

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE



**EXTRA MARITAL AFFAIR LIVES OF MARRIED WOMEN IN SHAMVA'S
WADZANAI TOWNSHIP**

BY

PATIENCE CHADAMBUKA

**This thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters of Science Degree
in Sociology and Anthropology**

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR V. N. MUZVIDZIVA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

March 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| DECLARATION | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| DEDICATION | vi |
| ABSTRACT | vii |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem | 3 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the study..... | 4 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 4 |
| 1.5 Justification of the study | 5 |
| 1.6 Delimitations of the study | 6 |
| 1.7 Key terms | 6 |
| 2 LITERATURE REVIEW | 6 |
| 2.1 Causes and perception of extra marital affairs by women | 6 |
| 2.2 Extra marital affairs and secrecy..... | 7 |
| 2.3 Consequences of women’s involvement in extra marital affairs-perceived and real..... | 9 |
| 3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES..... | 10 |
| 3.1 Symbolic Interactionism | 10 |
| 3.1.1. Goffman’s Dramaturgical theory and conceptualization of the self | 12 |
| 3.2 Michel Foucault’s the gaze | 14 |
| 3.3 The concept of <i>Ubuntu</i> | 15 |
| 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | 16 |
| 4.1 Research Methods/Techniques | 16 |
| 4.1.1 The interviews..... | 17 |
| 4.1.2 Limitations/ Challenges | 18 |
| 4.2 Sampling | 19 |
| 4.3 Data collection methods..... | 19 |
| 4.4 Data presentation | 19 |
| 4.5 Research population..... | 19 |
| 4.6 Ethical considerations | 20 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 5 FINDINGS..... | 21 |
| 5.1 Demographic profile summary of the respondents | 21 |
| 5.2 Individual cases..... | 22 |
| 5.2.1 Case A- Esther | 22 |
| 5.2.2 Case B - Kudzai | 23 |
| 5.2.3 Case C- Chipo | 24 |
| 5.2.4 Case D - Diana | 24 |
| 5.2.5 Case E- Debra | 25 |
| 5.2.6 Case F- Magret..... | 25 |
| 5.3 Extra Marital Partners | 26 |
| 6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS | 26 |
| 6.1. Perceptions of extra marital affairs | 26 |
| 6.1.1 Extra marital affairs “are wrong but...” | 26 |
| 6.1.2 Extra marital affair partners not marriage material..... | 30 |
| 6.2 Reasons for engaging in extra marital affairs | 31 |
| 6.2.1 Marital dissatisfaction | 31 |
| 6.2.2 “Everyone does it in Wadzanai township” | 33 |
| 6.3 Strategies..... | 36 |
| 6.3.1 Secrecy | 36 |
| 6.3.1.1 Mutual agreements to keep secrets | 37 |
| 6.3.1.2 Secret networks with friends..... | 37 |
| 6.3.2 Rendezvous | 38 |
| 6.3.3 The role of Information Technology..... | 40 |
| 6.3.4 The role of the church | 42 |
| 6.4 Consequences..... | 43 |
| 6.4.1 Perceived Consequences | 43 |
| 6.4.2 Real Positive Effects | 46 |
| 6.4.3 Real Negative Effects..... | 49 |
| 6.4.3.1 Threat to marital stability | 49 |
| 6.4.3.2 Physical violence..... | 50 |
| 6.4.3.3 Sexually Transmitted Diseases | 50 |
| 6.4.4 Extra Marital affairs not leading to divorce | 51 |
| 7 CONCLUSION..... | 51 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 8 RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 53 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 54 |
| Appendix A- Research Instruments | 58 |
| Appendix B- Invitation/Introduction Letter..... | 60 |
| Appendix C- Consent Form..... | 62 |

DECLARATION

I, Patience Chadambuka, Registration number R068573M declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted for the Masters of Science Degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Zimbabwe. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signature.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere gratitude goes to my participants who courteously spared their time and energy with me telling their personal life stories. This particular academic fulfilment will not have been possible without their much needed input.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Victor Muzvidziwa for his patience, mentorship and mature guidance which made this study easier to achieve. Special thanks also go to the entire University of Zimbabwe Sociology department staff for their unwavering support and professional conduct. My four colleagues with whom I spend the two special years will always be remembered for their indispensable help and companionship- Maureen Tshuma, Phillip Mwatsera, Modester Ngwerume and Tonderai Charehwa.

DEDICATION

To my late maternal grandmother for being the starter and main motivator throughout my academic journey. I am also grateful to my mothers; Mrs Chadambuka, Mrs Chimwe, Mrs Murimoga, Mrs Murenga, Mrs Bumhira and Mrs Dondo and also my uncle Mr Peter Chadambuka. To my husband, Simba, I will always be grateful for all the support, advice and faith that saw me completing this study when I did. To my son, Tavonga, thank you for the company to school and life in general. Last but not least glory is to God, without whom I'm nothing.

ABSTRACT

The present project sought to investigate and document extra marital affair dynamics prevailing among married women in Shamva's Wadzanai township, Zimbabwe. Previous studies on extra marital affairs have been criticised for their lack of a sound methodological and theoretical background. Thus this anthropological qualitative study employed in-depth interviews which were conducted with six women in the township. The interviews focused on the reasons, strategies as well as the perceived and real consequences of married women's indulgence in extra marital affairs. This study also made use of symbolic interactionism, Goffman's dramaturgical theory and Michel Foucault's concept of the gaze as the sociological lenses with which to analyse these dynamics.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present study sought to document the extra marital affair lives of married women who live in Shamva's Wadzanai township, in Zimbabwe. It was designed to gain an insight and in depth understanding of the extra marital experiences and perceptions of married women who actually engage in extra marital affairs. Focus was placed on how married women viewed and perceived extra marital affairs from their own understanding and experiences as well as their reasons for engaging in them. The study also focused on the participants' perceived and lived consequences of their engagement in affairs.

The study was based on an anthropological qualitative research methodology as it is the most useful methodology with which to gain an in depth understanding of a social phenomenon from a participant's perspective. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted in the township with six married women who were actually involved in affairs during the time that the interviews were done. Symbolic interactionism, Goffman's dramaturgical theory, Michel Foucault's concept of the gaze and the African concept of *ubuntu* were used as the sociological perspectives to analyse the dynamics that are involved in married women's conduct of extra marital affairs.

1.1 Background to the study

Marriage has long been viewed as a very important social institution that is responsible for legitimising conjugal rights and children. Therefore, most people in almost every society including Zimbabwe will marry at some point in their lives. Unlike in Western societies, for a woman to be referred to as being "married" in most African societies including Zimbabwe usually the husband would have paid some amount of bride price or bride wealth known as *roora* in the vernacular Shona language or *lobola* in Ndebele (Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 473). It has been argued that it is the bride wealth that transfers a father's control of his daughter to that of her husband and it also gives husband exclusive conjugal rights over his wife (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013, Bourdillon: 1997). Hence once a man pays a part of the bride price to his wife's family, he expects sexual and emotional exclusivity from his wife. It is against this background that some theorists of note feminists, have criticised the payment of lobola claiming that it acts as a hindrance to women's liberty as it confines her to patriarchal control (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013). The payment of *lobola* therefore forms the basis for a woman's fidelity within a marriage in the Zimbabwean

context. A man who pays the bride price for his wife is usually treated with integrity and respect especially by his in-laws; likewise, a woman for whom *lobola* has been paid is also treated with dignity.

The payment of *lobola* is also viewed as an adherence to Shona humane values and as such a woman for whom *lobola* has been paid is expected to behave morally straight by practising fidelity within a marriage. She is expected to exhibit values that reflect African values of *hunhu* through the way that she carries herself before the eyes of the society. However, even in instances where the bride price has not been paid, when a woman elopes to her lover, she is also considered a wife to that man and likewise, she is also supposed to be faithful to him. Marriage can also be formally registered in civil courts of law or churches such as the phenomenon in most Western societies.

In most societies including Zimbabwe, once people get married especially in a monogamous relationship, there is an emotional and sexual exclusivity that is expected in every marital union between a husband and a wife (Treas and Giesen: 2000). However, in some cases, marriage partners deviate from this standard and instead they opt for extra marital relationships for different reasons. Nevertheless, there appears to be a difference in the perception of extra marital affairs for men and women comparatively (Touersnard: 2009, Zare: 2011). Almost in every patriarchal society, men are socialised to be virile, masculine, powerful, decision makers who are adventurous especially in the area of sexuality. As such they are usually involved in polygamous relationships both formally, such as the case with polygamous marriages and/or informally in the form of extra marital affairs. Some of these extra marital affairs are referred to as “small house” in Zimbabwe and they tend to be normalised in the present society. As a result of these social beliefs and practices, male infidelity is somehow more accepted and even normalized (Touersnard: 2009, Treas and Giessen: 2000).

On the other hand women are socialised in a way that is meant to make them subservient and humble. They are expected to be faithful to their male partners whether they are married or not. As Foucault (1994) points out, female sexuality is confined to male dominance and control since women have always been historically under patriarchal control. A wife’s submission and fidelity to her husband are qualities that are central in qualifying a woman’s humanness or *hunhu/ubuntu* within an African marriage context. Even in other societies, female sexuality has generally been and is still associated with reproduction, while that of men is expected to bring pleasure (Swee-

Lin: 2012). Female sexuality in Zimbabwe, just like most if not all parts of the world can be equated to Foucault (1990) remarks concerning the regulation of women's sexuality by the Victorian bourgeoisie in England, it is "carefully confined" and also "moved into the home", as the conjugal family "took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction".

Unlike their male counterparts, the incidence of a woman marrying two men at the same time is unheard of in most if not all societies including Zimbabwe. Women thus lack liberty to behave as they wish sexually. As a result, they are always under the watchful eyes of the society; they are constantly under social surveillance. Some women in Zimbabwe resent this matrimonial control over their sexuality and autonomy to the extent that they opt not to marry (Muzvidziva: 2001). However, even though fidelity and marriage in general seem to be constraining to women, they also come with their own benefits to married women. Thus a lot of women chose to marry for different reasons and perceived benefits.

Usually under the local Shona custom, (which dominates the area under study) when a woman is caught while engaging in an extra marital affair, she is usually divorced as she would have disgraced her husband and his entire family. Extra marital affairs therefore offer a legitimate ground for divorcing a wife. Such women are treated with shame and usually their boyfriends will have to pay a fine in the form of five beasts to the cheated husband. A woman who gets divorced under such circumstances also brings shame to her family.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Extra marital affairs have traditionally and popularly been viewed as a place for men. Thus most extra marital affair studies that have been conducted mainly focused on men as the cheaters and their wives as the cheated partners. Women have been generally viewed as the weaker sex that is subservient and receptive to male domination. Ideally, in the traditional Zimbabwean society, a marriage is expected to establish a situation whereby the husband gains exclusive conjugal rights over his wife. Hence once married by whatever means, a wife is expected to honour her husband and one way of doing this is through being faithful to her husband. This also entails that only the husband has the right to intimate affection from his wife. Female sexuality has thus been largely domesticated and confined to the control of men and even the wider society. In most if not all societies, female sexuality is usually censored. Women are also said to benefit a lot from a marriage more than their husbands. Muzvidziwa (2001), points out that marriage in Zimbabwe is used as a

survival strategy by women in urban areas. Married women purportedly benefit materially and emotionally from their various forms of marital unions. Besides, entering into adulterous affairs is rarely anyone's goal at the outset of a marriage (DeMarris 2013).

However, studies that have been conducted elsewhere as well as media reports including the Zimbabwean media have shown that despite the social expectations that are ascribed to women in a marriage set up, women do engage in extra marital affairs and the number of married women engaging in extra marital affairs seems to be on the increase. (Treas and Giessen: 2000, Touersnard: 2009, Swee-Lin: 2012). Thus given the perceived socio-economic stability and pride that women purportedly accrue from stable marriages it becomes imperative to study why and how married women would risk putting all their marital benefits into jeopardy by behaving beyond social norms and moral boundaries.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study sought to;

1. Assess married women's perceptions pertaining extra marital affairs
2. Document married women's stories and experiences concerning their involvement in extra marital affairs.
3. Explore the strategies that married women employ in order to engage, consolidate and maintain extra marital affairs.
4. Explore both the perceived and real consequences and implications of women's engagement in extra marital affairs.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions;

1. How do married women who engage in extra marital view and experience the institution of marriage in relation to fidelity?
2. What strategies do married women employ in their conduct, consolidation and maintenance of their extra marital affairs?
3. What are the consequences of women's involvement in extra marital affairs-perceived and real?

