masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society.

The study explores the roles of men as husbands in a matrilineal society, demonstrating that they are not central within the family structure, are subordinate to their father-in-law, and have less authority over their wives and children. The study also shows how the practice of *impalume* is not harmful to women and children, but does have some effect on married men in a matrilineal society.

The study, from the data collected, reviews the benefits of being *impalume*, and recommends the practice of *impalume* as a tool for peaceful, progressive, caring, loving, respectful, and trustworthy teachings on the construction of masculinity. At the same time, the study reviews the challenges posed to married Bemba men, as they face issues such as economic disempowerment, slave labour, and gender-based violence. The study shows how the example of married Bemba men, as a construction of masculinity, can resonate with the religious construction of masculinity—redeeming men in matrilineal societies, and limiting harmful ideologies of masculinity in favour of masculinities which are life-giving. This study challenges religious, feminist and masculinity scholars to think about the men who are abused by their fellows, and to consider ways by which they may be redeemed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

In most societies in Africa “men tend to be socially constructed as more powerful than women” (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012: 6). Religion and culture have been accused of socialising men to take the role of head and leader in the house, church and community, making women their subordinates. A lot of feminist and masculinity studies have expressed concern over these expectations as constructed by both religion and culture. Many feminist and masculinity scholars focus their studies on the evils of hegemonic masculinity, which is aggressive, dangerous, and even deadly for women and children. In these studies, they often recommend that men find ways to change, enabling a more life-giving expression of masculinity.

However, it should be noted that, “although hegemonic masculinity has projected men as having power over women and children, the fact is not all men have power, and some men are more powerful than others” (Deepan, 2016: 18). Richards argues on “male ambiguity position in matrilineal society” which she called a “matrilineal puzzle” (Richards, 1950:246). Richards’ argument, according to Franke, is based on the ideology that “male dominance over women is universal” which is not necessarily the case, as this depends on the culture of a particular community (Franke, 1992: 476). Lowe observed that “men in matrilineal systems have less authority over their wives, which allows women safety as they are protected by their brothers and uncles” (Lowe, 2020: 125). Men have less authority in matrilineal society because, “a married man has to stay at his in-law’s place until when he has three children. Then he can be permitted to get his wife and children and settle with his family” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 9).

Frank-Watson, writing on *Masculinity and the Matrilineal Puzzle* in looking at the role of men in matrilineal society, noted that the “matrilineal system is not based on centralised male authority, but rather on male support for their female core” (Frank-Watson, 1992: 477). That is why, in matrilineal society, “a man lives with the wife’s family instead of the husband’s family” (Power, 2014: 4). Here, the role of a “brother (*indume*), uncle (*nalume*), sister (*inkashi*), and aunt (*banasenge*) are relatively more important than that of a father or husband” (Lowe, 2016: 10). This grants men an otherwise atypical or interesting position in the family, which led Shin to accept that “masculinity in matrilineal societies is a topic which deserves more attention” (Shin, 2016:8).

In Bemba tradition, the masculinity of married men is shaped by society’s expectation of them to be *impalume*, meaning ‘an ideal man’. An ideal man in traditional Bemba matrilineal society means married

men who are “hard workers, caring, courageous, strong, brave, bold warriors, dependable and responsible” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 22; Kaunda, & Kaunda, 2012: 17). The word ‘*impalume*’ in Bemba matrilineal society is mainly associated with ‘*nalume*’ (uncle), ‘*indume*’ (brother), and ‘*abalume*’ (husband). Women who portray masculine characteristics and who achieve big things in life are also called *impalume*.

The Bemba ethical code represents ideals of masculinity within the missionary and colonial Bemba society of Zambia” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 6). The code was “formulated for the sake of men liberating themselves from dominion of colonial powers” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 18). The word *impalume* also appears in the Zambian national anthem. The Bemba translation shows that the word is well known, and here it is used to describe men who are national heroes. According to Chishimba, *impalume* has been used “in preference for an equivalent word for Victor” (Chishimba *et al.*, 2017: 5). In the national anthem, *impalume* is used to describe victorious men who were courageous in the fight to free the nation. This warrior-victor version of *impalume* is known as *impalume shabulwi*, and will be discussed more in the next chapter. The Zambian national anthem was “adopted at independence by the Zambian people as a patriotic and solidarity song which expresses national identity, evokes and acclaims the history and struggles of the country and its people” (Chishimba *et al.*, 2017: 50). In this research, I have used the word *impalume* to mean an ideal man; a victor who is dependable. Secondly, I have used the word *impalume* to mean the Bemba traditional practice of marriage, which gives some men power over their fellow men by making the role of a brother, uncle and father-in-law more important in family decision making than that of a father and husband. I agree with Kaunda & Kaunda as they acknowledge “the limitation of *impalume* as a religio-cultural practice that emerged from structural patriarchal principles which was oppressive to women”, as it makes women rely more on men as brothers and fathers for their protection (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 6).

In as much as Kapwepwe and Kaunda & Kaunda portray *impalume* as a strong man, in reality married Bemba men traditionally depend on the woman’s family for economic support and to secure their children’s futures. On one hand, they are weak as husbands and fathers, but on the other hand, they are strong as brothers and uncles. Kapwepwe (1994) in his book entitled *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, describes the traditional Bemba notion of being *impalume* in marriage as a way to demonstrate how men’s roles are constructed. Kapwepwe describes societal expectations and moral behaviour for both married men and women, but his focus is primarily on the roles of men. Kapwepwe’s writings are important in this research, as they look at how masculinities are constructed in Bemba marriages. In addition, they keep traditional Bemba marriage and its expectations alive, reminding younger generations of what it means to be a married man in Bemba matrilineal society. Conversely, Kaunda and Kaunda (2012) write on *impalume* in the context of HIV, framing it as a traditional means to fight the spread of HIV in marriages. How can a married man

living with his in-laws become *impalume* when the reality is that he depends on his wife's family for their children's wellbeing, and when his property is invested at his in-laws' place? While Kapwepwe, Kaunda and Kaunda promoted the practice of *impalume*, we can clearly see from their writings that they had to define the Bemba cultural understanding of 'ideal men' in response to the accepted western understanding of 'ideal men'.

Firstly, I decided to use the word *impalume* in my study because, being a Zambian and growing up in the Copperbelt where Bemba is spoken, I am familiar with the language. Amedium warns of the "dangers of using European terms when addressing non-European culture and experience" (Amedium, 1997: 1). Therefore, using the word *impalume* to discuss the criteria and concepts of masculinity in Bemba society maintains a sense of familiarity for the participants, making it easier for them to understand this topic and contribute effectively in the discussions.

Secondly, the existing literature does not discuss married Bemba men's experiences of religion and culture in terms of how these institutions define their masculinity, an aspect which I call a religio-cultural puzzle for married men in matrilineal society. Given the fact that "religions and churches have a tremendous influence on individuals and society as a whole", one can ask how the Church could affect and influence the challenges of masculinity and culture in matrilineal society (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012). Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing knowledge on African masculinity in today's matrilineal society. Therefore, "the study of religion and masculinities presents an opportunity to reflect on African issues by using African methodologies in coming up with solutions to its problems" (John, Siwila and Settler, 2013: 169).

Being an empirical study, it attempts to understand the religious (religion here means Christianity, being the base from which the study draws its theological interpretations) and cultural perspectives of Bemba married men in the construction of masculinity. Therefore, this study will look at the general background of the Bemba people, the construction of masculinity therein, and the practice of *impalume*, as well as Bemba married men's experiences regarding how they are affected by the practice of *impalume*.

1.2 General Background

The Bemba people are found in the northern province of Zambia in Mporokoso, Luwingu, Chinsali, Kasama, and Mungwi districts. Those who speak Bemba dialects are found in Luapula the Ushi, Ngu'mbo, Lunda, Chishinga, Kunda, Tabwa, Unga, Muchinga the Bisa, Copperbelt the Lamba, and the Central

Province the Lala (Serenje). But according to Andrew Gray and Phallen Bwalya, “In the 20th century the Bemba language spread to the mining areas in the Copperbelt and is more widely understood than any other language in Zambia” (Gray and Bwalya, 2015:3). Among the 73 ethnic groups found in Zambia, the Bemba people are the largest and most influential, and are one of the more important ethnic groups. They constitute a major cultural and linguistic group in Zambia.

1.2.1 Bemba Land

In Zambia, the land is divided into two categories: customary land under the custody of the chiefs, and government land under the Ministry of Lands. However, “most of the land in Zambia is traditional or reserve land, which belongs to the communities living there. It is vested in traditional rulers, who are its custodians. Individuals have a right to land under customary law. The community chief approves an individual’s application for the land, which remains theirs for generations” (Mwambazi, 1994: 11). Some people may wonder why married men in Bemba matrilineal society live with their in-laws when they have the right to buy land, and more details regarding this question are covered in Chapter Two of this research.

Kasama District today is divided into two categories, described by Richards as “a village (*umushi*) which represents the civilised way of life, and the bush (*mpanga*) which represents a mysterious and dangerous environment” (Richards, 1995: 27). The town (*kukalale*) represents the modern way of life. Here, many people are involved in business, and others are civil servants with small pieces of land where they have built houses. Lua-Luo, one of the places where I conducted interviews, can be classified as *kukalale* (a town). The village (*kumushi*) represents a rural area, with many people engaged in commercial and subsistence farming, and where there are very few civil servants. Kamena and Sampa are categorised under *kumushi* (villages).

1.2.2 The Current Bemba Chief and the Bemba Capital

The study was carried out during the reign of Paramount Chief Chitimukulu Henry Sosala Kanyanta Manga II. He is educated in leadership, corporate governance, and creative writing, and “was Chief Mwamba before ascending to the highest throne in Bemba land” (Mukuka, R., 2020: 119-120). The heart of Bemba land “which the Bemba call *Kulubemba*, is in the Kasama District in the northern part of Zambia, where Paramount Chief Chitimukulu and hereditary counsellors known as *bakabilo* live” (Epstein, 1975: 199-200; Kangwa, 2011: 13; Cancel, 2013: 75; Kaunda, 2021: 179). We should note that when Epstein wrote that Kasama is where Paramount Chief Chitimukulu resides, Mungwi was not yet a district. According to

Sinyangwe, “Mungwi was under the Kasama District until 1997, when it was declared its own district under the second president of the Republic of Zambia, the late Chiluba. This resulted in Chitimukulu’s palace (*isano*) being placed in Mungwi District as opposed to in Kasama District” (Sinyangwe, 2015). However, Kasama “remains the provincial headquarters for the northern province, under Senior Chief Mwamba of the Bemba people, who is one of the five senior chiefs of the Bemba people and the brother to Paramount Chitimukulu” (Mupeta, 2014). The traditional ceremony for the Bemba people is the *Ukusefya pangw’ena* ceremony, which is celebrated in Malole, where Paramount Chief Chitimukulu resides.

1.2.3 Economic Activities in Kasama

Having lived and worked in Kasama for more than four years, the primary economic activity I saw in the area was agriculture, for both commercial and subsistence farmers. White noted that “the agriculture sector in the northern province consists mainly of small-scale farming” (White *et al.*, 2005: 134), with the main agriculture industry operating in the area being Miracle Fisheries, a subsidiary company of Kalungwishi Estate; Northern Coffee Company Ltd (NCCL), Kateshi Estate; and Kalungwishi Estate Graining Sugar, commonly known as ‘Kasama Sugar’, which is the brand name. The participants interviewed in Kasama are mostly involved in agricultural activities, chiefly small-scale farming and related businesses.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Bemba society, a man is legally identified by his mother’s lineage. That is why traditionally “a young man lives neither with his father’s people nor his mother’s, but goes to live in his wife’s village. The man stays at his in-laws’ place and works there as part of *lobola* payment for the bride” (Richards, 1995: 114; Kapwepwe, 1994: 9). A married Bemba man living at in-laws’ place is required “to build his hut there, and offer his services doing fieldwork for his father-in-law” (Badenberg, 2002: 42). Therefore, traditionally for a man in a matrilineal society, “marriage separates him from his mother’s village as he lives with his wife’s family, and makes him become a member of his wife’s extended family” (Abendroth, 2012: 371). I acknowledge that not all married Bemba men live with their in-laws, because some Bemba men work in towns away from their in-laws. Despite outside influences, some men in Bemba society still hold on to the traditional practice of residing at their in-laws’ place. This is for them to be accepted as *impalume* by their in-laws, keeping this cultural practice alive in the 21st century. In addition, the practice of *impalume* is also found in Zambia’s Luapula Province, among the Ushi people.

However, “the consensus of church history is that a man holds the leadership role in the church and at home, and women are required to accept male dominion as a divine order” (Stubbs, 2007; Kaunda. and Kaunda, 2012). However, this is a situation where the man is a leader at church, but at home becomes subject to his fellow men. Uchendu noted that, “Christianity contributes in advancing foreign masculinities in Africa” (Uchendu, 2005: 6). Hence, “Bemba cultural practices and ideals were harshly judged by both colonisers and the Christian missionaries who failed to understand that each different cultural group contributes its understanding of male behaviour, which may or may not be in accord with the dominant understandings of masculinity” (Mukuka, 2013). Falola acknowledges that “modern African cultures cannot be understood without considering the impact of western culture on African culture” (Falola, 2003: 20). In Bemba matrilineal society, there is some religious and cultural clashing on how the practice of *impalume* (an ideal man) is perceived by people in both religious and secular spaces. This leads to some Bemba married men being “victims of conflicting messages given from home and churches” (Dahlback *et al.*, 2003). What are these conflicting messages which Bemba married men receive from their culture and religious spaces, concerning their construction of masculinity and its implications? The process of amalgamation between “the African way of life, it’s thought system, and the way of living out the Christian faith as introduced by missionaries, remains a challenge in matrilineal society” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012:17). Since religion and culture hold different measures for men, the research shows the effects of this on married men in Bemba matrilineal society.

1.4 Motivation for Undertaking the Study

In every area of research, some things motivate the researcher to explore a particular topic in more depth. In this research, I have been motivated by my personal and academic experiences.

1.4.1 My Personal Experience

I grew up in a home where my parents lived independently, away from their parents’ village. We only visited our grandparents once a year, and my parents always had gifts ready for them for these visits. Despite my grandfather dividing his land between all his children, my father—being on contract in Ndola in the Copperbelt—made sure that he built a house of our own, away from the village. Even after the death of my mother, my father stayed in his house until his death, and the house has remained our property as his children. This experience made me understand that an ideal man should provide shelter for his children, and not depend on his own parents. In addition, having been brought up in the Copperbelt, I saw that a man

was respected by the community and the family if he worked in the mines or was involved in any business, and was able to provide for his family.

After my studies at the UCZ Theological College, the church posted me to the northern province of Zambia, among the Mambwe people. I worked there for four years, and later was posted to Kasama, where I lived among the Bemba people. My experience as a minister in a patriarchal society, stationed among the Mambwe people, was in line with my own home environment where I grew up. Working among the Bembas in a matrilineal society inspired my interest in their cultural practice of *impalume*: a man who lives at his in-laws' residence.

Having worked among the Bembas of the northern part of Zambia, in Kasama, from 2006-2010, I saw married Bemba men who were members of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) and who lived with their in-laws. The challenge was how to offer pastoral care to married Bemba men who faced marital challenges with their wives and in-laws, and to identify the appropriate tools to use when explaining to them what an 'ideal man' is. Would it be a cultural or a religious understanding of an ideal man, given that the two conflict with each other in this context? Further, it was interesting to undertake this research, as I discovered more through this process than I had learned while doing my pastoral work some time before. The details of my fieldwork experience are given in Chapter Four of this study.

1.4.2 My Academic Experience

Notably, my academic experience builds upon my honours degree programme, where I looked at the *Gender Dimension in the Treatment of Female Ministers' Spouses in the United Church of Zambia*. In this programme, I reviewed both hegemonic and subordinate masculinity in men married to female ministers (pastors). However, this study is informed by Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe's (1994) writings, in his book *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, which focuses on the importance of Bemba marriage practices for an ideal man in Bemba matrilineal society. Kapwepwe puts more emphasis on an 'ideal man' as strong and hardworking, but does not look at the 'weakness' of a man who is kept like a slave at his in-law's place, working hard at the land which does not belong to him or to his children. Kaunda and Kaunda (2012), also speaking on the Bemba Action Code, bring in the importance of the practice of *impalume*, with a focus on helping men turn their hegemonic privilege into a weapon of social transformation in fighting HIV/AIDS. I agree that the practice of *impalume* is beneficial as a weapon to fight HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, laziness, and polygamous marriages. On the other hand, is the practice of *impalume* not to some extent harmful to a married Bemba man?

The research recognises others who have done studies in matrilineal society in other countries. Shin, in his research *What Does it Mean to Be a Family Man in a Matrilineal Society? Masculinity and Women's Empowerment in Akan, Ghana*, notes that being a “family man in matrilineal society is about being a father and an uncle and brother, each of which have different meanings and hold different degrees of authority” (Shin, 2016: 2). The same man enjoys being in control of his sister and his sister's children, but at the same time another man is in charge of his children and his wife. Isabel Phiri (2007), writing on religious experiences of Chewa women in Malawi, indicates how women's roles are constructed in Chewa matrilineal society and in the church, while this research looks at how men's masculinity is constructed in Bemba matrilineal society and in the church. Her focus is on women and not men, but her writings are important to this research as they grant some understanding of how men benefit in matrilineal society.

My interest in this study is to find out how married Bemba Christians navigate living in a patriarchal global village that informs masculinity in a certain way, now that they are in a matrilineal setting and living with their in-laws. Given that “religions and churches have a tremendous influence on individuals and society as a whole, one can ask “what the Church could contribute to the challenges of masculinity and culture” in matrilineal society (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012). On the other hand, what can the Church and the community learn from the practice of *impalume*, which may be helpful in framing the way masculinity is constructed in the 21st century? What are the differences between cultural and religious constructions of masculinity, and how can the church help to provide positive interpretations of masculinity?

1.5 The Purpose of the Research

Klinken acknowledges that, “a wide range of issues concerning culture and religion are addressed by theologians in the fields of gender and HIV who point to patriarchy as the root problem of women's vulnerability in marriage” (Klinken, 2011: 68). In addition, Phiri writing on *Women Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women*, says that “African women theologians are mainly concerned about women's issues in the Christian faith and traditional religions of Africa” (Phiri, 2007: 20). But Phiri also recognize that “not all African women theologians are concerned with women's issues” (Phiri 2007: 21). The present study proves Phiri's statement, by me as an African female theologian discussing masculinity in this research. However, this does not mean that I am not concerned about women's issues, as this study shows how men in matrilineal society protect women and children.

Since most studies on masculinity have been done in a patriarchal setting, this study has shifted the focus to a matrilineal setting. While I recognize that “women are indeed struggling and facing greater challenges than men”, it is important to hear men’s voices and to recognize their challenges, and see how we can develop interpretations of masculinity that are redemptive. Chitando observed that “failure to listen to men’s voices in favour of listening to women’s voices results in interventions that do not promote gender fairness” (Chitando, 2016). Stearns, in the book titled *Be a Man: Males in Modern Society*, acknowledges that it is high time for us to study how “males in contemporary society connect with the historical forces at work” (Stearn, 1990: 2). Furthermore, Uchendu challenges researchers to “address men’s issues just like they do on women’s issues” (Uchendu, 2005: 18). Being an insider (as a Zambian African woman theologian), and an outsider (as a woman researching men), I am concerned with hearing men’s voices in order to achieve true gender equality.

The aim of the study is to explore and analyze the cultural and religious perspective of Bemba married men’s construction of masculinity, and the implications of being *impalume*. As alluded to by M’kandawire, the importance of culture is that “it influences the activities of people in a particular society, reflected in what they do daily” (M’kandawire, 2019: 2). Secondly, the study challenges the dominant construction of masculinity, which has in turn influenced the theological understanding of masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society. The study also challenges African women theologians to get involved in the study of African masculinity. Lastly, the study highlights some excellent perspectives on Bemba married men’s construction of masculinity, and how the cultural practice of *impalume* shapes positive masculinity in 21st century society. Therefore, the study is constructed within the framework of understanding masculinity, using both literature and empirical study methods to collect data and address the research problem through open religious and cultural dialogues with married Bemba men who are also Christians.

1.6 The Research Questions and Objectives

Having stated the background, motivation and purpose of the study above, the main research question for this study is: What are the religio-cultural perspectives among married Bemba men of being *impalume*, and how do these perspectives affect the construction of their masculinity? From this main question, the following sub-questions were constructed:

- What does it mean to married Bemba men to be *impalume*, from their religio-cultural perspective?
- What are the implications of being *impalume*, from the religio-cultural perspectives of married Bemba men?

- How can *impalume* be redefined in an attempt to provide positive masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society?

The objectives of the study, which helped me to shape this research, are as follows:

- To understand what it means to married Bemba men to be *impalume*, from their religio-cultural perspective.
- To explore the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men and the implications of being *impalume*.
- To analyze how *impalume* could be redefined, in an attempt to provide positive masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society.

While this research attempts to answer the above questions and attain the set objectives, the study also raises some new questions which require further research regarding how religion and culture construct masculinity in matrilineal societies. A critical analysis of the traditional practice of *impalume* in this context is also required.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Having tabulated the above research questions, I was able to distinguish the necessary boundaries for my research. The research did not look at men in general, but at married men in matrilineal society who live at their in-laws' residence. The study was carried out among the Bemba people in the Kasama District of the northern province of Zambia. Not all married Bemba men participated in the interviews; instead, a selection of Christian married men from the United Church of Zambia, who reside with their in-laws, were engaged. Twenty-two married men from Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo congregations participated in the focus group discussion. This was done in order to achieve the objectives of the study by focusing on a specific group. It is important to note that not all literature on the Bemba tribe was used, but only those pieces relevant to the topic. The word *impalume* in this research is used within the context of Bemba marriage practice where men reside at their in-laws' place, and also to mean an ideal man as defined according to traditional Bemba culture. Lastly, many changes have occurred in the modern age, and today not all Bemba men reside with their in-laws. Hence, some Bemba people will find this traditional practice strange, especially those who have lived in urban areas for a long time and who do not visit the village. However, the practice of *impalume* is still observed despite many changes and the coming of Christianity to the area.

1.8 My Positionality in this Research as a Female Theologian

It's very important to recognise my positionality in this research, to understand how I related with my participants. Holmes speaks of positionality as something that "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study. It influences how the research is conducted, it's outcome and results from participants" (Holmes, 2020: 2). In this research, I position myself as an insider female theologian doing research within the church, and an outsider researcher being a female interviewing man, and as an individual who is not a Bemba by tribe. Holmes further states that "positionality acknowledges and recognises that researchers are part of the social world they are researching which has already been interpreted by existing social actors" (Holmes, 2020: 3). Merriam states, "it has been commonly assumed that being an insider means easy access because you have the ability to ask meaningful questions and read non-verbal cues" (Merriam, Bailey, Lee, Kee Ntseane and Muhamad, 2001: 411). As a married female theologian interviewing married men in the church, I considered my insider stance to be an advantage, because participants related to me easily and took the research seriously as they looked at me as their leader. At the same time, the places I chose reminded me of my past experiences while I was doing my pastoral work there some years back. Simultaneously, the participants had power to determine when I should meet them and where, which showed that they were free to relate to me as a researcher. It is also said that, "the insider's strength become the outsider's weakness and verse-versa" (Merriam *et al.*, 2001: 411). Being a female, I considered myself to be an outsider. Being a female theologian became a hindrance, as the research may have limited the outcome of data collected due to the concern that men don't always feel free to discuss issues—especially their personal challenges—in the presence of a woman. Even though I knew the language and was able to communicate with them well, I am further made an outsider as I don't belong to the Bemba tribe. This could have limited some of the cultural information shared, for fear of revealing the secrets of their ethnic group to other people. That is why I had to be with male theologians to help me in the interviews, so that participants would feel comfortable to share matters with their fellow men while I wrote what was being discussed.

1.9 Outline of Chapters

The study covers six chapters with sub-headings within each chapter to enrich the related discussions. Each chapter focuses on answering the research questions, to understand the practice of *impalume* and how it benefits and affects Bemba married men's constructions of their own masculinity. The chapters are structured as follows:

Chapter One covers the introduction and background to *Being Impalume*, and details the reasons why the study was undertaken. It also includes a brief overview of the knowledge covered in the study, concerning

economic activities, the current chief, the research questions, and the study's objectives. The chapter details the limitations of the study, the motivation to do the research, the purpose of the research, an outline of the chapters, and the conclusion.

Chapter Two addresses the first objective from the cultural perspective among married Bemba men of being *impalume*. It provides an overview of the background of the Bemba Kingdom, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, into northern Rhodesia and present-day Zambia, and how they settled in Kasama. The practice of *impalume* is defined, explaining the construction of Bemba masculinity before and after marriage.

Chapter Three covers Bemba marriages, since the research focuses on married Bemba men. This chapter details why Bemba married men live with their in-laws, and discusses the expectations and challenges they face under this traditional arrangement.

Chapter Four discusses the theoretical framework of this study, which is informed by Connel and Chitando's work on constructions of masculinity and by other scholars who have done similar work in the area of studying masculinity in its various interpretations. Chapter Four therefore looks at hegemonic, subordinate and redemptive masculinity, all of which shape this study. The methodology used in collecting the data in this research is empirical data, using interviews and focus group discussions as tools.

Chapter Five looks at the findings from the field in Kasama District. This chapter addresses the second objective concerning the religious and cultural implications of being *impalume* for married Bemba men. The voices of men describing their religious and cultural experiences help us understand how the practice of *impalume* benefits and is critical to men in matrilineal marriages. The importance of preserving the culture shows the uniqueness of each society, and helps create its identity. In the same chapter, the findings are analysed from the emerging themes in the study. The chapter attempts to answer the third objective in this research, to redefine *impalume* and provide positive interpretations of masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society. The data analysed in this chapter comes from the data presented in chapters one, two, and three, along with data collected from the field, which displays the benefits and challenges for Bemba married men in constructing masculinity. It highlights the changes in matrilineal societies which have led to an attempt to redefine the practice of *impalume* as it relates to residing with in-laws. Though there are challenges for Bemba married men regarding *impalume*, there is a need to embrace the positive side of the practice.

Chapter six is the conclusion of this study. It includes a summary of the chapters covered, and offers suggestions for further studies. It shows how the research questions were answered and how the study met the objectives.

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the topic by defining *impalume*, before providing the general background of where the research was conducted. The research problem and the research questions provide the motivation for why this research was undertaken; hence they have been tabulated in the first chapter to guide this research. The study location where data was collected is Kasama, in Chief Mwamba's area. The chapter reviews how much of the literature shows Kasama as the place where Paramount Chief Chitimukulu resides. However, the findings of this study indicate that the Mungwi District is in fact where the Paramount Chief resides, and is where the traditional ceremony is held (at Malole). The main research questions and the objectives of the study have been tabulated, and the chapters outlined.

The next chapter explores the historical aspect of the Bemba kingdom and the practice of *impalume*. This literature review on the background of the Bemba people provides the foundation upon which this study is established.

Chapter 2: The Bemba People of Northern Zambia and Their Understanding of *Impalume*

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave us the background to the topic and detailed the reasons why this research was undertaken. I acknowledge that “the topic of religion and masculinities has attracted much attention due to its impact on sexual issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS) and gender-based violence in many societies” (Fashola, 2015: 14). Moreover, the “religious construction of masculinity is analysed within patriarchy’s framework, as a system of male dominance and female subordination” (Klinken, 2011: 111).

M’kandawire states that “culture helps members of the community understand their historical background better through appreciating their cultural heritage” (M’kandawire, 2019: 2). The chapter begins by looking at the historical background of the Bemba people, from where they came from to where they are today. Secondly, the chapter addresses the first objective set in Chapter One, to understand what it means to be *impalume* among married Bemba men from their religio-cultural perspective. Lastly, the Conclusion shows the brief historical background of the Bemba people and how masculinity is constructed in Bemba matrilineal society.

2.2 Historical Background for the Bemba Kingdom and Its Clan System

The origins of the Bemba people cannot be written without mentioning Audrey Richards, whom Andrew Roberts acknowledges by saying that, “the Bembas were the first people in central Africa to be studied by a professional anthropologist, A.I. Richards, who worked among them in 1930-40” (Roberts, 1970: 221). This does not imply that Zambian writers have not written on Bemba history, but Richards was the first professional anthropologist to do so—and notably, a female. In her work *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe*, Audrey Richards emphasised the effects of immigrant labour on the social-economic life of the Bemba people (Richards, 1995). Lunsonga wrote on *Bemba Music* and its role in different culturally and socially important occasions, focusing on the girl from puberty up to the time of marriage (Lunsonga, 1963). While Lunsonga does not give many details on the origin of the Bemba people, a brief background was written on how Bembas found themselves in Kasama. Whiteley wrote on *Bemba and Related People in Northern Rhodesia*, on which he spoke on the social, political, economic and marriage including some changes which occurred in Bemba society after men went to the mines for paid labour leaving their families (Whiteley, 1950). In addition, Vaughan wrote on *Divine Kings*:

Sex, Death, and Anthropology in Inter-War East/Central Africa, the latter primarily detailing what happens when Chitimukulu dies and how succession disputes are resolved (Vaughan, 2008). The one who wrote the details on the Bemba people like Richards did before him is Tanguy, whose first publication in 1948, the book titled *Imilandu ya Babemba*, speaks on the history of the Bemba people, from their time in the Congo until they established themselves in the northern province of Zambia. Tanguy gives a more detailed account, where more focus is given to the history of the Bemba chiefs and their successors. Using Tanguy and the above-mentioned writers alone without including Kapwepwe's writings would have not given a good picture of traditional Bemba marriages. Kapwepwe's writing *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi* describes how Bemba marriages and teachings are structured for men and women. Kapwepwe writes on men's construction of masculinity in Bemba society, and the requirements for men to be known as *umwaume* or *impalume* in marriage and society (Kapwepwe, 1994).

Gerrie ter Haar, in her review of the work *Bemba Speaking Women of Zambia in a Century of Religious Change* by Hugo Hinfelaar, noted that "in traditional Bemba culture, there are three characteristics which are the pillars in this matrilineal society. These are:

- The Bembas still cherish the clan (*umukowa*) system and membership, which follows maternal lineage.
- The legal emphasis is matrilineal, thus a chief's line of succession places first his brothers, then his sister's sons (nephews/*abepwa*) and then his sister's daughter's sons (his sister's grandsons from her daughter's side/*abeshikulu bakwankashi yakwe*).
- Bemba marriages are matrilocal, which means that the married man is supposed to move into the village of his wife, and stay there for some years (Hinfelaar, 1994: 41-42, Badenberg, 2002: 41).

The above three characteristics are the reason why a Bemba man "is legitimately identified with his mother's family clan" and not his father's clan, as is seen in patrilineal society (Richards, 1995: 114). In addition, the three characteristics stated above cover the construction of Bemba masculinities as found in marriages, which is the focus of this study. Looking at the first and second characteristics, a man is honoured from the mother's side as a son, a brother and an uncle; this is where his hegemonic masculinity is displayed. Notably, in the last characteristic as observed by Hinfelaar above, marriage traditionally places a Bemba man in a subordinate position, as he is required to stay at his in-law's home (more details are given below on the particularities of traditional Bemba marriage).

2.2.1 Origin of the Bemba People (*Abena Ng'andu*)

Like other African societies, Mupeta speaks of the Bemba people as those who “have a rich cultural heritage transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another” (Mupeta, 2014: 5). Lumbwe (2004), Badenberg (2002) and Tanguy (1996) trace the origins of the Bemba from Kola, which today is known as north-eastern Angola. According to oral tradition, the Bemba people came from the Luba Kingdom in an unknown year, and the Bembas were not the only tribe to leave the Luba Kingdom. Other tribes include the Chewa people, the Nsenga, Tumbuka, and many others, although each had different reasons for leaving. For instance, Mushibwe explains how Tumbuka people left because “they were not happy with the embarrassing manual work they were expected to do by their leaders” (Mushibwe, 2009: 16). However, the Bembas left because Chitimukulu and his brothers differed with the father, leading to the sons leaving the Luba Kingdom and settling in present-day northern Zambia.

In his book titled *Imilandu ya Babemba*, Tanguy discusses the origins of the Bemba people, concentrating more on the journey from the Luba Kingdom up to when they established the land we know today as Kulubemba, including the tribes they fought, and the succession of chiefs. Tanguy says that:

Kale kumyaka ishishibantu, aba Bemba bali mu caloabela ku masamba ico batila Angola. Eko na Babemba bafumya shina pa kutila, ‘Kale twali ku Kola’.
Literally meaning: A long time ago in a year unknown, the Bemba people lived in the western country known as Angola. That is why the Bemba say, ‘In the past, we lived in Kola (Tanguy, 1996: 1).

Tanguy “traces the origin of the Bemba from the grandfather of Chiti Mukulu, known as Kapopo, who was praised as *Kapopo-lapwa, umukali wapwa* because he was a very bitter king who did not get along well with other people, including his siblings” (Tanguy, 1996: 2). *Chitimukulu* simply means “a big tree with many branches” (Matholeni, 2020: 25). As a result, Mukulumpe’s sons “ran away from their father, and went with his people to the eastern part of the country” (Wendland, E. 1977: 2). Paul Mushindo further stated: “Luba people called the King Mukulumpe (the Great Forever) but people called him Mukulu (the great) and was the father of Chitimukulu”. Nevertheless, the clan system for the Bemba people dates back to the time of Mukulumpe, whose wives are known by their clan. Wendland narrated the story as follows:

The king had many wives, but only three are remembered. The first wife’s name is not known, but she is known by her clan name as *Ngulube* (pig), who was a mother of Matiyamfwa, while the second son was MwataKazembe. The second wife’s name is likewise not known, but her clan was *abena Bowa* (mushrooms), and she was the mother of Chimba, the principal councillor whose descendants act in the interval between the death of Chitimukulu and his successor. The third

wife was Queen Mumbi Mukasa from *abena Ng'andu*, and her children were Chitimukulu Fwamamba Umuluba, Nkole Mukulu, Kampampa (Mukulu) Mubunshi and a daughter Bwalya Chabala (Wendland, 1977: 2).

Tanguy and Roberts indicate that children of the third wife of Mukulumpe are Katongo, Nkole, Chiti, and Chilufa Mulenga (Tanguy, 1996: 3, Roberts, 1973: 39). It is not known whether the names of the children from Chiti's brothers as mentioned by Wendland were additional names, or praise names (*amashina yamalumbo*) to the names Tanguy and Roberts mentioned. Nevertheless, what is clear is that the third wife had three sons and a daughter. By the above statement we see that from the three wives we have three different clans, namely *abena Ngulube* (pig), *abena Bowa* (mushroom), and *abena Ng'andu* (the crocodile clan). All are Bembas with the same father but born of different mothers. Therefore, the Bembas of Kasama District in the north trace their lineage from the third wife, while those from Kazembe Luapula trace their lineage from the first wife. Nevertheless, *abena Ng'andu* clan, which is based in Kasama, is the focus of this study.

2.2.2 Chief's Wives and Mothers of Chiefs (*Namfumu*)

Why is it important to talk about *bana Mfumu*, when it could have been of interest to talk on chiefs' fathers? According to Kusniarti, in a matrilineal system, "women are positioned as binders, keepers, and depositors" (Kusniareti, 2018: 156). Like other Zambian Chiefs, Bridget Mukuka states that in Bemba society, "Chiefs mothers are vital and significant, because they are the ones who nature the chiefs and give advice concerning the running affairs of the kingdom. That is why some Bemba paramount chiefs look after their mothers. Hence, they are regarded as *bana Mfumu*, meaning 'mother of kings'" (Mukuka, 2020: 25).

Concerning *bana Mfumu*, Brelsford says that, "the hereditary names for mothers to Chitimukulu are 'Chandamukulu' and 'Mukukafume'. When it comes to succession after the death of *bana Mfumu*, only sisters or granddaughters carry on the name of the chief's mother" (Brelsford, 1948: 19). Therefore, the mothers to the chief who bear traditional names such as Chandamukulu, Mukukamfumu and Mushimba, with such arrangements of chief's mothers, thus "the seniority of the son follows that of the mother" (Roberts, 1970: 233, Brelsford, 1948: 4). Brelsford further says that "Chandamukulu and Mukukamfumu possess *babanye* (tribal relics), the sacred objects that all chiefs and other tribal persons inherit with the name and position" (Brelsford, 1948: 19).

Chief Mukulumpe did not have a good relationship with his sons from his third wife, resulting in him "chopping off the eyes of his eldest son Katongo and banishing his other sons from his kingdom, as part of

his discipline” (Lumbwe, 2004: 2). Chief Mukulumpe’s actions led his two sons, Nkole and Chiti, to run away from the Luba Kingdom together with their stepbrother Chimba (whose mother was from the *abena Bowa* clan), crossing the Luapula River to be far away from their father. This showed that Mukulumpe didn’t care to lose his sons, as he knew that his successor would come from his sister’s sons, or his daughter’s sons. Later on, their mother, Mumbi, “was also chased by Mukulumpe because of her son’s behaviour” (Tanguy, 1996: 4-6, Wendland 1977: 3). Such acts from Mukulumpe reviews hegemonic masculinity, as a father to his children and as a husband who blames the wife for his sons’ behaviour.

2.2.3 How Chitimukulu Became the First Chief of the Bemba People

In the book entitled *Imilandu ya Babemba*, Tanguy says that “Chiti was the first to cross Luapula River from Congo, before his elder brother Nkole. And because of that, Chiti praised himself using Bemba words that he is *Ntalasha matanda* and *mukulumpe* for being the first to cross the river and seeing the land where they settled” (Tanguy, 1996: 7). That is the reason why Chiti, the youngest, became the Paramount Chief instead of Nkole. The journey continued after crossing the Luapula River, as Chiti and his brothers, with their people, passed north of the Bangweulu Swamps and travelled up to the Chambeshi in a north-eastern direction. Lunsonga states that:

When others remained along the river valley after crossing Luapula River, Chiti and his brothers pushed forward for a better settlement, and settled in the area known today as Ulubemba, with their Paramount Chief Chitimukulu (Lunsonga, 1996: 7)

They finally settled and established their Paramount Chief Chitimukulu at the present government station in Kasama, though currently the paramount chief resides in Mungwi District. Nevertheless, Mukulumpe’s sons, being strong and courageous men, left their father’s village and went to establish their own kingdom. The Bemba, on the other hand, “seems to have found the country lightly occupied by people they describe as being very primitive, and of whom few traces survive” (Richards, 1968: 26, Richards, 1995: 15). In addition, Whiteley said that, upon their arrival in that area, the Bemba people “began to expand rapidly, pushing both the Bisa and Lala to the south, and the Lungu and Mambwe people to the north” (Whiteley, 1950: 8). Richards explains how the Bemba warriors expanded the kingdom, stating that:

In the first half of the nineteenth century was a time of expansion to the north when Bemba conquered territory occupied by the Lungu, the Tabwa, and other groups, and established the chiefdoms of Makasa and Mporokoso. In addition, the period between 1850 and the arrival of officials of the British South Africa

Company in 1893 was a time of further expansion, mainly to the west and south-west, at the expense of Bisa and related groups. (Richards, 1968: 26)

The Bemba people were “known for their raiding of neighbours, and hegemonic assertion. They fought with many tribes, and were victorious enough in battle to finally find a place to settle in the northern part of Zambia” (Cancel, 2013: 75). These wars were led by the chief and his army, who were required to be strong warriors able to defend and protect their people. The known and counted wars the Bemba chiefs fought with other tribes show how strong the Bemba men and chiefs were. They also show how strong, courageous and victorious Chiti and his brothers were in finding a new place to settle at a time when they were still single. That is why the historical Bemba chiefs are known as *impalume shabulwi*, because they dominated the region in a powerful and militaristic manner. Bedenburg observed that “the unique feature found in the history of Bemba matrilineal system is war and conquest, and not agriculture as seen in other tribes like the Tongas” (Bedenburg 2002: 41).

Through fighting and emerging victorious in the wars, “values such as power, possessions, and security for the people were defined as masculine” (Nanyangwe, T., Moyo, N., Zheng, X., Guo, C. 2020: 673). Although “it was *impalume* that fought the wars and protected the village from enemy attack, this did not reflect the dominion of men over women” (Kaunda, M & Kaunda, C., 2012: 9). However, *impalume shabulwi* protected the men, women, and children, aiming to dominate other tribes, contrary to patriarchal hegemonic masculinity. I acknowledge that Bemba masculinity as *impalume shabulwi* can be related to hegemonic masculinity, as the aim was to dominate every tribe they came across. Nevertheless, the question today is, can the current Chitimukulu qualify to be called *impalume yabulwi* (described by Richards as ‘warrior people’) when there are no more tribal wars? If we use victory in wars as a yardstick to qualify Bemba married men as *impalume*, then no chief or man could attain the title. Although there are no tribal wars, the definition of *impalume* is not restricted only to being victorious in wars. Kapwepwe stipulates that an ideal man is someone who people can depend on; someone who is hardworking and strong, who cares for and respects his wife and children. We read more on this in the presentation below. According to Connell & Messerschmidt:

Hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force. It meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institution, and persuasion. Considerable research has shown that masculinities are not just different but also subject to change. (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832-5)

The current Chitimukulu is qualified to be called *impalume* for being in power in the Bemba Kingdom, and because all his people look up to him as a leader. However, he does not fight wars like the first Chitimukulu.

There is a difference in how a Bemba chief was viewed years back as an ideal man, from showing his hegemony through the wars and expanding his kingdom, to having quality leadership skills and demonstrating the power to rule.

2.3 The Organisation of the Bemba Kingdom

Audrey Richards states that “the Bemba people are the largest and most highly organised tribe in north-eastern Rhodesia”, which is the northern province of Zambia today (Richards, A.I. 1995: 15-16). Richards describes the Bemba as “warrior people (known as *impalume shabulwi*) of Congo origin; according to their traditions and surrounding peoples, the Bembas were originally an offshoot of the great Luba from the Katanga area east of Congo. Badenberg acknowledges what Richards says about the Bemba people being “highly organised in terms of religion and political governance compared to other tribes in the province” (Badenberg, R. 2002: 40). How accurate is the statement by Badenberg that Bembas are more organised than other tribes in the province? What was the determining factor for organised governance? I understand that each tribe has its own way of doing things, though these ways may sometimes seem disorganised in the eyes of others. The Bemba people, being the only matrilineal society in the province, cannot be compared to the Mambwe and Lungu people.

2.3.1 Political Organisation of the Bemba Kingdom

The present-day territory of the Bemba peoples is a series of immigrations. The Bisa were the first to have arrived, followed by the Bemba and the Lunda, inhabiting the region around Lake Mweru. In Bangweulu, “the districts in the swamps are the Ushi, Unga Abena Ngu’mbo, and abena Chishinga. Others from traditional Congo origin are the Lala, Lamba and Kaonde people” (Richards, 1995: 16). Bemba land “lay within the territory of the tsetse-fly, in which it was difficult to raise cattle. Regular periods of hunger were a feature of local life. The poverty of environment and economy encouraged the Bemba to expand by warfare at the expense of their relatively richer neighbours” (Epstein, 1975: 200). Tongas of the southern province and Bembas from the northern province of Zambia are tribes who practice a matrilineal inheritance system. Mwambazi states that:

Despite the fact that women have fundamental rights to land in matrilineal societies, preference for inheritance often follows the male line. If she does not have a son, land may go to her brother or her mother’s nephew. However, the oldest son inherits the land among the patriarchal societies like the Ngoni of the Eastern province of Zambia (Mwambazi, 1994: 13).

One thing which should be noted is that “in both patrilineal and matrilineal systems, land and property are passed through the male relatives of a figurehead. This figurehead is male in patriarchal systems and female in matrilineal systems” (Chapoto, Jayne and Mason, 2006: 3).

The political organisation of the Bemba people begins with the paramount chief, followed by senior chiefs, sub-chiefs, and then village headmen. The Bemba people’s political structure is one of “centralised governance, where a single paramount chief has secular and ritual functions” (Whiteley, 1950: 5). Thus, “Paramount Chief Chitimukulu is responsible for all the rituals, even though each chief was and still is in charge of the traditional shrines in their area of operation” (Richards, 1968: 25). Mupeta states that in Bemba society, “all paramount chiefs are known as Chitimukulu, and all senior chiefs and sub-chiefs belong to the royal crocodile clan”. As stated above, “the Chitimukulu title is the apex of a ladder of succession to chieftainship” (Mupeta, 2014: 5, Roberts, 1970: 221). Such “power relations among men produce hegemonic and subordinate masculinity”, even within the political structure of the Bemba (Hadebe, 2010: 14). However, each chief has the right to appoint his own headmen and receive tribute in the form of labour, crops, and game meat from his people. No tribute is given to the superior chief, and each has his own judicial court. However, today Bemba chiefs—including other chiefs from other tribes in Zambia—receive a monthly salary from the government, which to some extent interferes with and compromises the traditional authority of political leaders.

The Bemba chiefdom stands under three powerful chiefs from the Crocodile Clan: Chitimukulu, Mwamba, and Nkula. Each of these “has the right to appoint and install several sub-chiefs, listen to judicial cases found unresolvable at the sub-chiefdom level, and initiate sacrifices at shrines at their own and at their sub-chiefs’ territories during times of disaster” (Richards, 1968: 24). The order to ascend to the highest level for chiefs in Bemba land is well known, and all the people know who will be the next Chitimukulu. Other Bemba chieftainships for clans such as “Mwamba, Nkula, Chikwanda, Shimumbi are confined to members of the royal clan (*abena Ng’andu*, or Crocodile Clan), and these are closely related to Chitimukulu and to the sons of royal chiefs Makasa and Mporokoso” (Roberts, 1970: 221). At first “he was the head of a royal dynasty, a matrilineage of the Crocodile Clan (*abena Ng’andu*) of nine generations, depth reckoned from the usurpation of Chitimukulu Chileshe in about 1825. This dynasty controlled the central kingdoms, the Chitimukulu, the Mwamba, the Nkula, and seven others” (Richards, 1968: 25). A Bemba chief is:

Ideally a generous chief, a chief who is also a successful military leader, and one who is comfortable in fulfilling this expectation. Bemba chiefs are responsible for protecting their people in their chiefdom, because

protection is both an entitlement and a bestowment. By being a man and a chief, this bestowment indicates that a man honours someone or something with his protection; but at the same time, it is an entitlement, because as a man he protects that which he owns. This means that he possesses anything and anyone (Meyer, 2017: 6).

The Bembas were “unable to achieve this separation of chiefly, administrative and military functions” (Epstein, 1975: 214). Today it is difficult to say if the current Chitimukulu is a successful military leader, because no more wars have been fought with other tribes, and there have been no further expansions to the kingdom. Apart from physical war, there are other battles in the governance which a leader faces and must seek to be victorious in. The political governance of the Bemba people was proposed by Muwowo as “a remedy to critique the current model of political democracy, which has brought problems to ethnic and tribal differences in Zambia” (Muwowo, 2016: 1). Such research shows how significant the Bemba governance system is, and how as Africans we might try to adopt good ideals into our political democratic governance of the country from these examples. That is why Whiteley and Richards describe the Bemba people as “the largest and most organised tribe in northern Rhodesia”, referring to present-day Zambia (Whiteley, 1950: 7, and Richards 1995: 15). Richards further describes the Bemba people as “the warrior people (known as *impalume shabulwi*) of Congolese origin” (Richards, 1995: 15). Even today, the Bembas remain the largest tribe in Zambia, and are scattered all over the country.

2.3.2 Succession of Chiefs

Badenberg states that “the legal emphasis in a matrilineal society is on the successors of the chief, who are his brothers (*bamunyina*), then the sons of his sisters (nephews/*abepwa*) followed by his sisters’ daughters’ sons (grandsons/*abeshikulu*). After Chiti died, “Chileshe Chepela became the first Chitimukulu in the new lineage, his next brother took the title of Mwamba” (Badenberg 2002: 41-42). According to the historical account of the Bemba people, the Chitimukulu title is the apex of a ladder of succession to chiefly titles. The Bembas, being a matrilineal society, have their own way of installing their chiefs after the deaths of paramount chiefs or senior chiefs.

The succession of chieftainship is strictly matrilineal. A unique role is attributed to “the mother of Paramount Chief Chitimukulu” (Badenberg, 2002: 42). Therefore, the theory of succession states that the sons of a royal woman, whose brothers were potential chiefs, are eligible for succession and may succeed

each other. It means that, the most senior son (*umwana umwaume umukalamba*) from the most senior mother (*muli ba mayo mukalamba*) becomes the Paramount Chief Chitimukulu. It is so because chiefs' mothers bear traditional names such as Chandamukulu, Mukukamfumu, and Mushimba. According to this arrangement of mothers, "the seniority of the son follows that of the mother" (Roberts, 1970: 233, Brelsford, 1948: 4). The practice of the clan system, which follows the mother's side, is still valued today by the Bembas of the northern province of Zambia.

The "appointment of chiefs lies primarily with the paramount in council, which is the superior native authority. However, government retains the power to override this organisation at any time. The government keeps watch over the appointments on chieftainship, because one appointment affects others" (Brelsford, 1948: 1). Vaughan notes that:

The reason for the government (from the time of British Administration) to have interest in Bemba succession was because of the frequent and prolonged succession disputes. Succession disputes after the death of Chitimukulu affected two or three other senior Bemba chiefs, like Senior Chief Mwamba and Senior Chief Nkula, from other districts within the Bemba Kingdom (Vaughan, 2008: 384).

Vaughan further states that "the death of Chitimukulu (or any other Bemba chiefs, whether seniors or sub-chiefs) took a year before he was buried, as this is the tradition for Bembas. As they wait for a year before their chief is buried, the preparations for who succeeds who also are made". The Bemba people form a larger politically influential group in the country, hence "their political instability affects the country" (Vaughan, 2008: 385). That is why the colonial government, and even the government of the day in Zambia, retained an interest in the affairs of the Bemba Kingdom. What can be noted here is that, in a matrilineal system, mainly "men retain position of power and authority within their kin group despite the fact that lineage follows the mother. It's brothers and uncles who are in charge" (Lowes, 2020: 121).

2.3.3 Social Organisation

In Zambia, the "social structures and hierarchy are firmly adhered to, because they are believed to offer society good morals" (Mushibwe, 2009: 120). The Bemba people identify themselves by their ethnic groups, "composed of tribes like Bemba, Tabwa, and Lamba. Each *abena Nsoka*, *abena Bowa*, *abena Bwali*, *abena Ng'andu*" (Kunda & Mpande, K.M. 2016).

Regarding family units within the Bemba people, priority is placed on the nuclear family and the extended family. This includes “husband and wife, children, sons-in-law and grandchildren” (Tembo, 2013: 4). Tembo seems to describe the family unit of Bemba in terms of those who reside at one farm. However, the Bemba family in fact includes uncles, aunts, grandparents, the brothers of the father, and the sisters of the mothers. In her book, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe*, Richards describes Bemba villages as “consisting of 30 to 50 huts. Each village is a kingship unity led by headmen (*mwine mushi*), appointed by the chief of the district” (Richards, 1995: 18). The Bemba people are agriculturalists, though they cannot be equated to Tonga, Mambwes, and Namwanganas, who are great agricultural people. Although I recognise Taiwo’s statement that “societal sustainable development depends on a solid family structure”, the Bemba people “emphasise daily activities which involve engaging others in work by participating in communal activities” (Taiwo, A., 2010: 231, Badenberg, 2002: 62). We call this *ichima*, and the practice caters for those who are married, single, widowers or widows. When a group of men and women in the community work in one person’s field, the next day they will move to another person’s, until all of their fields have been cultivated. Unity within their society is extremely important for Bemba people.

The Bembas are “fond of hunting and fishing, and rely on the bush for many of their wild fruits and plants used as food” (Richards, 1995: 18). However, Richards does not specify which wild fruits and foods the Bemba people gather from the bush. Nevertheless, these include fruits like *amasuku*, *imfungo*, *ifikome*, *amabungo*, and *amasafwa*. These fruits are mainly collected in the bush by boys or men, and other fruits are cultivated within their yards, such as mangoes, guavas and lemons. The vegetables girls and women collect in the bush include *ubowa* (mushrooms), *umulembwe katali na kafulu* (a plant similar to okra), *kanunka*, and *chikanda*. Other vegetables gathered include those which are seasonal and cannot be planted, but which grow by themselves.

Other community work includes funerals and sicknesses, where community members are expected to help each other (Badenberg does not mention this) as part of their collective system. Just as Twene indicated that “according to traditions and belief systems, in African society, individuals have rights and responsibilities not only to themselves but also to the community in which they live” (Twene, 2019: 20). That is why in the village, funerals and weddings must all be attended regardless of one’s church affiliation. In the case of funerals, this is a sign of showing final respects to the deceased.

2.3.4 Bemba Religion and Sacred Places

In African culture, “religious beliefs and institutions matter most in shaping both public and private understandings of masculinity. Although many studies are male-centred in their religious imagery, there is evidence of female focus of the divine in Bemba society” (Ebere, 2011: 480). Something interesting to note, whenever we read on African religion, is that all African countries have their own ways of worshipping God. It is essential to know and understand that religion and culture are connected, especially in Africa. Therefore, as Ndemanu stipulates, “any attempt to study African people’s cultures that does not involve their traditional religion is incomplete” (Ndemanu, 2018: 71). The Bembas of the northern province of Zambia, “just like other tribes in Zambia and much of sub-Saharan Africa, practiced a range of traditional religions even before the introduction of Christianity” (Taylor, 2006: 27).

Hinfelaar noted that “traditional Bemba belief is focused on the shrines in the homes of married women, which puts women in the role of intermediary between the realms of the human and of the divine. It was through women than men gained access to the world of transcendence” (Hinfelaar, 1996: 217). Women in Bemba society were the ones to play the role of priest; something which is also seen with the Chewa people of Malawi. Just like the Bemba people, the Chewa already believed in the existence of God before missionaries came to their land. According to Isabel Phiri, in Chewa matrilineal society, “the religious roles of women were clear and acceptable at the territorial rain shrine, where they were known as spirit wives” (Phiri, 2007: 25). Surprisingly, a belief system that is so deeply rooted in its people’s lives did not allow men to be in charge of Bemba’s sacred places. Especially, married Bemba men who lived with their in-laws were “regarded as foreigners who had little knowledge of their local divinities (*imilungu*) and their territorial cults” (Badenberg, 2002: 16). However, does this mean that all married men in this position were outsiders who did not understand the local divinity? How can a Bemba man be a foreigner in Bemba land? Bemba married men residing at their in-laws’ place were given a subordinate position even in Bemba religion, which was and is not so in Christian churches, where men are granted leadership roles. Despite this, Jere pointed out that “male figures are usually highly favoured by society. This is seen by the support they get from society, the kind of food they eat, the kind of work they do, and the choices of marriages they enter into, be they monogamous or polygamous” (Jere, 2009: 4). That is why in Chapter Four we see that Bemba men take leadership roles in the church, and during interviews they associated *impalume* with leadership in the church. “The Bemba names of all territorial places of worship are regarded as feminine” (Hinfelaar, 1994: 7).

The following names “emphasise women’s religious roles in traditional worship: *Chibinda wa N’ganda*: Enabler of the Domestic Cult. *Kabumba wa Mapepo*: Initiator of Worship. *Nachimbusa wa Chisungu*: Tutor of the Transcendent” (Roberts, 1970: 12, Hinfelaar, 1994: 12, Badenberg, 2002: 12). The feminine names

for Bemba places of worship align with Christianity's teachings that the church is a Bride of Christ, hence being given the personal pronoun of 'She'. According to Mupeta, it was a woman's duty "to make small offerings to the family shrines, to obtain health and life from the forebears" (Mupeta, 2014: 29). Mupeta further explains that *Chibinda wa Ng'anda* meant that "the woman was the maker and the priestess of the home shrines" (Mupeta, 2014: 27). However, this statement also indicates the overseer of the home shrines and the keeper of the house. The Bemba usually use the saying *umwanakashi emwine wa Ng'anda*, meaning "a woman is the owner of the house, who takes care of and manages the home affairs".

Taylor noted that, despite the fact that many Zambians are Christian converts, "many, including the Bemba people, continue to maintain several traditional beliefs alongside their new Christian faith" (Taylor, 2006: 27). It is evident that although there are many churches in Bemba land, and despite the Paramount Chief Chitimukulu Mwene Lubemba being a Roman Catholic, traditional sacred places are kept and respected even today in Bemba land. According to Richards, this is so because:

The sacred relics (*babanye*) of the Crocodile Chiefs symbolise their legitimate succession and how the royal spirits are approached. They form the heart of the ancestral cult, and it's a traditional religious identity for the Bemba people. All Bemba Crocodile Chiefs have some relics and usually a relic house. Nevertheless, those of Chitimukulu are naturally the most important *babanye*, which consists of movable objects such as bracelets that can be worn as regalia, bows, spears, and sacred bugles, skins of honey badgers, and stools (Richards, 1968: 28).

These are the things which differentiate Bemba tribes from others, and those found in such sacred places today are usually men. Traditionally, much of the royal ritual centres around the chief's sex life. "The act which 'warms' and vivifies the land is carried out with his chosen elderly head wife, preferably a woman who has passed childbearing and stopped menstruation (*umwananmukalamba ushiya kumweshi*). This woman is expected to live in chastity, watching the 'fire of the land' and presiding over the sacred storehouse until called upon to perform the necessary ritual sex act. She must not have children, for childbirth is considered to be the ultimate danger to the *babanye*" (Richards, 1968: 32, Owino, 2009). As Falola indicates, the continuation of many indigenous practices means that "we can still locate communities in Africa based partly on older sacred beliefs and practices, though many aspects of the beliefs have been modified, some prescribed by laws, and many forced to adapt to current circumstances" (Falola, 2003: 211). The power of Bemba culture is that, "despite mixing with other cultures after invading and intermarrying with them, the Bemba people subjected their captives to their own manners and customs" (Lungonga, 1963: 27).

2.3.5 Some Changes in Religious Roles

Since the coming of Christianity, “the religious role of women changed, and their social position, including where society based their belief, was weakened. Men were busy learning their new religious system, which emphasised the role of men” (Hinfelaar, 1996: 217). Christianity put men in leadership positions even though they were the minority in church. As noted by Ndemanu in the study of traditional African religious beliefs and practices of Bangwa people of Cameroon, “traditional religion had a great influence on Africans in their thought processes, belief systems and worldviews” (Ndemanu, 2018: 71). Phiri says that the coming of the missionaries in matrilineal societies in Africa resulted in:

The transfer of religious powers from women to men, and missionaries’ teachings placed women in a subordinate position in society and reinforced negative cultural elements of hegemonic masculinity backed by biblical texts (Phiri, 2007: 14).

The issue of maleness, according to Owino, “began to emerge when concepts of the male as the head, as a priest, and as fathers are biblically emphasised and supported. Such notions stress the dominion and power of men over women” (Owino, 2009: 40). And we cannot deny that the coming of Christianity in Bemba land made Bemba men become leaders at church, while at home they were still subject to their wives’ families. Therefore, “Christianity contributes in advancing foreign masculinities, which young men have adopted in many African communities” (Uchendu, 2005: 6).

In some areas of Bemba society, however, we read of women who have stood as heads of church. History alleges Lenshina, the spiritual leader of the Lumpa church movement, “was helped by her husband to establish a viable independent church, operating mainly in rural areas, with a strong hierarchy of priests. The emergence of the Lumpa Church was part of a much more comprehensive process of religious change in Zambia at that time” (Mildnerova, K., 2014). This shows how Bemba women still had a religious role to play even after the coming of Christianity in Bemba land. However, the majority in church leadership are men, and this was evident at the three churches in the three different villages I visited in Kasama when I was doing this research.