4. What are the implications of women's involvement in extra marital affairs-perceived and real?

1.5 Justification of the study

It has been noted that there is generally a limited sociological study on infidelity since most studies on extra marital affairs have been biased towards biology and psychology (Touersnard: 2009, Treas and Giessen: 2000). The paucity of literature on extra marital affairs by women seems to reveal that extra marital affairs have traditionally been a gendered terrain in which men and not women are more likely to participate. Therefore studies on infidelity have focused on men as the cheaters and women as the cheated. The available studies on extra marital affairs have also been conducted mostly in developed countries and not much if any has been documented concerning extra marital affairs by married women in developing nations in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Existing studies on extra marital affairs have also been criticised for their lack of a sound methodological orientation (Touersnard: 2009). It has also been noted that studies on extra marital affairs have largely been conducted using quantitative research methodology. LaRossa and Wolf (1985) attribute this tendency to the gendered atmosphere of the social science research field. They reason that the institutions of marriage and family have largely been feminized such that male stream sociology which dominates the research field belittles vigorous qualitative study on marriage. Therefore the researcher reasoned that there is a need for a sound sociological inquiry on married African women in Zimbabwe so as to complement existing scholarly literature. The institution of marriage and the family are very vital since they are responsible for the primary socialisation of children. There was also a need to carry out a qualitative research on extra marital affairs by married so as to get an in-depth understanding of the matter from the actor's perspective. There was also need to study the extra marital experiences of married African women from an Afrocentric perspective which is what the present study managed to achieve.

Existing literature on infidelity has also been criticised for focusing on the negative consequences of affairs (Touersnard: 2009). Yet there is a possibility that affairs come with their own positive impacts and those also deserve a committed scholarly inquiry. Thus this study also sought to document the positive impacts of affairs by married women.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in Wadzanai Township in Shamva District and it is located 85 kilo meters from Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. The township is located in a mining and farming catchment area and has a small population of less than four thousand inhabitants.

1.7 Key terms

Extra marital affairs, fidelity, infidelity, marriage, married women, gender, culture

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Causes and perception of extra marital affairs by women

Cheating, philander, affair, adultery, extramarital sex, and infidelity are some of the terms that are used interchangeably to refer to extramarital relationships and these are usually sexual in nature (Touersnard: 2009). According to Zare (2011) these also include fondling, kissing, emotional friendships that go beyond friendships and with the advent of the internet, these also include internet relationships.

A longitudinal qualitative study of extra marital affairs in Japan by Swee Lin (2012) revealed that modern women have a different worldview regarding the institution of marriage. Instead of the traditional opinion which has always viewed marriage as a place where a woman totally submits herself to her husband's dominance, women view marriage as an institution where their own sexual desires and pleasure ought to be fulfilled. Thus when women feel that their sexual and emotional needs are not met in their marriages, they seek for them elsewhere. These married women look for male lovers who satisfy them in areas where their husbands fail to fulfil. Treas and Giessen (2000) point out that women's perception of inequality in marriage has been identified as a cause for their engagement in extra marital affairs. Swee-Lin (2012) also concluded that women engage in extra marital affairs as a way of equating themselves to men and their behaviour in extra marital affairs is usually not different from that of men (Prins et al: 1993). Thus by engaging in extra-marital affairs, women will be "playing like men" (Swee- Lin 2012: 321). The women would pay their lovers and male prostitutes for sex and they would dictate every sexual act since they will be the ones paying for the services. However ,though women seem to enjoy philandering, a study by Treas and Giesen (2000) found that almost 90% of the general public including women viewed extramarital affairs to be always or almost always wrong.

Some scholars are of the opinion that sexuality is being redefined by the present day woman and that includes but not only limited to married women. The traditional belief has been the idea that the terrain of extra marital affairs is a place for men (Blumstein & Schwartz: 1983, Atkins et al. 2001). However, other studies suggest that men and women's rate of engagement in extra marital affairs are becoming increasingly similar (Oliver & Hyde: 1993) According to Giddens (1992: 2) such studies reveal that female sexuality is increasingly being 'freed from the needs of reproduction'.

Female sexuality in particular is becoming closely linked with notions of romantic love, passion, fairness, pleasure, freedom and intimacy. Stivens (1998: 2) also concurs with this assertion pointing out that the involvement of these women in extra marital affairs represent moments of "gender instability". Thus the activities of women who engage in extra marital affairs represent a deviation from the socially accepted norms which depict women as docile receivers of sex and love in a patriarchal society. These dynamics are also occurring within the "formation of self-identities" in opposition to predefined, traditional social roles and identities. (Weeks: 1986) quoted in Swee-Lin (2012: 324).

There are other socio-demographic factors that have been linked to women's involvement in extra marital affairs. A study by Forste and Tanfer (1996), and Smith (1994) concluded that there is a significant correlation between educational level and infidelity among married women. They found that women who have a higher educational level than their spouse are likely to engage in extra marital relationships. Edwards and Booth (1976) also found that women who indicated that they could often "get their way" during arguments with their spouses were most likely to engage extramarital sexual affairs.

Treas and Giesen (2000) point out that less religious people including women are more likely to engage in extra marital relationships. Marital dissatisfaction has also been identified as another cause for women's engagement in affairs (Touesnard: 2009). Others indicate that women's desire to revenge for their husbands' infidelity also causes them to engage in affairs (Zare: 2011)

2.2 Extra marital affairs and secrecy

According to Allen (2005) extra marital affairs are shunned by society such that those who engage in them are often at pains in keeping them a secret. Generally in every society, women are supposed

to be subservient, humble and most of all they are expected to be faithful to their male partners, whether they are married or not. In the Shona culture, marriage is held with high esteem such that family members take time to groom the girl child for her to become marketable for marriage (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013, Bourdillon: 1997). The ability to get married is a milestone for a woman and married women are often treated with dignity. Generally, female sexuality is associated with reproduction, while that of men is expected to bring pleasure (Giddens: 2002). The situation is further strengthened in a marriage set up. As noted earlier, marriage in Zimbabwe is legalised by the payment of the bride wealth by a husband to his wife's family. The bride price then transfers a father's control over his daughter to that of her husband (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013, Bourdillon: 1997) and it also gives a husband exclusive conjugal rights over his wife. From this background, a married woman within an African context cannot openly engage in an extra marital relationship.

According to Treas and Giessen (2000), sexual exclusivity is expected in both married and cohabiting couples. As a result, women who engage in extra marital affairs usually do this discreetly. According to Swee-Lin (2013), married women often employ discreet strategies so that their significant others will not learn about their extra marital affairs. Touesnard (2009) also asserts that, without secrecy, most extramarital relationships may not endure. This assertion is also supported by Pitman (1989) in Allen et al (2005) who posits that secrecy is very essential in both *creating* and *maintaining* extramarital affairs. This is also supported by Treas & Giessen (2000) and Glass & Wright (1988) who point out that circumstances that assure secrecy are functional in facilitating extra marital relationships. Richardson (1988) also asserts that what is common in every extramarital relationship is that it begins as a secret. This secret is what generates intimacy between the two parties and it also helps sustain the relationship. Secrecy within the relationship also avoids social pressures, criticism or judgment from others (Swee-Lin: 2012).

According to Swee-Lin (2012), in Japan wealthy married women usually meet their lovers in host bars and strip clubs that provides male prostitutes who cater only for the needs of women. Such facilities are also ideal for these women since they grant their female clients a higher level of anonymity. The study also revealed that working women have better chances and resources such as time and money to meet their lovers. They usually meet their lovers without the knowledge of their family on the pretext that they will be working. Housewives also secretly take resources for

domestic use to pay their lovers but they usually find this expensive. Some women also create different kind of stories to their husbands just to spend time with their extra marital partners. These discrete strategies seem to point to the fact that extra marital affairs when practiced by married women is shunned by society hence the need to make the act a secret.

2.3 Consequences of women's involvement in extra marital affairs-perceived and real

Infidelity has been identified as the main cause for divorce in most societies. (Wiedermann: 1997, De Marris: 2013, Swee-Lin: 2012). According to Zare (2011), 90% of America divorces involve infidelity. Patriarchy is a reality in every society such that extra marital affairs when practised by women are usually interpreted as a dishonour to a husband and his family. Therefore, such women are usually divorced. Even in instances where married women manage to conduct their extra marital affairs secretly, they are usually engulfed with feelings of guilt and shame (Swee-Lin: 2012).

Many women depend on their husbands financially and thus such women fear financial loss from divorce that can be caused by their engagement in extra marital affairs. According to Swee-Lin (2012) many scholars are of the assumption that the threats that infidelity poses to economic security for the woman, family harmony, and social stability are good enough to deter women from behaving beyond cultural norms. However, some studies reveal that infidelity does not always lead to divorce. A study by Edwards and Booth (1994) indicated that only five percent of American couples agreed that extramarital sex and relationships caused a problem in their marriage. Similarly, Blumstein and Schwartz's (1983) findings among American couples revealed only a limited tendency for extramarital sex to lead to divorce. Thus these studies seem to suggest that the majority of people who experience an extra marital affair will stay together which can be a reason why researchers need to explore the dynamics and complexities of extra marital affairs further (Touesnard :2009).

Studies have revealed that there are indeed positive results that married women gain from extra marital affairs (Touesnard 2009, Glass and Wright 1992).Some respondents in these studies reported that their extra marital affairs helped them to improve intimacy in their marriages. Married women's involvement with male prostitutes and secret lovers equipped them with sexual tactics, pleasure, emotional support and companionship that were allegedly missing in their marriages

(Swee-Lin 2012). Some studies have also revealed the functional aspects of extra marital affairs such as increased self esteem (Glass and Wright 1992).

Olson et al. (2002) also found that infidelity positively impacted marriage through creating and cementing closer marital relationships. The same study also revealed that women who had extra marital relationships benefited as they would take better care of themselves and they would also place a higher value on their family.

3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a micro sociological theoretical perspective that focuses on how individuals negotiate their own relationships within a broader social structure. This perspective is based on two major assumptions. Firstly it is based on the idea that human behaviour cannot be explained without knowing and understanding the meaning that such behaviour holds for the actor (Giddens: 1992). Therefore, for one to understand a social phenomenon, they ought to first of all understand the meaning that it holds for the individual concerned at an intra and interpersonal level. Meaning itself is created through human interaction and the use of shared symbols such as language.

Secondly, the theory further posits that how a person defines their own situations determines their course of action (White & Klein: 2002). Thus a person's interpretation of a particular situation is the one that determines their course of action. As a qualitative study that is concerned about how and why individual married women negotiate their way in a world that condones their indulgence in extra marital affairs, it becomes important to understand their own perception of the world as they experience it in their own marriages. As White & Klein (2002: 62) point out, the central assumption is that "actors think about and act according to the meanings they attribute to their actions and context". Symbolic interactionism also accounts for the dynamic and reflective nature of relationships therefore it becomes ideal for studying extramarital relationships. Hence using this perspective is beneficial for exploring the meanings, feelings, and experiences of married women who have actually engaged in extramarital relationships.

This perspective was also chosen for its micro and individualistic orientation. In a world that is becoming more individual than societal due to a number of factors such as migration, acculturation and rapid urbanization, micro perspective inherently become indispensable. The area under study is a township and therefore it represents urbanisation and a centre where different cultures converge. Wadzanai Township itself is composed of people from various Southern African ethnic groups who migrated into the area as mine and farm workers. Thus symbolic interactionism can help to understand how women in these cultural milieus construct their own meanings of the world. The study is also concerned with telling the women's stories according to their own perspectives. Hence symbolic interactionism becomes indispensable.

This perspective can also provide a framework for exploring the reasons why married women choose to engage in extra marital affairs considering the social woes that are associated with the act. Thus if the women perceive their reasons as outweighing these social woes, then they may believe their actions are justified. Symbolic interactionism provides a useful framework for exploring dimensions of marital and extramarital relationships including how one defines extra marital affairs and how these women as well as their significant others negotiate these affairs within the particular context of their marriage and family. Its concern with meanings, process, interaction and a grounded familiarity with everyday life make it a prime tool for approaching all aspects of social life as they emerge and transform (Plummer: 2003). The perspective is also vital for exploring interpersonal process, such as how the women understand and perceive the effects of their affairs on their other relationships.

Symbolic interaction is also helpful for exploring how individuals are influenced and shaped by cultural norms and social scripts. This particular theory can also be useful when studying how these social forces are internalized, accepted or rejected by the actors. Thus it becomes easier for instance to explore why and how some married women deviate from the socially accepted norm of fidelity in marriage. Symbolic interaction can also help to explain why for instance both perceived and real consequences of extra marital affairs are different for different women. Therefore, in short, symbolic interaction is useful to explore, on a micro level of analysis, how individuals use language and symbols to construct meanings. These constructed meanings will then in turn have an effect on their course of action.

3.1.1. Goffman's Dramaturgical theory and conceptualization of the self

Symbolic interactionism can also be further understood and appreciated by using Goffman's conceptualization of the self and the dramaturgical theory. The dramaturgical theory is based on the premise that the world is a theatrical representation. According to this model the self is a product of the dramatic interaction between the actor and the wider audience. Thus Goffman's main purpose in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is to 'consider the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others' (Goffman 1990: 9). As a social actor, the individual's life takes course at two distinct contexts, that is, the backstage and the front stage. In these two facets of life and interaction, an individual constantly tries to give and give off impression to others through verbal and non-verbal communication respectively. The backstage is the place where the real personality of an individual is exercised. The backstage is kept away from the audience and it usually takes place in secretive social spaces, much like what happens in the changing rooms or "behind the curtains scenes" in theatres. Social actors do not want to give the audience access to their backstage. They only want to exhibit themselves on the front stage where they present an act which they deem desirable to the audience.