2.4 How *Impalume* are Constructed in Bemba Matrilineal Society

Richter & Morrell says that “culturally, there are many ways of being a man, and these are not limited to universal understanding of masculinity’s construction” (Richter & Morrell, 2006: 14). But how do the Bemba people construct men’s masculinity? Traditionally, women are associated more with the house chores. Rasing speaks of men as being “outsiders in the local village, who are supposed to be with their fellow men outside the house, in the *insaka*” (Rasing, 2010: 3). Indigenous Bemba communities train men at special gatherings known as *insaka*. Traditionally, these gatherings were the source of knowledge and practical skills for young men. Mukuka said that *insaka* was:

The men’s resting place, often when men came from their field work. It was used as a place for relaxing and communal eating. Young people were also given life skills by elders. *Insaka* also was used as a reservoir of knowledge, and formed an integral male space and indigenous foundational school where issues related to sexuality, survival skills, and good morals were taught (Mukuka S. 2018: 120-122, Lumbwe, 2009).

It was at *insaka* where men were moulded into *impalume*. It was a school for gaining knowledge, wisdom and good morals. *Insaka* was the place for training two categories of *impalume*: *insaka yampalume shabulwi* and *insaka yampalume yamucuppo*.

2.4.1 *Insaka Yampalume Shabulwi (Insaka for Warriors)*

Firstly, *insaka yampalume shabulwi* (or, ‘ideal men as warriors’) were gathered for the *insaka* held at the chiefs’ palace, known as *inchenje*. Paul Mushindo describes *inchenje* as “the biggest *insaka* (*insaka ikalamba*) of all, where the appointed elders (*bachilolo*) trusted by the chief sit and discuss matters and solve problems in that particular village” (Mushindo, P. 2008: 7). Another *insaka* is for the military training of young boys at the palace, which Kapwepwe described in detail. *Impalume shabulwi* underwent three stages of training. The first stage covered community morals, and laid out the standards expected of a good man. The second stage dealt with survival skills, and the last stage covered how to fight in wars. Since the first and second teachings are the same as those taught at *impalume yamucupo*, I have discussed those in detail for the second *insaka*.

In his book titled *Shalapo Canicandala*, Kapwepwe (2005/1967) introduces the two types of *insaka* found in Bemba culture, per the *insaka* held at the chief’s palace (*kwisano*). *Kwisano* is the name for the chief’s palace, including the paramount chief. For *insaka yakwisano*, “people from the village sent boys (*bakalume*) aged 15 years to be trained as *impalume shabulwi*. It was from such trained men that the chiefs selected

husbands for their daughters—those proven to be stronger than others, who will be called *Lumbwe wa Mfumu*” (Kapwepwe, 2005: 13). *Impalume shabulwa* taught the young men how to fight in a war and win using a spear and a bow and arrow, and how to play drums after winning a battle. These teachings, Kapwepwe says, were taught at *insaka yakwisano* (the palace). He does not mention how an ordinary man was trained at an ordinary *insaka*. Only the strong were selected to join the chief’s army, and from this group husbands for the chief’s daughters were selected. Acquiring “manliness and culturally-expected masculine behaviours requires active and passive learning, observation, and imitation” (Dahlback *et al.*, 2003: 53). Today in Bemba society, boys do not need to be trained for battle, as tribal wars are no longer an occurrence. But more research may be needed on how the security men at the chief’s palace are trained in Bemba society, and how the chief’s daughters get married today.

2.4.2 *Insaka ya mpalume Yamucuupo* (Ideal Men in Marriage)

Secondly, there is *insaka ya mpalume yamucuupo* (ideal men in marriage), which I refer to as *insaka yamumushi* (a general *insaka* for the community). In Bemba culture, *insaka yamumushi* for ordinary men was held in every small community. It was also “a communal eating place, a source of identity and a cultural school” (Mukuka, S. K., 2018: 126). At this *insaka*, young boys were encouraged by elderly married men to become *impalume* when they grow up. But what did men do at this *insaka*? Mushindo describes what I call *insaka yamumushi* as a gathering meant for ordinary men in the community, and not for men who were in training to become part of the Bemba army group. Kapwepwe explains this *insaka* training taught to the young men as follows:

Having good morals, respecting all elders in the community, treating men as their fathers and women as their mothers, providing a seat for an older person at any home or place of gathering, not exchanging words with elders, not propositioning married people, showing generosity, and offering help to the elderly and disabled. (Kapwepwe, 2005: 13)

Good morals were important, and are still important in traditional Bemba society even today. Therefore, younger men were expected to respect their elders and treat them well. Despite these *insaka* teachings, I acknowledge that in Bemba community there are men with bad morals. But *insaka* was a good place to train young boys so that they would enter adulthood with a good moral foundation. It was at *insaka* that elderly men would teach young boys morals through storytelling, known as *utushimi*. Mushindo indicates that “it was at *insaka* where proverbs were told and taught” (Mushindo, 2008: 28). We see some of these stories in Bwalya Erlwanger’s book titled *Tales from Kasama*. Such documented stories ensure that “Bemba

traditional moral lessons are passed on to the younger generation” (Erlwanger, B., 2000). The second stage of training Kapwepwe mentions is skills training:

At *insaka*, the young boys were taught skills like making leed mats, making traditional baskets and other skills, and they learned how to respect other people and have good moral conduct in society (Kapwepwe, 2005: 14, Mushindo, 2008: 14)

Apart from having good morals, a man in Bemba society was also trained with survival skills. These survival skills learnt at *insaka* helped them to provide for the family in and out of season, and set them up to be hard workers. The above statement proves that men in Bemba society underwent skills training before the current skills training schools were established by the government in Kasama and Mungwi District, as reported by Tembo, “like Mungwi Skills Training Centre, Kasama Skills Training Centre, and Chifyani Skills Training Centre” (Tembo, 2017). Mushindo further describes the work which both young and old men did at *insaka yamumushi*:

When men came from their fieldwork on their farms, they would start doing other work, sitting as men in *insaka*, where tin-smithing, making spears and bows and arrows, wood carving, and making traditional drums was done (Mushindo, 2008: 14)

After finishing their daily work in the field, men would come together and sit at *insaka* and wait for the women to finish preparing the food. Women cooked and brought the food to the *insaka* after the men and boys had come back from the work in the field. In the meantime, the elderly men at *insaka* were teaching young men some practical skills as a way of economic empowerment. Whatever they made at *insaka*, they sold to other people. In order to have time to teach men survival skills and good morals, beer drinking was not allowed until the men had finished their work in the evening” (Mushindo, 2008: 28, Musapu, 2008). Skills training is not taken seriously today. With Zambia’s current high unemployment rate, teaching men practical skills today could do much to reduce the level of unemployment which the country suffers.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter addresses the first objective of considering how being *impalume* is positively defined in Bemba culture. The chapter began by giving a brief account of Bemba history, covering how they came from Congo and established themselves in the northern part of Zambia. Three significant characteristics have been identified in this chapter as pillars in Bemba matrilineal society. The first one is the clan system (*umukowa*), with which every Bemba man or woman is identified, and which differentiates those who come from royal

lineage from those who do not. Secondly, it explains the legal implications the matrilineal system places on children, where children identify themselves through their mother's lineage, and not their father's. This shows why, in Bemba's matrilineal society, nephews succeed their uncles (*bayama*). Lastly, the chapter reviews *impalume* from two perspectives, *impalume shabulwi* and *impalume yamucuupo*. *Insaka* played a very prominent role in training *impalume shabulwi* and *impalume yamucuupo* in Bemba society. At *insaka*, men were trained from a tender age to exhibit good morals and later employ good practical skills like making baskets, leed mats, hoes, and how to do fieldwork like crop cultivation and gardening. Thus, the Bemba construction of masculinity was mainly seen at *insaka*, and those men who distanced themselves from *insaka* were not well thought of as *impalume*. The primary focus in this chapter was to understand a married Bemba man's construction of masculinity through the practice of *impalume*. Surprisingly, I discovered that *impalume shabulwi* is different from *impalume* in marriage. More on *impalume* from married men's experiences is discussed in Chapter Four of this study. Now that we understand the construction of masculinity in traditional Bemba society, the next chapter looks at masculinities as a theoretical framework guiding this research, and shows the methodology used to obtain data in the field.

Chapter 3: Understanding Marriage in Bemba Matrilineal Society

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the historical background of the Bemba people, their cultural practices, their understanding of men's roles, and how their masculinity is constructed. To start, this chapter answers the second objective, which is to explore the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men and the implications of being *impalume*. The chapter helps us to understand the traditional practice for Bemba married men from the time *insalamu* is paid up to when they are married and begin their new relationship with their in-laws. Lastly, the chapter concludes by highlighting the religious and cultural perspectives regarding how Bemba married men relate to their in-laws.

I acknowledge that much literature has been written concerning Bemba marriages. The earliest of these was Wilfred Whiteley's 1950s book *Bemba and Related People of Northern Rhodesia*. Though the book has few details on marriage, the writer looks at Bemba marriage and highlights some of the changes which occurred when Christianity arrived in Bemba land, and how marriages were affected because of men (*abaume*) migrating to towns in order to find jobs in the mines. In the book titled *Making Modern Marriages Traditional* (1983), Ault Jr. writes within the context of colonial Zambia, and focuses the discussion on how modern social conditions affect the stability of marriage in urban areas (especially for the women). Whiteley and Ault help to discuss some social changes in rural and urban areas, which affect both men and women in marriage.

Lumbwe (2013) has written on indigenous *mfukutu* and contemporary *ubwinga* (wedding) music of the Bemba people of Zambia. The writer emphasizes how music and *ubwiinga* play an important role in teaching cultural values and Bemba traditions. One such study focused on Bemba married women living in the Copperbelt Mukuka (2018). Another academic who has dealt with Bemba marriages and teachings and what is expected from young men and women in marriage in Bemba society is Simon M. Kapwepwe (1994). In *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, Kapwepwe reviews what married Bemba men do at their in-law's place and what the in-laws are expected to do with their son-in-law. Hence the need for more investigation into what it means to be a man in different social contexts, if we are to shift men toward more positive interpretations of masculinity.

3.2 *Insalamu*

Insalamu is the money a man brings to the girl's parents requesting for a hand in marriage. The money a man brings to his parents-in-law, covered in two white plates, is called *insalamu*. The man is not charged for such but decides on what to put in those white plates which signifies the proposal of a man to a woman in the presence of the family. However, the man should also look forward to the girl's parents' acceptance of *insalamu*. Chalwe speaks of *Insalamu* as "something which is given to the bride's family before the bride price negotiations can begin" (Chalwe, 2016: 16). In traditional Bemba society, when a daughter or son wants to marry, the uncles (*yama*) are responsible for all processes. His sister needs to consult *bayama* on every move. Sometimes the uncles act as the go-between to the girl's family, but at times the go-between may be chosen among close relatives or family friends" (Tembo, 2013). *Insalamu* is taken to the bride's family by the go-between, who is known in the Bemba language as *shibukombe/nabukombe*. This go-between can be a man or woman. Taylor, Whiteley, and Richards emphasize the payment of *lobola* as an essential feature of Bemba marriage rites. However, having interacted and worked in Bemba land, *insalamu*, which is brought by the middle man (*shibukombe*), is essential because it makes marriage traditionally legal and determines the beginning of the marriage agreement between two families. *Insalamu*, as stated by Simbotwe, also shows "the commitment a man has for the woman he intends to marry" (Simbotwe, 2016: 10). In addition, Njunga states that:

The first step for Bashibukombe/Banabukombe is to notify the parents of a woman about the man's intention to marry their daughter. The intention is usually to formalise a marriage proposal to the woman's family symbolised by the payment of a token called *insalamu* (Njunga, n.d: 2)

Once *insalamu* has been offered, the *shibukombe/banabukombe* goes back with the news of whether the *insalamu* was accepted or rejected by the woman's family. When *insalamu* is accepted, the mother-in-law prepares food known as *icisekelela nsalamu* for the groom and the family to show that they have accepted *insalamu*. After that, *lobola* negotiations begin. Unless the man brings *insalamu*, there is no negation for the payment of *lobola*. That is why when the girl's parents return *insalamu* to their daughter's suitor, they have rejected him as a potential in-law, which marks the end of the couple's courtship or prospects of marriage. Thus, the validity of courtship or marriage is *insalamu*. *Insalamu* marks the official engagement for the young couple. Kapwepwe explains how the man, after acceptance of *insalamu*, is tested to see if he is a hard worker.

The in-laws call their son-in-law to their place and give him a portion of land to work. The man either cultivates the land (*ukulima*) or cuts the trees down

(*ukusaila*), known as *chitemene*. It is an embarrassment to both the man and his family when he fails to do the task assigned to him (Kapwepwe, 1994: 53)

Young men are presented with this challenge because “hard work was a yardstick for choosing the right partner. Moreover, if a young man proves not to be hard-working enough, the girl’s family will not approve to give their daughter in marriage” (Nanyangwe, *et al.*, 2020: 3). *Insalamu* in this case should be returned to the man’s family to signify that there is no longer a courtship taking place. One elderly man at Focus Group Discussion in Lua-Luo explained his personal experience to the group, saying that:

When parents do not want the man to marry their daughter, they give the man a considerable task. When he fails to complete the task, the engagement is turned down (FGD at Lua-Luo UCZ on 22 July 2021, Researcher Mwakasenga)

It was by his completion of such a task that a man would know whether *insalamu* would be kept or returned to his parents. From these tasks, a man has to prove to his in-laws that he is an ideal man, capable of keeping and providing for their daughter. The above statement shows that though the practice was effective, other would-be in-laws abused men by giving them huge tasks, only to disqualify them from marriage because they were not successful. In traditional Zambian society, “the consent of the families was sufficient to constitute a marriage without the consent of the bride and groom” (Dialho & Himonga, n.d.:12). It was so because, in the past, it was common for parents to find a girl their son could marry by talking to the girl’s parents. The two sets of parents would agree, and these are what we call “arranged marriages”. Kapwepwe noted that even in the past, “a girl or boy had a right and freedom to choose a partner, but usually, the advice came from their parents” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 53). Commonly today, even among people I interviewed, parents are rarely consulted by their adult children concerning their choice of spouse. This is because in modern society today, the choice is largely left in the hands of the would-be couple.

3.3 Lobola/Impango (Bride Price)

Notably in Zambia, each ethnic group has distinct marriage rites and rituals, many of which continue to be practiced despite other modern changes in Zambians’ lives. Morrell, speaking from a South African context, states that “traditional marriage is part of a socially negotiated relationship between families, formalized through *lobola* payments” (Morrel, 2012: 13-14). Thus, as Taylor states, *lobola* “remains an essential feature of the marriage rites for most Zambian cultures” (Taylor, 2006: 97). According to Chalwe, “bride price is commonly known as *Lobola* in many parts of Bantu-speaking people in Africa. However, in Bemba community, though the word *lobola* is also used, it is commonly referred to as *impango*” (Chalwe, 2016:

2). It should be noted here that part of *lobola* includes the amount for a girl's virginity. If she is not a virgin, then that money would not be paid by the man.

Traditionally in Bemba society, *lobola* "was paid by the groom or his family to the bride's family. Although things have changed in modern society, the financially stable groom pays *lobola* on his own, despite this being his family's responsibility (Dialho & Himonga, n.d.: 12). When the man pays *lobola*, the money does not go to the girl's parents but rather to the family, and in this case, the uncles have the upper hand.

Morrel observed in the study of masculinities in South Africa, "many South African men never marry because of the inability to afford the *lobola*" (Morrel, 2012: 14). However, in Bemba matrilineal society, a young man comes to live with his wife's family, and the family of the bride requests a smaller amount of *lobola* from the groom, which is very much affordable—though indirectly the man will pay handsomely (Roberts, 1970: 16, Badenberg, 2002: 42, Power, 2014: 1). Therefore, it was common in traditional Bemba society for a "man to give a small amount of *lobola*, popularly known as *impango* (bride price), to his fiancée's parents, and then move to her village and build a house there. Traditionally, Bemba people only charge a small amount of *lobola*—though today Bemba parents request huge sums of money, especially if the girl is educated or working class" (Whiteley, 1950: 17, Kapwepwe, 1994: 35). According to Kapwepwe:

Bemba people were not so rich to have money to pay for the bride price. Hence the man had to work at his in-law's place for some time and provide good food for them (Kapwepwe, 1994: 9-10)

This statement by Kapwepwe gives us a picture of why Bemba men live at their in-laws' home; it is so that they pay what is due to their in-laws. If we analyse this practice properly, Bemba men ultimately pay more than those from patrilineal societies where large amounts of *lobola* are charged, and the grooms take their wives far away from her parents. For the Bemba man, he has to work for some good years at his parents-in-laws' place or, in some cases, for his lifetime—which benefits his in-laws through his labour. Nevertheless, today Bemba people do charge huge amounts of *lobola*, especially those who live in towns and copy what other tribes there do.

Richards states that in Bemba society, "marriage is a contract, not a transfer of goods; hence, large payments in the monetary or material form are not made at marriage, but through a man's labour at his in-laws' place" (Richards, 1995: 17). Whiteley states that "services performed by the bridegroom for his in-laws are the important element in the contract" (Whiteley, 1950: 5). And these services are in form of work at the farm which the man should prove to be a hard worker to his in-law's. Unlike today's marriages where men are

charged large amounts of money, Bemba traditional marriage charges less, as it is through the “service undertaken by the husband to his parents-in-law where they benefit from the work their son-in-law provides while staying at their place” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 56). When *lobola/impango* is paid either in full or in part, the parents from both sides begin marriage preparations for their children. The question is why should a man pay *lobola* when it’s him being taken to the in-law’s residence and not the woman? This shows that in Zambia, whether in matrilineal or patrilineal societies, the man is the one to pay *lobola/impango*.

3.4 Marriage

It is worth noting that “marriage is one of the oldest institutions in human history, and it has played a significant role in the lives of many communities of people” (Siwila, 2011: 84). Further, “in almost every human society, marriage has been viewed as an important rite of passage that every individual should recognise” (Sweetman, 2003: 2). Taylor states that “marriage is a vital part of gender relations and identity. Historically, it was rare to see adults who had never been married, and marriage remains an essential aspect of manhood and womanhood” (Taylor, 2006: 96). Twene also states that “to get married is to demonstrate maturity, and is regarded as a graduation event from childhood to adulthood” (Twene, 2019: 18). This explains why Africans put more effort into ensuring that their children get married as expected, under flexible conditions and requirements. Remaining unmarried in African society “undermines a man’s social status. He is considered not man enough, because an ideal man’s qualities are shown through marriage to a female partner and by having children” (Uchendu, 2007: 285-286).

In order for a Bemba man to be called *impalume*, one of the qualifications is for him to marry. Hence marriage is very important in understanding what being recognised as *impalume* entails in Bemba cultural practice. That is why a couple wishing to enter into marriage must first undergo marriage counselling lessons. In the article written by Mwanza et al. on *Understanding Cultural Roles of Traditional Marriage Counsellors in Ng’ombe Compound of Zambia*, the writers articulate the role of marriage counsellors (*bana chimbusa* in Bemba) for the couple who are about to enter into holy matrimony (Mwanza, S. Phiri, Muyayanga, & Chibamba, 2019). Mwanza states that, in Zambia, “there are three ways by which marriages usually are contracted; marriage under Zambian customary law, marriage under statutory provisions (marriage by ordinance), and Church marriage blessings” (Mwanza et al., 2019: 71). Mwanza further states that “many marriages in Zambia, despite being influenced by faith missionaries, still go through traditional marriage counselling” (Mwanza, 2019: 27). After the wedding ceremony, as alluded to by Kapwepwe:

Traditionally for the Bemba people, the husband is supposed to stay at his in-laws' place until he has three children; then he is allowed to take his wife and children to his home village (Kapwepwe, 1994: 35)

That is what Phiri calls in her study of Chewa matrilineal society in Malawi “the right of the mother. A married Chewa woman remains united with her relatives and controls her children with their help” (Phiri, 1983: 258). As much as men are required to stay at their in-laws' place, it is interesting to note that such arrangements do not include village headmen and chiefs, who usually live in their natal village (Peter, 2010: 183). In my understanding, staying with the in-laws as noted above is one way for a married Bemba man to pay *lobola/impango*. But nothing is said on what happens to a childless couple—does that mean the man has no right to take the wife away from his in-law's place?

It should be noted that among the Bembas “marriage is preferred between cross-cousins on both sides of the parents” (Niemeyer, 1982: 74). This statement was debated at Kamena village during the Focus Group Discussions in 2021, where the group was divided, with one group saying this does not happen, and the other acknowledging that this does occur, even today. One participant gave examples from within the community of men who had married their cousins. The other group pointed out a case tabled with the village headman at the time of the interview, where a young man had impregnated his first cousin. I took this as the truth, because they had evidence from within the community. Therefore, marriages between cousins do indeed still take place today, though other families within the Bemba community do not allow very close cousins to marry.

It is interesting to discover that “polygamous marriage is not a recognised social unit among the Bemba people like it is practiced among patrilineal societies” (e.g. the Mambwes in Mbala district), but only allowed among their chiefs (Whiteley, 1950: 18). Polygamy in traditional Bemba culture was “considered taboo. A polygamous man was not considered *impalume*, and instead was viewed as a lazy man who took advantage of women” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 13). The Bembas are not polygamous by culture, especially as living with his in-laws makes it difficult for a man to marry another woman. Though, notably, polygamous marriages do sometimes exist in matrilineal society among Bembas, despite it being culturally anomalous, and in addition to Christianity not allowing men to take more than one wife. Living with their in-laws, where a man cannot bring another woman, gives women marriage security and positively shapes men's morals. My experience with the Bemba men during my research field work was that all participants had one wife. Nanyangwe acknowledges that:

Polygamous marriages which were found in the past among the Bemba people were as a result of the barrenness of the woman, and the family may get the sister or cousin to bear children on behalf of their elder sister, which they call *impokeleshi*. Although polygamy existed among the Bembas, it was as a result of death, sickness or old age of a married woman. In addition, today polygamous marriages among the Bembas exist as a result of mixed marriages and living in towns where there are mixed cultures, which leads to young men copying other cultures. However, Bemba history only records chiefs and kings as having many wives even today, despite Christianity influencing some chiefs to refuse to have multiple wives (Nanyangwe *et al.*, 2020: 674)

Kapwepwe, in talking on polygamous marriage acknowledged that he comes from a polygamous marriage and the mother was the first wife. He further explains what caused his father to marry another wife was because his mother stopped having children and his father wanted- more children (Kapwepwe, 1994: 116). Though Kapwepwe does not state clearly if polygamous marriages are accepted in traditional Bemba society, Tembo emphasised that “though polygamous marriages seem familiar in many African countries, traditionally Bemba society has a different setup which does not allow men to have many wives. Moreover, extended families among the Bemba are not big like those found in patriarchal societies in other parts of African countries, which are polygamous” (Tembo, 2013: 4). However, Cole, in a qualitative gender analysis in Luwingu (Bemba land) found that:

Men were abandoning their wives at their natal homes to marry another woman in another village, while continuing his marriage to the first wife (Cole, Sweeney, Moyo, and Mwauluka, 2016)

Though monogamous marriages are common in Zambia, the above statement by Cole shows that among the Bemba people, there are men who practice polygamous marriages across towns and villages. This is as a result of mixed marriages and urbanisation, which has brought changes to Bemba matrilineal society.

3.5 The Importance of Having Children in Bemba Matrilineal Society

In Bemba traditional society—like other African societies, both patrilineal and matrilineal—having children is significant, and gives a couple an identity within their society. Just as indicated in *Imbusa Shachibemba*, “when a man and a woman get married, they desire to have a child. When that does not happen, the couple carries the burden, though it seems heavier on the woman and her family than for the man” (Moto-Moto Museum Mbusa Club, 2007). Siwila observed that in African societies, “a woman should

be able to provide her husband with offspring, and only then will she be regarded as worthy of being called a woman” (Siwila, 2005: 35). The same applies to a Bemba married man who is required to impregnate his wife for him to be called *impalume*. This is because in many African societies:

Children are considered the crowning glory in an African marriage—the more children, the greater the glory. Having children certifies one as a ‘real man’ not only in matrilineal society but also in patriarchal societies (Baloyi & Manala, 2019, Chitando, 2016)

The Bemba saying *ichupo cabana tachipwa* literally means “a marriage with children in it cannot break”. Therefore, from an African perspective, a man “acquires a father figure through marriage by having children, which marks a man with masculine identity and success” (Uchendu, 2007: 290). Mukuka observed that in Bemba culture, “when one has children, the customary practice is that one will be called *bana* or *bashi*” (Mukuka, R. 2020: 107). Calling a man *bashi* is the respect every man desires. When he has children, people stop calling him by his name, but instead by his son or daughter’s name. Thus, the status of a man is elevated in the family and community when he has children.

Though married Bemba men’s children belong to their mother’s clan, “children actually take their father’s last name, signifying the biological father of the children” (Whiteley, 1950: 19). In instances where a man denies a pregnancy, the child takes the grandfather’s last name as their sire’s name. Why do children take their father’s name instead of their mother’s or grandfather’s name? It should be noted that in pre-colonial times, some communities in Zambia gave their children one name at birth and another after seven days or a month. Thus, in matrilineal societies such as Bemba, Chewa, Lunda, and Luvala, the maternal clan name was used to distinguish individuals. Chanda stipulates that it was “after interactions with Europeans and Christian missionaries that the naming system changed, as there was an introduction of surnames for colonial administration purposes” (Chanda, 2020). Children having their fathers name in matrilineal society enables children to be identified with their father’s clan instead of their mother’s clan, a confusing shift which the western world brought to Bemba land.

It is of interest to note that, in a matrilineal society, “a man has less control over his children and the wife, but the mother and the uncles take this role” (Amadiume, 1996: 35, Power, 2014: 2). Shin, in his research on Akan matrilineal society in Ghana, noted that: “Being a family man in matrilineal society is about being a father and being an uncle and brother. All of these have different meanings and different types of authority” (Shin, 2016). The same man enjoys being in control of his sister and his sister’s children, while another man is in charge of his own wife and children (Amadiume, 1997: 35, Shin, 2016: 2). Therefore, for

one to be called “uncle”, his sisters should have children. Like in any other African marriage, Bemba families “pity the deaths of childless couples because they will not be remembered when they die. Hence from an African perspective, one of the purposes of marriage is childbearing” (Baloyi and Manala, 2019: 1).

3.6 Expectations of *Impalume* in Bemba Matrilineal Society

Traditional Bemba marriages place some expectations on the couple after the wedding has taken place, particularly related to the son-in-law’s obligations to his new in-laws, and in terms of what the in-laws will expect of their new son-in-law. In addition, society places some expectations on *impalume* which may have both positive and negative implications on how a man is perceived in Bemba society.

3.6.1 The Parents-in-Laws’ Expectations of Their Son-in-Law

To begin with, as stated by Audrey Richards “the chief principle of local associations in Bemba society is a man’s legal right to the services of his son-in-law. That is why a man leaves with his father and mother and resides at his parents-in-laws’ place, and a man with many daughters enjoys such services from his sons- in-law” (Audrey Richards 1995: 103). It is very true in Bemba matrilineal society, like in most African societies, that “older men have a role in holding power over younger men, and thus young men have subordinate masculinity” (Barker & Ricardo, 2005: 5). In addition, it was the responsibility of the father- in-law to “teach their son-in-law to work hard, so that when the time comes for the son-in-law to leave their village with their daughter and grandchildren, the man is capable of putting food on the table. At the same time, that was the time when a young woman was taught how to take care of her children” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 59). Though I wonder why training a young man to be a hard worker is the responsibility of his father-in-law, and not his own biological parents? Furthermore, the arrangement was to strengthen the marriage and build one family from the man’s and woman’s side. “The in-laws want to build a good relationship with their son-in-law so that he will be able to keep them like their own son” (Kapwepwe, 1995:35). Bemba men staying at their in-laws’ place results in “a stable marriage showing unique features of male headship in marriage” (Power, C. 2014: 5). Participants in all three places—Kamena, Sampa, and Lua-Luo—confirmed that it is difficult for men to beat their wives when living with her parents, to which they said, “*Ninshi ufwaya ukufwa*”, meaning “Then you want to die” (Focus Group Discussions held on 18/06/2021, 20/06/2021 and 23/06/2021 at Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo respectively.). To sum up, a stable marriage results in the parents-in-law preparing a final marriage ceremony of ‘bringing in the son-in-law’ (*ukwingisha shifyala*). After this function, “a man is allowed to leave his wife’s village with his wife. This happens after several years of marriage, when the stability of marriage has been confirmed by the parents-

in-law” (Wilson, 1968: 43). A son-in-law waits for this big day when he is honoured by his parents-in-law, as they appreciate his services and how well he has kept their daughter. If the in-laws do not prepare for this ceremony, this is an indication that their son-in-law does not deserve such an honour.

3.6.2 The Son-in-Law’s Expectations of His Parents-in-Law

Staying at his in-laws’ place makes a man subordinate to his father-in-law, who requires him to work extra hard and follow instructions in order to gain his freedom or independence in the years to come. Traditionally a son-in-law was expected to work extremely hard, as he had to work in his in-laws’ fields as well as tend his own field. A son-in-law “was expected to work hard in a position of economic dependence to prove his worth as a husband/father” (Richards, 1995: 126). Tembo explains this further by saying a “good son-in-law hoes the garden, chops trees, and generally helps his wife family as proof of his love for his wife, his dedication, and of being a well-cultured man” (Tembo, 2013: 4). Furthermore, a son-in-law wins the hearts of his parents-in-law through hard work and good behaviour. In Bemba culture, being *impalume*, a married Bemba man should be a hard worker, because “laziness (*bu mbokoya*) is discouraged in the community by *ifikolwe* (forefathers/mothers)” (Kapwepwe, 1994:20). The parents and family members do not want any member of their family to be called *mbokoya* (meaning a lazy person), because if their son or daughter was known to be *imbokoya*, no respect would be given to them by either family members or the community at large, making it difficult for him/her to marry.

Apart from hard work, a son-in-law is expected to provide security for the family. Nanyangwe gives an example of how a Bemba man, upon marriage, “is presented with an axe and a hoe by his wife’s family, signifying the tools of security. Nevertheless, security does not mean protection from bodily harm, but rather food and property security” (Nanyangwe, 2020: 671). Therefore, Bemba men are required to ensure security and protection for household possessions. This shows how masculine the man is when he provides protection to the family.

Just like in patrilineal societies, married Bemba men are not allowed to do house chores. This shows that in Bemba matrilineal society, “Christian marriage does not take away men’s authoritative role in marriage conferred on them by tradition and culture” (Tween, A., 2019: 3). For instance, Richards says that:

Cleaning the hut, looking after the children, preparing daily food for the family, fetching for firewood was the work of a woman/wife. No man was allowed to draw water from the river for himself; that was a duty for the wife. Nevertheless, he can fetch firewood for his chief (Richards, 1995: 100-103).

This indicates that in Bemba culture, though a man lives at in-law's place, the construction of gender roles is the same as those in patrilineal societies. We also see in the letters written to Stephen Mpanshi, compiled by Thomson Konkola Musebo in the book titled *Abanakashi Bashobola Abaume* (1957), where a woman wrote a letter complaining of how men in towns have become stingy by not giving their wives money to be used at home, and also how they check for cooked relish in the pots—something which is not allowed in traditional Bemba culture, where a man may not help himself in a woman's kitchen. Such letters were reminders to Bemba men of what was expected of them despite staying in town. Here hegemonic masculinity is shown in terms of gender roles.

Kapwepwe only mentions what a man is supposed to be, and does not mention the challenges he goes through by staying at his in-laws' place. The younger husband is required to live with his wife's family for many years, "if the man did not get along with them, and left the village (without permission), his wife and children remained behind" (Wilson, 1968: 43). Though the man may move out of his in-laws' place, this is only on condition that he has fathered three children with his wife. Such expectations of having children limits the rights to independence of couples' who have infertility issues. What happens to couples who have not produced children is not much researched in relation to this Bemba traditional norm.

3.6.3 Societal Expectations from *Impalume*

Every society places expectations on individuals according to their gender, position in the society, or in religious cycles. Just like Mushibwe states that individual members have "roles that are anticipated of them depending upon the position held. These expectations can be compelling or obligatory to the point of controlling an individual's behaviour" (Mushibwe, 2009: 117). In the book titled *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, Kapwepwe (1994) wrote on what is expected of *impalume* by the society, though did not use the word '*impalume*' when he talked about how a man is constructed in Bemba society, and the importance of keeping this practice amid western influence. These teachings for men were not done overnight, but started at an early stage, and most of these teachings were action-oriented (*mumicitile*). The young men were engaged in various types of work as part of their training (*imilimo*). Kapwepwe noted the following societal expectations of an ideal man:

A man was expected to be a hard worker and show his masculinity through his good behaviour. In addition, a man should be physically strong and bold at heart
(Kapwepwe 1994:49)

Kapwepwe only mentions the positive side of men's strength, showing that traditionally, Bemba people do not support gender-based violence. Physical strength is one of the characteristics of ideal masculinity in our

current societies. The Bemba have a common saying for when a man is portrayed as weak: “*Ulekosa; kwati, tauli mwaume*”, meaning, “Be strong, and don’t be weak, as if you are not a man.”

The first point of being hardworking as a man was made very clear in the focus group discussions, I held in two places in Bemba land. A man who is *impalume* should “work hard and not complain, though he might feel tired” (Focus Group Discussions in Kamena and Sampa village, 2021). Nevertheless, in Bemba society, the husband is viewed as “the crocodile that provides everything to the family, just like the chief does for his people in the village” (Lumbwe, 2004: 85). In Bemba society, laziness is discouraged. Kapwepwe emphasised that “in the past and modern times, whether in towns or villages, lazy men bear names such as *wamulele* (a lazy man in the village) and *ilofwa* (an unemployed town man). He further says that “it was difficult for such men, even lazy women, to marry or get married. Hence laziness was discouraged in society, as such people were not respected in the community” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 20). Therefore, the hegemonic masculinity of a Bemba man is seen in how hardworking he is, judged by how well he provides for his family. Kapwepwe further said that, in order to show love to his partner:

A man was expected to respect and give gifts to his wife. A man’s love for his wife meant he cannot be unfaithful to his partner, for it is not good to be unfaithful to his wife. It was required for a man to respect his in-laws, welcoming them with joy. A man should have his own house, and begin to settle in a new place (Kapwepwe, 1994: 49).

A married Bemba man is expected to build a house at his in-law’s place. Can the house a man builds at his in-laws, where he stays with his new family, be considered his house when the land does not belong to him? Kapwepwe and Kaundas do not point out the challenges of *impalume* living at the residence of their in-laws.

3.7 Death of a Partner, and Divorce

In Zambia, “customary marriages are a family group affair, so even dissolution is a family group affair. Marriage is dissolved within the family forum and not by the couple, and *lobola* has to be paid back by the family” (Dialho and Himmonga, n.d.: 12). The family is “responsible for supporting the divorced wife and her children depending on the type of kinship organisation” (Dialho and Himong, n.d.: 13).

In the early years of marriage, “the facility of divorce was an essential factor for old Bemba equilibrium, and any relationship that survived was likely to be permanent. After one or two children had been born, divorce was more difficult, though likely to happen in some cases” (Wilson, 1968: 42). Wilson does not mention what a man loses after divorce, having invested in the land of his in-laws and leaving everything, then going back to his family to start life over again. The man is only lucky if his spouse dies, and his late wife’s family gives him another woman from the same family. Then all investments would remain under his control.

Surprisingly, in traditional Bemba society, “marriage is not terminated by the death of one of the partners. After the death, the widow or widower may continue with another member of the family of the deceased husband or wife, with no extra formalities associated with the celebration of the new marriage” (Dialho & Himonga, n.d.: 12). In Bemba, this is known as *kupyanika*, meaning ‘replacing’. There are traditional practices done during *ukupyanika*, which many scholars have condemned and discouraged. These are practices surrounding *ukupyanika* which are coupled with a sexual cleansing” (Kapungwe, 2003: 4). Richards states that, in traditional Bemba society:

The identification of men and women is with particular ancestral spirits. The name of every adult who dies is preserved by a simple rite of succession (*ukupyanika*), which transfers the spirit (*umupashi*, *imipashi*), the status or office of the dead man or woman, and his or her position in the kinship group to a living descendant—the system I have called ‘positional succession (Richards, 1968: 27)

Traditionally, *ukupyani* after the spouse dies meant giving the remaining partner another spouse. That practice has been condemned by many writers in this era of HIV. However, a man will only be given another woman from the same family if the man is *impalume* enough: responsible, hardworking, and strong. Otherwise, no family will accept a lazy man to continue as a part of their family. For *impalume*, it becomes hard for the in-laws to release them; hence the practice of *ukupyanika* is performed.

3.8 Conclusion

The chapter explored the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men and the implications of being *impalume*. It further attempted to discuss how marriage is set up in traditional Bemba matrilineal society, beginning with the importance of *lobola*, *insalamu* and marriage. It has shown the expectations

placed on both the son-in-law and the parents-in-laws. The challenge for married Bemba men is that when death or divorce occurs, he will need to leave and be united once again with his family.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the importance of marriage in Bemba matrilineal society. Therefore, this chapter discusses the theories of different masculinities as a theoretical framework, which guides this research in answering the research question. The study will not look at all types of masculinities, but will instead use hegemonic, subordinate and redemptive masculinities as related to an uncle, brother and father-in-law in traditional Bemba family structures. Therefore, hegemonic, subordinate and redemptive masculinity will be used to look at the benefits of *impalume* and the challenges therein.

4.2 Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Married Bemba Men

In this research, I acknowledge the works of an Australian socialist R.W. Connell, one of the leading scholars in the field of masculinities, whose rejection of the conceptual singularity of masculinity “has opened up new possibilities for understanding it as a socially constructed multiplicity” (Howson, 2006). I also acknowledge the works of Morrel, Klinken and Chitando, who are leading scholars in African masculinity in the church. Masculinities are used as a lance to analyse married Bemba men and the construction of masculinity in matrilineal society within the religious and cultural context. In this research, let me begin by discussing the theories of masculinities, which are highly debated by scholars in both feminist and masculinity studies.

4.2.1 Theories of Masculinities

Mfecane, in the article, *Towards African-Centred Theories of Masculinity*, research written in a South African context discusses theories of masculinity used in African scholarship which were developed by western scholars. Mfecane and Chitando “challenge scholars to find African theories on masculinity in the African context” (Mfecane, 2018; Chitando, 2013: 28). Mfecane states that “the theories of masculinity are founded in the western world, which cannot fully account for the complex life experiences of African men, because African masculinities are influenced by a wide range of complex and competing forces that are continually changing” (Mfecane, 2018: 292). Chitando argued that “it is not easy to debate for a single hegemonic masculinity, but rather multiple masculinities” (Chitando, 2013 :27). Writing on *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, Kapwepwe responds to the challenge of how the western world defines men by defining who a man is in Bemba matrilineal society where an uncle, brother and father in-law are placed over a

husband and father. In Bemba matrilineal society, as Kapwepwe (1994) explained, married men show their different kinds of masculinity as brother/uncle and husband/father. In this study, I have used hegemonic, subordinate and redemptive masculinities to explore the practice of *impalume* within the confinement of heterosexual marriages in the Bemba matrilineal context.

In discussing theories of masculinities, Uchendu noted that “it is vital to note that race, culture, religion and belief systems influence the notion of masculinities all over the world” (Uchendu, 2008: 3). In this study, theories of masculinities are “located within the cultural hermeneutics studies” (Pini and Pease, 2013: 36). However, Morrell proposes three types of masculinities which are hegemonic:

Firstly, white masculinity represented in the political and economic dominion of white ruling class. Secondly, an African masculinity is rural-based masculinity constructed through indigenous institution (i.e. chiefs, communal land tenure and customary law). Thirdly, black masculinity, that has emerged in the context of urbanisation separating village from town (Morrell; Jewkes and Lindegger, 2012)

Looking at the three types of masculinity that Morrell proposes, this research falls under African masculinity, which is rural-based. This helps us to understand Bemba married men and the practice of *impalume*. When we talk of men in a matrilineal society, we talk about men “who do not gain power and authority by being a father and husband, but play important roles as a brother and uncle” (Frank *et al.*: 478). Hence the concept of masculinities in this research has been engaged to understand the construction of masculinity in Bemba matrilineal society. The theory is employed to help find how the fathers-in-law relate with their sons-in-law. What masculinities are displayed in matrilineal society? The theories of masculinities employed in this study show how the practice of *impalume* benefits and affects Bemba married men.

4.2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity in Matrilineal Society

In order to understand *impalume* in contemporary society, “it is imperative to know how hegemonic masculinity operates. It should be noted that hegemonic masculinity is not imposed upon the gender order, but emerges from and through the socio-cultural setting itself” (Howson, 2006: 3). Hegemonic masculinity “being the form by which other masculinities become measured and represented as subordinated to, or marginalised from, this hegemony at different times and in different situations” (Robertson, 2003: 708).

We should note that “the concept of hegemonic masculinity was first proposed in reports from the field study of social inequalities in an Australian high school whose basic concepts were feminist theories of patriarchy” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 830-831). Hence, Connell writing on masculinities is from the patriarchal perspective and not matrilineal, as is the case in this study. African researchers “are on a battlefield with Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, which they say does not address adequate challenges facing the continent over time. African scholars in the field of masculinity studies “are encouraged to be extra careful and vigilant on what ideas to use and not use, putting in mind that we cannot avoid drawing on hegemonic theory” (Chitando, 2013: 27-28). Many scholars have used the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and it has been “accepted widely as part of the overall theoretical framework for studying men, since the 1990s” (Hearn, 2004: 50). Hearn’s concern in this article is to outline the field of studies of men within the framework of Critical Studies on Men, in which the centrality of power issues is recognized.

Mfecane (2018: 292) recognizes that there has been tremendous growth of research and intervention programs on masculinity in Africa. According to Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinities, “there is need to localize and study the actual interaction of men with one another” (Lusher, and Robins, 2009: 387). Although Demetriou criticizes Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, he acknowledges that the concept “represents the most influential and popular part of his work. It has been used in “empirical research in sexuality, gay studies, criminology and prison sociology” (Demetriou, 2001). In addition, “much work done in the study of men’s masculinity revolves around hegemonic masculinity”. As a theoretical tool, “the strength of hegemonic masculinity lies in its ability to describe multiple masculinities at the structural level”(Cole, 2009: 31-32).

Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity refers to “cultural centrality and authority and acceptance of power, and those who exercise it” (Connell, 2012: 13). Duncanson, on the other hand, says that “hegemonic masculinity explains both the persistence of male power and the potential for social change” (Duncanson, 2015: 2).

Though the concept of “hegemonic masculinity is mostly used, it has also been criticized. And the construction, maintenance and actual performance of hegemonic masculinity remain a very complex affair” (Smit, 2017: 8). However, in the available literature, many concerns by African theologians on hegemonic forms of masculinity are informed by their “critical analysis of the patriarchal structures, gender-based violence, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which seem to be the major issues in their research. Klinken writing

in *God Forgives, AIDS Does Not: Transforming Masculinity in African Christianity*; *Gender Controversies in Times of AIDS*, describes hegemonic masculinity as “aggressive and destructive, dangerous and deadly” (Klinken, 2016: 48). Green, writing in *Hegemonic and Subordinate Masculinities: Class, Violence and Sexual Performance Among Young Mozambican Men*, noted that in all of Connell’s key concepts, “hegemonic masculinities are the most notorious and popular in men’s studies in Southern Africa” (Green, 2009: 288). Klinken and Green’s analysis of hegemonic masculinity is within the patriarchal structures in the context of HIV/AIDS, which is harmful to women and children. Moller, in the article *Exploiting Patterns: A Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity*, argues that “men’s practice and motivations are often more complex than the concept of hegemonic masculinity allows” (Moller, 2007). Nevertheless, the problems addressed by this concept remain of importance” (Connell, 2012:13). Hadebe states:

The notion of masculinity has been beneficial for critiquing essential notions of male power and pointing out that some men are more powerful than others, indicating how men use control, authority, strength, and being competitive and aggressive (Hadebe, 2010: 13)

The use of masculinity as a theoretical framework in this study has helped to critic male power in matrilineal society and how hegemonic masculinity is not only harmful to women and children but also fellow men with less power. Yet, the “ideal of (hegemonic) masculinity depends on social context, and changes throughout generations” (Shin, 2016, Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 6). Hadebe’s statement sits well with the power the father-in-law has over the son-in-law in Bemba matrilineal society. However, this study gives a different view on hegemonic masculinity in matrilineal society for Bemba married men. The construction of masculinity in Bemba society meant not being violent, but protective. In addition, hegemony relates to cultural dominance in society as a whole. Within that overall framework, there are “specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between men” (Connell, 1995: 78). Even in Bemba matrilineal society, I acknowledge that men have the upper hand in decision-making as parents-in-law, and as an uncle or brother over women, children and men. The discussion is critical because “the dynamics of the world gender order and its hegemonic masculinity affect men as profoundly as they do women, though this fact has been less discussed” (Connell, 2005). Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is “understood as both hegemony over women and hegemony over other subordinate masculinities” (Demetriou, 2001: 341).

Kaunda has said that “the self-masculine understanding of Bemba men resonates with the hegemonic masculinity that many contemporary scholars have interrogated”. They further say that “the aspiration by many men to obtain a hegemonic standard for their masculinity has been perceived as the only means to be accepted as real men” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 16). Contrary to what Kaunda says, hegemonic

masculinity in Bemba society is more protective of women than in patrilineal society, which many scholars in masculinity studies, gender studies, feminist studies, health studies, and religious studies mainly associate with being dominant to women. Moreover, Connell acknowledges that the “concept of hegemonic masculinity has been generally used and criticized, and the problems raised cannot be ignored”. For him, hegemonic masculinity does not equate to violent masculinity, because hegemony refers to cultural centrality and authority and the broad acceptance of power by those over whom it is exercised” (Connell, 2012: 13).

4.2.3 Hegemonic/Subordinate Masculinity and How It Benefits Married Bemba Men

However, the strength of the matrilineal system “is not based on centralized male authority, but male support for its female core” (Frank, 1992: 477). This support is seen from men as brothers, uncles and fathers for their sisters and daughters. Franke noted that, “if we wish to understand masculinity in a more constructive mode, we need to work with positive definitions that tell us what it is, instead of what it is not” (Franke, 1992: 475).

4.2.3.a) Hegemonic Masculinity in Uncles/Brothers

In Bemba matrilineal society, men are respected as uncles to protect their sisters, though they are not so much celebrated as fathers. In all the focus group discussions, it was noted that the respect which is accorded for the uncle is still in existence even to this day. The role of an uncle remains valid in terms of decision making for his sister’s children, and his involvement in his sister’s children’s wedding procedures. At Kamena, one elderly man explained that:

But sometimes it depends on the individual family relationship between brothers and sisters. Some families are divided because the uncle is not involved in decision-making regarding his sister’s children (FGD Kamena, 18/06/2021)

The above statement indicates how a good relationship between brothers and sisters makes the sisters respect the authority that their brothers have over their children. However, we cannot deny that some families’ sisters do not get along with their brothers. Hence, the brother’s role as an uncle may be ignored by the sister—but that does not take away the role of the uncle. In Bemba matrilineal society, the role of the mother’s brother (*banalume*) is so influential that children are required to submit to the authority of *banalume* even over their father, who is subordinate to his brother-in-law. This is unlike the Khasi matrilineal tribe of India, where “the brother to mother, is a non-authoritative, indulgent figure” (Lyngdoh

and Nongkynrih, 2015: 34). *Namulume*, or a brother, has the responsibility to protect his sisters and their children, and children fear their *nalume* more than their father. But why do brothers care for their sisters' children in traditional Bemba matrilineal society? According to Abendroth, men care for their sisters' children in Bemba matrilineal society because:

They are his heirs, as they bear the same clan name, unlike his children who bear their mother's clan name. As an uncle, the brother protects the niece during and after marriage (Abendroth, 2012: 367, 371, Lowe, 2016: 10).

According to Lowe, in traditional matrilineal society, "the man should financially support his sister's children because his inheritance and lineage are traced through his mother and his sister's children" (Lowe, 2016). However, in today's Bemba society, very few people have kept that tradition, as the majority concentrate on educating their own children. But the uncle continues to be respected, and has the final say regarding his sisters' children, despite the fact that he does not support them financially. The hegemonic role of an uncle in Bemba society was described by one participant at the focus group discussion in Lua-Luo, saying:

Though the respect for the uncle still exists, today uncles are not so much respected like before. During the slave trade it was uncles who were selling nephews, because uncles had more power than fathers. It is the uncles who were disciplining their sisters' children. In the past, you could not have family meetings without the uncle, or marry off your daughter without the uncle. That was considered a bad omen to the betrothed couple (FGD Lua-Luo on 22 July, 2021)

As *impalume*, to begin with, "the Bemba married man looks after his sister's children, who are believed to be his true blood" (Rasing, 2010: 2). For the Bemba people, the brother cares for his sisters' children because he knows that they are his blood, unlike his wife's children, who might not even be his. In matrilineal societies, "when a girl wants to get married, her father should consult her mother's brothers. The maternal uncle is the go-between, and undertakes all the arrangements and responsibilities for his niece's marriage" (Tembo, 2013: 6).

What should be noted today is that "the practice of uncles taking care of their children is slowing dying, especially for those who stay in urban areas" (Kapwepwe, 1994: 20). Furthermore, "while patrilineal societies in Zambia like Ila, Ngoni, Namwangan, Tumbuka, Lozi and Mambwes succeed from their father's side, the matrilineal societies like the Bembas, Kaondes Aushi, Lamba, Chewa, Lunda, Nsenga and Luvale succeed their uncles (*banalume*)" (Kapwepwe, 1994: 34). In Bemba matrilineal society, "the nephew is the heir to his maternal uncle, who in turn was a legal guardian of his life and his mother" (Rasing, 2007: 61).

But the question is, how can a Bemba married man's nieces or nephew succeed him while he lives with his in-laws? And how does a married Bemba man fulfil his role as an uncle when he stays at his in-laws' place? In addition, as *impalume*, the man as an uncle is responsible for taking care of his sisters' children, his wife, and his in-laws. It should be noted that today married Bemba men not only care for their sisters' children, but also their own children.

Poewe writing on *Matrilineal Ideology: Male-Female Dynamics in Luapula*, indicated that in a matrilineal society, "it is not the husband who controls women and resources, but the woman's brothers and maternal uncles" (Poewe, 1984: 27). According to the recent qualitative gender analysis done in northern Zambia by Cole, "men are involved in cultivating cash crops jointly with their wives, and men make major agricultural-based decisions" (Cole, Sweeney, Moyo, Mwafuluka, 2016: 4). Ngubane observed that "decision-making has traditionally been a male prerogative because in African culture, men are socialised to believe that women are inferior and should be under their control", be it in matrilineal or patrilineal societies (Ngubane, 2010: 26). However, the empirical study carried out in Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo shows that men have less power in decision making. Though they cultivate jointly with their wives, the brothers in-law and parents in-law have an upper hand on the farm which limits progress when plans to develop cannot be supported by in-laws.

4.2.3.b) Hegemonic Masculinity in a Father-in-Law

The question one can ask is how does a married Bemba man, as a father-in-law, display his hegemonic masculinity, and how does it benefit him? In Bemba matrilineal society, having girls meant "the expansion of the village, because the man is guaranteed of having many sons-in-law who will work for him when the daughters get married" (Abendroth, 2012: 371-372, Phiri, 2007: 37). According to Richards and also Rasing, a married Bemba man with many daughters and sons-in-law "qualifies him to be the head of a large economic unit made up of his daughters, his sons-in-law and their children" (Richards, 1956: 40, Rasing, 2001: 60). In the first place, economically, the father-in-law benefits from his sons-in-law as they work his field free of charge, as it is their duty to care for their in-laws. A Bemba man will not benefit as a father-in-law if he only has sons, as all will leave him to live with their wives' families.

Since it is their sons-in-law who do much of the farm work and who take care of him, the father-in-law further plays the role of a supervisor, advisor, parent, and head of the family. Only his excellent leadership will help keep his sons-in-law at the farm. With bad leadership, the sons-in-law will run away. For some of the participants I interviewed in Kasama, the number of years they stayed in a marriage while living at their

in-law's place was an indication that the in-laws had been good to them. Likewise, this indicated that the sons-in-law were hard workers, and peaceful. It also shows that married Bemba men's construction of masculinity as the head is not violent but caring, and is protective of wives, children and sons-in-law. However, we cannot deny the fact that men in matrilineal society may not leave their in-laws' place even in the midst of violent activities against them. The reason for this is the fear of leaving behind the things they have invested in at their in-laws' place.

Thirdly, other hegemonic masculinity seen in Bemba married men is the respect shown by women when they kneel down to men, husbands, and older men when greeting them or inviting them to the table. Kapwepwe said that, "a man cannot kneel for a woman when greeting her, and a woman cannot be standing while men are seated, as it does not show respect. Men as heads are to be given seats before the women at any family gathering" (Kapwepwe, 1969/1995: 92-93). What I observed was that, though Kapwepwe mentions women kneeling to men, married Bemba men also kneel to their father-in-law when greeting him, as a sign of respect.

It is important to note that "dominant and accepted practices (both formal and informal) within most African churches continue to reproduce patriarchal patterns of men's headship and women's subordination, even in matrilineal society" (Kaunda & Pokol, 2019: 6). In this case, the women, children and sons-in-law are under the leadership of the father-in-law.

4.2.3.c) Subordinate Masculinity of a Son-in-Law

We should take note that, "older men also have a role in holding power over younger men, and thus young men having subordinate masculinity" (Barker & Ricardo, 2005: 5). That is what happens in Bemba matrilineal society, between the son-in-law and the father-in-law. Subordinate masculinities display qualities that are opposite to hegemonic masculinity. Hedebe noted that, "the power relation among men produces subordinate masculinity" (Hadebe, 2010: 14). This power relation is seen between the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law in terms of headship. The headship of the fathers-in-law is stronger than the headship of the sons-in-law in terms of power relations. In a matrilineal society, "children and their mothers are considered outsiders by the husband's patrilineage. At the same time, the husband is also viewed as such by the women's matriline" (Takyi & Gyimah, 2007: 685). But why is this? According to Bemba beliefs:

Blood passes through a woman and not through the man. Although a man possesses this blood, he cannot pass it on to his children. The Bemba stress the

link of a man with his sister. Children belong to their mother's clan (Misengo, 2002: 9).

Nevertheless, in a matrilineal society, a man never has complete control over his wife and children, though he can gain some substantial measure of control over his wife's labour. For a married Bemba man, despite being recognised as the head of the household, his children are under the power of their maternal uncle. The tricky part is for a man to live with his wife's kin and act as an uncle in his sister's village. "When the time came to leave the village and go for work, some men asked permission from their parents-in-law to shift their wives and children to their matrilineage for security purposes" (Phiri, 1983: 272). Therefore, "the question of authority in the household and over the children is a very complex affair" (Rasing, 2001: 61, Power, 2014: 2-3). Nevertheless, the wife is taught to respect the husband as the head of the house.

It is noted that "not all hegemonic men embody all aspects at once, they may possess particular elements. As such, masculine hegemony can be viewed as a role, status set, perspective, behaviour or personal characteristic" (Ricciardelli *et al.*, 2010: 64). That is why in Bemba matrilineal society, a son-in-law may possess subordinate masculinity while living at his father-in-law's place, but the same man will retain his hegemonic masculinity as an uncle.

The study by Shin titled *What Does It Mean to Be a Family Man in a Matrilineal Society?* noted that "there are different kinds of masculinities within and across cultural and social contexts" (Shin, 2016). The married man in Bemba society living at his in-laws' place is under the leadership of his father-in-law and his wife's brother. However, at the same time, the man who seems to have subordinate masculinity among his in-laws also possesses hegemonic masculinity, because he is an uncle to his sister's children and a brother to his sisters, where he is respected and his decisions are valued.

4.2.4 The Need for Redemptive Masculinity for Married Bemba Men in Matrilineal Society

A key contributor to the academic research in the emerging field of religion and masculinities in Africa is theologian Ezra Chitando. Chitando is a pioneer and one of the scholars whose work on the subject is described as 'ground-breaking' (John, Siwila, and Settler, 2013). "Chitando has set the trend in the emerging field of studies on religion, masculinities and HIV in African theology, with other scholars more or less actively emerging in the field" (Klinken, 2016: 48). Masculinities form a recurrent topic in the writings of Chitando, and he underlines the "importance of religio-cultural resources in the emergence of liberating more peaceful and harmonious masculinity" (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012: 1, Morrell, 2001).

The studies in masculinity review that “masculinity is a social, not a biological construct; it is socially, politically, historically and culturally constructed, and is not fixed. Therefore, it can be changed and transformed for the good of society at large if found to be dangerous” (Togarasei, 2013: 2). Using the theory of redemptive masculinity by Ezra Chitando, the study explored how a Bemba married man might embrace his culture, while redeeming him from the dangerous practice of *impalume*, to exhibit life-giving masculinity for married men in matrilineal society living with their in-laws.

The theory of redemptive masculinity might be a major challenge to those who are suspicious of any effort to associate men with anything positive, let alone redemptive. Especially that men have been associated with “violent hegemonic masculinity both by religion and culture” (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012: 1). Chitando and Chirongoma employed redemptive masculinity out of the context of violence and the AIDS pandemic, in order to identify masculinities that are life-giving. However, this research employs the concept of redemptive masculinity as a means to identify the negative aspect of being *impalume* for a Christian man in the 21st century. How do we redeem this man’s identity and make him celebrate the practice of *impalume* within the religio-cultural context in matrilineal society? Does the man in Bemba society need redemption? Chapter Five shows in detail the experiences and challenges for a man in Bemba matrilineal society.

The research uses the concept of redemptive masculinity because “it evokes the spiritual dimension and resonates with the theological and religious dimensions. The aim of the concept is to embrace and identify masculinities that are life-giving” (Chitando, 2013: 2). Chitando further notes that “some gender scholars have used the concept of redemptive masculinity to present an alternative and life-promoting form of masculinity as opposed to the dominant hegemonic masculinity. The notion of redemptive masculinities might conjure an image of supermen who intervene swiftly to save women and children: male saviours. The notion of redemptive masculinity can thus be problematic in a world dominated by men” (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012: 1).

Songwigi uses the concept of redemptive masculinity in his study of men’s masculinity in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in Zimbabwe in relation to reproductive health rights, a case study of Amadodana (Songwigi 2019: 4). He says that “the concept of redemptive masculinity includes religio-cultural resources in the emergence of liberation. It is a theory that can be used to engage masculinities in different angles”. The theory of redemptive masculinity is applied in this study “to associate it with men’s concerns about others, their affirmation of life, and the community”. Masculinities, therefore, “are thought to be redemptive to those who suffer most under the pressure of hegemonic masculinity” (Klinken, 2016:

53). However, the goal is “not to eliminate masculinity or the practice of *impalume*, but to create a hegemony for forms of masculinity that already exist in the lives of men; masculinity that is peaceful” in this case for men in matrilineal society” (Connell, 2012: 15). Further, the goal is not to redeem men from their cultural practices, but from behaviours which are not life-giving.