It is at this front stage where they create personality traits through what Goffman (1959) terms impression management and it can also be understood as "putting on a performance" (Asplund 1980:105). Thus impression management is all about "successfully staging a character" (Goffman 1959:203) and it is also concerned with controlling certain audience from gaining access to some performance. Thus this perspective can help understand how women who engage in extra marital affairs present themselves to the world after taking into cognizance of the fact that extra marital affairs are usually shunned by society. The dramaturgical theory becomes useful in understanding how married women who engage in extra marital affairs try to give people a different impression of themselves to the world.

However, even though symbolic interactionism in general and Goffman's conceptualization of the self appear to be individualistic, they also have elements of structuralism intrinsic in them. Even though the central theme in the perspective postulates that individuals construct their own meanings of the world, Goffman (1990:45) points out that "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited

values of the society”. Thus although individuals do construct their own meaning of the world, they do so with social values in mind. According to Goffman, they will exhibit socially desirable behaviour in order to save their faces lest they will face social “stigma”. Thus the perspectives can also help to understand how married women’s involvement in extra marital affairs is affected by the wider society and how the women view and react to the officially accredited value of infidelity.

Goffman further postulates that performance usually involves team work or co-actors. These team-members are dependent and reliant upon each other. Team work and performance needs to be coherent and supportive lest other team-member will expose or destroy the whole performance if they have bad acting skills or in case they adapt to discrepant roles. Thus for an act to be successfully staged, “Each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behaviour of his fellows, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on him” (Goffman 1959: 88). Individuals and teams alike employ several techniques of impression management in order for their performance to be successfully staged. They make use of such as dramaturgical attributes and practices based on loyalty, discipline and circumspection in order to avoid unwanted incidents, disruptions and scenes in case the back stage is exposed to the unintended audience. Hence, Goffman points out that those teams characterize a secret society. “If a performance is to be effective it will be likely that the extent and character of the cooperation that makes this possible will be concealed and kept secret” (Goffman 1980: 108). Hence the idea of a secret society will help understand how married women and their accomplices attempt to engage in their relationships secretly.

Thus using Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective can help in understanding the strategies that are employed by married women as they try to conceal their affairs. It can help to understand how married women manage to pursue their engagement in extra marital affairs since literature has shown that these affairs flourish and thrive in a world of secrecy. Hence for instance, places where the women meet their boyfriends secretly can be equated to Goffman’s backstage whilst those avenues where married women exhibit a socially desirable character can be viewed as the front stage.

However, although symbolic interactionism is instrumental in exploring the micro level processes that take place within marital and extramarital relationships, there are a few shortcomings that can

be experienced when using this paradigm. Firstly, symbolic interaction has been criticized for heavily concentrating narrowly on the micro analysis of social processes whilst overlooking the role that is played by macro social processes such as power and inequality (Giddens: 1997). Furthermore, Plummer (2003: 525) suggests that what is largely missing from symbolic interactionist work on sexuality is "...there is little humping and pumping, sweatiness or sexiness in much sociological work. Instead we have discourses, identities, cultures, patriarchies...Until recently, the body and emotions are largely absent". It is against this background that it becomes imperative to use other sociological lenses such as the work of Michel Foucault on sexuality to inform our understanding of women's extra marital engagements.

3.2 Michel Foucault's concept of "the gaze."

According to Foucault, much of human action is subjected to social surveillance. In his analysis of the panopticon, Foucault asserts that human beings are subjects who are constantly in realms of power contestations. They are subjects who are constantly scrutinised especially by the authoritative instruments of power. Foucault's panoptic gaze analysis also stipulates that the ideal subject is the one who obeys the law. Therefore, according to him, "confronted by a power that is law, the subject who is constituted as subject – who is 'subjected' – is he who obeys" (Foucault 1990: 85). However, this is not always the case. Humans as subjects are able to resist power structures; hence he also argues that, "We must construct an analytics of power that that no longer takes the law as a model and a code." Everyone has power at their disposal and every subject can also scrutinize those who scrutinize them and this even includes authority. (Krips: 2010). Therefore even though one is subjected to certain power structures that repress them, they can always find strategies with which to renounce those very power structures. Hence he points out, "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault 1990:93).

The fact that power is dispersed therefore implies that subjects can resist power and control. This can happen by way of "practices of freedom" such as engaging in extra marital affairs. This power also includes power over one's sexuality, hence even though women are exposed to certain social control mechanisms that are meant to repress their freedom over their sexuality, they are also able to renounce those control mechanism as they have the power. Therefore even though wives are

being constantly watched by the social gaze, they can resist social control and this they can do for example, through engaging in extra marital affairs. Therefore the concept of the gaze can be useful in analyzing the dynamics that take place in extra marital affairs, especially on the strategies that married women use in their practice of these affairs. Their perceptions and reasons for engaging in extra marital affairs can be understood by using this concept since they are used to justify married women's engagement in extra marital affairs in defiance of popularly held social norms and values.

3.3 The concept of *Ubuntu*.

In an effort to understand the dynamics of extra marital affairs as they occur in an African context, it became imperative to analyse the present study using an Afro-centric perspective. Thus the researcher adopted the African philosophical concept of *Ubuntu*. The word *ubuntu* has different dialectical terms across Sub-Sahara African ethnic groups, the Bantu and it shares the same meaning. The Shona word of *ubuntu* is *unhu* and the English translation of the word is humanness (Mawere: 2012).

The concept of *Ubuntu* is derived from the Nguni proverb '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*': "A person is a person because of other people" and according to Jacobs and Jacobs (2013:151), the proverb simply connotes the idea that "I am what I am because of who we all are". Put differently, the phrase connotes the idea that an individual is a product of his surrounding thus he should in turn contribute to the sustenance of that very society. Thus from this proverb, it can be clearly noted that the concept of *Ubuntu* is derived from a macro theoretical perspective. It connotes that an individual's behaviour, feelings, thought and actions are a product of learned cultural norms and values. A human being is thus a product of society and not the other way round.

The concept of *Ubuntu* also carries with it some fundamental moral implications. According to Woodling (2010), the concept of *Ubuntu* is built around humanistic and communalistic virtues that encourage empathy, justice, trust, solidarity of human kind, interdependence, caring and respect. The concept thus delineates what is right from what is wrong (Mangova and Chingombe: 2013). Thus the concept discourages selfish behaviour and anything that goes against African cultural social norms. The concept was adapted in this research because of its ability to situate the study within its African context. It would be useful to analyse the cultural beliefs of these women as well as their perceptions. Since extra marital affairs especially by women are viewed as moral

decadence, using this perspective will thus be useful to analyse how women feel about culturally ascribed values of fidelity in marriage. Their beliefs in African values will also help to appreciate the strategies that they employ when practicing their affairs in an African but somehow Westernised socio-economic context. It will also be worthwhile to assess whether the spirit of *ubuntu* still exists in the African context.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was based on qualitative research methodology. Qualitative methodology was chosen because of its ability to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of social phenomena from the respondent's own perspective since it sought to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of married women. Qualitative methodology was also considered ideal for this particular study as it deals more with language than with numbers since gaining meaning was more important for the study. Matthews (2005: 800) concurs with this assertion adding that "Qualitative analysis entails making sense of words, those elicited during interviews". As such, the researcher was able to get an insight and understanding of unique dictions that were chosen by the respondents as opposed to those that may be used by outsiders to describe the same phenomena, person or object.

Personal relationships especially extra-marital affairs constitute a complex and sensitive arena. Thus an understanding and exploration of the complexities and dynamics that are characteristic of extra marital affairs is essential in revealing the paths to truths of what really transpires in this act and only qualitative research appeared ideal for the exploration of social dynamics as they take place in the form of extra marital affairs by married women. Qualitative research methodology also proved to be more ideal for the study of women in extra marital affairs because the researcher managed to go on the ground with the respondents on a face to face to basis. This helped to establish a rapport and environment that helped the researcher to get the valid information from the respondents. Reliable traits such as non-verbal communication also helped to validate information.

4.1 Research Methods/Techniques

According to Crotty (2003) research methods are procedures or techniques that are used to gather and analyse data that is related to a research question or hypothesis. While according to Carter and Little (2007:1318), "Method is research action." The study made use of one major research

technique, that is, in-depth interviews while some element of observation was also employed for the purposes of validity.

4.1.1 The interviews

In-depth interviews were chosen since they are an excellent way of getting first hand data because the researcher got an opportunity to talk directly with the respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted with six women in the township on a face to face basis and these lasted for one to two hours. According to Matthews (2005) usually those who do research on marriages and families typically choose to do interviews. This is because marriage, intimate relationships and family life occur "behind closed doors," (Matthews 2005: 801) hence it is rarely open for instance, to participant observers. As a consequence these social phenomena may be "directly apprehensible" only through intensive interviewing. Therefore, rather than being a poor substitute for participant observation, Lofland & Lofland (1995:19) suggest that intensive interviewing becomes the method of choice. Matthews (2005) also stresses that an interview in qualitative research ought to be as much like participant observation. This is so because to label the interaction between a researcher and a respondent an interview implies simply recording answers to questions. A question and answer session implies that the respondent only answers given questions.

However, qualitative research usually goes further than this since the respondent is given the platform to air out issues that are of importance to them and not necessarily only that information which appears important to the researcher. Thus using the word "interview" becomes misleading if not a misnomer. According to Matthews (2005) qualitative researchers who offer advice about research techniques on interviewing are sensitive to this. Thus after taking these issues into cognizance, the researcher opted for in-depth, active, semi structured interviews. This gave the respondents an opportunity to dominate the discussion as well as air out some issues that they thought were important to stress.

Robson (2004) also argues that this "collaborative relationship" between researcher and the researched also implies that the power to decide on the designing and collection of data is lost by the researcher. Thus a research partnership was also established with the participants.

The personal contact with participants that transpired in the interview settings also helped to elicit richer and more detailed responses from the informants. The researcher also got to know more

about some of the participants to such an extent that some of the women are now friends to the researcher. These Interviews also provided an excellent opportunity and setting to probe and explore questions further.

It should also be clearly pointed out that the interviews were conducted in the vernacular language, that is, Shona. This proved to be effective since this is the first language for both the researcher and the participants. Meanings attached to certain words and actions are well understood by the researcher and the researched. The researcher was also of the same gender, locality and race as the informants. This was pivotal in giving the interviewer first-hand knowledge of respondents' situation. Interviews took place in private settings at the respondents' homes and work place when there was no one else around. This made it possible to ensure privacy which was required for the study. A private face to face interview setting also made it easier for the participants to be at ease and comfortable with the researcher, knowing that no other person was listening. It should also be noted that the research topic is highly private thus a private setting became an inherent necessity.

4.1.2 Limitations/ Challenges

Since marital affairs are a private issue, some potential interviewees were unwilling and uncomfortable with sharing their life stories. At first those who were willing to be interviewed were sceptical about sharing these uniquely private stories of their lives. Some respondents thought that the researcher was a spy who had been assigned by their husbands to investigate them. However, once the aims of the study were explained the introductory letter and consent forms were produced mutual trust was established between the researcher and her respondents. Some potential respondents outrightly refused to participate in the study.

Two of the respondents said they only chose to talk to be interviewed because they trusted the researcher since we knew each other personally while one respondent made it clear that she decided to be interviewed only because she wanted the researcher to realize her academic ambitions. Since some interviews took place at the respondents' houses, disruptions would also take place sometimes since unintended visitors would arrive. This meant that interviews had to be temporarily stopped only to be continued only after the visitors had left. This had to be done for the purposes of ethical considerations especially the aspect of confidentiality. Sometimes the respondents had to lie to their visitors and even husbands regards to who the researcher was and why she was talking to them. Elements of guilt were thus sometimes intrinsic to the researcher in

the interview stages. Volumes of data obtained through interviewing were also time-consuming to analyze.

4.2 Sampling

According to Matthews (2005), a sample consists of the elements or units that will be examined in a study and these are selected from the population under study. All the women who participated in the study were purposefully selected. Thus only women who were actually engaged in extra marital affairs were interviewed. It should be noted that identification and approaching participants was not easy due to the sensitivity of the research topic. However, the researcher got help from personal friends who identified three respondents whom they knew were involved in extra marital relationships. Two of these respondents also introduced the researcher to their two other friends who also became participants. Thus an element of snowballing became part of the sampling procedure. Only one participant was a personal friend of the researcher and she agreed to participate in the interview once she learned about the study. As a personal friend, the researcher knew that the participant was involved in an extra marital relationship since they confided in each other.

The study took place between October 2013 and February 2014

4.3 Data collection methods

The interview data collection method was chosen. In depth interviews were conducted only between the researcher and her participants. Field notes/anecdotes were gathered as the interviews will be took place.

4.4 Data presentation

Both raw and analyzed data was included in the final presentation. Descriptive accounts were used and these were presented in thematic forms or topics. Findings were also presented topically and chronologically in a narrative form. Conceptual frameworks and theoretical analysis were manipulated for the purposes of description and explanation of the findings.

4.5 Research population

The research was done with married women who live in Shamva's Wadzanai Township. Marriage in this study was taken from a both modern and traditional African conception. Whilst Western conceptualisation of marriage usually considers only formally registered marriages, the traditional

definition of marriages in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular usually considers the bride prize, or *roora/lobola* as a seal to a marital union as it legalizes a marriage (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013, Bourdillon: 1997). Thus from this perspective, any other form of marital union that does not include lobola “looks like casual sex or prostitution” (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013). However it should also be noted that not all African societies uphold the practice of bride wealth. There are also some ethnic groups in Sub-Saharan African groups that do not pay or receive *lobola*, for example the Chewa. Even though these groups do not pay much or any bride price, they also formalize their marriages through engaging in rites that unifies their families. A woman then becomes a wife to a man as soon as they their marriage rites are done.

This study was carried out in Shamva, an area that is also dominated by diverse African ethnic groups, which also include some of these matrilineal groups. Hence in this study, a married woman refers to a woman for whom a certain amount of bride price has been paid by her husband to her parents and/or relatives *if* both her family and that of her husband were from a lobola paying background. However, those women whose family or those of their husband were of a non-*lobola* paying background and whose marriage had been accepted by their matrilineal families were also considered as married women. Formally registered marriages were also considered in this study. It is also important to note that the exact number of women involved in extra marital affairs is and might never be known.

4.6 Ethical considerations

By nature marriage and intimate relationships are private and confidential. Thus the researcher had to be extremely sensitive to this fact before, during and after the study. Since they provided private information, participants had to be assured that their identities were not be revealed to anyone. Due to the victimizations that usually befall women who engage in extra marital affairs especially from their spouses, it became critical to qualify these women as a vulnerable group. Thus the research ethics of informed consent and confidentiality were seriously taken into consideration in an effort to protect the participants.

(i) Consent

All the women in this study freely consented to participate, without having been coerced or unduly pressurized. The participants were also well-informed about the objectives of the study, what

participation entails, and they were also reassured that declining to provide information was not an offence. The participants also signed the consent forms and were issued with the introductory letter that fully explained the aim, nature, purpose of the research as well as the contact details of the researcher's supervisor.

(ii) Confidentiality

The identity of participants was and will always be protected in order to protect them from possible danger or shame which might be incited by the revelation of real identities. As a result, alias names were used for all the participants in the study, though one woman had insisted that her real name be published. However, it should be acknowledged that it is difficult or even impossible for one to measure the exact or possible dangers of a certain context or situation to a given population, or worse still to individuals. Confidentiality might also be difficult to guarantee given the fact that the researcher may have no control over the publication, readership as well as circulation of the study material. Even though alias names were used, it is also vital to leave a room for the possibility of other people especially those from Wadzanai Township to trace the real identities of participants. Nevertheless, the researcher did all she could to make sure that the identity of respondents is protected.

5 FINDINGS

5.1 Demographic profile summary of the respondents

Most of the participants in this study were in their thirties with only one who was 43. Of the 6 women that were interviewed, 2 were full time housewives; one was a vendor while 3 were formally employed. Only two respondents had a tertiary education qualification, while the other 2 were O-level graduates while the remaining two were high school dropouts. Three of the women were born and bred in Shamva while the other two had come to Shamva to work, and one had migrated to Shamva with her first husband 7 years ago. Five of the six women were regular church goers while one of them said she had stopped going to church after realizing that her lifestyle was no longer compatible with Christian doctrines. Three women were under the institutional Chapter 5.11(monogamous) marriage registration, two of them having wed in church while one was registered with the civil court. The other three were customarily married, with a certain amount of bride price having been paid to their parents by their husbands.

One woman was in a polygamous marriage while the rest were in monogamous marriage unions. Two of the women were in their second marriage while the other four were still in their first marriage. The women had been married for at least 3 years to 21 years. All of the women in the study were having an affair at the time of the interviews. One woman had begun engaging in extra marital affairs from the onset of the marriage, while the other 5 got involved at least 2 years after the marriage. The length of affairs ranged from a few days to 8 years. Two women had had a single affair while one of them had two affairs whilst the other three expressed doubt over the exact number of affairs that they had in their entire lives. As one respondent pointed out,

“Handichambozivi ini kuti nditi ten ndinenge ndichinyepa nekuti vakawandisa, chingotii kuma 30”- Esther (I am not so sure to say 10 will be a lie because they are too many just say around 30.)

5.2 Individual cases

5.2.1 Case A- Esther

A mother of one who was of Ndebele origin, Esther was aged thirty. She was an O- Level graduate who had passed four subjects. She was born in Bulawayo but had stayed in various towns with her father who was a soldier. She came to Wadzanai Township seven years back with her first husband whom she had married whilst living in Bulawayo. She was unemployed and thus depended on her husband financially. Esther was born a Christian however she reported that she had since stopped going to church two years back after realising that her lifestyle was no longer compatible with Christian doctrines. She was now in the third year of her second marriage.

Her current husband was of Malawian Chewa descendancy. As a man from a matrilineal background her husband had not paid bride price for her. However, he had been formally introduced to her parents and she said that her parents regarded him as their son in law but they were expecting him to pay the bride price. She said that her husband’s relatives had also accepted her into the family as a daughter in law. Thus their relationship qualified to be regarded as a form of marriage. Esther had met her current husband after divorcing with her first husband whom she blamed for being promiscuous. She reasoned that her first husband had put their marriage in jeopardy once he had started making lots of money from his gold dealings. He had started having extra marital affairs with many women, including two of her married friends. She then decided to leave him.

Esther started engaging in extra marital affairs at the onset of her first marriage. She was not even sure about who had fathered her child who she had when she was still married to her first husband. This was made possible by the fact that she had continued her relationships with two of her boyfriends whom she had before she got married. She reported that she only practised fidelity in the first two months of her second marriage but went back to her old ways of cheating thereafter. She was not sure about the number of extra marital partners that she had had in life but she estimated that they exceeded thirty. She pointed out marital dissatisfaction as the main reason behind her indulgence in affairs. She complained that her husband starved her emotionally, financially and sexually thus she found solace in extra marital affairs. Her boyfriends were scattered around the country and she had partners in most of the towns where she once lived and stayed. However, most of her boyfriends lived in Wadzanai Township and the majority of them were her husband's friends and workmates. Esther would meet her Wadzanai based boyfriends in bushes, friend's houses, nearby hills and Pote river. She reported that her relationships were both emotional and sexual in nature. Just like the rest of the women, Esther thought that extra marital affairs were wrong. Her husband had never caught her engaging at the time of the interviews.

5.2.2 Case B - Kudzai

A high school dropout, 36 year old, Kudzai was a mother of five who was of the local Shona origin. She was unemployed at the time of the interviews and she was an active member of a local Apostolic church and she had been raised in a Christian environment. She was in her second marriage and she had one child with her current husband. They had been together for six years. She had four other children with her first husband. Her second husband who was also of Shona origin had paid a partial amount of bride wealth for her. She was in a polygamous marriage and her husband had three other wives, her being the third.

Kudzai reported that she had been involved in only one relationship and it was eight months old at the time of the interviews. She had decided to reignite her romance with her married high school sweetheart after being dissatisfied with her current husband who had reportedly lost interest in her. She pointed out that her relationship with her boyfriend was emotional in nature but they had made plans to become sexually intimate. Her affair had been disclosed to her husband after he had seen intimate messages that her boyfriend had send her on her mobile phone. Though her husband had

not taken any major action, she pointed that their relationship had been constrained further because of the disclosure.

5.2.3 Case C-Chipo

Another High School dropout, 33 year old Chipo was born and bred in Harare. However she used to stay in Wadzanai township with her aunt during school holidays as a teen. She was self-employed and was involved in buying and selling. She rented a room in Wadzanai township which she used for accommodation while she was in the township. Her Shona husband and four children lived in Chitungwiza (a nearby town). She had been married for 14 years and her husband had paid bride wealth for her. Their Chapter 5. 11 marriage was also formally registered at the magistrate's court. She was an active Pentecostal church member.

Chipo indicated that her involvement in extra marital affairs was mainly financially motivated but however she was of the opinion that infidelity by married women was morally wrong. She reported that her husband was failing to fulfil his roles and obligations as the provider of the house therefore she had decided to take over that role. She pointed out that she was involved in affairs as a way of making money thus she was operating on a commercial scale and would charge for her services for any payment after ten dollars. She also indicated that she now did it not only for money, but also for pleasure. She was not sure of the number of affairs she had had thus far but she indicated that she had been involved with more than thirty men. She would meet her clients at her room that she rented in Wadzanai, lodges and even pubs and bars. Her husband had never caught her since he never visited her in Wadzanai. She also conducted her affairs in Wadzanai and not in Chitungwiza where her husband and family lived permanently. She would only meet her boyfriends and clients during her business related stays in Wadzanai.

5.2.4 Case D - Diana

An O- Level graduate mother of two, 30 year old Diana worked for the local authority. She was born and bred in Wadzanai Township where she was raised by her Shona parents. She was in the 10th year of her first monogamous marriage and was customarily married to her Shona husband who had paid bride wealth for her. She lived in Wadzanai with her husband, their two children and her deceased sister's three children. Diana was in a three year old affair with a workmate who was also married. It was her first and only affair which she had turned to in retaliation for the betrayal she had suffered when husband who had cheated on her.

Her affair was both emotional and sexual in nature and she reported that her affair was more egalitarian than her marriage where her husband dictated everything. She had disclosed her affair to some of her friends but she did not want her relatives to learn about her affair. She would meet her boyfriend away from the town usually in Harare or even South Africa in order to conceal her affair. She was aware of the fact that some of her workmates knew about her affair but she said that though it worried her, she was prepared to face the consequences if her husband was to know. She was confident that her husband knew nothing about her affair.

5.2.5 Case E-Debra

Thirty five year old Debra was a government worker who was a mother of two. She stayed in Wadzanai alone while the rest of her family lived in Harare. She stayed in Wadzanai during working days and would join her family on weekends and other holidays. Debra was a university graduate who had been married for ten years and she was still in her first marriage. She had wed in church after her husband had paid *lobola* for her. She was also an active Christian who was a member of the Mother's Union in one of the old churches. She had been born and raised by her Shona parents in Harare, and her husband was also of the original Shona.

Debra got involved in extra marital affairs for the first time three years back when she came to Wadzanai to work. She indicated that she only dated employed men and all of them were married. She had been with four boyfriends and her longest affair had lasted for two years. Two of her boyfriends were mine works whilst the other two also worked for the government. She reported that she only had one boyfriend at a time. At the time of the interviews she was dating a fellow government worker. They would meet for their romantic escapades outside Wadzanai but sometimes they would also meet at her house especially during the night since she stayed alone when in Wadzanai. She reported that she was involved in extra marital affairs as a way of compensating for marital dissatisfaction. Her husband had become emotionally distant from her over the years and thus she was receptive and grateful for the attention that she was getting from other men. Her husband and relatives were not aware of any of her relationships, she only told a few friends.

5.2.6 Case F- Magret

Magret was a forty three year old government worker who possessed a college diploma. She also stayed in Shamva during working days whilst her husband and four children lived in another town.

She had been married for twenty one years and she was still in her first marriage. She was of Ndebele origin as well as her husband. Her husband had paid *lobola* for her and they had also wed in church.

Magret had first got involved in extra marital affairs in the 14th year of her marriage. General dissatisfaction had caused her to turn to other men for love, comfort and even sexual satisfaction. She was of the opinion that affairs were morally wrong. She had dated six men since then and all of them were married. Magret was dating a co-worker at the time of the interviews and they had been dating for fourteen months. She had started her current affair after ending her two year affair with a local gold dealer. She would meet her boyfriend in Bindura (nearby town) or during lunchtime at local restaurants. Her husband had learned of her current affair and he had physically attacked her together with her boyfriend. He was threatening to divorce her but she did not want to end her marriage, thus she was still negotiating with him for a reconciliation. However, she had not ended her affair with her boyfriend.

5.3 Extra Marital Partners

This study revealed that the affairs happened with old boyfriends and the friends of these women's husbands especially for the unemployed women. Formally employed women's affairs took place at work related environments with co-workers. Only one woman reported to have had relationships with strangers. All the six women also revealed that their extra marital partners were also married men. It is also important to note that all of the extramarital relationships that are described in this particular study contain a sexual component. Five of the six women admitted to have had sexual encounters with their extra marital affairs partners while the sixth one was planning to have her first sexual encounter with her boyfriend who lived out of town.

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1. Perceptions of extra marital affairs

6.1.1 Extra marital affairs “are wrong but...”

One recurrent theme that was echoed by all the six women was the idea that extra marital affairs are wrong. This view has been shown in similar studies (Touesnard: 2009, Smith: 1994, Treas and Giesen: 2010). The perception was that extra marital affairs are wrong and that ideally they should

not be practiced by anyone, whether male or female. All of the women reported that extra marital affairs are contrary to African social norms that encourage fidelity in marriage especially for married women. Thus these women reported that they engaged in the act with a guilty conscience. Therefore, even though the women were constructing their own meaning and experience of the world regarding fidelity in marriage, they were aware of the idea that extra marital affairs were contrary to socially accredited values and African *ubuntu* spirit. As a result, they tried by all means to appear as if they adhered to the social values of fidelity in marriage.