Ezra Chitando calls for faith communities to play a significant role in reforming masculinity. The call for reforming “is an indication that there is something wrong with the prevailing articulation and embodiments of masculinity” (Tjemolane, 2017: 35, Tjemolane, 2017: 39). Therefore, the relevance of redemptive masculinity as a theoretical framework rests on the concept which suggests an alternative expression of what it means to be a man, as opposed to hegemonic masculinity, which brings a lot of pressure to men in a matrilineal society. It challenges male privilege (the notion of privilege is not without difficulties, since it has to do with access to resources and opportunities) and offers privileges to both males and females. The theoretical framework in this research “tends to render both the tensions men feel when obliged to live up to prevailing masculinities and their actual lived experiences and emotional lives” (Seidler, 2006: 52). Furthermore, “redemptive masculinity speaks against hegemonic masculinity, and shows that there is an articulation of masculinity which can be supported by both religion and culture” (Kaunda & Kaunda, 2012: 19). Therefore, redemptive masculinity is a suitable theoretical framework to use in this research, because it helps us to understand men’s struggles in embracing hegemonic masculinity, using it as a yardstick to determine an interpretation of an ‘ideal man’. It should be noted that, “Churches have a major role to play in the transformation of men” (Chitando, 2007: 43). In order for churches to achieve this, Chitando further says that, “there is need for churches to address masculinities within and should engage men in order to transform dangerous ideals about masculinity in Africa” (Chitando, 2007: 46). Hence, this research engages married Bemba men within the United church of Zambia and address the construction of masculinity from the religious and cultural perspective.

4.3 Research Methodology

As this is a qualitative study, details of the methodology used to obtain data from pre-existing literature and from the field have been shown. Research methodology is a “philosophy or general principle which guides the research. In contrast, research methods are the tools used to gather data” (Dawson, 2007: 15). Kothari (2004) defines research methodology as “a way to solve the research problem. It may also be understood as a science of studying how research is done”. Therefore, “it makes sense to match the scientific efforts to describe the social construction of masculinity ideology with qualitative research methods that are steeped in similar social construction philosophies” (Issacco, 2015.).

There are two types of methodology: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research generates statistics through the use of large-scale surveys, using questionnaires or structured interviews in order to employ experimental methods and quantitative measures to test the hypothesis” (Golafshani, 2003: 597). Qualitative research “refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, and descriptions of things” (Berg, 2001). Qualitative research “explores attitudes, behaviours, and experiences which are important, through methods like interviews or focus group discussions” (Dawson, 2007: 15). That is why qualitative researchers use a “naturalistic approach that seeks to understand a particular event from a real-life situation” (Golafshani, 2003: 600). Using a qualitative approach helped me to answer the research questions through focus group discussions.

4.3.1 Research Site and the Procedure to Gain Access

The study was located in Kasama, which the earliest studies on Bembas in the Northern Province of Zambia mention as “the provincial headquarters of the northern province, as well as the Bemba heartland where Chitimukulu resides” (Niemeyer, 1982: 70). The Kasama district was chosen because it is the administrative centre not only for Bemba Kingdom, but also for northern province under the leadership of the Paramount Chief Chitimukulu. It is “the most famous town in Bemba tradition, as it is a centre of power for the Bemba Kingdom” (Niemeyer, 1982: 71-72). Kasama’s surrounding districts are Mbala (169.1km north), Mpika (217.7km south), Luwingu (166.1km west), Mporokoso (177.2km northwest), Chinsali (201.5km east-southeast). Mungwi District, where the Paramount Chief Chitimukulu lives, is 25.7km east-northeast, and that is the nearest district to Kasama.¹

While Chitimukulu is a leader for all Bembas in the northern province, “Kasama District is under Chief Mwamba, the successor to Chitimukulu, having both a rural and a town life. The current chief, Chief Mwamba, was appointed to the role in 2019 and officially gazetted to the throne on 16th July 2021” (Nsofu M., 2021/06/1, Chief Mwamba Installation set for July, ZANIS Report). The research was conducted at Kamena village, which is located northeast of Kasama. Sampa village is located northwest of Kasama, and Lua-Luo is within the central town of Kasama. The primary data collected from the three chosen areas were within Chief Mwamba’s area, reflecting the views of married men in these areas from both rural and urban perspectives.

¹ <https://www.distancesto.com>.

Kasama was chosen firstly because, despite living in Lusaka where Bemba people can be found in town, I had to go to Bemba land to cover the study's cultural perspective. In addition, while the Bemba people have some contact with other cultures around them and coupled with western influence, as indicated by Mupeta, some married Bemba men "of Mwamba's village still lead a traditional lifestyle to a great extent" (Mupeta, 2014: 6). Earlier on, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe acknowledged that, "In the villages, some traditions are still being practiced today" (Kapwepwe, 1995: 10). I do acknowledge, however, that not all Bemba men follow the traditional practice of being *impalume*, even in the villages where the research was conducted. Secondly, the three villages, Kamena, Sampa, and Lua-Luo, are located in Mwamba's village, "a royal village, which remains a custodian of Bemba culture, having some aspects of traditional life as well as modern life, a reality that represents contemporary Zambian society" (Mupeta, 2011: 11). The location of the study was important to this research, as it gave me the opportunity to interview married Bemba men who live with their in-laws per Bemba tradition. Thirdly, from a religious perspective, Masaiti states that "although there are a number of other religions in Zambia, Christianity is the largest religious group in the country" (Masaiti, 2018: 30). Allocating the study within the sacred space of a church was of help in answering the problem faced by Bemba married men who live at their in-laws' residence. The chosen places were linked with the research problem which I saw within the church in Bemba land during the time when I worked there. Although the locations for this study were a nine-hour drive from where I currently reside, I was familiar with the place and it was easy for me to find lodgings over the time I was conducting the research.

In order to gain access to my research areas mentioned above, I had to get permission from the general secretary of the United Church of Zambia. Since I was living in Lusaka where the church headquarters are, it was easy for me to reach the offices and request permission. There was no need to get permission from the chief or any government official in the district, because the research was purely within the church space, where I am a member and a worker. Despite this, the study was conducted in the church space, and as such I had to wait for the government to ease its COVID-19 restrictions following lockdown to allow for public gatherings. Health guidelines were given by the government's Ministry of Health, and by following these guidelines I was allowed to go out in the field and conduct my research. At the same time, the permission from the general secretary of the church also included health guidelines. Therefore, I made sure I had hand sanitizer, masks, and that social distancing was observed throughout the discussions.

4.3.2 Research Design

According to Ngozwana (2018: 20), “research design provides a framework for collecting and analysing data”. Therefore, the design of this research was based on a qualitative method, using the procedures within the church spaces where the research was conducted in order to collect the data required.

4.3.2.a) Samplings

Sampling deals with identifying the place and people to participate in the research. Sapsford & Jupp define a sampling as “a set of elements selected in from the population. Its aim is to save time and effort, and also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of population status for what is being researched” (Sapsford, 2006: 26). I was studying married Bemba men who live with their in-laws. The people I interviewed were married, they were Christian men, and they were of the Bemba tribe. This drew the boundaries, and guided me to where I could find such men.

A random sampling of married Bemba men was used to come up with three focus groups within three congregations in the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) in Kasama, as stated above. Having worked in Kasama before, and having been a reverend in the church, made it easier for me to contact my fellow reverends in the area who helped me to choose the location and select the people who participated in this research.

4.3.2.b) Selection of the Study Participants

The selection of the participants was in line with the topic. Not all married Bemba men were interviewed, but only those who were members of the United Church of Zambia. Very interestingly, I also found married men from other tribes living at their in-laws’ place, who had lived in the area for a long time and who had married Bemba women. This shows how strong the traditional practice of *impalume* is, that even men from patrilineal society can be convinced to practise it. Among the selected men, some were elders of the church and others belonged to the marriage guidance committee. Powell & Single (1996: 500) stated that “effort to recruit participants for a focus group should avoid systematic biases in the selection process” (Powell & Single, 1996: 500). Hence, my selection of participants was not biased, because the objectives of the study were to interview married Bemba men in the United Church of Zambia, and no other churches. Having few men in the church, there was no competition and it was not difficult to select participants from that few, though it was difficult to find such men within the church.

The ministers in charge of the three congregations, through their secretaries, helped me to select and organise participants after revealing my topic to them. The places chosen made it easy to find participants, because these are places where the Bemba practice of *impalume* is still in existence.

4.3.2.c) Sample Size

The sample size predicated before the interviews were 24 married Bemba men. It is unfortunate that the expected number of Bemba married men living with their in-laws was not met, as four men withdrew at the last minute due to their in-laws falling sick, while others did not give a reason as to why they withdrew from the interviews. Nevertheless, the interviews continued with the majority who had agreed.

The groups were divided into three focus groups of eight, eight, and six, from three congregations within UCZ, and the two ministers who were helping me with interviews. The sample does not represent the entire Bemba tribe or all churches in northern province, but married Bemba men in the United Church of Zambia who live with their in-laws in Kasama District.

4.3.2.d) Profile of the Participants

The participants' ages ranged from 20-69 years of age at the time of interviews. It's essential to admit that participants were not chosen using age as a way to exclude other men from participating. However, the reverends in charge in those congregations organised men who stayed with their in-laws without age restrictions. This worked to my advantage, as it helped me to hear men's voices from both urban and rural setups. In this research, I didn't involve men who were 70 years and above for health reasons, in keeping our elderly people away from crowded places due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants' level of education ranged from grade one to college. Since few were able to read and write, the participants contributed greatly verbally rather than by writing on the paper provided, and the focus group discussion was carried out in Bemba, the local language. As noted by Mupeta, "among the Bemba people, the predominant type of education is the informal and unguided one" (Mupeta, 2014: 17).

Economically, many participants earned their living through farming and others were involved in various business activities, while a few were working class and had retired as civil servants. Since participants were drawn from the church, all had one wife, and no one disclosed if they had other wives apart from the one the church knew of. In addition to this, all participants had children and had stayed in their marriages from 3-34 years, giving a broader view of a man's experience at his in-laws' place.

The table below shows, in brief, the profile of people interviewed in Lua-Luo, Sampa, and Kamena village in Kasama District, in chief Mwamba's area. It indicates the age and highest grade of schooling completed, the number of years in marriage, and number of children, boys, and girls. The table shows that the source of information came from young and old, educated and uneducated, giving a balanced view of what it was and what it is now.

Kamena and Sampa show married men who are staying at their in-laws' place, and have been given land by their in-laws, which they farm. At Lua-Luo, these are men who stay at their in-laws' place in town and who have not been given land to farm, but have been given accommodation by their in-laws, and do business to feed their families. I was able to get the views of those in the village regarding how they define *impalume*, which was a bit different from those in town, though a lot was similar. Further details on this are given in Chapter Four of this research.

NO.	LUA-LUO	COMPOUND	ALL-SAINTS	UCZ
	AGE	HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED	MARITAL STATUS	NO. OF CHILDREN
1	38	10	MARRIED FOR 8 YRS	3 boys
2	46	7	MARRIED FOR 27 YRS	4 boys
3	50	10	MARRIED FOR 32 YRS	2 boys / 6 girls
4	69	9	MARRIED FOR 18 YRS	2 boys / 1 girl
5	58	12	MARRIED FOR 34 YRS	3 boys / 4 girls
6	33	12	MARRIED FOR 11 YRS	2 girls

7.	58	College	MARRIED FOR 32 YRS	5 boys / 4 girls
8	60	10	MARRIED FOR 29 YRS	2 boys / 3 girls
NO.	SAMPA	VILLAGE	SAMPA	UCZ
	AGE	HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED	MARITAL STATUS	NO. OF CHILDREN
1	36	9	MARRIED FOR 9 YRS	2 boys / 1 girl
2	43	7	MARRIED FOR 23 YRS	4 boys / 4 girls
3	57	6	MARRIED FOR 37 YRS	2 boys / 5 girls
4	50	1	MARRIED FOR 30 YRS	4 boys / 4 girls
5	38	7	MARRIED FOR 11 YRS	3 boys / 1 girl
6	50	1	MARRIED FOR 23 YRS	5 boys / 4 girls
7	50	6	MARRIED FOR 30 YRS	4 boys / 5 girls
8	40	2	MARRIED FOR 21 YRS	4 boys/ 3 girls
NO.	KAMENA	VILLAGE	ST. JOHNS	UCZ
	AGE	HIGHEST GRADE	MARITAL STATUS	NO. OF CHILDREN

1	50	9	MARRIED FOR 8 YRS (divorced the first wife)	2 boys / 2 girls
2	27	7	MARRIED FOR 7 YRS	3 girls
3	29	8	MARRIED FOR 8 YRS	1 boy / 2 girls
4	49	9	MARRIED FOR 31 YRS	5 boys / 3 girls
5	20	8	MARRIED FOR 4 YRS	2 girls
6	52	5	MARRIED FOR 32 YRS	2 boys / 1 girl

The announcements were made in the church by the secretaries through the ministers in charge, to whom I communicated and explained my research topic and described the people needed for the focus group discussions. The arrangements were made between April and June 2020.

4.4 Methods of Data Collection

The data collection was done using two qualitative methods: secondary and primary sources. Jain states that, “in any research process, the critical part is data collection methods, because it determines the success of the research process” (Jain, 2010: 176). The data collected from the literature as seen in Chapter Two showed me the need to also conduct an empirical study in order to meet my research objectives. The field work data collection process took place in June 2021, and involved individual interviews and focus group discussions. All interviews were done in the Bemba language, which is the local language, to make the participants comfortable to contribute freely to the research topic.

This research has therefore used the qualitative approach, due to the fact that the research is based on the experiences of Bemba married men in a matrilineal society. The focus of qualitative research is “to give voice to people at the very margins of culture”, and in this study, this refers to Bemba culture. Qualitative study has become “the favoured methodology for scholars covering Marxism and feminist and cultural practices” (Vanderstoep and Johnson, 2009). Since I was dealing with a small number of people, not a largenumber, and no statistics were required, the qualitative method was applicable in this study.

4.4.1 Tools Used for Collecting Data Interviews

In order to meet the objectives of this study, in addition to the written literature, guided questions were used in the three focus group discussions from two congregations based in rural areas and one congregation based in Kasama town. Some participants signed consent letters before the group discussion began, while others who were unable to read and write had the document read to them in Bemba, and they agreed verbally. The questions used were written both in the English and Bemba languages, and I took notes during the discussions (see attached questions). Interviewing men through focus groups helped me to hear men's voices as they discussed their experiences with other men within their community; a rare opportunity within the church space.

The interviews were held with individuals as well as three groups of eight and six from three different congregations in Kasama. The questions were formulated in line with the research questions and objectives. Two individuals who accepted to be interviewed from the first congregation I approached made the effort to call and see me where I was staying at my family's house. Individual interviews allowed me to analyse personal perspectives as well as the group perspective on the topic. The one-to-one or face-to-face interviews in a free format "are conducted like natural conversation between two people, and the interviewer has a lot of work in asking questions while at the same time taking notes" (Sapaford & Jupp, 2006: 94). Such discussions in research "can be a site for reproducing or challenging men and masculinities" (Pini & Pease: 2009). The interviews challenged men's masculinities within the religio-cultural perspective, and allowed men to reflect on their cultural practices and see what has changed and what has continued as before. The interview dates were arranged with the individuals accordingly, and I held one-to-one interviews using the same questions I used with participants of the focus group discussions. The two had experienced life both staying away from and living at their in-laws' home.

It should be noted here that the original intention was to hold focus group discussions only, but since of the first group only two men accepted to be interviewed, I had to add this one-to-one method of interviews to hear their responses also. It was interesting to interact with them, though I sensed that they were not as free, compared to participants in the focus group discussions. As noted by Lambert & Loiselle:

Although individual interviews contribute in-depth data, the assumption that words are accurate indicators of participants' inner experiences may be problematic. That is because sometimes interviewees may choose to withhold

certain descriptions, or to exaggerate them if the truth seems to be inconsistent with their preferred self-image, and if they wish to impress the interviewer (Lambert and Loiselle, 2008: 229).

My experience during interviews was that men find it difficult to review their weaknesses, especially in the presence of a woman. However, though individual interviews have a negative sense, the positive part is that, as a researcher, I was able to get more individual experiences than in the focus group discussions, where people seem to generalise as they do not always feel free to review their own experiences in the presence of others. Lambert and Loiselle further noted that:

When using focus group and individual interviews, many researchers favour the combination of these methods. Although focus group and individual interviews are independent data collection methods, their combination can be advantageous to researchers, as complementary views of the research topic may be generated (Lambert and Loiselle, 2008: 230)

The combination worked to my advantage, as it helped me to hear the individual experiences of Bemba men residing at their in-laws' place. That gave me the chance to hear the pros and cons from the perspective of a married Bemba man who has experienced life with his in-laws, and without his in-laws. The two one-to-one interviewees were free to share their personal life experiences with me within the 30 minutes I had with each one of them separately. One was interviewed during lunchtime, while the other was interviewed after he'd knocked off from work in the evening.

4.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

The study made use of a qualitative research method, using Focus Group Discussions (FGD). I conducted FGD as a means to obtain additional data from the existing literature. Interviews in FGD are tools I used to collect data in Kasama, in the northern part of Zambia. FGD is a "flexible technique and is adaptable at any stage of the research, and offers an opportunity to explore issues that are not well understood or where there is little prior research on the topic" (Nyumba *et al.*, 2018). FGD is a "group of individuals selected and assembled by the researcher to discuss and comment on a particular topic, presented by the researcher, from their personal experiences" (Powell and Single, 1996: 499, Given, 2006: 8). It was helpful because "the existing knowledge on the subject was inadequate" (Powell and Single, 1996: 500). By using FGD, the aim was to obtain indigenous knowledge on what it means to be *impalume* in Bemba matrilineal society (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, and Mukherjee, 2017: 27). The purpose of FGD is "to explore the topic on which little is known" (Parker and Tritter, 2006: 24). The FGD "employs guided, interactional discussion as a means

of generating the rich details of experiences and reasoning behind certain actions, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes” (Powell & Single, 1996: 499-500). My experience with the first congregation was that the men did not show interest to be part of the interviews after the announcement was made in the church by the secretary. This led me to change my strategy by not announcing anything publicly, but instead I talked to the secretary to identify men who stay at their in-law’s place and convinced them to be part of this research as participants, which worked so well in all three areas.

4.4.2.a) Preparations of Focus Groups

There were three important things needed as I prepared for FGD with Bemba men in Kasama.

Firstly, I had to obtain permission from the UCZ general secretary to conduct the research in the church. The letter from the church was submitted to the ethics department, attached to an ethical clearance application for me to obtain ethical clearance from UKZN in March 2021. However, much of the emphasis was on health and safety for the participants and for myself, since the research was being carried out during the world pandemic of COVID-2019. All health guidelines given by the church (UCZ), the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Ministry of Health in Zambia were followed (see attached).

Secondly, the participants were asked to sign a consent form written in English. However, the consent details were interpreted into the Bemba language that the interview candidates would understand what was involved in the research, and which allowed them to choose to participate or not. A clear explanation of the purpose of the research was given to all participants, along with their right to participate or withdraw. The challenge I had was that some men failed to sign the consent form. Although some men didn’t know how to write, and by western education standards were not very educated, they did know their culture and traditions very well, as passed on to them by word of mouth (see the attached consent form). Some participants at Kamena withdrew from the group on the same day, and the apology given was that they must take their mother-in-law to the hospital. The two men who withdrew had each married sisters, and both were staying together at their in-laws’ place. This is why when she got sick, it was the responsibility of both sons-in-law to take her to the clinic as their wives remained beside her.

Thirdly, the participants were assured that they would remain anonymous. Confidentiality is vital in this research; therefore, the names of the participants will be withheld. The participants will only be known by the congregation they belong to, and by their experiences. Given my position as a trained minister in the church, participants had no problem with my assurance of confidentiality, as they understood my role in the church. Nyumba *et al.* (2018: 23) states that “the facilitator is central to the fruitful discussion by

creating a relaxed and comfortable environment for all participants”. Since I am female, I worked hand in hand with male research assistants who were tasked with helping my participants feel comfortable during the discussion. But being a woman disadvantaged me, in that this kept me from hearing more on the challenges, because men are generally unwilling to reveal their weaknesses to a woman. However, male ministers helped me enormously by discussing issues in detail concerning some of these weaknesses.

Lastly, in order to conduct the FGD in an orderly manner, guided questions were used and these were prepared both in English and Bemba language. (see attached).

4.4.2.b) Structure of the Guiding Questions

The guiding questions were written in English and in Bemba languages. The interview method used was less structured methods of data collection, “with a naturalistic and unstructured interview. That applies that the questions are not asked in order, the interviewee appears less artificial and more natural” (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006: 95).

Thus, the questions used were open-ended, which allowed the participants to feel free to contribute in detail on the subject matter, and enabled me to ask follow-up questions to seek clarity on how *impalume* is perceived and its implications for married men. Cyr states that, “in a focus group, the researcher prepares less structured questions to let participants speak freely on the issue” (Cyr, 2019: 11). The question was split into three parts, defining a man in a general sense, defining *impalume*, and the religio-cultural advantages and disadvantages of being *impalume* (see attached).

4.4.3 Problems Encountered During Data Collection

The first challenge I had was the withdrawal of some participants, which is their right, and something which could not be controlled. Ngozwana (2018: 1) acknowledged that “the ethical challenge that a researcher encounters in qualitative research is the withdrawal from participation even after confirmation”. But I arranged for two other participants within Kasama to cover up the shortfall. Secondly, being a female researcher discussing men’s issues resulted in some men not giving me detailed information. Therefore, I arranged with male reverends who were in charge of the congregations to accompany me. In the last group, the reverend did not accompany me as he was busy preparing for the service of the late Republican President Dr K. Kaunda, whose body was brought to one of his congregations in Kasama for the people to pay their last respects to *impalume shabulwi*. What should be noted here is that the FGD was done during the time

when the nation was in the midst of campaigns for the general election, as well as mourning the first president who had recently passed on.

Thirdly, some participants withdrew at the last minute due to illness in their family, making it difficult to replace them. These were two men at Kamena village whose mother-in-law fell ill and needed to be taken to the clinic on the day of the interviews. In the last group in Lua-Luo, we failed to meet, because on the day agreed we found that the church premises were busy with activities, creating an environment which was not conducive for the discussion to take place. Fortunately, one of the participants offered his place nearby the church, and we sat outside with no disturbances. Since the pastor did not accompany me at Lua-Luo, I had to interview the men as a woman. What I noticed from this group was that when I began, it was difficult for them to feel free to speak on some issues which revealed a failure on their part. I observed that all participants claimed to be *impalume* when asked if they could point any of themselves out as *impalume*. Being an outsider researcher, some words used in FGD were not immediately clear—like the name ‘*likili*’. I thought this was a brand name for a bus common in the area, which is known for being the fastest—when in fact for Bemba men in Kamena it referred to a local beer which makes them drunk faster.

The other challenge I encountered in Kamena and Sampa villages, though we went there on different dates, was the non-compliance with COVID-19 health guidelines. The reverend in charge of the Sampa congregation took me there on a Sunday. We found few people had gathered, and people stared at us as we wore masks while they did not. Thus, my first task was to ask about COVID-19 and remind the church of what the health personnel had said on privations due to COVID-19. Some participants at Kamena and Sampa village told me in Bemba language that:

Ba Reverend Mwisakamana takwaba CORONA kuno mushi, kano ku town.

Literally meaning: Reverend, don't worry there is no CORONA here in the village unless in town (FGD Kamena, 18/06/2021; Sampa, 20/06/2021)

Despite that assurance, I had to repeat what they already knew about COVID-19, and giving them face masks and sanitizing their hands was the first priority above all. After ensuring that all the participants had masked up, with the help of the reverends, we started to explain to them the FGD procedures. According to Siabana as reported in the Mast newspaper, “Chief Mwamba had expressed sadness over some people who were disregarding COVID-19 health guidelines, saying that it is compulsory to wear a mask in his chiefdom both rural and urban” (Siabana, 2021/02/13). It was encouraging to know that his Royal Highness Paramount Chief Chitimukulu Kanyanta Manga II of the Bemba people took the COVID-19 vaccine at the launch of the vaccine campaign in the northern province. The Paramount Chief “called for more effort in

educating the general public, especially in the villages” (Jere, ZANIS reporter, 2021/04/22). This issue was real, as I observed in Sampa and Kamena villages that people were not wearing masks despite knowing that COVID-19 was present. The only group which followed health guidelines were participants at Lua-Luo, who had masks on and provided water to wash our hands at the site. I had to give them the masks I prepared for them, and commended them for following health guidelines. The problem I had was that participants failed to challenge religion’s constructions of masculinity, but only said good things about *impalume*. Maybe the method used or questions formulated did not help in extracting the data in these areas, or perhaps it was because people are not used to challenging church teachings, but easily challenge their culture.

4.4.4 Reliability, Validity, and Rigor

4.4.4.a) Reliability

Reliability “concerns the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides a stable and consistent result. Reliability is also concerned with repeatability” (Taherdoost, 2016). In this research, for it to provide reliable information, I used a recorder at all FGD while taking notes in a book. The recordings were kept safe once I’d finished all the interviews and had time to listen once again to the whole discussion. The recordings are more reliable than note-taking, because the discussions can be replayed many times.

Reliability also “relates to the consistency of a measure. A participant completing an instrument meant to measure motivation should have approximately the same responses each time the test is completed” (Heal & Twycross, 2015). At all FGD, the same questions produced similar answers at all three venues in each of the different locations. The way *impalume*, *insaka*, and marriage were defined, and impressions of how men are constructed in Bemba society, remained consistent. Having the same discussion in three different places and producing the same answers is proof that the data collected and analyzed in this research is reliable.

4.4.4.b) Validity

The place chosen for the research to be conducted and data collected was within the heart of Bemba land. The three locations were far apart from each other, validifying the data collected. The validity of this research is also based on the consent letters from the church, the consent letters signed by participants, and ethical clearance from the university. Validity is defined as “the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a qualitative study” (Heal & Twycross, 2015). The concept used here covers the practice of *impalume* using masculinities as the theoretical framework. The theory was tested through individual

interviews and FGD from which I found that even in matrilineal societies, men still have a dominant role where women are subordinate to men. However, the men who take the dominant role in matrilineal society are brothers, uncles and fathers-in-law, and not the husbands. The husbands and women found themselves in the same category of being subordinate to the same men.

Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Although reliability is essential for this study, reliability alone is not sufficient unless combined with validity. In other words, for a test to be reliable, it also needs to be valid (Wilson, 2010). FGD in all three locations were not done on Zoom or by the use of questionnaires for the participants to fill in, but instead were held in person. I travelled to the areas and met the participants physically, providing an interactive and free space away from others from different places.

In addition, considering that I am female and some men may not feel comfortable discussing this issue with me, three male research assistants helped me to lead the group discussions, and prepared the participants in each of the three locations. Further validity for the data collected is in the profile of participants, shown in the table above.

4.4.4.c) Rigor

Rigor is defined as the “quality or state of being exact, careful, and strict, and trustworthy” (Cypress, 2017). The study allowed participants to air their views on the research topic through the FGD held. Each group was given the same questions, though these discussions were held in different places and at different times. During each discussion, the views of all participants were respected, and all those who wished to withhold information were not forced to do so. Everyone who was present participated willingly, and freely gave me the information according to their understanding. Since the FGD was recorded and notes taken, I was later able to sort the data according to themes while looking at the notes and listening to the detailed discussion carried out in the field. This ensured that the information analyzed in this research is reliable and reflects what transpired during the data collection period. The FGD was done in Bemba language, a language I am familiar with, and which the participants also freely spoke. The methodology employed in this study was reliable in bringing out the information to achieve the objectives of this study.

4.4.5 Data Analysis

Castleberry & Nolen acknowledges that “analyzing data collected from the field is a critical stage for the researcher in the research process” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018: 812). The data analysis stage indicates that

the objective of the study has been met through the data which has been collected. Sapsford & Jupp (2006: 158) says that, “the method of data collection also points to the likelihood of the data being complete, in terms of there being the same information for all the cases” (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006: 158). Analyzing data from qualitative research, I employed the thematic analysis method, using the objectives of the study. Thematic analysis is a “type of qualitative analysis used to analyze classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. It provides the opportunity to code and categorize data into themes” (Ibrahim, 2012). By doing so, “it allowed the researcher to focus on interpreting the data and view it in relation to and in concert with each other” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018: 812). Following the objectives of this study, the analyzed data was presented in Chapter Four, in related themes, looking at how men can be redeemed from abusive cultural practices while maintaining cultural norms. Owino says that, “the description of masculinity as multiple is crucial more when examining faith-based communities where men are often encouraged to ‘Act Like a Man’” (Owino, 2018: 160). Breen states that, “the aim of analyzing focus group discussion is to identify the following: most important themes, most noteworthy quotes, and any unexpected findings” (Breen, 2006: 472). Thus, the data collected during individual and group discussions was categorized in an orderly manner, and participants were coded according to the congregation and area where their focus group discussion took place. After identifying themes, the written and recorded data was analyzed, and critical arguments were raised on the understanding of the religio-cultural perspectives of being *impalume*. The data collected from the field was divided into three categories:

- What it means to be *impalume* for married Bemba men.
- The implications of being *impalume* for married Bemba men.
- How being *impalume* can be redefined, in an attempt to provide positive masculinity for married men in matrilineal society.

The above themes helped me to analyze the data collected from both secondary and primary sources, and helped me in reaching the objective of the study. Thematic analysis was an ideal approach to this study, as it dealt with defining men in Bemba matrilineal society. Themes were drawn from the discussions which arose from the questions posed. The themes were similar in all three field research locations.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter covers the theoretical framework used for this research to reach the objectives set in chapter one. Theories of masculinity were used to measure how *impalume* can be defined and how married men in matrilineal society construct their masculinity. Two theories were identified as suitable: hegemonic and subordinate masculinity. The chapter reviews how hegemonic masculinity is seen in Bemba men as fathers-

in-law, as brothers, and as uncles. Fathers-in-law are in charge of all family affairs, including that of their sons-in-law. Brothers have authority over their sisters, protecting them and their children and taking care of discipline. A husband's authority is exercised not at his in laws' place where he lives, but instead is held over his sisters. A married Bemba man is subordinate to his father-in-law and to his wife's brothers. Hegemonic and subordinate masculinity proved to be suitable theories when measuring the benefits and challenges of being *impalume* for Bemba married men, while redemptive masculinity is used to explore how the practice of *impalume* affects men in matrilineal society.