“Zvinonyadzisa, kwete inini chete, asi naiwo baba, zvinovarerutsa pane vamwe varume neniwo ndinofumuka.” Esther. (It’s shameful, not only to me, but also my husband as well, he loses respect from fellow men, I also lose dignity).

“Zvinhu zvinonyadzisa. Nekuti pane zvandinombonzwa zvichitaurwa nevanhu pamusaka peaffair yangu iyoyi. Dzimwe nguva ndinoedza kuzviiginowa but ndinozombofunga vana vangu kana vamwe vana vandinochengeta kuti kana vakazovinzwa vanofungei neni? Futi vanodzidzei? Kana ivo vabereki vangu vakanzwa kuti ndozvandakuita vanofungei neni nekuti hazvisiro zvavakandiraira.”-Diana. (It’s shameful. Because there are certain things that I hear people saying about my affair. Sometimes I try to ignore them but I end up thinking about what my children, my nephews and nieces that I look after will think about me if they are to learn about my affairs. What kind of lesson am I teaching them? Even my parents, what will they think if they are to hear of what I am doing because that is not what they instilled in me?)

Zvakashata kani. But kungoti dzimwe nguva unenge usina option. –Kudzai. (It’s wrong it’s just that sometimes you will be out of options).

The women also supposed that they had a potential of imparting these ‘wrong’ moral values to their children. They knew that they were responsible for the primary socialization of their children and other minors who looked up to them. For instance, Diana’s sentiments reflected the idea that she thought that her children were likely to construct their own meanings and value of the world based on her involvement in extra marital affairs. Thus the participants were not comfortable with setting up a socially unacceptable example. Likewise, Esther felt that her indulgence in extra marital affairs was wrong because it was detrimental to her husband’s dignity and self worthy. Her sentiments showed that the African value of patriarchy was indeed a reality since women’s lives

could be defined by their husband's social status. These opinions and perceptions by the respondents also highlighted the fact that African values and morals (*ubuntu*) were still pivotal in shaping these women's worldview and behaviour. They felt that their involvement in extra marital affairs was a disgrace to their children, husbands and even their parents who had raised them up in a way that sought to impart and instil the moral values of fidelity by a married woman. Thus the involvement of these women in extra marital reflected the idea that they had lost *unhu/ubuntu* that had been imparted to them by their parents. Their sentiments also echoed the idea that they were also in the danger of imparting the wrong values to their minors. Hence indeed it was shown that the even if the values of *ubuntu* still shaped these women's perceptions, the spirit of *ubuntu* is indeed gradually losing its influence in the actual behaviour of these women as they were actively involved in extra marital affairs.

The idea that extra marital affairs are morally wrong was also reflected in the way that the respondents defined or described the act in their own words. For Esther, the correct word with which to substitute extra marital affairs was "*kuba*"-stealing. In an African context, as well as most if not all societies, stealing is morally wrong and usually those who are caught stealing are penalised. She reasoned that stealing was the perfect word to describe her experience of extra marital affairs because according to her,

"Ndingati inini kuba nekuti kana uri kuba uri kutora chinhu chisiri chako zvichireva kuti zvauri kuita izvozvo hazvisi pamutemo. Chepiri, munhu wauri kubira iyeye even vamwe vanhu haafaniri kuzviziva nekuti unogona kusungwa kana kuitwa zvimwe zvinhu. Zvichireva kana washinga kuba haufaniri kubatwa, futi munhu kazhinji kana asvika pakushinga kuba anenge aona kuti nzira dziri straight dzaramba plus hapana munhu akakwana anoba chinhu chaasingadisi".-Esther (I can say it's stealing because with stealing you are taking something that is not yours meaning that the act is illegal. Secondly, the person from whom you are stealing and other people as well must not catch you lest you will be arrested or other things will be done to you. This means that when you decide to steal you should not get caught. Also in most cases when one finally opts to steal it means other legal avenues will be closed for that person and no sane person steals what they don't really need).

Thus Esther reasoned that she was stealing her husband's conjugal rights by making them available to other men. Also, like Diana, Esther reasoned that her involvement in extra marital affairs was a

disgrace to her husband, and this is what qualified infidelity by women as being morally wrong. The two women's sentiments showed that the *ubuntu* value of patriarchy was still pivotal in shaping these women's perceptions and behaviour.

For three of the women, the correct description of extra marital affairs was the traditional Shona description of extra marital affairs-*gumbo mumba*, *gumbo panze*-a phrase that depicts a person standing with one leg inside a house and the other leg outside the door. The idea is that a person is engulfed in indecision; they are standing in the middle. Usually in Shona culture, when a person is married, they are said to be inside a house-“*mumba*”. As such, a married woman is referred to as *mai vemba* and the husband as *baba vemba*. Thus the idea is that when one decides to marry, they should stay with both legs inside the house. Thus putting one leg outside the house has negative moral implications.

“Ndongoti ndiyo gumbo mumba gumbo panze inongotaurwa iyoyo. Unenge usiri decided. Pamwe pachu unenge usingadi zveshuwa. Imwe pfungwa inoti ita semudzimai akaroorwa, munhu ari mumba asi zvaunozoitirwa zvacho unotoona kuti better kubuda panze umbonozorodza pfungwa saka unozongobuda panze pachu. Zvakashata hazvo nekuti mukadzi wemunhu anofanira kuita chiremerawozve asi chinobva chapera”. - Magret (It's the outspoken *gumbo mumba gumbo panze*. You will be undecided, at times you will not be up to it. Sometimes you tell yourself to behave like a married woman but you end up getting a raw deal so you end up stepping outside the house just to get peace of mind. It's wrong though because a married woman ought to have dignity but you will lose it anyway).

For Chipu, it was just prostitution-“*chihure*”.

“Kuhura kuhura whether uri mumba kana uri single. Kuita munhu wevarume vakawanda panguva imwe chete kuhuraende kuhurakwagara kwakashata asi kana munhu asingadi kuchengeta mhuri yake zvingaitwe sei?” –Chipu (Prostitution is prostitution whether you are married or single. Being a woman of many men is prostitution and prostitution is wrong but if a man does not want to provide for his family, what are the options?)

Hence, the women's explanations and the meanings that they attached to the practice of extra marital affairs clearly revealed that they were of the opinion that affairs were morally wrong. Their terms and explanations also pointed to the idea that they did not consider only themselves when

opting for extra marital affairs. Instead, they also considered their significant others and the wider community who had an influence and impact on their lives. Thus they were aware of the presence of the social gaze, to borrow the concept of the Foucauldian panopticon. Also from a symbolic interactionist perspective, it can be concluded that women's involvement in extra marital affairs was a result of the women's internalized, accepted as well as rejected social values. They had learned and internalized the idea that extra marital affairs are wrong but at the same time their life experiences had forced them to negotiate that social value. The women were convinced that their personal circumstances had forced them to engage in extra marital affairs.

6.1.2 Extra marital affair partners not marriage material

One recurrent theme that also emerged from this study was the idea that the women were not prepared to leave their husbands for their boyfriends. This has also been shown in similar studies (Touersnard: 2009). Though all the six women reported that they were not satisfied in their marriages, they ruled out the possibility of marrying their extra marital partners. They reasoned that a marriage to an extra marital partner was doomed to failure because it was built on the wrong foundation. Extra marital affairs started and were cemented by secrecy and betrayal. Trust that is supposed to be one of the bedrock of marriage was jeopardized by this betrayal. The participants reasoned that even if they were to leave their husbands and marry their boyfriends, the marriage would not last for long. They would eventually divorce. They thought that their boyfriends would never trust them because they had already betrayed their husbands by having an affair. Thus leaving their husbands for the boyfriends was not an option for the women.

“Anoziva weakness yangu so anenge akufunga kuti ndichamusiya sezvandakaita murume wangu saka hazvitomboiti”. Kudzai(He knows my weakness so he will think that I will eventually leave him just like what I did to my husband.

“Anotoziva kuti ndakambohura naye saka anetenge ofunga kuti ndichangohura futi”. –Esther (He knows I cheated on my husband with him before so he will think I will do the same to him).

Thus the women's lack of enthusiasm to marry their boyfriends seemed to point out to the fact that they were only prepared to be with their boyfriends only at the backstage part of society. Their relationship with their boyfriends was just an act that could not be taken seriously. As accomplices and co-actors, theirs was a relationship that could never be presented to the world under any

circumstance lest it would not survive. They had known each other well enough to judge each other accordingly. From the perception of these women, an extra marital relationship could only start and survive in a secret society. It could never be practiced overtly, and it could not be transformed into a lasting open marriage because the co-actors knew each other too well so much that trust and a lasting relationship was inherently insurmountable.

6.2 Reasons for engaging in extra marital affairs

6.2.1 Marital dissatisfaction

Even though the women were of the opinion that extra marital affairs were wrong, they still believed that their reasons for engaging in them outweighed the guilty conscience that they felt when they engaged in these affairs. Therefore they had power at their disposal with which to redefine their social world to fit their personal circumstances. A recurrent theme that emerged in this study was the idea that the women were generally unsatisfied in their marriages. All the women reported that ‘everything’ should change in their marriage and that ‘nothing’ good worth mentioning was prevailing in their primary relationship. Other studies have also revealed that there is a correlation between marital dissatisfaction and the likelihood to engage in affairs (Touesnard: 2009, Blow and Hartnet: 2005).

Studies that have been conducted elsewhere also point out to the idea that women engage in extra marital affairs mainly for emotional reasons (Touesnard: 2009, Treas and Giesen: 2010, Smith: 1994). All the women in the study pointed out that they expected true love from their husbands. For them, love from their husbands was supposed to be the cornerstone of their marriage. Five of the six women pointed out the fact that their husband appeared not to be attracted to them anymore while only one woman insisted that financial deprivation from her husband forced her to venture into seemingly commercial sex work. The majority of the women felt that love and affection were missing in their marriages and this was the main cause for marital dissatisfaction. The absence of love manifested itself in different forms that ranged from poor or lack of verbal communication to the absence of sexual activity. Expression of love in its subtle ways was also missing for these women. For Esther, her experiences in extra marital affairs compensated for this lack of matrimonial love.

“Ndinotombozvibvunza kuti ndini here uyo ari kunzi sweetie, kana kunzi honey, unotombovhunduka. Apa murume wangu handizivi kuti akazvipedzisira riini, ndofunga ndichangopinda mumba. Zvinoita kuti ndinzwe kudiwa.” -Esther (I ask myself whether I am actually the one being referred to as ‘sweetie’ or ‘honey’, I am shocked sometimes. I don’t remember the last time my husband said something so sweet to me, I think it was soon after we got married. I feel loved when those things are said to me.)

Some women pointed to the fact that communication breakdown and a general loss of power and influence within their own marriage made them to opt for extra marital affairs. This was similar to some studies which reported that loss of power and self esteem can drive married women to engage in affairs (Treas and Giessen 2010, Touesnard: 2009, Swee-Lin: 2012, Smith: 1994).

“We used to plan things together but not anymore. Sometimes he gives his relatives staff like money without my knowledge and I only learn that from the grapevine. That’s an insult to me; I lose my place as a wife, the lady of the house”.-Diana

“Hautombozivi nepaanoisa mari. Kana ndichitoda chingwa ndinototanga ndaenda kubasa kwake kana kusenda please call nekuti kana yeairtime yacho haandipi. Handiti kana muri baba namai munofanira kuronga pamwe chete?” -Esther (I don’t even know where he keeps his money. Even if I want bread I will have to follow him at his workplace or sent him a call me back message over the mobile phone because he does not even give me airtime. Isn’t it the norm that a husband and wife should plan together?)

Thus contestations of power were also evident in these women’s grievances. The gravity of marital dissatisfaction also included sexual deprivation. Four women pointed out that sexual deprivation outweighed financial deprivation. They pointed out to the fact their husbands could go for months without having sex with them. As a result, the women were adopting affairs as a survival strategy in order to satisfy their sexual needs. One woman pointed out the fact that a boyfriend was the only solution to her problem.

“Zvekuti anondinyima mari hazvina basa nekuti ndinogona kungoronga kamusika kangu pamberi pemba ndikaiwana. As long ropa richingofamba-famba chete ndinotenga chii chinomisa ropa kufamba, mururme ndichamuwana kupi? Ndotobuda panze mai mwana nekuti iye ane kwaari kuzviwana.” – Debra (Financial deprivation does not bother me much because I can make money

through petty trading. But as long as I have sexual feelings, what will I buy with money that will satisfy my appetite? Where can I get a man? I have to look outside my dear because he is surely also getting it from somewhere).

Another idea that emerged from the issue of sexual deprivation was that these women thought that their husbands were getting sexual satisfaction from other women. Hence they reasoned that their husbands had failed to fulfil their conjugal function which happens to be one of the main rationales behind the institution of marriage (Touesnard: 2009, Zare: 2011, Wiedermann: 1997). One woman who was in a polygamous marriage as a third wife pointed out that her husband had stopped paying attention to her when he fell in love with another woman that he eventually married as his fourth wife. This forced her to seek love outside her marriage by reigniting old romance with her high school sweetheart that she had last seen 14 years back before she got married to her first husband. Therefore these women reasoned that they could only match their husbands' sexual activities by seeking sexual satisfaction elsewhere. Hence one can conclude that these women were redefining their sexuality by deviating from traditional and conservative perceptions that depict female sexuality as one that is confined to the domestic sphere where it is controlled by their husbands. They had their own form of power over their sexuality at their own disposal.