The research used a qualitative method, utilizing literature obtained from the library at UKZN and at the Zambia National Archives Centre. Literature from published articles, journal, and also theses and newspapers from scholarly websites was also used. Being an empirical study, ethical clearance was required. This was obtained in the form of consent letters from the church where this research was conducted, and consent forms for all participants were also signed and secured. In order to understand the benefits and effects of the practice of *impalume*, the method used to collect the data was important, as it affected the outcome of the research results. The chapter has indicated how data was collected from Kasama in Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo, in Chief Mwamba's territory in the northern province of Zambia. The data was collected using FGD, guiding questions, a recorder, and by note taking. The next chapter looks at data presentation and analysis to determine the helpfulness of the theory and methodology used in attaining the objectives outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter 5: Religious and Cultural Experiences of *Impalume* in Bemba Matrilineal Society

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at masculinities as a theoretical framework, as Bemba married men incorporate different masculinities as husbands, brothers/uncles and as sons-in-law. This chapter first looks at the presentation of the data collected from the three congregations in Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo, and from the individual interviews conducted within the United Church of Zambia. The data is presented using the first objective to understand what it means to be *impalume* among Bemba married men from their religio-cultural perspective. Though this seems to be tabulated in Chapter Two, the data here is different as it reflects the actual experiences of Bemba married men in terms of how they define themselves today. Secondly, this chapter analyses the data collected by answering the second and third objective of this research: to explore the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men and the implications of being *impalume*. The chapter further analyses how the term '*impalume*' can be redefined to provide positive masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society.

5.2 Understanding *Impalume* from a Cultural Perspective for Married Bemba Men

Although the literature in Chapter Two has reviewed the cultural perspective of being *impalume*, there was a need to know how married Bemba men understand the practice of being *impalume* in today's society. M'kandawire speaks on the importance of culture as something which "influences the activities of people in a particular society, reflected in what they do daily" (M'kandawire, 2019: 2). As M'kandawire alluded to, this chapter is a reflection of what some married Bemba men do every day living in a matrilineal society. Chandler Paul links masculinity with the experience of being a man, as well as with what society or culture proposes it means to be a man (Chandler, 2014: 11). Cultural practices are what make each community different from the other, and men's voices today reflect how different society is now compared to how it's been in the past. Edwards acknowledges that every society has its own way of constructing masculinity, and "in order to aspire to this social classification, there is a particular set of core features that a man should demonstrate" (Edward, 2015: 4). Edwards Aydon mentions such features, which include, "Power, strength, rationality, heterosexuality, risk-taking, dominance, leadership, control and repression of emotions" (Edward, 2015: 5). The following are some of the features of *impalume*.

5.2.1 Being a Married Man

The understanding of marriage in Bemba matrilineal society has been tabulated in Chapter Three of this study, and the definition of *impalume* stipulated in Chapter Two of this study lands within the context of marriage. All the participants were married men within the United Church of Zambia. Through Kapwepwe's writings in *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi*, we can see that for Bemba people, marriage defines a man's status in the society. Taylor S. recognizes that:

Marriage among Bembas is a vital part of gender relations and identity. Historically, it was rare to see adults who had never been married, and marriage remains an important aspect of manhood and womanhood, where masculinity can be identified and produced (Taylor, 2006: 96)

However, the discussions I had with men in all three groups at Kamena, Sampa and Lua-Luo when answering the question "Who is *impalume*?" all gave the same answer, as "a man who has married a woman". The answer by the participants clearly made a distinction between heterosexual marriages and same-sex marriages. According to my understanding, the participants seemed to deem men involved in same-sex-marriages as not qualifying as *impalume*. When asked further why they emphasized marital status, their response was circular: if a man is not married, he is not considered to be *impalume*. Therefore, such a response set the boundaries of the discussion within the heterosexual marriage cycles, which is the focus of the study. One of the participants at the Kamena FGD gave himself as an example when explaining why it's important for a man to marry in Bemba matrilineal society, saying:

When I was single, they called me young boy. After marrying I went to stay at my in-laws' place with my wife, and they called me a man (FGD Kamena, 18/06/2021)

The response above also indicates that after marriage a Bemba man is expected to stay at his in-laws' place, as per the traditional practice of the Bemba people in Kasama. The importance of marriage in Bemba matrilineal society cannot be excluded from discussions on how Marriage and Guidance Committee is chosen in the United Church of Zambia (UCZ). Siwila clearly indicated that, "the Marriage Guidance Committee in the UCZ consists of diverse number of men and women chosen by the congregation, and marriage is still the requirement for membership in this group" (Siwila, 2011: 122). Siwila's statement is an indication of how important marriage is even in the church today, just as it is in traditional Bemba culture. Nevertheless, in as much as marriage is recognised as important in Bemba culture and in the church, Siwila condemns child marriages as "a practice that has affected both the church and the society" (Siwila, 2011: 55). However, in each of the discussions I had with men in all three groups at Kamena, Sampa, and Lua-Luo, it was consistently said that no matter how young the man is, as long as he is married, he will be respected in

the community. The participants further said that in Bemba society, a man who is not married—no matter how old he may be—cannot be called a man, or *impalume*. The participants suggested that being single in Bemba society was not a good thing, because respect was not accorded to such men. Such treatment for single men happens not only in Bemba matrilineal society but also in patrilineal societies.

I also conducted individual interviews, as part of my methodology, with one man who has experienced both staying at in-law's place in Sampa village, and staying away after finding a job in Kasama town. For him, *impalume* is:

Someone who does extraordinary things which others have failed to do. That can only be done by a man who is physically strong, and able to do things that women can't do. For instance, in Bemba land, a man who is able to cut down a big tree faster than his friends is called *impalume* (One-on-one interview, Kasama, 21/06/2021)

This response comes from a participant who managed to leave his in-laws' place when he had only one child with their daughter, and had lived with them for only eight years. According to my observation, he did something exceptional which other participants in this research had failed to do—he was strong and hardworking enough for his in-laws to entrust him to leave, taking their daughter with him. One thing I observed from this participant was his comparison with women when he said that “a man who is physically strong, and able to do things that women can't do”. Even FGD participants tried to demonstrate how they are more capable than women, which they interpreted as a characteristic of an ideal man.

The participants acknowledged that very few men stay at their in-law's place, due to rural-urban migration and mixed marriages. One of the participants in Kamena village, however, was not Bemba by tribe and came from a patriarchal society. He was instead brought up in Bemba land, and married twice in his life, both times to Bemba women, and in both of these marriages he lived with his in-laws. Lungonga shows the power of Bemba culture that, “despite mixing with other cultures after invading new land and marrying their captives, the Bemba people subjected their captives to the manners and customs” (Lungonga, 1963: 27). When further asked how society looks at them for living with their in-laws, all participants agree that some people in society view them as weak men, especially those who do not understand traditional Bemba marriage practices.

5.2.2 Being the Head of the House

It was interesting to hear that even in matrilineal society, a man is the head of the house despite staying at his in-laws' home. The participants reaffirmed that being the head of the house meant taking care of the family, protecting them and providing for them. Being the head incurs many responsibilities, and as one Kamena FGD participant said, "*impalume* is a person who cares for his family". The man gave an example of how he himself lives with his in-laws, describing that:

When my father-in-law passed away, I remained with my mother-in-law. Being a woman, she cannot cut trees or prune the branches, and it's out of such fields that cassava and millet are raised. I have the responsibility to cultivate my mother-in-law's field and my own field (FGD Kamena, 18/06/2021)

The responsibility of *impalume* to take care of their family and in-laws was emphasised, showing that there is not much difference here between their responsibilities and those of men in patrilineal societies. Nanyangwe *et al.* says that "in as much as values such as power, possessions and security were defined as masculine, man is considered the head of the household if he provides basic needs" (Nanyangwe *et al.*, 2020). Interestingly, being a provider in Bemba matrilineal society does not entail the headship of a man in a family as it does in patrilineal societies, instead it requires that the man be strong, responsible, and able to care for the family as the head of his wife.

The death of his father-in-law will hand a son-in-law the responsibility of taking care of his mother-in-law and providing for her. I think that such situations place men in situations where they provide more care for their in-laws than they do their own parents. However, from the individual interviews, the two Bemba men in Kasama had different views on how they take care of their in-laws, since they no longer stay with them. These two Bemba men said that their role was to send money for cultivating the field, seeds, and fertilizer to their in-laws, as part of their contributions and to show their care. When asked if men who fail to take care of their family can be called *impalume*, the participants were all united on this: men who run away from their families because of financial difficulties or other family problems are not real men (*tebaume*, *twaume*). Men "should be strong, and be a family problem solver. When a problem comes, the wife asks the husband to find solutions to the problems" (FGD Lua-Luo, 2021/06/23). Those who work very hard are called *impalume/umwaume*, and the lazy are called *utwaume* (small men). Apart from taking care of the family, a man who is *impalume* is able to unite both the family and the community. Participants at Lua-Luo said that:

A man should be truthful and fair in decision making, and unite the family and the community so that there are no divisions. When the family or community does

not involve you in decision making or any issues, then you are not a man (FGD
 Lua-Luo, 23/06/2021)

A man who can unite the family is also regarded as a wise man, and is involved in community affairs. A man in Bemba society seems to be respected only if he is a hard worker, and if he unites the family. The above statement reveals that Bemba married men are leaders in the community despite staying at with their in-laws. I learnt that in Bemba society, men are respected not because of their financial capacity, but for their wisdom and knowledge. I relate this with Chitando's words, who said:

Traditional culture ordains the man as a decision-maker, to regard him as a man even when he is unemployed. A man has absolute control over his household; if he loses control because of economic or social reasons, he feels frustrated (Chitando, 2012: 73)

I acknowledge that traditionally speaking men are decision-makers even in matrilineal societies. What I observed during my fieldwork was that Bemba married men were leaders both in the Church and in the community, but at home were under the leadership of their fathers-in-law. However, Chitando seems to say that a man has power in decision making even when he is not economically sound—this is not usually so in a matrilineal society. In Bemba matrilineal society, as stipulated above, a man will only be considered in decision making when he proves himself a good father, a good son-in-law, and a good example in the community.

5.2.3 *Impalume* and Fatherhood

Just as it was noted in Chapter Two, children remain important in today's Bemba marriages. A father figure is very important to the children, just like being a father is important to a Bemba man, as it changes how people think of a man, and people start to respect him. Bongo noted that:

The idea of fatherhood is quite central to constructions of masculinity in most cultures. In fact, in some cultures, fatherhood is a defining feature on what it means to be a man. A male who is not associated with biological fathering is looked down upon (Bongo in Chitando and Njoroge, 2013: 49)

The above statement indicates that fatherhood is not only important in defining men in Bemba society, but in all cultures. Therefore, apart from having a wife, the participants also emphasised the need for *impalume* to have children. Producing many children is significant in Bemba culture, as a young man at the Kamena FGD testified:

When I married and moved with my wife into my in-laws' place, after my wife got pregnant, they called me a man (FGD Kamena, 2021/06/18)

The ability to make their wives pregnant came out so strongly in all FGD and individual interviews I held, and participants clarified that a man who fails to make his wife pregnant is not called a *man*. Hence having children qualifies a Bemba man as an ideal man or *impalume*. The participants emphasised the man as a procreator, because men can produce offspring even in their old age, where women have limitations. We see this point being discussed further in Kapwepwe's writings, saying, "When women reach forty-five years, a lot of them stop bearing children, but this is not so with men who can have children even in their old age" (Kapwepwe, 1994: 118). Perhaps menopause is one of the reasons why child marriages are so rampant in Zambia—to start having children earlier in life. According to the participants, having children is very important, as it proves that they are indeed men. Men can have children even in their old age as they don't experience menopause (*abaume ubufyashi tabupwa*). At a group discussion at Sampa village, the men agreed that:

Having two or three children, you have not reached the level of being *impalume*, unless you have twelve children from one wife (FGD Sampa, 20/06/2021)

A follow-up question was made to hear more from other participants as to why men with few children cannot be called *impalume*. They were further asked if it was okay for them to have many children when they fail to take care of all the necessities children need in order to grow up as responsible adults. Some Christian men quoted the Genesis scripture, not recognising that the same scripture teaches responsibility. Others referred to how their parents sustained them through agriculture in the old days. We stopped asking questions along this line because the discussion became heated, and I saw that men were defending themselves for having many children despite their low financial status.

5.2.4 Being Morally Good and Knowing Life Skills

The participant from Sampa village described what *insaka* was all about, detailing it as a place where young boys spent time with their elders who taught them how to live with others in the community. When asked a follow-up question on how they teach their boys today, the participant responded that they are taught within their home space by the fathers, though this can be challenging, as they have little time to talk to their sons given that most of their children's time is spent at school. This indicates some changes to the transmission of cultural knowledge from elders to young ones, showing the shift from a young man being taught by elders in the community, to being taught by his parents or guardians. Among the participants, some were privileged to have learnt at *insaka*. As one man at Lua-Luo described:

I grew up at *insaka*, where elders taught us how to respect. Whether you are tired when an elder send for you, you have to do the work. If you refuse to your elders, you will not eat nice food at *insaka*. It was at *insaka* that we were taught some life skills, like making reed mats (*amatanda*) and buckets (*imiseke*) (FGD Lua-Luo, 23/06/2021)

When I read about *insaka*, I thought these things happened a long time ago, not knowing that I would be privileged to meet men who were taught at *insaka*. This man's insights were enriching to hear as he talked about how the elders used to discipline the young ones who disobeyed or ignored their elders. He also pointed out a difference between those who grew up going to *insaka* and those who did not. The respondents confirmed that people taught at *insaka* are still alive, indicating that *insaka* still existed not too long ago. The man boasted of how *insaka* enriched them and shaped them into men who have good morals and respect for elders, unlike today's children who have no respect for elders. However, my question was: Why did the elders stop such teachings, and stop shaping the young ones to be better people in the community?

Although *insaka* is no longer physically there, the participants told me that they have time to meet with friends and discuss how to be ideal men in society. The friendships they have created within the community give them some authority to rebuke their friends' children if found doing something wrong, especially at Kamena and Sampa village. When I asked the participants if such skills are being taught today, they told me that the skills they learnt at *insaka* are still being passed on to young boys today, but that this depends on the person's level of interest, as school takes up most of their children's time. (FGD Sampa, 2021/06/20)

5.2.5 Being Recognised as *Impalume* by Other People Through Hard Work

During the discussion with men in Kasama, I learnt that an individual could not claim the word *impalume*. Society calls a man *impalume* after seeing how hardworking he is within the community and how dependable he is in his marriage. Participants revealed that there are two types of *impalume*, and Chapter Two explains how the masculinity of these two types of *impalume* are constructed. The first requires a man to be assertive and without fear, that he may fight in battles and be victorious for the larger community's benefit. The other required a man to be married, have children, and to work hard for the benefit of his family. According to the Kaunda and Kaunda, "being *impalume* entails being strong, to protect the family in case of any calamity" (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 9). We see also the emphasis by Chitando on physical strength and courage, as one of the characteristics of being an ideal man (Chitando, 2007: 115).

The Bemba chiefs who fought in battles and took over the Mambwe-Lungu land are also called *impalume* because they were victorious. As a participant at Lua-Luo FGD explained:

Impalume is put into two categories: *Impalume kubulwi* (war) and *impalume* to the in-laws. *Impalume* have to work hard and give the in-laws a helping hand. *Impalume kubulwi* are seen on the battlefield. Usually, they are in front, and people can see how they fight their enemies (FGD Lua-Luo, 23/06/2021)²

In Bemba Kasama, all participants identified Paramount Chitimukulu, Nkole, Mwamba and all Bemba chiefs as *impalume shabulwi* because they fought the Mambwes and Lungu people and chased them from Kasama. The participants' descriptions of *impalume shabulwi* pointed not to current chiefs, but the first chiefs who fought for Bemba land and defended the Bemba people. The participants further said that *impalume* also take part in the governance of the country, and help the community to keep peace. Apart from Bemba chiefs, participants described the late president Kenneth Kaunda as *impalume yabulwi*, because he fought for the independence of the country; he was not fighting for his family but for the country. Hence, Dr K.K. Kaunda, after his death, was recognised as *impalume yachalo*. The Melody Church Choir in the United Church of Zambia in Chililabombwe Copperbelt province, composed a song entitled *Twalufya Impalume* meaning 'we have lost an ideal man' in honour of the late president Dr. K.K.Kaunda (*Twalufya Impalume*, YouTube, 2021).³ Therefore, *impalume* as defined by one participant is described in this way:

He is someone who has done extraordinary things. Even when he dies, he is remembered and his works are seen by many." He then gave an example of the late president Kaunda, who was mourned countrywide and whose works will be remembered in the history of the country (One-on-one interviews, Kasama, 21/06/2021).

There is no victory without warriors, and warriors are strong, courageous men who have been responsible for defending and protecting the family and society. The word *impalume*, as stated in Chapter One, has been used in the Zambian national anthem Bemba translation, in line three. According to Chishiba *et al.*, "*impalume* has been used as an equivalent word for 'victor'" (Chishiba *et al.*, 2017: 53). The Zambian national anthem was "adopted at independence by the Zambian people as a song for patriotism and solidarity, expressing a national identity and evoking and acclaiming the history and struggles of the country and its people" (Chishiba, Mutale, and Musonda, 2017: 50). The word *impalume* in the national anthem describes *impalume shabulwi*, who are victorious. That victory was achieved because some made sacrifices

³ Melody Church Choir, The United Church of Zambia, 2021. *Twalufya Impalume*. <https://youtu.be/jiCXkIEiN24>.

for their nation, resulting in Zambia's independence from the British. These were strong men who fought for Zambia's independence. The word *impalume* reminds me of the song by Pastor R.K. Kanyembo (audio on YouTube), Zambia Gospel from Kazembe, of the Lunda tribe. In the song, he speaks of being *impalume shabulwi* for acquiring independence from the colonial masters (YouTube, found on New Zambian gospel 2020). This shows us that the word *impalume* is not just used by the Bembas of Kasama, but appears even in Luapula Province with the same meaning.

Lastly, when asked if it is easy to attain the title of *impalume*, the participants acknowledged that while this is hard to achieve, men strive and work extra hard to attain it so that they don't embarrass their parents or family. When further asked if any among them were *impalume*, some responded that they are known as *impalume* by their in-laws and in the community, as seen in the way the in-laws respect them, which has resulted in them staying many years at their in-laws' place. However, I observed that very few strive to attain the honour, because the practice of being *impalume* is not embraced by all married Bemba men. The Bemba practice of being *impalume* is challenged by modern ways of being an ideal man, for example with a paid wage or by being involved in business. The other challenge of the practice is mixed marriages, where Bemba girls are married off to other tribes who don't practice *impalume*.

5.3 Understanding of *Impalume* from a Religious Perspective for Married Bemba Men

The participants were Christian men who attended the Church where the FGDs were carried out. Therefore, it was important to ask them how they understand *impalume* from a theological perspective. In exploring the participants' understanding of *impalume*, the concept of Jesus and the church leaders as *impalume* was considered.

5.3.1 Jesus as *Impalume*

The understanding of *impalume* in the church, by participants from all groups, related to Jesus in the Bible as an example of a man who was *impalume*, who fought the battle, and who was victorious. This was observed from the songs sung in Bemba during the church service I attended at Sampa village and in the media by gospel artists. A song by Stay Zimba speaks of Jesus as *impalume* who can be called upon in times of trouble (Zimba, 2016, *Yesu Empalume*, YouTube). The song reminds believers that Jesus is able to carry any burden, because he is stronger than others as *impalume*. The general view of participants from all FGD was that:

Yesu nimpalume mulukuta pantu alitulubula kububifi

Literally meaning: “Jesus is *impalume* because he has delivered us from sin.”

It was easy for men to associate Jesus with being *impalume*, as they seem to look to him as their role model for fighting the battle and standing victorious. From what I saw, they felt comfortable associating Jesus with being *impalume*, despite the fact that Jesus did not marry and so had no in-laws and no children to take care of. The reason for this could be that even the first Chitimukulu remained unmarried and did not father children. According to the participants’ interpretation, Jesus is well known in the Church as *impalume* due to his works. At the Sampa congregation, a youth choir (known as “Jerusalem Choir”) sang in the service before the FGD, speaking of Jesus as *impalume* whose works are unexplainable. The chorus went as follows:

*Nani wingalumbula ifyabumpalume bwakwe? *2*

Meaning: “Who can mention his greatness?”

*Nokulenga fwufwike nokumutasha *2*

Meaning: “Make it known and thank him.” (FGD Sampa, 20/06/2021)

We see that the song’s composer refers to Jesus as *impalume*; this is a clear reflection that teachings of Jesus as *impalume* are common in the church. The youth associate themselves with him and aspire to be like him by showing good conduct and by leading as an example for other youth to follow. The church, therefore, does not only teach men hard work but also to train their minds, and they are reminded by these songs which refer to Jesus as *impalume*. The song gave me hope for the FGD, which was scheduled after the service, as the people I was about to meet were clearly very much familiar with the word ‘*impalume*’.

5.3.2 Church Leaders as *Impalume*

At the time the interviews were conducted, some of the participants held leadership roles in the church, other participants were past leaders, and some were just members. This gives us an idea of why many participants described their church leaders as *impalume*. According to the participants at Sampa FGD, *impalume* in the church is any man who has good morals, fears God, and is respected in the community and at home; a man who is able to preach and able to take part in church activities; a man who is able to lead and plan for the development of the church; someone the church depends on for decision making; someone who is generous; someone who leads by example.” (FGD Sampa, 20/06/2021)

When the church undergoes any positive development, for the participants, the leaders are described as *impalume*. Working hard as leaders qualifies one to be called *impalume*. I observed that the majority of the leaders in the church where participants attend services were men, and that these men were known among

the congregants as *impalume*. Hard work as a determining factor in classifying a man as *impalume* can be traced from cultural and missionary teachings on how to be an ‘ideal man’.

As stipulated by Songwigi, “the teachings of both culture and missionaries encouraged men to be hard workers in providing for their families. Thus, men have been constructed and affected through culture, religion and colonial experiences”(Songwigi, 2019: 15).

For a Bemba man in the Church, teachings on being a hard worker are not strange. This is because traditionally it is required of every man that he be called *impalume*. In addition, when discussing the factor of generosity in men, in all FGD the participants brought out the importance of hard work. The participants defined *Impalume* in the Church as someone who is a hard worker. According to the participants Christianity is not about paying lip service but being hard workers. They gave Jesus as an example of a man who was *impalume* from the beginning to the end of his work. *Impalume* is someone who works hard, help the poor, generous in the Church, take care of the orphans, listen to God’s word and obey the rules of the Church.

Such a description of *Impalume* may even apply to all Christians, including women. But the description was in clearer reference to men, which puts them under pressure to work very hard both at home and at church in order to be counted among *impalume*. At Sampa UCZ, the youth choir enlivened both the service and my research without even knowing it, as they sang a song praising such men as *impalume* and comparing them to Jesus, a hard worker. The song says that “when such men die, people cry and say they have lost *impalume*”. Surprisingly for me during the service, the youth choir also sang the song which depicted the challenges of being *impalume* in the Church—that others celebrate the death of such hardworking men, saying now they might also be recognised in leadership positions.

Society must decide that you are indeed *impalume* from what they see. Even *impalume* in the church must be approved by the family, where his masculinity is shaped every day. One man, who was once in leadership at Kamena FGD congregation, said that:

Being *impalume* at the church—let me give myself as an example. It’s not pride; when we were in leadership, we bought chairs, harvested beans, millet and groundnuts, and people appreciated this and said we had worked as *impalume*
(FGD Kamena, 20/06/2021)

The response seems to shift from an individual point of view to a group victory. *Impalume* here is defined as being united by engaging in teamwork and planning together. He speaks using “we” and not “I” in the

leadership, as achieving what he achieved required other people's involvement. They worked with him to reach these goals at the church during his tenure in the office. Being a leader, people acknowledging and appreciating someone's work in the church makes a man feel that he is someone who can bring development at home and in the church. The group said that *impalume* are remembered for their good works. They are respected and they become examples in their communities, inspiring the young boys to be like them. Although in this research, the participants at FGD acknowledged that some men who are known as *impalume* are too proud and boastful (*ifilumba*) because of how people praise them.

We see that both from the cultural and religious understanding of *impalume*, working hard is emphasised for all married men in Bemba culture.

5.4 Analysis on the Religio-Cultural Perspectives Among Married Bemba Men of Being *Impalume*, and How It Affects the Construction of Their Masculinity

Having looked at married Bemba men experiences and how they understand Impalume, there is need to analyse the data collected from the field and through the available literature. In doing this, we want to understand what it means to married Bemba men to be *impalume*, from their religio-cultural perspective. However, matrilineal society teaches us that women as sisters and wives are more protected by their brothers and fathers than their husbands. We can draw many positive lessons from Bemba men living under the authority of their in-laws. It takes courage, humility, love, faithfulness, endurance, perseverance, and good moral conduct for a man to accept living at his in-laws' property, in this era, for such a substantial length of time. What does it mean to be *impalume* in Bemba matrilineal society? The following are the common recurring themes which I picked up from the field and from literature.

5.4.1 Headship

What should be noted is that, when we talk of headship, we mean headship in the context of marriage and leadership in the church. The notion of headship has been criticised by some feminist and masculinity scholars as it promotes male dominance and female subordination. Klinken describes cultural or religious notions of male headship as "obstacles to achieve the transformation of masculinities that are essential for overcoming social challenges" (Klinken 2011: 111). The research found that headship in Bemba matrilineal society does not mean male dominion over women and children. Therefore, it is not an obstacle, but instead is helpful in overcoming dominant notions of masculinity. Chitando and Chirongoma encourage that men should not be left out in discussions of these social challenges because "men provide leadership in the home,

communities and nations. The quality of leadership demonstrated at these various levels has a direct bearing on the success in response to social challenges” (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2005: 66-67). Thus, headship here is used to criticise dominating, oppressive and violent performances of masculinity” (Klinken 2011: 114).

Kapwepwe explains that headship for married Bemba men is “to lead the family, feed them, protect both his wife and children, and to be a hard worker” (Kapwepwe 1994: 88). Headship in Bemba society, as explained by Kapwepwe, is different from the version found in patrilineal societies, where men’s headship corresponds with them having authority over women. In Bemba’s matrilineal marriage, though the husband is ‘*umutwe nacibinda wang’anda*’, meaning ‘the head and master of the household’, he portrays his hegemonic masculinity positively even when living at his in-laws’ place (Mupeta, 2014: 38). The headship which is similar to that found in patrilineal societies can be related to the power the fathers-in-law, uncles, and brothers have in matrilineal society. Such men have more authority over women, children and their fellow men.

The church teaching on headship in marriage comes with the responsibilities of being a provider. Men feel as though they are embodying their masculinity when they can provide for the family, bringing respect and showing how they conquer hunger and poverty at home. The practice of *impalume* as a provider for own family gives the man a sense of pride and dignity, despite him staying at his in-law’s place and working their land. When a man can provide, he creates a good relationship with his in-laws, but the lazy man is chased off or not allowed to marry. It helps men to understand that marriage comes with responsibility, and having children calls for responsible parenting. Songwigi looks at how:

“The missionary teachings on an ideal man were of one who will be the provider for his household and community. Men have been moulded and affected through culture, religion, and colonial experiences.” (Songwigi, 2019:15)

Being a provider in Bemba matrilineal society was equated to being *impalume*, an ideal man. This shows that even in matrilineal society, men are providers of their family. Being *impalume* in Bemba society “entails being hardworking, dependable and caring” (Kaunda & Kaunda, 2012: 17). This is so, even though in Bemba culture a man’s legal entitlements and rights of inheritance are on his mother’s side. Further, being *impalume* in Bemba society marks the moment when a male ceases to be a minor.

Generally speaking, masculinity in rural Zambia is “associated with the value placed on hard physical work, toughness, dependability, strength, and the ability to succeed as a farmer” (Cole *et al.*, 2015: 158). The Bemba worldview traditionally exemplifies a man who is able to climb trees and cut branches (*ukutema/ukusaila*). It is relevant to note that the Bemba people are specialised in the shifting cultivation system called *chitemene*. In their view, *chitemene* was not just for food production, had a ritual significance, and in part exemplifies what it means to be a Bemba man. In the Bemba thought, *ubupalume* (warriorism) and *impalume* (warrior) were associated with the measure of manliness. A man who failed to climb a tree and cut tree branches was not considered an ideal man in society. “The men were required to climb the trees and cut their branches from the top (*ukusaila*), and the ability displayed in reaching the topmost branches of the tree and skilfully lopping them off was a measure of masculinity. This cultural system, called *chitemene*, has ritualistic significance, because it is used as an example of what it means to be a Bemba man” (Kaunda 2016:184).

In today’s society, men “have been brought up to believe that a ‘real man’ is complete and self-sufficient. In fact, a ‘real man’ is supposed to be the ultimate provider. In turn, he lacks nothing. A man who seeks help is regarded as feminine. A man must not request assistance from friends, family members, or work mates. The ideal man is one who never seeks help or places a great burden on other men” (Chitando E. & Mabizela, 2013: 47). But this leaves the man “burdened by expectations of meeting all financial demands for the family, which indigenous cultures and missionary religions such as Christianity are prescribing” (Mangena, Chitando, Mswati, 2016:8).

5.4.2 Respect

Nanyangwe noted that, in Bemba society, “respect signifies control or dominance over people and resources, and it is the responsibility of girls and women to ensure that boys and men are highly respected. A man respected by his wife commands much respect from other people in the community” (Nanyangwe *et al.*, 2020: 2). However, the husband remains the head of the home and requires to be respected by his wife (Dahlback *et al.*, 2003: 53). These teachings help girls not to disrespect their husbands even if they stay at the woman’s parents place. In Malawi, the Chewa matrilineal society will “respect the man if in the community he is known to be wise and hard working. If he is not a hard worker, the man suffers from being described as ‘a stranger in his wife’s village’, as the man worked gardens that were not his own, and had children that did not belong to him” (Phiri, 1983:260).

However, “during marriage counselling, the husband is taught to treat the wife with respect, and not to enslave her. In addition, adultery is totally forbidden in Bemba marriages, and one must never ever think of it” (Lumbwe, 2004: 86-88). Deserving men are accorded the ceremony known as *amatebeto/ukwingisha* by their in-laws. *Amatebeto/ukwingisha* is a ceremony where the in-laws prepare different types of traditional food to thank their son-in-law for caring for their daughter. It’s a way of appreciating the man’s good heart and care for the family. It allows him to be at ease with his in-laws, eating with them and entering their house freely. “After *ukwingisha*, one acquires a higher social status and respect, and is often consulted on matters related to marriage and other community issues” (Lumbwe, 2004: 123). This ceremony “is not performed for every married man, but only for those who are caring, loving and hardworking husbands and fathers (*impalume*). One has to display the set and accepted mode of behaviour within his home, clan and the entire community to be accorded this prestigious ceremony” (Lumbwe, 2004:123).

Although Isabel Phiri and Mutale Kaunda speak on marriage teachings for women as being based on submission to the husband (Phiri, 2007: 40, Kaunda, M., 2013: 21), my observation from the literature collected showed women to be more loyal to their parents and brothers than to their husbands. Submission to some extent is questionable, as to what extent does a woman submit to a man who works her father’s land? A good son-in-law makes the mother-in-law “cook food for her sons-in-law, for they are not to lose respect from their in-laws’ (FGD Sampa, 20/06/2021). Giving food to a son-in-law “signifies authority and prestige. With such hospitality, the son in-law is obliged to reciprocate by working hard at his in-laws’ land” (Richards, 1969/1995: 135). Moreover, the giving and receiving of cooked food symbolises the legal and economic relationship between sons-in-law and parents-in-law. Also, “it is a woman’s pride to show respect to her husband or son-in-law” (Rasing, 2001: 66). One of the things which all groups were eager to mention when asked about the benefits of staying with their in-laws was being given food. This shows that, in Bemba culture, “generosity was a required virtue in women, and was highly perceived as a motivational goal for unity in families and communities” (Nanyangwe *et al.*, 2020: 672). Therefore, to the son-in-law, food signifies the respect that his mother-in-law gives him as appreciation for the work he has done in the field. The mother-in-law prepares good food for the hardworking son-in-law to show appreciation. Cooking and serving food is the role of the women in Bemba matrilineal society. Therefore, we see that in Bemba matrilineal society gender roles are also stipulated like in patrilineal society, a study which need to be explored more in matrilineal societies.

5.4.3 Protecting the Family

Taylor describes life for women as being harder, stating “in all aspects of life; family, social, economic, and legal, in Zambia and in Africa in general, things are simply harder for women than they are for men”

(Taylor, 2006: 92). In as much as some literature portrays men as dangerous to women and children, there is something good that we can learn from men in Bemba matrilineal society. Chitando warns African scholars not to always think negatively about African cultural practices, because:

A preoccupation with such negative traits might easily lead to false conclusion that African traditional religion does not make any positive contributions to the HIV epidemic. Such a conclusion reinforces the portrayal of Africa and its traditions as ‘hopeless and lost’. This should be challenged, as there are many positive beliefs and practices in African traditional and religions that are helpful in the struggle against HIV (Chitando, 2007: 81)

The above statement by Chitando is an indication that though he condemns men’s behaviour towards women and children in most of his writings, he acknowledges that there is something positive to learn from African cultural practices. Kapwepwe in *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi* has shown how Bemba men should be caring, strong, and protective of their family. Furthermore, in looking at Bemba traditional marriage practices, Kapwepwe portrays a peaceful marriage for the family where men are not dangerous but friendly to women and children.

While many women experience gender-based violence (GBV) in their marriages, the women in matrilineal marriages are at peace, enjoying the protection of their parents and brothers. The practice of *impalume* gives a sense of security to the family, which includes food security and marriage security, and which offers protection for family members and property. In Bemba society, the husband is “regarded as the crocodile that provides everything, just as a chief does for his people” (Lumbwe, 2004: 85). Bango, speaking on masculinity and violence, points out that “religion, culture and tradition have positioned men as guardians over others, and have socialised them to hold the special responsibility of heading and protecting the family” (Bango, 2013: 34). Bango further condemns “men who are protective of women related to them, but many are not willing to extend the same protection to women who are not related to them” (Bango, 2013: 34).

In Bemba matrilineal society, “the brother’s role is to protect his sister, and be the guardian of his sister’s children as they are of the same clan name and are his heirs. This is why he considers them his closest relatives” (Abendroth, 2012: 370). In addition, Bemba marriages are focused on protecting women from being abused by their husbands, hence their parents and brothers staying near to them because they carry the brothers heirs. But such an environment may not be favourable to the man, who may be verbally or physically abused by his in-laws since they provide accommodation and a farm for him. Hegemonic masculinity in matrilineal society is

fixed on how hardworking a man is in caring for his family, as this is what will qualify him to be called *impalume*; it is not judged by how much he exercises his authority over his family (Kapwepwe, 1994: 48). It should be noted here that though polygamous marriages do exist in matrilineal society among Bembas, traditionally speaking, “the Bemba people do not subscribe to polygamy, and this grants marriage security for both the man and the woman in accordance with Christian teachings” (Kaunda, 2019: 143).

5.5 The Implications of Being *Impalume*

The themes from this study emerged from both the field work and the existing literature read and organised based on their negative implications. Bemba men seem to find themselves in a complicated space, looking at both traditional and Christian teachings on what constitutes an ‘ideal man’. The research has raised some issues which affect men negatively, and there is need for theologians and scholars in masculinity studies to address these. I understand and acknowledge that there is more to be done concerning how women are treated in society and in the church, but that does not stop us from discussing men’s challenges in matrilineal society.

Therefore, from this study, there are three themes which I understand to be of importance and relevance to masculinity and religious-cultural studies for married men in matrilineal society. These are slave labour in Bemba tradition culture, economic vulnerability of Bemba married men, and gender-based violence in Bemba matrilineal society where Bemba masculinities are peaceful and protective towards women and children.

5.5.1 Unpaid Work in Bemba Traditional Culture

The research shows that Bemba men work hard in their in-laws’ fields as well as tending their own field, which is on the land of their in-laws. According to Kapwepwe, laziness is discouraged in Bemba matrilineal society. Every man is encouraged to “work hard, provide for his family, and take care of his in-laws (Kapwepwe, 1994:20). As stipulated by Kapwepwe, those who are lazy were given names and were not qualified to be called *impalume*, which is a desire for every Bemba married man in traditional Bemba society. I observed that in the quest to be called *impalume*, a Bemba married man works very hard to please the in-laws and his wife. As a result, men are overworked, do not have enough rest, and are abused by being given huge portions of work just to prove to their in-laws that they are hard workers.

In traditional Bemba culture, as stated in Chapter Four by Kapwepwe above, it is the responsibility of the father-in-law to train his son-in-law to be a hard worker and provide for his wife and family. Rasing speaking on a newly married Bemba man says that:

the man has to work for several years for the in-laws' to prove his worth as a husband and a father. During this period, the in-law could punish him if he fails to carry out his duties and women in the village could treat him badly (Rasing, 2001: 59)

According to my observation, that is why a married Bemba man is subjected to what I may call slave labour, and cannot complain lest he be considered lazy. The married Bemba man works extra hard, so much so that it becomes difficult for his in-laws to release him and allow him to become independent. The married Bemba man continues to play a subordinate role, for he has no absolute power where he lives with his wife, and must defer to his in-laws. The in-laws benefit more from their son-in-law's work than his own parents. In Bemba matrilineal society, therefore, the sons-in-law were the main contributors to the development of their in-laws' field and property. The participants accepted that they feel as if they are being used, and sometimes it demoralises them to develop land that does not belong to them. Phiri, I. writing on *Some Changes in the Matrilineal Family System Among the Chewa of Malawi Since the Nineteenth Century*, noted that:

Matrilineal marriages and the position of a man appeared as a barrier to economic development because the man is a stranger in his wife's village, hence being reluctant to invest his effort and money into the land given to him by his in-laws, fearing that sooner or later he will be called upon to leave the land if they separate or he divorces from his wife (Phiri, 1983: 260)

Unfortunately, despite all these inhumane treatments, some Bemba men do not leave their in-laws' home. This is because they feel loved, cared for, and respected by their in-laws, compared to their parents. The participants smiled when they described how caring their in-laws were, especially when sick and on the days when they worked on their in-laws' fields. The in-laws cook a big chicken without cutting it into pieces, and prepare *nshima* (*ubwali*, *pap*, *ugali*) for their son-in-law to give to him when he comes in from the field. *Nshima* is the staple food in Zambia, usually eaten twice or three times in a day. It is a very thick porridge made from maize flour known as 'mielie meal'. Being served a full chicken and *nshima* is the highest respect in Bemba land which an in-law can offer their son-in-law. But that does not correspond to the work a man does at his in-laws' place; his labour cannot be compared to the chicken given to him. Men work very hard in matrilineal marriages, though a great deal of literature fights for women's rights for land and claims that women play an essential role in food production.

While Ene-Obeng, Onuoha, & Eme in *Gender Roles, Family Relationships and Household Foods and Nutrition Security in Ohanfia Matrilineal Society in Nigeria*, speaks of the rights for women being marginalised over owning land, despite that the same land is owned by her brother and father. Very few fight for men who work hard on the land which is not theirs (Ene-Obeng, Onuoha, & Eme, 2017). Peter, in *Our Daughters Inherit the Land, But our Sons Use Their Wives' Fields: Matrilineal-Matrilocal Land Tenure and the New Land Policy in Malawi* speaks for men in the towns and working in matrilineal society (Peters, 2010). The study shows that in a matrilineal society, men work very hard to feed the family and their in-laws. Perhaps they work even harder than women.

5.5.2 Vulnerability of Married Bemba Men

One will wonder how men in matrilineal society can be vulnerable, because many people see men as powerful individuals who can control things and do what they want. As Morrell & Ouzgane says, “the concept of masculinities provides a way to understand that not all men have the same power and the same opportunities” (Morrell & Ouzgane, 2005: 4). That is true of married men in Bemba matrilineal society, in the way parents-in-law treat them. Kaunda & Kaunda state that “male identity and power over women is sustained by a wife’s financial dependence on her husband in Bemba society” (Kaunda & Kaunda, 2012: 11). Traditionally speaking, in Bemba society, a married man has less power over his wife and children. The findings in the field revealed that the practice of *impalume* makes a man dependent on his wife’s family for economic survival. Despite working as a slave at his in-laws’ place, the Bemba man is not economically empowered. This is seen when divorce or the death of a wife occurs. The man has to leave everything he has worked for, including the house and the field, and start afresh. No one will allow him to continue staying at his in-laws’ place. But for a woman, when death or divorce occurs, she remains with a house and the field, which her brothers protect on her behalf. Death and divorce make a Bemba man vulnerable economically, as he has to go and start new to build his life at his father’s place, or elsewhere.

As much as we advocate for women to be treated well in marriages, if we are to achieve gender equality there is a need to advocate for men in matrilineal society. In a matrilineal society, when death or divorce occur, women do not lose access to their land or their children—but men do. In Bemba culture, a man’s legal entitlements and inheritance rights are on his mother’s side. He has no rights to any investments made at his in-laws’ place (Tembo, 2013). No matter how hardworking the Bemba man may be, upon the death of his wife or dissolution of marriage, the man goes back to his mother’s clan without any property, which puts him in a vulnerable and subordinate position. Maybe that is why “Bemba men mainly engage

themselves more in subsistence farming and not commercial farming, because they know that they will not benefit, unlike Tongas who are engaged in medium and large-scale farming” (Nayangwe *et al.*, 2020: 674). We see the debate in the literature on matrilineal marriages. While some fight to grant women access to land ownership, others are fighting for men to own land as husbands in matrilineal marriages. In *Gender Roles, Family Relationships and Household Foods and Nutrition Security in Ohanfia Matrilineal Society in Nigeria* (2017), Ene-Obeng, Onuoha, & Eme speak of the rights for women who are marginalised in issues of land ownership, despite the fact that the same land is owned by these women’s brothers and fathers. These two conflicting experiences are true for both examples. How can we redress the situation, and enable a man in this position to receive shares equal to his wife, even after divorce or when death occurs? Peter Pauline, writing on *Our Daughters Inherit our Land, But Our Sons Use their Wives’ Fields: Matrilineal-Matrilocal Land Tenure and the New Land Policy in Malawi*, acknowledge that the new policy challenges the Malawian practice of men using their wives’ fields. This gives men an advantage, where they may have equal shares of land with women in matrilineal society (Peter, 2010).

The other vulnerability of a man in Bemba matrilineal society is that, when divorce occurs, the children remain with the wife’s kin and the man goes back without children. This shows how a Bemba wife has more power over the children than her husband, because “the Bemba stress the link between a man with his sister. Children belong to their mother’s clan” (Misengo, 2002: 9). Though I acknowledge that laws have been put in place in the country that make men responsible for their children even after divorce, the woman will still remain with the children because, economically speaking, the man has no financial capacity to provide for the children. Hence, the divorced man in matrilineal society goes back to his parents as a single man with no children, and can no longer be called *impalume*.

Married Bemba men are disempowered, as their in-laws have more authority than they do in economic decision-making. Taylor’s assertion that “in all aspects of life, family, social, economic, and legal in Zambia and Africa, in general, things are simply harder for women than for men” has “wider implications beyond issues of fairness” (Taylor, 2006: 92). Taylor’s statement reveals the extent of interest scholars have shown in looking at women’s vulnerability, while closing their eyes to vulnerable men. Togarasei in *Christianity and Hegemonic Masculinities: Transforming Botswana Hegemonic Masculinity using the Jesus of Luke* stated that “hegemonic masculinity dominates both men and women, and it is as a result of the predominant culture giving power and privilege to those who own the culture” (Togarasei, L. 2013:2). In this case, the head of the family in Bemba traditional society is the father-in-law, who is in charge of all his sons-in-law, as they are all under his leadership. Since men are shaped to be breadwinners of the family both in patrilineal and matrilineal societies:

In the absence of jobs, money, no education and no proper farm to help him be financially stable, such men are marginalised and seen as not ideal men by themselves or by society, and are not socially recognised as adult men. Thus, it's difficult for them to marry (Green, 2009: 290, Barker and Ricardo, 2005: 7)

In Bemba society, such men are called lazy men (*mbokoya*), as stated above by Kapwepwe, and they find it difficult to marry because no one in the community would like a lazy son-in-law. Consequently, such men are marginalised by their community and family. Men who do not have resources may look up to those who do.

In both patrilineal and matrilineal systems, land and property are passed on through the male relatives of a figurehead. This figurehead is male in a patriarchal system, and female in a matrilineal system" (Chapoto, Jayne and Mason, 2006: 3). In matrilineal society, the land is passed from uncle to nephew, grandfather to grandson. Women in matrilineal societies are not accorded the same power given to men in patrilineal societies. Per Bemba tradition, a married Bemba man has no rights to the land his in-laws give him to cultivate, though his wife does, as the land in question belongs to her father. In terms of land ownership in matrilineal society, though a woman does not benefit directly from land ownership, she does so indirectly through her brothers or sons. Matrilineal marriages render men powerless, as they are not given the authority to own land. This was made clear in the focus group discussions, where many of the participants were still under the authority of their in-laws despite having lived with them for some time. No man among the participants has land in his own name, apart from those who have left their in-laws.

Peter Pauline, in her writing on matrilineal society in Malawi, noted that "inheritance and succession run through the female line, which includes children but excludes men. That is because the conjugal bond between husband and wife is often weaker than the sibling bond between brothers and sisters" (Peter, 2010). In Nigeria, Ene-Obeh examines gender roles, family relations, food and security in Ohafia matrilineal society. Although Ene-Obeh speaks on how matrilineal rule of succession and inheritance favour men over women, we notice that in Bemba marriages (though it is men as fathers and brothers who inherit the land), "Bemba married men have no such privileges as sons-in-law or as husbands" (Ene-Obong, Onuaha, I. and Eme, 2017: 2). How can a man be the head of the house and be called *impalume* without having his own land? Where will his children or daughters live with their husbands when they get married?

According to Kaunda M.M. & Kaunda C.J., “male identity and power over the women are currently sustained in Bemba society by the wife’s financial dependence upon her husband” (Kaunda M. and Kaunda C., 2012: 11). Kaunda said that, contrary to Rasing’s assertion regarding men who live with their in-laws, “they become economically dependent on their wife’s relatives” (Rasing, 2001: 59). The Bemba married man, from what I have observed in the field, relies on his wife’s family for land and to make sure that he remains in the marriage, as this is the only means for him to benefit from what he has invested in his in-laws. A man living at his in-law’s place therefore “experiences problems in marriage when he fails to take care of his parents-in-law by working for them in the field” (Kapwepwe, 1994: 34). That is one way of men oppressing their fellow men, and there is a need for men to redeem themselves by speaking out against such injustices. In as much as I acknowledge that in a matrilineal society women do not have direct access to land, women are nevertheless protected by their brothers or fathers. Greenaway notes:

Even as matrilineal customs safeguard women’s household power, access to resources, and connections to their matrilineal kin, it is customary for male guardians to ensure women’s and their children’s interests when faced with social, economic, or legal strife. These guardians, however, tend to be male, matrilineal relatives, not husbands (Greenaway *et al.*, 2019, 130)

In ensuring that a woman is protected, the male figure is left unprotected, relying on the properties that are not his as long as he can feed his family. How can such a man be known as *impalume* when he is economically unstable, and fails even to care for his nephews?

5.5.3 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Matrilineal Society

Many scholars call for men to change their behaviour in the way they treat the women, especially in marriage. But few scholars call for men and women to change how they treat their partners in marriage. Very few men are able to report cases of abuse to the victim support unit because they fear that people will look down on them as not being real men. Men in matrilineal society find it difficult to report any kind of abuse perpetrated by their in-laws, because these men reside on their in-laws’ property and are therefore at their mercy. Kapwepwe in his book *Icuupo Nobuyantanshi* does not mention any abuse in-laws enact against their sons-in-law, but only speak of how beneficial this practice of *impalume* is in Bemba traditional culture. Though many African women theologians argue that “marriage is a dangerous institution for women”, the married Bemba man does not have the chance to be unfaithful to his wife, or to marry another woman, while living at his in-laws’ place (Kaunda, M. and Kaunda C., 2012: 11, Phiri, I. and Nadar, 2009). Contrary to what Kaunda suggests when referring to marriage as a death trap for women, the reality is in

fact closer to the opposite. A Bemba man in a matrilineal marriage cannot beat or shout at his wife, because her family will always protect her. Though the participants did not mention the existence of GBV for married Bemba men, after being asked a follow-up question if they beat their wives, the participants answer in all groups was: “You can’t even do that because her family can beat you to death.” Such a response reveals that a man lives in fear, and though he is sometimes emotionally and physically abused, he keeps silent—because that is how tradition has told them to be strong as men. In addition, such a response reveals that they have seen other men who have been beaten by their in-laws. Phiri Isabel in *Why Does God Allow Our Husbands to Hurt Us?* addresses the issue of violence against women from an African theological perspective by condemning some beliefs which promote GBV statements like: “Men own the woman in a marriage relationship, which creates power imbalances in the African Church and society” (Phiri, I., 2002: 24). Nevertheless, Phiri’s statement contradicts Bemba traditional marriage, as married Bemba men have less power over their wives. Chammah Kaunda challenges:

Men need to be awakened to critical consciousness concerning the oppressive nature of some cultural beliefs and practices concerning women and children. Critical consciousness has the potential to be a powerful strategy, not only to enable men to understand social forces and oppression towards women and children, but to make them as agents of transformation in society (Kaunda, C., 2014: 11)

The above statement shows that many scholars in masculinity focus on women and children, which should not be the case. In as much as men need transformation, not all men are evil. This is evident in married Bemba men who do not abuse women and children, but are instead abused by the work arrangement between themselves and their in-laws. As indicated by Seidler, V.J., “men are raised to protect their image in public, which makes it very difficult to know what they really think and feel” (Seidler, 2006: 45). Chitando said, “Gender justice requires both men and women to work together to produce a better society for all” (Chitando, 2007: 123). Dube and Klinken note the “popular Zambian saying, ‘*Umwaume talila*’, meaning ‘Real men do not cry’” (Klinken, 2016: 14). A characteristic associated with being *impalume* is not carelessly showing emotions in public (Dube, 2003: 87, Klinken, 2016: 14). Masculinity demands that “men affirm their control over their emotional lives”. As a result of such traditions, “men find it difficult to give voices to the frustrations they feel and the pressure that exists in their lives, hence they prefer to remain silent rather than admit that they have difficulties” (Seidler, 2006: 45, 53). Power acknowledged that “the tough part is for a man to live with their wife’s kin, and act as the uncle in their sister’s village” (Power, 2014: 3). Also, “men who strictly adhere to hegemonic masculinity are more likely to experience stress in a situation where masculinity is challenged or threatened” (Smith *et al.*, 2015: 3). Stress may be experienced

not only because of how they relate to their wife's family, but also because of how general society looks at them and judges them as weak men.

Zambia's Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 was passed as a law in 2011, and includes economic abuse as a form of GBV for both genders. The Act defines economic abuse as:

Any reasonable depriving a victim, a family member or dependant of the victim, of property in which the victim, family member or dependant of the victim has an interest or reasonable expectation of use, or unreasonable expectations of use (Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1, I c. 2011: 5)

The Act actually provides for the protection of victims of GBV, both male and female. The statement above protects men and women from economic abuse. Men in matrilineal society are economically abused by their in-laws, but no one among the participants had reported such abuse to the church or to the victim support unit.

Chammah Kaunda, writing on reconstructing life-giving masculinities in the African context, focuses on men as perpetrators of GBV and HIV in marriages, positing the need for change by reconstructing male expressions of masculinity for the betterment of women and children (Kaunda, 2014: 11). Nevertheless, there is a need to look at the case of a man who is being abused through cultural practices in matrilineal society, in which, for example, Bemba married men have also become victims of GBV.

5.6 Redefining *Impalume* in an Attempt to Provide Positive Masculinity for Married Men in Matrilineal Society

How redemptive can redemptive masculinity as a theory is for married Bemba man. In the past, as noted by Klinken and Chitando, "in traditional African societies, men observed their obligations within a clear, structured marriage and kingship. Due to colonialism and urbanisation, such structures have collapsed in the modern period" (Klinken and Chitando, 2015: 5). According to Richards, "European teachings and the introduction of money as currency have strengthened the father's authority over his children as against that of their mother's brothers" (Richards, 1995: 116). Kapwepwe acknowledged that "men who were working in towns or far from their in-laws' place had no time to stay and work for their in-law as per tradition. Thus, a week later, after the wedding, the man is allowed to take his wife to begin their life away from their parents" (Kapwepwe, 1995: 10). The disadvantage of paid labour is that it deprives men of being trained as

impalume by the parents-in-law and from gaining knowledge and wisdom from the elders. Today, many young men regard traditional cultural teachings as being old-fashioned, forgetting that this is what defines their identity.

In the modern era, Power notes that “the young have complimentary access to empowerment, as the elders look to the young for support. This has led to male elders no longer having the power to use their sons-in-law for labour in their fields” (Power, 2014: 9). Paid work gives a married Bemba man authority to control what he earns, and empowers him to make decisions and develop economically. Though the in-laws look to him as a source of income, the married Bemba man who has gained the freedom to take his family away from his in-laws’ place does not work as a slave at his in-laws’ farm, but uses money and pays other men to work at his in-laws’ farm instead. So, a Bemba married man prepares the future for his children and an inheritance for his family.

In terms of education, unlike in the past when men depended on *insaka* for moral and skills training, western education has brought many changes to matrilineal society. School systems lead to many students despising their own culture’s expectations of them in preference for western education and white-collar jobs, which has resulted in unemployment. Abendroth (2012: 378) points out two further influences which she considered destructive factors placing pressure on the family in matrilineal society. The first of these is Christian missionaries, who condemned some traditional practices for being un-Christian. Second, she identified the copper mines, which drew many young men away from the village. Surprisingly, despite this, the Bemba people have maintained their ancient matriarchal pattern up to today. This shows how essential and influential this matrilineal practice is, as it persists among the Bemba people despite significant counter-influences. Younger educated men are attracted to the town, because here they can use their education to find employment. This leaves them better off than others in the village. Instead of staying at their in-laws’ residence, some young educated couples go to town and build a home far away from their respective parents. The work which a son-in-law is supposed to do cannot be done in this situation, and so in the place of his labour, they send gifts and money to their parents. When gifts are not prepared, “men are afraid and ashamed to go home on a visit, or to send their wives, brother or brothers-in-law, or visiting relatives to their home without gifts, and visits are usually postponed until gifts have been prepared” (Wilson, 1968: 40). Travelling from town to the village means spending time and money. For example, “a journey from Kasama to Kabwe (Broken Hill) takes a week by lorry, costing two months’ wages, and seven weeks by foot” (Wilson, 1968: 49).

The migration from villages to towns when seeking employment has further had an impact on the tradition and norms of Bemba society. It has resulted in “generational struggles, because male elders have lost their position as gatekeepers over youths reaching adult and senior masculinity” (Miescher, 2005: 12). However, in our discussion groups, nothing was mentioned on why *insaka* is no longer in existence despite there still being people in the village who would benefit from training at *insaka*. There is a need to recognise that western education hurts Bemba’s cultural practices.

Through critical analysis, we see that even married Bemba men were affected by Christian teachings on how a husband should be, even while their tradition told them to live with their in-laws after marriage. Shin noted that “missionaries spurned local notions of masculinity that prevailed through the matrilineal family system” (Shin, 2016: 20). This shows that the missionaries and the church today do not embrace the practice of *impalume*. Mutale Kaunda and Chammah Kaunda address men’s masculinity in line with the practice of *impalume*, and how this can be a tool for life-giving masculinities in today’s marriages in terms of safeguarding the lives of women and children (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012, Kaunda, C., 2014: 11). According to Klinken and Chitando, in the face of GBV, the available literature centers around the idea that religion is a double-edged sword in relation to masculinities. In as much as religion reinforces dangerous masculinities, it has the potential to transform masculinities, even in matrilineal society (Klinken and Chitando, 2015: 4, Chitando and Chirongoma. 2012: 17). As stipulated by many scholars, hegemonic masculinity “is a kind of masculinity that is dominant and is supported by religious and cultural norms favouring men over women and children” (Tjemolane, 2017: 19).

A “new school of thought argues for alternative masculinities in light of a constantly changing social, economic, political and religious terrain in which men negotiate for recognition in their day-to-day engagements” (Dery, 2017: 36). In Zambia, not much has been done regarding studies of masculinity, and especially not in religion, theology and cultural studies. However, some studies have been done by Klinken (2016), specifically in *Pentecostalism, Political Masculinity and Citizenship: The Born-Again Male Subject as Key to Zambia’s National Redemption*. In this study, Klinken discusses the Men of Truth, a men’s group in Northmead Assembly of God in Lusaka, while looking at urban masculinity and the masculinity politics pursued by this prominent Zambian Pentecostal church.

Chitando and Kudzaibiri define redemptive masculinity as forms of masculinity that are positive and nurturing, in a world where violence is rampant (Chitando and Biri, 2013: 36). The practice of *impalume* has shifted along with the changes that have occurred in a matrilineal society. The advent of paidlabour, for example, has resulted in urbanisation and mixed marriages. There is a need to rethink the means

and ways positive masculinity is modelled for married Bemba men. Simultaneously, it remains important to maintain the aspects of this cultural practice which shape men who are not violent.

The critical question Klinken asked is “whether and how religions contest hegemonic ideals of masculinity, what alternatives they propose, and how this impacts men. Do religious institutions actively engage in a project of transforming masculinities?” (Klinken, 2011: 11). Klinken observed that “Christianity and its biblical teachings have been critically condemned for maintaining the notion of patriarchy; the churches are challenged to give up the ideology of hegemonic masculinity in place of promoting masculinities which are life-giving” (Klinken, 2010: 8). The question is, does the practice of *impalume* embrace life-giving masculinities in Bemba matrilineal society? The answer is yes and no, and here the church is a helpful tool to redefine masculinities in matrilineal societies in Zambia. However, Owino said that “many African theologians agree that religion can be a means of positive dialogue in envisioning alternative masculinities” (Owino, 2018: 159). Jewkes saw it as important for the church to start teaching married men in matrilineal societies that “masculinities are multiple, fluid and dynamic, and hegemonic positions are not the only masculinities available in a given society” (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015: 112). The statement by Owino can help Bemba married men not to think of themselves as less of a man purely because they live with their in-laws.

The “crucial questions are whether and how religions contest hegemonic ideals of masculinity, what alternatives they propose, and how this impacts men. Do religious institutions actively engage in the project of transforming masculinities?” (Klinken, 2011:11).

In Pentecostal masculinity in Zimbabwe, Chitando Ezra noted that “the men’s organisation challenges its members to provide for their families by being economically productive if they are to live up to their status as heads of the household” (Chitando, 2007: 120). Chitando further states that such encouragement for men to be breadwinners and heads of the house might result in GBV” (Chitando, 2007: 124). In this research, men are encouraged to be breadwinners who are not abusive, but instead take care of their wives and children. Married Bemba men appealed to the Church to have such platforms where they could air their views as married men living at their in-laws’ homes. However, there is a need for the Church to teach both men and women, boys and girls, gender roles that are manageable and which do not overburden the other. It is evident now that “gender approaches need to work for both males and females, and acknowledge that masculinity can be reconstructed” (Morrell and Ouzgane, 2005: 13).

5.7 Conclusion

The chapter was divided into two parts: data presentation, and analysis of the data collected. The chapter has answered the critical question on the experiences of married Bemba men as *impalume*. In this chapter, we hear the voices of men who are defining themselves and reviewing some of the traditional ways of being *impalume*. *Impalume* is redefined as someone married to a woman, which shows that masculinities in Bemba tradition are revised following marriage. In this research, *impalume* is defined as being a married man, the head of the family, being a father of many children, having good morals and knowing some life skills, and being a hard worker recognised by people in the community. Religiously, *impalume* has been defined in relation to Jesus, who redeemed the world and was an effective leader in the Church.