However, in the study only one woman pointed out that financial deprivation from her husband was the main reason behind her involvement in extra marital relationships. She reported that her husband did not financially provide for her and their three children the way that he should, given the fact that he had a steady job and reasonable income. She reasoned that the primary role of a man in any patriarchal arrangement is to provide for both his children. Thus she wanted to take over the role of her husband, by fending for her children financially through commercializing her sexuality.

“Imhosva yake haadi kushandira vana vakezve saka ndinotomushandira”. - (He is the one to blame, he does not want to provide for his children, so I will provide in his place). –Chipo

6.2.2 “Everyone does it in Wadzanai Township”

Another dominating theme that was significant in the study was the idea that by nature Wadzanai was incompatible with fidelity in marriage. The women reported that most married women were involved in extra marital affairs in Wadzanai. They just did not want to talk about it. Some believed

that it was because Wadzanai is a small mining and farming township and this goes contrary to previous studies which point out that bigger cities are the ones that are likely to have higher rates of infidelity (Treas and Giesen: 2000). The convenience of small mining towns for affairs can be attributed to the fact that many people have money at their disposal in mining townships. Wadzanai is therefore a good example. The township is infested with gold dealers, miners and panners both legal and illegal. These gold dealers can easily lure many women with their money and married women are no exception. Prostitution is also rife in Wadzanai due to commercial sex workers who are after these gold dealers' money. The three women whose husbands were involved in gold dealings also reported that whenever their husbands made money they would spend it with other women, including married women. One of the participants, Chipo was also quick to point out this idea,

“Wadzanai hainetsi kutsvaga mari nekuti ine makorokoza hobho anenege ane mari’ Ndosaka ndichida kutengesera kuno nekuti ndinozopedza ndoita rimwe business.”-Chipo. (It's easy to make money in Wadzanai (Township) because there are a lot of gold panners who have money. I chose to undertake my buying and selling business here because I end up embarking in another type of business (prostitution)).

Another respondent, Esther also had this to say;

“Wadzanai inotongorine mweya wenzvimbo, wechihure chaiwo. Muno makangozara chipurazi nechimine. Zviya zvekutoti nyaya yenyu iyika iyi, aaa handifungi kuti pane asiri kuzviita. Kana varipo vatori vashoma ndevaye vanotoenda kuchechi nemoyo wese. Chikomboni chakawandisa”. (Wadzanai is haunted by a resident spirit, a spirit of prostitution and promiscuity that is typical of farming and mining communities. I think everyone is doing it except for a few who are genuine, devoted Christians).

For Magret and Debra, Wadzanai was more lucrative for extra marital affairs than their original cities, where their husbands worked and lived. They had found it easier to engage in extra marital affairs in the Township since it was almost the norm. They reasoned that the purported high rates of extra marital affairs in the township made it very normal and acceptable to engage in affairs.

“Zvingatonetsa kuzviitira kuHarare nekuti iii unoswera wasvororedzwa muraini. Manje kuno zvinotori normal vanhu havatombozvivhunduki. Zvaitombodinetsa ndichazvitanga but not

anymore.”- Debra. (It’s more difficult in Harare because neighbours will put you to shame in no time. But here in Wadzanai people are not even shocked about that (affairs). I used to struggle when I started but not anymore).

Thus the women were confident of the fact that virtually most married women were involved in extra marital affairs in the township. Except for one woman, Chipso who claimed to have no friend in Wadzanai, all the other five women reported that all of their married female friends were also cheating on their husbands. They just did not want to talk about it especially with the researcher. In their circles, the women also encouraged each other to engage in extra marital affairs as a way of relieving stress especially from their promiscuous husbands. One can therefore posit that by encouraging each other to engage in affairs, these married women were constructing their own social world which was contrary to traditional cultural beliefs and practices of the African *ubuntu*. A different type of ‘*unhu*’ was being defined and normalized. In Foucauldian terms, these women were resisting the domination of African customary law through engaging in “practices of freedom” in the form of extra marital affairs.

In this study it was also found out that extra marital affairs are also made possible by the fact that Wadzanai is composed of people from different Southern African ethnic groups who migrated into the area as labourers in the mines and farms especially during the colonial era. The concentration of different ethnic groups in the area resulted in the acculturation of these ethnic groups and that ended up affecting their values, attitude, behaviour and even morals. These ethnic groups include but are not limited to Shona (original Kore-Kore), Chewa and Bemba groups (originally from Malawi and northern Zambia) as well as other groups of Mozambican and Zambian origin. However the Chewa and Bemba are of more interest since they are two of the greater sub-ethnic groups that have a unique cultural orientation when it comes to marriage and family. These two groups are matrilineal unlike most Southern African ethnic groups. They do not pay *lobola* (bride price) unlike most African ethnic groups. This is alien to the patrilineal ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier, the bride price is interpreted as the means through which a father transfers his control of his daughter to that of her husband, and its main role is to legitimise a marital union (Mangena and Ndlovu: 2013, Bourdillon: 1997). Thus the non-payment of *lobola* by the Chewa and Bemba can be interpreted as ensuring that a husband does not have absolute control over his wife as is the case with ethnic groups where the bride price is inherently mandatory. Also, contrary

to patrilineal societies, in matrilineal societies, children are said to belong to their mother and not their father and as such, their mother's brother and not their father. Therefore matrilineal women have a considerable level of autonomy compared to their patrilineal counterparts.

It can be elucidated that women who belong to these matrilineal ethnic groups might have different perceptions regarding marriage and fidelity compared to those who have a lobola paying culture. Women who come from a matrilineal background may therefore have more control over their sexuality than their patrilineal counterparts. Through their interactions in the township, other people from a lobola paying background can learn, internalize, admire and even adopt some of these matrilineal cultural practices and implications. Thus some of the women in the study reported that the Chewa and Bemba lifestyle was being adopted by other women who come from a patrilineal background. This was evident in the area of fidelity within marriage. Non-Chewa women and men alike have been acculturated into the matrilineal Chewa lifestyle as they no longer confine their sexuality to their husbands. They have made their sexuality available to some men other than their husbands.

One participant had this to say, "*Muno makanyanya kuzara marudzi ekuMalawi, anaChimwene anongotorana neadzimai awo asingabhadhari roora saka unongozivawo kuti kana usina kubvisirwa pfuma unogona kungoita yese yese. Saka vanhu vamwe vanongozopedzisira voitawo kunge marudzi*".- Esther (This township is full of foreigners from Malawi who take women as wives without paying the bride price which gives one a legitimate ground to be autonomous. Therefore other people end up behaving like these foreigners). Therefore, one can posit that the urbanization and migration process characterised by the infusion of cultures had a profound effect on the behaviour of the participants.

6.3 Strategies

6.3.1 Secrecy

It has been noted that the engagement of women in extra marital affairs is socially unacceptable in every society (Touesnard: 2009, Swee-Lin: 2012). Hence in principle to borrow Goffman's dramaturgical sociology, the practice of affairs by married women is a socially stigmatised act that ought to occur backstage. It is something that the audience ought not to see in order for the face of the women who practice it to be saved from the audience (society). Therefore this inherently

implies that most extra marital affairs take place in secrecy. All of the women in the study revealed that their affairs survived because of secrecy. In Foucauldian terms, the women knew that they were under the surveillance of the social gaze. Thus an overt practice of these relationships was never an option because they knew that they would be judged and even face possible negative consequences. The study revealed that various strategies were employed by the women in an attempt to make sure that their significant others as well as the wider community would not learn about their relationships.

6.3.1.1 Mutual agreements to keep secrets

All the six women reported that they made mutual agreements with their boyfriends to keep their affairs as secrets. None of them was supposed to disclose the affair to other people. As team members and co-actors they had to establish and maintain their own dramaturgical team rules, values and loyalties in order for their act and presentations to be successful.

“Tinotoita chisungo chekudenga kuti hapana munhu anofanira kuzviziva”. -Magret (We institute a divine covenant that no one else should know).

These mutual agreements could also be cemented by using threats. These threats were also directed to the wives of the women’s extra marital partners. Under customary law in Zimbabwe, when a man is caught having an affair with a married woman, he pays a fine of five cattle to the woman’s husband. Thus some of the women in this study took advantage of this customary law arrangement.

“Ndinotovaudza kuti munoudza vari kumba ikoko vaticwanire. Vakada kubhabhauka ngavazive kuti mombe dzinoenda ivo vasina kubvisirwa kana huku chaiyo.” –Esther. (I tell them to silence their wives because they are the ones who will be at the losing end. They will lose five cattle yet no bride price has been paid for them).

6.3.1.2 Secret networks with friends

There were also networks that were established and utilized by these women. Even though the idea was to keep secrets, a few selected friends were told of these affairs. These friends also had their own extra marital partners. This secret society of friends would help each other with ideas and strategies to ensure that their affairs were concealed from the rest of the world. Thus a dramaturgical team among friends who engaged in extra marital affairs was established. As Goffman (1959: 88) postulates, “each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and

behaviour of his fellows, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on him”. The friends would therefore facilitate for instance when these women wanted to meet their boyfriends. The friends would ensure that the husbands and even children would not catch the women when they were with their boyfriends. One of the women had this to say;

“Dzimwe nguve unotononaka wamubikira kana sadza chairo kuti asambofungira kuti pane chirikuitika. Pamwe pachu unototi uruke nyaya kuitira kuchengetedza abiako.” – Esther. (Sometimes you even have to prepare him a meal (as a delay tactic) so that he will not suspect anything. Sometimes you have to create a story in order to protect your friend).

Some women would meet their boyfriends at their friends’ houses or they would communicate with their boyfriends using their friends’ mobile phones. They would also return the favour by facilitating their friends’ affairs. It was also noted that some ‘*ubuntu*’ values of friendship, interdependence and communalism existed among these women and they were devised as means to realize an end that was contrary to *ubuntu* value of trustworthy and fidelity in marriage. Dramaturgical team loyalty among these friends was thus functional in the maintenance and sustenance of extra marital affairs.

However, friends could also provide an opportunity for these women to get potential extra marital partners in a mutually exclusive fashion. Some elements of dramaturgical team disloyalty also existed among these women as they would sometimes betray each other. This happened as these women would also have extra marital affairs with their friends’ husbands or their husbands’ friends but it was never part of the agreement among these friends to have affairs with friends’ spouses. One of the women pointed out how her friend had an affair with her husband.

“Vabiyangu vakatouya kuzorarana zvavo mumba mangu umu mai mwana. Apa ndanga ndavharwa zvikanzi enda kuBindura unotenga hembe dzako. Kundiita fuza chairo” –Tendai. (My friend had sex with my husband in my house after my husband had tricked me into going shopping for my clothes in Bindura (nearby town). They made an absolute fool out of me.)

6.3.2 Rendezvous

In an effort to keep secrets, these women would also ensure that they met their boyfriends at secluded places, at the backstage that was located a bit far from the township, places where people of usual acquaintance would rarely reach. However there was a notable difference that was existent

between employed women and housewives. Housewives would usually meet their boyfriends at nearby Pote River, surrounding hills, bushy areas and maize fields.

“Ndinongoita sendiri kuenda kuhuni mugomo, isu tichitoziva kuti tirikungosangana zvedu. Tinoita zvatinoita ikoko. Tapedza ndotosunga svinga rangu ndotoita saamai vari kubva kuhuni. Unotorasisa vavengi manje”. - Esther. (I pretend to be searching firewood in the mountains, knowing very well that I will be meeting my boyfriend. We do what we have to do. After that I will carry my firewood just like any other woman who has been searching firewood. I will disguise myself).

Thus when she was spotted carrying firewood, Esther would appear like a very responsible woman in the eyes of the world. The ability to fetch firewood and the act itself is considered as one of the most important and expected roles of a woman in a traditional African context. Hence, fetching firewood was an act that was functional in concealing Esther’s affairs from the rest of the world because no one watching would suspect her of the fact that she had been with a boyfriend in the bushes. She even bemoaned the destructive effects of veld fires that were ravaging the surrounding tall grasses and bushes blaming them of robbing her of her rendezvous.

“Unotoshaya kuti vanhu ivava vanongopisa pisa vanombozvitiirei? Takutoshaya pekufarira nekufambira manje.”- Esther. (You wonder why these people start veld fires. Now we don’t have somewhere to enjoy ourselves.)

On the other hand employed women met their boyfriends at more sophisticated rendezvous. For Diana, Magret and Debra, meetings with boyfriends usually took place away from the township. They would meet their boyfriends in Bindura and Harare (nearby towns) or as far as South Africa yet they all lived in Shamva. In order to guarantee themselves more privacy, they would meet at more secluded places such as lodges and guest houses. This was also similar to Swee-Lin’s (2012) study on the extra marital experiences of married women in Japan where it was discovered that wealthy married women would meet their boyfriends in expensive host bars and strip clubs. All this was done in an effort to ensure that no one important would spot them. This was also done in an effort to maintain their humanness, in the eyes of the community. They had to give their acquaintances the impression that they adhered to African moral values of fidelity in marriage.