Some of outcomes from the data collected imply that, though a married Bemba man seems to be powerful as portrayed by Kaunda & Kaunda and also Kapwepwe, this is not the case among married Bemba men who experience some of the following situations. Firstly, married Bemba men are faced with some degree of disempowerment as husbands who are the head of the house, and yet have no final say over their wives and children. Secondly, a married Bemba man has no land to leave as an inheritance for his nephews and nieces, and he works as an enslaved person at his in-laws' place and in their field. Thirdly, a married Bemba man experiences gender-based violence, which is difficult for men to discuss or reveal. In-laws may abuse their sons-in-law through labour at their farm. The married Bemba man has no freedom, because he has to get permission from his in-laws before gaining permission to take his wife and children away from their place. His hard work cannot be compared to what his in-law gives him as appreciation. When divorce or death of a partner occurs, the married Bemba man has to leave the place with only the clothes on his back, and return empty-handed to his relatives. Fourthly, literature on masculinity studies in culture and religion have shown that men are widely labelled as dangerous to both women and children, which is not the case with married Bemba men. There is a need for the Church to engage men in finding alternative life-giving masculinities for married Bemba men within its religious and cultural context. Men need to redeem themselves from harmful masculinities and the associated assumptions by embracing nurturing, non-violent forms of masculinity.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Research Contributions, and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

I started the research with a notion understanding what being *impalume* means in Bemba traditional culture. I had no expectation of finding anything good in the practice of *impalume*, because a lot of literature around this topic points to men being abusers of women and children. The present research has taken advantage of this gap by shifting the attention to men who are protective providers of their women and children. The study attempted to answer the objective, namely to understand what it means to married Bemba men to be *impalume*, from their religio-cultural perspective, to explore the religious and cultural perspectives of married Bemba men and the implications of being *impalume*, and to analyse how *impalume* could be redefined, in an attempt to provide positive masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society.

6.2 Research Gap

For a long time, the existing literature has predominantly linked masculinity with men's dominance over women, exploring how men should change their interpretations of masculinity in order to achieve gender equality in a given society. The available literature reveals that "there has been little analysis of men and masculinity in the third world" (Morrell & Swart 2004: 90). However, John, Siwila and Settler observed that:

Masculinities have been analysed in relation to various issues which include, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, Violence, fatherhood, history, health, religion, education, power, conflict and violence and issues relating to theory (John *et al.*, 2013: 162)

Narrowing down to the context of this study, most of the works on masculinity in Bemba matrilineal society in Zambia and other parts of the world condemn hegemonic masculinity. Particularly as related to HIV/AIDS (Simpson, 2005, 2007, Kaunda and Kaunda 2012, Klinken, 2016), sexual health (Mweemba, O., *et al.*, 2018, Dover, P., 2005), gender inequalities and women's access to land (Cole M. ad: 2015, Chapota, 2006), and the roles of men and fatherhood in South Africa (Richter & Morrel: 2006). Since the focus in most of the existing literature on masculinity relates to women and children, "this had undesirable effect of leaving men out of the picture" (Chitando and Chirongoma, 2012: 2). But that does not mean that men are not mentioned in the existing literature; they are mainly mentioned in relation to being harmful to women and children. John, Siwila and Settler selected four themes from Chitando writings, which they propose in

their article. Firstly, that the approach to change must be radical. Secondly, there is a need for an opportunity for Africanisation. Thirdly, that religion and culture are a double-edged sword. And lastly, that there should be alternative masculinities concerning gender justice (John *et al.*, 2013: 167). All these proposals target men's behaviour for change towards women and children within a patrilineal marriage setting. However, this research shifts the focus from looking at men as bad people and helps in seeing the good side of men whose masculinity is constructed in a way which is not harmful to women and children. Unless we begin to allow good men to share their experiences and spread the cultures which help men to be good, we will seldom see any good from men. The Africanisation of masculinity is to let men speak their own experiences within their cultural settings and see how religion has affected their masculinity.

Although John, Siwila & Settler agree with Chitando that “for transformation to be more radical and accepted, it must go beyond patriarchy and its related ideas like men as head and leaders” (John *et al.*, 2013: 170); And “advocated in opening up more opportunities for women to exercise their leadership capability” (John *et al.*, 2013: 170). The research does not reject male headship in matrilineal society, but it shows that headship in matrilineal society is more caring, protective and responsible to women and children. Thus, what John *et al.* should know is that within patriarchal structures, there are men who are good whom we can use as examples for lifegiving masculinity.

However, this study acknowledges the works of Kapwepwe (1995, Chammah Kaunda, Mutale Kaunda 2012, 2016), and Hinfelaar (1960). Hinfelaars study of married Bemba women and married Bemba men explores the effects of colonialism and missionaries in affected areas, and how these arrivals undermined the social position and religious role which Bemba women had previously held.

6.3 General Overview of the Study

Chapter one was an introduction of the topic, where the research questions were first presented. The chapter detailed the reasons why this research was undertaken.

Chapter two answered the first objective of this research: To understand what it means among married Bemba men to be *impalume*, from their unique religio-cultural perspective. The study on *impalume* by Kaunda (2012) was referenced in relation to transforming masculinity in the context of HIV/AIDS and using *impalume* as a tool to shape life-giving masculinities. However, Kapwepwe (1994) looked at marriage in Bemba society in general, highlighting how marriages in Bemba society are constructed and describing who is qualified to be called *impalume*. Kapwepwe's research lacked a comparison between the religious

and cultural implications for married Bemba men. Uchendu noticed that many masculinity scholars “are those involved in gender studies and feminist studies, but we must be mindful that the construction of masculinity differs from matrilineal and patrilineal societies, though more attention is given to liberating women from men’s behaviour” (2008). Uchendu further said that, “masculinity researchers should address mens’ issues just like researchers on women issues do” (Uchendu, 2005: 18).

It was interesting to learn that the Bemba cultural practice of *impalume* is placed into two categories: *impalume shabulwi* and *impalume* in marriage (*muchupo*). Thus, the Bemba’s understanding and construction of masculinity was mainly formed at *insaka*. Those men who distanced themselves from *insaka* were not well thought-of. *Insaka* played a prominent role in training *impalume shabulwi* and *impalume muchupo* in Bemba society. At *insaka*, men were groomed from a tender age to have good morals and later were taught useful life skills such as making baskets, leed mats, hoes, and how to do forms of fieldwork like crop cultivation and gardening. *Ukutema* was taught to a man at *insaka* and in the field. At *insaka*, elderly Bemba men had a space for teaching young men, and here boys could ask questions about why things are done in a particular way in their culture. The men were trained to be independent, even though, once married, they would live with their in-laws and provide for their family under their authority. What I discovered in this chapter is that *impalume shabulwi* refers only to the earliest chiefs and warriors for the Bemba people, who fought physical battles to conquer the land the Bemba people boast of today as theirs. Therefore, the first Chitimukulu and other chiefs are known as *impalume shabulwi*.

The chapter highlights what is expected of a son-in-law to qualify as *impalume*, both by society and in marriage, and what the in-laws are expected to do for their sons-in-law. Many teachings are given to girls before marriage, namely during the *Chisungu* initiation ceremony and *Imbusa*. Women teach young girls how to keep their home and respect their husbands. Since men live at their in-laws’ properties, the teachings girls receive on how to respect boys cover how to make a husband comfortable while under her parents domain.

Chapter three established the theoretical framework on which this study is based or structured. By using redemptive masculinity, this study looked at how men can be redeemed from the bad aspects of *impalume*, and instead embrace the positive aspects of the practice. Hence the study is conducted “with the aim of giving something similar to men to what women’s studies have given women,” and that is to understand how being *impalume* affects married Bemba men’s constructions of masculinity (Uchendu, 2008: 14). As said by Mupeta (2014: 17), “culture has many definitions, and these affect what people do in their society”.

Two theories are reviewed in this chapter, reliant on the lenses used to collect and analyse the data for this research. Connell's theories of masculinity focus on hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, and using these when looking at *impalume* reveals some unique difficulties. The practice of *impalume* benefits both men and women, as it shapes stable marriages with less GBV, it discourages polygamous marriages, and it makes marriages economically productive. On the other hand, as some men experience GBV due to issues concerning their wives, the woman's family may become too involved in these marital disputes as a result of their proximity. The need for redemptive masculinity was therefore applied, to try and explore how men might be redeemed from the harmful aspects of the practice of *impalume*. When we talk of men in a matrilineal society, we talk about men "who do not gain power and authority only by being a father and husband, but who play important roles as a brother and uncle" (Franke, 1992: 478). In Bemba matrilineal society, as stipulated by Kapwepwe, married Bemba men embody different kinds of masculinity in their varying roles as brother/uncle and husband/father.

The data for this research was collected using a qualitative method, using books, articles, scholarly websites, and libraries at UKZN and the Zambia National Achieve Centre in Lusaka. The empirical data was collected through focus group discussions at Kamena, Sampa, and Lua-Luo in Kasama, the northern part of Zambia. The participants were in groups of eight, eight and six individuals. These group discussion participants were married Bemba men who helped in gathering data on *impalume*, which is used to answer the main research question. The research being done during the Covid-19 pandemic demanded the need to follow the health guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health in Zambia. The chapter describes the process of the data collection and provides a table for the participants' profiles.

Chapter four presented the data collected from the field. The focus was "to explore the religious and cultural perspectives of Bemba married men and the implications of being *impalume*". The chapter reviewed the benefits of married men living on their in-law's properties, and the challenges which men go through in this situation. Out of the data collected, the following themes were identified: the definition of a man and *impalume*, society's understanding of *impalume*, religious understanding of *impalume*, the benefits of staying at the in-laws' home, and lastly, the challenges these men face.

Chapter five used the themes from the data collected to analyse ways by which the practice of *impalume* might be redefined, in an attempt to provide positive masculinity for married men in a matrilineal society. The third objective was answered using the benefits and challenges men go through. The data analysed recommends the practice of *impalume* in marriages be used to encourage men to channel their masculine

hegemony towards working hard and improving their economic status, as well as to help inspire young men to have good morals at home and in the community.

6.4 The Findings in Relation to the objectives of the study

The findings from the existing literature and from the field reviews the challenge married Bemba men face, acknowledging that there are many struggles which need attention. However, the “focus on men is not to deny the importance of studies that have argued for the need to put women at the center of analysis” (Simpson, 2009: 5). There is “a lot of attention given to studies on masculinity concerning women. African gender studies mainly emphasise women’s status as the focus, because women are oppressed by men, but there is no equivalent discussion on men” (Morrell and Ouzgane, 2005: 6, Uchendu, 2005: 1). Kaunda states clearly that “in Africa, masculinities are relationally and communally constructed not only in relation to women, but the whole community” (Kaunda, 2014: 4). Despite the increase of studies on men, masculinities and gender in the areas of anthropology, cultural studies, film literature, gender, history and sociology, men’s studies remain an under-researched field in areas of religiosity, including religious studies, the sociology of religion, and theology” (Krondorfer and Hunt, 2012: 197). Thus, there is a “need to push the borders even further by discerning the current operation of masculinity in Bemba society” (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2012: 16).

Klinken, in his writing on *Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity*, observed that “the primary concerns of theologians mainly are on patriarchy as a cultural and religious ideology which assigns power and authority to men, hence creating a hierarchy in gender relations” (Klinken 2016: 31). We cannot run away from such hierarchy, even in a matrilineal society where patriarchal structures are likewise visibly set. The headship of man in marriage is emphasised in Bemba matrilineal marriage by marriage guidance counsellors. Kapwepwe explains that headship for married Bemba men is “to lead the family, feed them, protect both his wife and children, and to be a hard worker” (Kapwepwe 1994: 88). Though the matrilineal system have patriarchal structures which Chitando, Klinken and others have condemned, the women in Bemba matrilineal society are not marginalised but protected while men are marginalised

Nevertheless, the problem which concerns theologians is that men are always condemned and portrayed to women and children as bad people, as they are related with GBV and the HIV epidemic. Many theologians overlook the fact that men are likewise marginalised in another way, which becomes apparent when looking at how men treat their fellow men—in this case, a father-in-law’s relationship to his son-in-law. The following are some of the issues that point to men being disempowered.

Firstly, the authority of a man as a son-in-law challenges his hegemonic masculinity as the head of the house. Living with his in-laws, the married Bemba man has less authority over his wife and children, and is required to consult his parents-in-law over anything he wants to do. Ezra Chitando, in his writing on *A New Man and a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostal masculinities and the HIV epidemic*, spoke on how “Pentecostal men are challenged and advised to be providers for their families and to economically be productive, in order to live up to their status as head of households” (Chitando, E., 2007: 120.). According to Bemba tradition, being a provider qualifies a man to be the head and to be called *impalume*. Though the participants spoke of the headship of a man in marriage, the headship for a married Bemba man is to care for and provide for his family, and for his in-laws. The married Bemba man’s headship is different to the headship seen in patrilineal societies. This results in his headship and his hegemonic masculinity not being violent, as he is under the watch and the leadership of his in-laws. Klinken, when he wrote on *Male Headship as Male Agency*, the sermon of Pastor Banda in a Zambian Pentecostal Church, looks at the cultural and religious notion of male headships, and condemns headship as “an obstacle in achieving the transformation of masculinities in order to overcome the social challenges like HIV and GBV against women” (Klinken, 2011: 111). Klinken helps us understand how theologians look at headship as a tool to undermine women, but do not see it as a tool that favours women and undermines married men living under their in-laws in a matrilineal society.

Secondly, the headship of a married Bemba man makes him feel less powerful or confident over his wife and children. As indicated above on Bemba marriages, Whiteley wrote that traditionally, a married Bemba man will only be allowed to take his wife and children away from his in-laws after having two to three children (Whiteley, 1950: 17). Despite a Bemba married man being the head of the house, he has no power to make big decisions over his wife and children without consulting the in-laws (Peters, 2010: 183).

Thirdly, a man as a provider is responsible for the fieldwork at his in-laws’ field and his own. This is why Bemba men must be strong and work very hard to succeed in such a huge responsibility. Chitando and Mabizela states that:

Men have been brought up to believe that a real man is complete and self-sufficient. A real man is supposed to be the ultimate provider. But a man who seeks help is regarded as feminine. That means a man must not request assistance from friends, family members or work mates. The idea of a man as one who never seeks help places a great burden on men (Chitando, & Mabizela, 2013: 47).

Though seen as a provider, the Bemba married man is regarded as feminine because he lives with his in-laws. Men in most African cultures are directed to be self-sufficient, and to take the role of ultimate provider for the family. According to Morell & Swart, “modern masculinities are centred around work”, because men are moulded to be providers and not receivers (Morell, & Swart, S., 2004: 102). A man in matrilineal society is not an exception; despite staying at his in-law’s place and being regarded as feminine, he is the provider for both his own house and for his in-laws, who sometimes abuse him. The married Bemba man has to work hard in proving himself not to his wife but to his in-laws, demonstrating that he is a hard worker who can keep a family. This is why in-laws fail to release their sons-in-law from their farms—not because they love them, but because in doing so they would also lose a provider.

Looking at men in matrilineal society as head and leaders in the church, the empirical study shows that married men in traditional Bemba matrilineal society can be related to what Klinken call a ‘new man’. Klinken in *Male Headship as Male Urgency* presents “the concept of urgency as an alternative interpretative tool in order to provide insight in the reconstruction of masculinities on the basis of male headship in a local African Christian context” (Klinken, 2011: 107). *Impalume* in the church is inclusive, as long as a person is a hard worker who is able to inspire others through their leadership. While the cultural definition of *impalume* is of one who is married, has children and works very hard, this would disqualify Jesus and the first Chitimukulu of the Bemba, who according to history did not marry or have children.

From the data collected through interviews and over the course of the focus group discussions, I discovered that the practice of *impalume* is centred more on married men who have children and are hardworking, but does not consider single men who are hardworking and are bread winners in the family. Men who are married and hardworking but who have no children likewise cannot be considered as *impalume*. The participants were very excited to name Jesus as *impalume*, though he never married and had no children, but they failed to recognise men who through circumstances beyond their control have no children.

The other thing to be noted is that, in the available literature, many concerns by African theologians on hegemonic forms of masculinity are informed by their “critical analysis of the patriarchal structures, gender-based violence, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which seem to be the major issues in their research. Klinken writing on *God Forgives, AIDS Does Not: Transforming Masculinity in African Christianity; Gender Controversies in Times of AIDS*, describes hegemonic masculinity as “aggressive and destructive, dangerous and deadly” (Klinken, 2016: 48). Green, writing on *Hegemonic and Subordinate Masculinities: Class, Violence and Sexual Performance Among Young Mozambican Men*, noted that in all of Connell’s key concepts, “hegemonic masculinities are the most notorious and popular in men’s studies in southern

Africa” (Green, 2009: 288). Klinken and Green’s analysis of hegemonic masculinity is within the patriarchal structures in the context of HIV/AIDS, which is harmful to women and children. Moller, in the article *Exploiting Patterns: A Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity*, argues that “men’s practice and motivations are often more complex than the concept of hegemonic masculinity allows” (Moller, 2007). Nevertheless, the problems addressed by this concept remain of importance” (Connell, 2012: 13). Apart from participants appreciating their rich heritage, my findings revealed that the religious understanding of *impalume* is more accommodating.

6.5 The Call for Redemptive Masculinity

John, S.F. Siwila, L.C., & Settler, F., noted that: “the key concern which emerges from the writing of Chitando is his betrayal of men. The picture of men as ‘perpetrators’ whose action threaten the well-being of women and children is striking in his works” (John et al, 2013: 164). The question is how can we call for redemptive masculinity for men whom we have condemned as perpetrators of injustices for women and children? The study here shows that there are men who are vulnerable just like some women and children and need redemption from the patriarchal structures which exist even in matrilineals subordinate men and women. The men in Bemba matrilineal society shows a positive masculinity which is life-giving which Klinken calls *New born again masculinities*.

The call for “redemptive masculinity, and involving men in the discussion of masculinity” has been heeded by the Ujamaa Centre, and this has produced “an array of contextual Bible studies exploring a range of aspects of violent masculinity” (West, 2013: 761). Gerald West utilises his expertise as a biblical studies scholar to provide a brilliant reading of masculinities within the Tamar Campaign. West provokes his audiences to identify the latent factors that enable different male characters to participate in the rape of Tamar. Such participatory and liberating Bible studies hold a lot of promise for the emergence of progressive masculinities. For instance, a Bemba man staying at his in-laws’ place is seen as being abused by fellow men, namely his father-in-law and brothers-in-law, who leave him do the work in their fields and then enjoy the fruits of his labour.

When I was conducting interviews in the field, I felt some sympathy for these married Bemba men, considering how they are treated like slaves by their in-laws. Surprisingly, the participants were not bothered at all by this, and still maintained that their cultural practice is a rich identity for the Bemba people. They counted themselves among the few who have kept that tradition alive, and expressed deep appreciation for their in-laws, who wished for their sons-in-law to stay even after having fathered more than three children. Despite the fact that married Bemba men are not free living at their in-laws, this practice

shapes their moral conduct and encourages men to show responsibility for their families. In my understanding, Bemba masculinity on one hand it benefits men while on the other hand it dehumanizes. The question is should Bemba men as *impalume* be classified under complacent masculinities for not challenging how their masculinity is culturally constructed?

I discovered that, in Bemba matrilineal society, a married man living at his in-laws' place enjoys his hegemonic privilege of being an uncle in charge of his sisters and sister's children, even as he is simultaneously held as a subordinate to his father-in-law. When his father-in-law dies, the married Bemba man is under the leadership of his mother-in-law. Having initially taken this as a way a married Bemba man might free himself and look for his own land, to my surprise some participants explained that they felt compelled to remain and take care of their mother-in-law after the death of their father-in-law. My next thought is that perhaps they do not have anywhere else to go in these situations, and experience some fear of starting afresh, especially after investing so much at their in-laws'. Nevertheless, not all married men live with their in-laws today, largely due to the economic shift from farming to paid work. Despite the fact that other married men live and work in urban areas, the responsibility to take care of their in-laws is still there, only it now exists in monetary terms.

Although a handful of men can realistically attain the hegemonic masculine status, "the pressure is so strong that men who are unable to assume hegemonic positions become complicit" (Dery, 2017: 23). Hedebe says that "these men do not usually challenge structures that subordinate other men because there are recipients who benefit from the patriarchy" (Hedebe, 2010: 15). Shin says that "although men seem to share the same notion of masculinity in the matrilineal system, their different experiences and identity can create marginalisation and discrimination within them" (Shin, 2016: 6). As a result, "men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a complicit masculinity" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832). The problem with complicit masculinity is that "men in this category accept the benefits of hegemonic masculinity without defending the patriarchal system from which it comes" (Hedebe, 2010: 66).

Bembas have the saying "*Umutembo ufinina konse konse*" in their marriage teachings (meaning, "what the couple does for both the man and woman's relatives should be equal"), I found that though men are hardworking while at their in-laws' place, they give little help to their own parents. The study revealed that the degree of development and progress the man brings by his time and labour benefits his wife's family more than his own. No wonder, in the case where the father-in-law dies, the mother-in-law will find it

difficult to release the son-in-law. By that stage, he is the established breadwinner for the family. Women are molded to depend more on their siblings and parents for protection, and so find it difficult to live away from them. Though it may seem good, this ultimately has a negative effect on women, as that they cannot stand on their own away from their family members. This is also why a Bemba man's in-laws fear to let him leave with their daughter, knowing they cannot watch over her when she's away from home. On the other hand, a man's family loses a son when he marries, and receives less care and support compared to a woman's family.

A married Bemba man staying at his in-laws' today experiences a lot of stigma from society. Today Bemba society is mixed with other tribes who don't understand this traditional marriage practice and who find it strange that a married man lives with his in-laws. It is true that in Bemba matrilineal society, as Poewe indicated some time back, "in matrilineal society it's not the husband who controls women and resources, but the woman's brothers and maternal uncles" (Poewe, 1984: 27). Although the recent qualitative gender analysis done in northern Zambia by Cole *et al.* (2016: 4) indicates that "men are involved in cultivating cash crops jointly with their wives, and men make major agricultural decisions", the fact remains that their decisions are stand-ins, and the final say comes from the in-laws. Unless a man has moved away from his in-laws and established his own land, all decision making and inheritances belong to them. The data from the field further reveals that men are not fully in charge of their fields, as brothers or sisters-in-law are free to harvest from his field without permission. Unless a man is emotionally and mentally strong, it can be difficult to tolerate this treatment from his wife's family. In addition, staying at his in-laws' place forces a man to display good moral character, or he may be chased off by the in-laws. Looking at the number of years the participants had stayed with their in-laws proves that they have good morals and are emotionally strong. Although the married Bemba man is emotionally strong, he is considered a weak person by others, as he is 'kept' by in-laws, who give him less authority and hold him subordinate to his father-in-law. A married Bemba man may also be sent to do things against his will, all in the name of pleasing his in-laws.

Where do married Bemba men get an inheritance for their children since they live at their in-laws' place? The literature does not show how men in matrilineal society leave an inheritance for their children. Tembo acknowledges that "even though in Bemba culture, a man's legal entitlements and rights of inheritance are on his mother's side, he has no rights on any investments made at his in-laws' place" (Tembo, 2013). This shows that though Bemba married men are called *impalume* for having children and working hard, they do not have an inheritance to give to their daughters, nieces and nephews. This left me to wonder about what happens to their daughters when they get married—would that be the end of the practice of *impalume*? The longer they stay with their in-laws, the less likely they are to perpetuate this traditional practice of *impalume*.

for the next generation. Perhaps this is why very few still practice this tradition today. Equally, this goes to the in-laws who fail to release their sons-in-law, even after they have been observed and qualified as *impalume*. This means their granddaughters won't have an opportunity to stay at their father's place with their husbands. It is from this angle that redemptive masculinity can be used to help Bemba married men to stop thinking about themselves, and instead think about their daughters' futures.

6.6 Research Contributions

The process of envisioning alternative forms of masculinity “makes it useful for scholars working within Christian communities to understand masculinity and how men negotiate and make sense of themselves in different contexts” (Owino, 2018). The idea is to “challenge harmful ideas of what a real man is” (Chitando & Njoroge, 2013). The study brings out the experiences of married Bemba men living with their in-laws, offering men a space to discuss what it means to be *impalume* according to their culture. Many studies have shown that in most societies, hegemonic or dominant masculinities meant being a “mighty, aggressive, competitive man. He is always in control and may become violent to maintain his authority and access the resources he needs to keep his power” (Gennrich D., 2014). This empirical study has shown that such ideas of hegemonic and subordinate masculinity affect men's understanding of being *impalume*. The study has shown that the practice of *impalume* did not mean to be violent, or to be in power. For married Bemba men who live with their in-laws, being *impalume* meant being able to care for the family, provide for them, and to protect and plan for the betterment of their future and that of the community.

The research further contributes to the existing literature on masculinity in looking at what it means to be *impalume* in the matrilineal society of married men among the Bembas of northern Zambia. The study brings new questions in the area of religion and cultural masculinity studies by asking how *impalume* can be redefine in an attempt to provide masculinities which are life-giving. The concept of *impalume* should be looked at in terms of providing positive masculinity in matrilineal societies. In Systematic theology, the study falls under theological and social ethics by bringing out significant social issue on masculinity within a Bemba cultural context. It brings out how masculinities of Bemba men are constructed and how they relate their masculinity in the church. The study in Systematic theology also falls under philosophy of religion with key philosophical questions on experience, faith and reason, religion and culture. It shows how Bemba married men experience their cultural and religious construction of masculinity. It helps the church leaders in matrilineal society to know how to counsel couples in matrilineal society using the bible from a patriarchal society as a tool.

Bemba masculinity can be an alternative, positive form of masculinity, as it reduces gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, and discourages polygamous marriages and laziness. It encourages hard work among men. Here women are kept safe by their brothers, and this is a culture that should be well-preserved. In contrast

to studies on hegemonic masculinity—which is depicted as patriarchal, oppressive, and violent—the research uncovers how married Bemba men enact and navigate their masculinity to reach a respectable expression of masculinity, disrupting the more dominant interpretation of masculinity brought by colonisers and missionaries. Moreover, such close readings of texts such as *Chitando* will better enable us to read and

critique problems concerning masculinities within and beyond the dominant HIV context, which is the focus of this study beyond the boundaries of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

While Cole and Chipota fight for gender inequalities and women access to land” (Cole M., ad: 2015, Chapota, 2006), this study shows how women are protected by their parents and given rights to their parents’ land exclusive of their husbands. Other studies have explored the struggles women face in terms of property rights and inheritance following divorce or after the death of a spouse, but this study shows how Bemba women and women in matrilineal societies have no issues of inheritance even after divorce or death of their spouse, as everything that their husband has worked for belongs to them. The problem with inheritance in Bemba traditional society lies instead with men, who leave everything to their wife and her family, as all investments are made in the in-laws’ land.

The study discovered that despite the challenges married Bemba men go through under this traditional arrangement, such as forced labour and GBV, married Bemba men have embraced the practice of *impalume*, which brings great challenges to the use of redemptive masculinity as my theoretical framework. How can men who are comfortable and unwilling to forgo the practice, which is considered dehumanising in some circles, be helped when facing its more negative aspects? The study has brought the need for more research on redemptive masculinity by Chitando to address that which is dehumanising, and to redefine forms of masculinity which benefits all. Redemptive masculinity by Chitando is being challenged in this study as not being an option for all men but few who are oppressed and ready to be redeemed.

6.7 Suggestions for Further Research

The Bemba practice of *impalume* can be an excellent tool for reducing gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. *Impalume*, as defined by the Bemba men in the focus group discussions, is a man who does not beat or abuse his wife. That is why the mother-in-law prepares pleasant food for her son-in-law, as a way of appreciating and showing respect to him. I recommend that the church use the practice of *impalume* to mold masculinity in young boys, teaching them good morals, offering skills training, guiding them on how to respect women and elders, and equipping them to control their tempers. I recommend that the Men’s Christian Fellowship in the United Church of Zambia create a platform for men living with their in-laws to contextualise marriage teachings within matrilineal societies. In as much as this study praised the practice of *impalume*, there is need for further research on GBV and land ownership for men in a matrilineal society. How can the Church protect men from the destructive practices of *impalume*, where women living under the authority of their fathers may treat men badly? In times of divorce or the death of their spouse,

impalume are left vulnerable, as they are the ones expected to move, leaving behind all they have worked for while living with their in-laws.

The research was centered on the son-in-law, but in order to clearly answer how masculinities are constructed, there is need to understand the role the in-laws play in helping their son-in-law to display positive and nurturing forms learned through their parents-in-law, exploring how they influence the masculinity of their sons-in-law. Such research would offer insights into how in-laws can help their sons-in-law to receive an inheritance after they have benefitted from his hard work. Using redemptive masculinity as a theoretical framework, further research should test whether it's the in-laws or the son-in-law who needs redemption. Therefore, I recommend that research be conducted on parents-in-law, exploring the ways by which they perceive and influence masculinity in their sons-in-law. The study is an eye opener to the church on how to do mission in matrilineal society using a patriarchal bible

6.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter concludes that the research questions were answered, as the term '*impalume*' was defined, and the qualifications for being *impalume* were outlined in Chapter Two. The fifth chapter answered in detail the benefits and challenges of religious constructions of masculinity, and how these affect men in a matrilineal society. The use of masculinities as a theoretical framework was helpful in recognising how Bemba men are at a crossroads in their separate roles as uncles and husbands. The study also challenges African women theologians to get involved in the study of African masculinity. Lastly, the study highlights some excellent aspects of masculinity in married Bemba men, as molded by the cultural practice of *impalume*, in shaping positive masculinities in 21st century society. Therefore, the study follows the framework of masculinities, using both literature and empirical study methods to collect data and address the research problem by opening a religious-cultural dialog with married Christian men living within the Bemba tradition.

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