“Aaa hationani muShamva, tingaswera taonekwa? Tinongounganidza mari dzedu to ngonimirana kure uko kuHarare chaiko kana kutoenda tese kuSouth Africa kwekuti machances ekusangana nemunhu wekuziva mashoma”.- Diana (No we do not meet in Shamva, lest we will be easily spotted. We just pool our resources together and meet in Harare or we will even travel to South Africa where chances of meeting a familiar face are slim).

Only two women reported that they met their boyfriends at their houses. For Debra, this was rare but for Chipo it was usually the norm. Perhaps this was because Chipo’s reasons for engaging in extra marital affairs were different from the rest of the women. She had stressed that she had opted for commercial sex as a way of making ends meet since she reasoned that her husband was not doing much to provide for their children. Thus most of her clients were gold panners and buyers. The other reason was that her husband also lived in a nearby town with their children. Though she grew up in Wadzanai, she now stayed in the township on temporary basis for a few days where she would double her petty business (buying and selling) and commercial sex work. Therefore, she would meet some of her clients at her place but knowing very well that her husband would never visit so she would not get caught. Her husband would not suspect anything about her sex work in Wadzanai since she always came to the mining town under the pretext that she was just doing her petty business. Thus Wadzanai gave her a perfect backstage for her to meet other men away from her family and friends since she reported that she had no friends in Shamva and did not intend to make any. This also ensured that her extra marital affairs relationships would not be known by her significant others who did not suspect her of anything. She also noted that her husband, family and friends did not suspect her as she was a different person when with her family and friends.

“Nyangwe mukavaudza kuti ndozvandinoita vanokurambirai. Vanondiziva ndiri mai vekuchechi ende kuchechi ndinotoenda.”- Chipo (Even if you tell them (her relatives) they will never believe you. They know me as a devoted Christian and I am regular at church).

6.3.3 The role of Information Technology

Most of the women were quick to point out the idea that information technology had the potential of both concealing and exposing their relationships. For Esther, a mobile phone was functional in both concealing and consolidating her affairs. She would communicate easily with her boyfriends

but this had to happen covertly. Therefore she had devised ways and means so that her husband would not learn of her conversations with her boyfriends that took place on her mobile phone.

“Ndinogara ndavaudza kuti musangofone pese pese. Vanongofona kanandabhipa chete kana kuisa please call”. – Esther. (They can only call me back when I request them to. They do not call whenever they wish).

This was done to ensure that their husbands would not be suspicious in case the boyfriends would call or text messages. Mobile phones were also a convenient way of communicating as they ensured that the relationships could occur without physical presence of the boyfriends.

However some women were sceptical about the use of mobile phones, they had a possibility of attracting an unwanted audience. Thus for Chipu, none of her boyfriends was allowed to call her under any circumstance. She did not want to take any chances. Though a mobile phone was a very convenient mode of communication, she also had certain rules.

‘Inini handifonerwi nembwa idzodzo. Handitombovapi number dzangu vazhinji vacho. Kana ndichida inini ndini ndinotovafonera. Vangazofona murume wangu aripo. Zvozodii manje?’ (Those dogs (her boyfriends) do not call me. I don’t give most of them my number. I am the one who makes the calls if I want to. What will happen if they call during my husband’s presence?)

For Kudzai, a mobile phone was the reason she got caught by her husband. However she said she did it deliberately so that her husband would realise that he had pushed her too far to the extent that she had turned to her long lost high school sweetheart for love, comfort and affection. Similar studies have also revealed that information technology especially in the form of emails and mobile phones has been instrumental in the disclosure of extra marital affairs to spouses (Touesnard: 2009).

“Ndakangosiya mamessages iwayo kuti amaone kuti anyatsoona zvandanga ndakuita? Ndaida kuti aone kuti anga achindirwadzisa ndine pfungwa yekuti aizo korrekta mamistakes ake.”-Kudzai(I left the messages on my phone deliberately so that he would be aware of what I was doing. I wanted him to realize that he was hurting me so that he would correct his mistakes)

6.3.4 The role of the church

Five of the participants in the study indicated that they were Christians who also happened to be regulars at church. Their engagement in affairs was thus contrary to Christian doctrines that advocate fidelity in marriage. Studies that have been carried out elsewhere indicate that people who go to church are less likely to engage in extra marital affairs (Smith: 1994). However one of the women reported that she had since stopped attending church. She reasoned that it was the proper thing to do after realizing that her involvement in extra marital affairs was no longer compatible with Christian doctrines. However, she said that she still believed in and prayed to God asking for His forgiveness especially when she was about to meet her boyfriends.

“Ndinotonamata ndichikumbirawo ruregerero ndototi Mwari ndakuenda asi munongozivawo kuti uku hakusi kuda kwangu asi zvandituma ndezvizvi nokuti chokwadi haisi mhosva yangu”. –Esther. (I pray to God asking for protection and forgiveness acknowledging that it is not my fault but circumstances will be forcing me to act as such).

She hoped that God would protect her from any iniquity that might befall her as she engaged in her extra marital activities. Thus though she was going against Christian values of fidelity, she still believed that divine protection was indispensable in ensuring her general well being.

The church was also strategic in ensuring that affairs could not easily be exposed. This was so because the church played a pivotal role in masking the extra marital affairs behaviour of the participants and at the same it accorded these women a favourable social status. Like Durkheim, in his dramaturgical analysis, Goffman (1990:45) views religion “as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community”. Thus for the participants, the church served as a haven and ideal front stage for the creation as well as maintenance of a favourable impression management for the women before the eyes of the community. It gave the world an impression that these women subscribed and adhered to moral values of fidelity in marriage. Attending church regularly was also functional in minimizing social surveillance so that certain people would not suspect that these women were involved in extra marital affairs. One woman was quick to point this out,

“Hapana anombozvifungira kuchechei kwedu uko. Ndiri mai ruwadzano vakasimba. Asi chero ndikabatwa hapana dhiri because church kwandiri iburial society. Iwo mafundisi acho ndiwo ari

pamberi nevakadzi vevanhu, zvinozivikanwa izvo”- Chipo (No one suspects anything at my church. I am an active mother’s union member. But I don’t care if they find out because to me church is a burial society. The priests are the ones who are notorious with married women and it’s a known fact).

Chipo’s sentiments also showed that if the women were to be caught, they were ready to expose the idea that the church members are not really what they purported to be. Some church members and leaders’ behaviour was not necessarily reflective of Christian expectations. Thus it can be ascertained that these respondents were proactive actors who possessed power to question the integrity of social institutions. Thus when they reasoned that the socially approved behaviour was not to their advantage, they were in a position to construct their own meanings and perception of the church according to their own lived experiences. They knew that they were under the watchful eyes of the social gaze but at the same time they were surveilling that very society back, including its instruments of authority and power (in the form of the church in this case).

6.4 Consequences

Respondents in this study generally pointed out that their involvement in extra marital relationships came with mixed fortunes. Both negative and positive impacts were realized from the act. Existing literature also points out that infidelity comes with both negative and positive consequences (Touesnard: 2009, Swee-Lin: 2012, Smith: 1994, Treas and Giesen: 2000)

6.4.1 Perceived Consequences

There are certain beliefs that are associated with women’s involvement in extra marital affairs in the African culture in general and the Shona culture in particular. For instance, it is said that if a married woman is involved in an extra marital affair while pregnant, the baby will not breastfeed until the mother confesses. Contractions might also be jeopardised or fail completely while the mother is in labour. There are also stories among the Shona whereby some married women have died while having sex with boyfriends. It is believed that a man can perform rituals on his wife such that if the wife sleeps with another man, the two’s genitals will be physically attached until they are seen by other people. This ritual is referred to as “*runyoka*” among the Shona. Certain rituals will have to be performed so that the two will be disjoined. There have also been stories in the Zimbabwean press where some men and other people’s wives have died together after failing to disjoin their private parts.

Generally all the women were aware of the social mores that were said to be associated with extra marital affairs. However except for two women all the other four women dismissed these consequences as mere fables and legends. They reasoned that these were old fashioned mores that no longer applied in the present society. For Chipso, belief in those mores was a sign of insanity, “*Ndezvekupenga izvo, vangani vari kuvachengeta vana vasirivi vavo?*” (That’s insane, how many men are raising children who are not theirs (unknowingly)).

Some women reported that their experiences enough testimonies to prove that these beliefs did not apply in their lives. Their lived experiences had shown that these beliefs were just mere claims that do not come to pass. For example, Kudzai, a mother of one who had had an extra marital affair while pregnant and married clearly pointed out;

“*Ndezvekunyepa nekuti handizivi kuti mwana wangu ndewaani*” (It’s a lie because I am not sure who fathered my child).

She reported that she did not face any complications while in labour. Her child had breastfed normally. All these happened despite the fact that she was involved with two other men besides her husband while she pregnant. This showed that these women were using their lived experiences to construct their own meanings of social phenomena contrary to the traditionally held beliefs.

However, two women thought that these beliefs were real. Kudzai indicated that she had seen and heard enough stories to believe that certain things could befall women who were involved in extra marital affairs. She pointed out that her grandfather who was of Malawian origin was able to perform *runyoka*. Thus her background had made her realize that there were indeed repercussions that were associated with extra marital affairs especially when practiced by women. This had also forced her to delay a sexual encounter with her boyfriend, even though she had plans to change that. Thirty year old Diana also believed that those beliefs were true. As a result she had decided not to breastfeed her child after having an affair whilst she was pregnant. She had also opted for a caesarean section when she gave birth. All this she did because she feared being involved in complications that would make her confess thereby exposing the fact that she was involved with other men. Thus whilst other women appeared not to be moved by traditional African beliefs, some believed that they were facts of life. And these beliefs were functional in shaping their worldview and behaviour.

Besides the culturally held beliefs, the women also perceived that other things could happen to them if they were caught. Three of the women had not been caught before by their significant others while the other three had been caught. Those who had not been caught believed that negative things would happen to them if they were caught. Diana thought that murder could be the ultimate penalty. She supposed that her husband was capable of killing her if he found out the truth about her love life. She also pointed out that her marriage would be in danger and if her husband was to learn about her affair there was a possibility that he would divorce her. That implied that her family would also be put to shame. It would be devastating to her parents who had received bride prize from her husband. Diana was also worried that her children and her nephews would lose respect for her if her affair was exposed. Generally all the women did not want their family members to learn about their affairs, especially their parents. They felt their parents would be ashamed the most because people would question their parenting strategies. As people who are responsible for primary socialisation of children, parents are usually blamed whenever their children contrary to social norms.

“My parents should not hear about it. *Zvinovabvisa chiremera* (They will lose their dignity.) What will people say about the way they brought me?” -Kudzai

Therefore the women were determined to conceal their affairs in order to combat those social costs.

The fear of emotional breakdown and shame for the significant others also made these women to behave in manners that were socially desirable. They acted in ways that would not openly exhibit their character as people who engaged in extra marital affairs. Esther was of the opinion that her husband would commit suicide if he was to learn the truth about her love life. She reasoned that her husband thought of her as a docile woman who was incapable of cheating and she always gave him that impression.

“*Haatombozvifungiri anondiona sedununu nekuti ini handimubvunzi zvaanoita*”. (He does not suspect anything; he thinks I am a moron because I do not confront him about his own affairs). - Esther

All of the six women also pointed out that they were aware of the fact that they were exposing themselves to Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV/AIDS. However some pointed out that their husbands were equally contributing to the risk since they were also involved with other

women. Thus they felt that engaging in affairs would make it less emotionally painful for them in the event of contracting a sexually transmitted infection because they were equal chances that either they or their husbands could infect each other. Three of the women reported that they were already HIV positive thus they were not so much worried about the disease anymore. Debra reiterated that though she was still HIV negative, turning positive would not bring pain to her since her husband was very promiscuous.

“Hameno ikoko tinongonosangana kumapiritsi kuchipatara chikuru kana chabvondoka. Nekuti hazvizonyanyondirwadza nekuti ndinonyatsoziva kuti ndakambofarawo, pane kuti ndongounzirwa chirwere ndakati wawawa sezviri kuitwa vamwe.” –Debra (I don’t care, we will meet for treatment at the hospital. That way it won’t be painful because I would have enjoyed than waiting for my husband to infect me like when I am being faithful.)

The women also pointed out that sometimes they had unprotected sex with their boyfriends especially long time boyfriends. Sometimes they ended up having unprotected sex since they were afraid that putting on condoms would take long putting them on the risk of being caught. Thus these women were aware of the possible costs that could be incited by their involvement in extra marital affairs. However, this could not deter them from pursuing their affairs. They were able to resist domains of power and social control.

6.4.2 Real Positive Effects

Existing literature has shown that extramarital relationships do have positive effects especially on individuals who actually indulge in the affair. These include but not limited to benefits such as ego-bolstering, material benefits and increased self-esteem (Blow & Hartnett: 2005, Touesnard: 2009). In this study, it was revealed that most women’s benefits were emotionally related. Five of the six women reported that they benefited a lot from their extra marital affair involvement as they could get love, affection, attention and even sexual satisfaction that their husband were not giving them. They reported that they were getting satisfaction that was missing in their marriages. Chipu reported that through extra marital she had managed to solicit sexual satisfaction.

“Inyaya yekuguta, ...pabonde nekuti tinogona kupedza mwedzi chaiwo ari kurarama nei? Pane kwaari kugutswaka” (It’s all about satisfaction... in bed because we (she and her husband) can go

for a month without sex, how is he (her husband) surviving? Certainly he is getting satisfaction from somewhere else).

Extra marital sex also helped to spice up romance in these women's marriage. For Esther the thought of her boyfriends would help her to endure intimacy with her husband. She reported that she had lost the desire for intimacy with her husband. Instead she felt more sexually attracted and attached to her boyfriends. However, she was still expected to serve her husband sexually as a wife. Therefore she would imagine that she was being intimate with her boyfriends when in fact it was her husband. It was that mental imagination which made her endure or even enjoy intimacy with her husband and that was functional in maintaining her conjugal union with her husband, thereby saving her marriage in the process.

Thirty six year old Kudzai who had not yet had a sexual encounter with her boyfriend reported that she was already satisfied with the attention that she was receiving from her boyfriend. Her boyfriend would constantly call her expressing his love for her. He would also surprise her in different ways that included presents and he could even pay her surprise visits. That made her feel loved and appreciated something that was missing from her husband.

For Diana constant communication and attention from her boyfriend made her feel loved. She also appreciated the fact that her boyfriend did not control her in the manner that her husband did. She reported that her relationship with her boyfriend of three years was reciprocal and consultative unlike her husband who would plan some things behind her back and without her approval. Maybe this was because as co-workers, they were both employed and were on the same professional level and thus earned the same salary. They would both contribute financially when their affair required money.

“Unotongoonawo kuti munhu anokuremekedza unlike situation iri kumba yekutii munhu anongoita zvaafunga just because ndiye ane mari yakawanda. Izvozvo zvinondibhohwa manje.” – Diana. (You just realise that someone respects you and this is contrary to the situation at home whereby my husband spends money as he wishes just because he is the one who earns more).

The same sentiments were also echoed by Magret and Debra who were also employed. Thus it can be elucidated that some women gained self esteem from their extra marital relationships. They reasoned that their extra marital relationships were more egalitarian in nature compared to the

situations that was prevailing in their marriages. It can be posited therefore that contestations of power over control in love relationships was pivotal in driving some of the women to engage in extra marital affairs. Total control from their husbands that they perceived to be characteristic of their marriages made them seek for alternative avenues where they could also exercise power. However, the quest for power was mainly mentioned by employed women while, for the other three wives, the opposite was true. For example, Esther was quick to point out that her boyfriends were in control since male control and domination was the social norm.

“Murume ndiye agara anocontroller. Ndinongovapawo chinzvimbo chavo nokuti ndivo vanenge vari baba panguva iyoyo.” (Men have always been in control. So I give him his rightful place because he will be the husband at that time).”

Therefore whereas the economically independent women were after an egalitarian relationship, for housewives, certain cultural norms had to be adhered to in extra marital relationships regardless of the fact that extra marital affairs themselves did not conform to cultural norms. Similar studies have also shown that financially independent women usually have a quest for power and control in relationships (Swee-Lin: 2012, Glass and Wright: 1992, Smith: 1994). Hence, whereas the employed women were redefining their sexuality in terms of power and control, the housewives were conforming to masculine and patriarchal control in a different way. From a symbolic interactionist perspective one can therefore reason that these women were shaped by their unique experiences and situations in life. They were also certain traits of component of *ubuntu* that were also intrinsic in the housewives’ perceptions in the form of respect for and submission to patriarchal control. At the same time, a deviation from *ubuntu* was also evident through the act of infidelity itself. Therefore it can be posited that a person’s adherence to cultural values, in this case in the form of *Ubuntu*, can be determined by their level of acculturation, especially to Western value. Educated and employed women seemed less inclined to cultural beliefs compared to uneducated housewives. However it should be noted that the sample size was relatively too small to make valid inferences.

Thirty three year old Chipo reasoned that her extra marital affairs brought her pleasure (*kunakirwa*). Her boyfriends would take her places where her husband had never and might never take her. She would visit lodges and hotels and her boyfriends would meet all the expenses. A lot of cash would be spent and this made her happy and even satisfied.

Material benefits were also mentioned by these women. They reported that their boyfriends also showered them with presents and cash. Money was also the main reason caused one of the women to resort to extra marital affairs thus she was happy that she was getting what was missing from her marriage.

6.4.3 Real Negative Effects

6.4.3.1 Threat to marital stability

There is a general paucity of literature on the impact of extra marital affairs on marital stability. Thus relatively little is known about how infidelity affects marital stability (Treas and Giesen: 2000, Johnson: 1970, Touesnard: 2009). This is so because some marriages have been maintained despite the fact that a spouse has engaged in extra marital affairs. Literature also shows that men are more likely to divorce their wives who engage in extra marital affairs than women (Treas and Giesen: 2000, Swee- Lin: 2012, Zare 2011). However, in this research it was discovered that infidelity has a potential for disrupting marital stability. Two women, whose affairs had been disclosed to their husbands, reported that the effects of the disclosure of these affairs were more damaging to their marriage than functional. Communication between them and their husbands had been strained and an emotional distance had been created.

None of the husband had taken formal legal action against their wives' boyfriends while one was threatening to report the matter to the local chief. One woman indicated that her husband had stopped communicating with her from the moment that he had found out about her relationship. Though he was still economically providing for their son, she reasoned that their marriage was over. Her husband was now staying with his other three wives as he was a polygamist. Theirs was no longer a conjugal union since her husband was no longer intimate with her.

“Parizvino ndingangoti takarambana chinyararire. Hapana zvaari kutaura hake asi zvingori pachena nokuti paatovane about 6 months ndisingazive bonde naye”. -Kudzai (As of now I think we are divorced covertly. He is not talking about it but it is obvious because we have not been intimate for six months now.)

Another woman whose husband worked in another city reported that her husband had stopped communicating with her. He was also asking for divorce. They had been married in a civil court after the bride prize had been paid. Thus one can clearly deduce that extra marital women have a

potential for further straining marriages and even ending them. Only one woman reported that her husband had forgiven her because she had lied to him that her affair with her boyfriend had ended. However, she was still seeing her boyfriend. She thought that her husband was not really concerned about her extra marital affairs because he belonged to the matrilineal Chewa ethnic group. She was of the opinion that her husband's matrilineal background had made him accommodate her relationship coupled with the fact that he had two other wives. He had also not paid bride prize for her therefore she reasoned that that granted her more liberty and less social control as far as her sexuality was concerned. She also pointed out that her parents had no reason to be ashamed if they were to learn about her affairs because her husband had not honoured them by not paying for her bride prize as she was of a Shona origin. This was despite the fact that her husband came from a matrilineal background that did not practice lobola payment.

“Vanonyara chii? Kuti vane mombe yake yavakadya?...ndinongonziwo mukadzi wemunhu zvezita...” - Kudzai (What should they be ashamed of? It's not like they received any bride price from him in the form of a cow. Being called someone's wife is just a title).

6.4.3.2 Physical violence

According to the Zimbabwe Republic Police (2008) 249 women were killed in Zimbabwe as a result of alleged infidelity in the year 2007. Every year there are reports of husbands killing wives for (sometimes suspected) infidelity. Thus extra marital affairs have a potential for causing physical damages and even death for women. In this research, it was revealed that one of the women, forty three year old Magret who had been caught by her husband was beaten by her husband when the affair was disclosed. She was caught by her husband while in the company of her boyfriend at her place. The husband worked in a nearby town where he also lived with their children. He had caught his wife in the company of her boyfriend after receiving a tip-off from unidentified sources. Not only was the wife beaten, but her boyfriend was also physically attached as well by the husband. However the physical attach did not result in the end of both her marriage and the affair as well since she was still seeing her boyfriend.

6.4.3.3 Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Four of the participants in the study reported that they had contracted sexually transmitted diseases more than once and they suspected that they had been infected by their boyfriends. This was also necessitated by the fact that they sometimes had unprotected sex with their boyfriends. Two of the

women who were HIV positive also reported that they were equal chances that their boyfriends or husbands had infected them.

6.4.4 Extra Marital affairs not leading to divorce

It has been noted that extra marital affairs are the main cause for divorce (Wiedermann: 1997, De Marris: 2013, Swee-Lin: 2012). Normally, in the Zimbabwean culture, when a married woman engages in an extra marital affair, usually they are divorced if caught. However, even though three of the six women in this study had been caught by their husbands, only one of the husbands was threatening to divorce his wife. Two of the husbands had reportedly not mentioned anything regarding divorce. Two women reported that their husbands had just kept quiet and created a distance, while one of them reported that her husband had forgiven her. She thought that her husband had no plans to divorce her because extra marital affairs were a norm in Wadzanai Township. She also reasoned that her husband had not divorced her because he was also involved in his own extra marital affairs. Thus their unique marital arrangement had helped to sustain their marriage. She also pointed out that the investments which they had made in the form of material possession as well as children made it difficult, if not impossible for them to divorce.

7 CONCLUSION

Existing literature on infidelity has largely concentrated on men and this was based on the assumption that extra marital affairs are only practised by men. On the other hand it has been assumed that married women follow their socially ascribed status of subservient subjects who remain faithful to their husbands once they get married. The idea has been that women are powerless in a patriarchal world hence they remain docile subjects to their patriarchal masters and values. The findings in the study were contrary to some notions of theorists who have noted that female sexuality has been rendered powerless due to the socialisation process that depicts women as powerless sexual objects. The society under study encourages a wife's fidelity as a virtue in marriage as it qualifies her as adhering to the notion of *hunhu/ubuntu*. However this study revealed that women, just like any other social actors, have the ability to shape their own perception and experience of the world as they can resist patriarchal power. Women have their own weapon with which to defy socially accepted norms, values and behaviour, in the form of infidelity in marriage.

This was also revealed by participants who dismissed some traditional beliefs relating to infidelity in marriage. The study revealed that though society expects married women to be confined to their husbands for love affection and even sex, women are also active sexual players outside their marital domains.

This study also confirmed previous studies findings which reported that married women perceive extra marital affairs as wrong showing that intimate exclusivity remains an expected norm in marriage. However it was also revealed that even though married women viewed extra marital affairs as wrong, they engaged in them for their own reasons that were chiefly determined by their life experiences. In this particular study, it was found that marital dissatisfaction is the main driver behind women's engagement in extra marital affairs. Emotional needs were identified as the main cause of marital dissatisfaction and this had also been revealed in similar studies. It was noted that the women turned to affairs as a way of compensating for missing aspects in their marriages.

The study also managed to outline how married women conduct their extra marital relationships. Just like other previous studies on infidelity, the present study also revealed that extra marital affairs start, survive, flourish or even end in a world of secrecy. As subjects whose lives are constantly under surveillance, women employ various strategies that are meant to conceal their conduct of extra marital affairs. The researcher used Goffman's dramaturgical theory to sociologically analyse how married women in the study employed secretive strategies that are meant to conceal their extra marital relationships. Thus theoretically, it was found out that there is a lot of dramaturgical staging that is involved in women's conduct of extra marital affairs. However, though secretive strategies are used, sometimes the affairs are disclosed to other people including spouses.

The present study also sought to document the consequences of married women's involvement in extra marital affairs and it revealed that the consequences of women's infidelity are complex and they differ from one context to another. According to the participants in the study, extra marital affairs came with their benefits and losses. The women reported that they gained love, affection, sex and even material benefits from their involvement in extra marital relationships. Previous studies on the effects of extra marital affairs with regards to the possibility of marital dissolution and divorce were again reaffirmed in this study. In line with the previous studies, it was revealed that even though women's involvement in infidelity sometimes results in divorce when affairs are

disclosed, this is not always the case. In the study two women were caught having affairs by their husbands but they were not divorced at the time when interviews were conducted. Their marriages seemed to survive, despite the fact that the society under study encourages philandering women to be divorced. However, some constraints on marital relations were caused by the disclosure of affairs.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though the present study confirmed what other studies have also found regarding married women's perceptions, reasons, strategies and consequences for engaging in extra marital affairs, it offered some unique revelations that need to be explored further in future similar studies. Contrary to earlier studies which purported that affairs are more lucrative in big cities, the present study revealed that extra marital affairs are very rife in small townships. Therefore future studies could explore in detail the unique factors that make small towns lucrative to extra marital affairs.

The present study also revealed that work places are a potential fertile ground for married women to meet potential extra marital partners. Due to the ever increasing number of women who are being absorbed into the workforce, future studies could also study work place related affairs in detail and ascertain whether these have possible link to power structures including women's promotion and demotion at their workplace.

Another notable finding from this study was the idea that married women usually indulge in unprotected sex with their extra marital partners. This has a potential of putting them at the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore there is need for more studies to be carried out on the risk factors that expose married women and their partners to sexually transmitted diseases. Even though they may be methodological and ethical challenges to be faced, there is a need for future studies to focus on the sexual practices of married women and their extra marital purposes, possibly for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Without doubt, this study revealed that traditional expectations of marriage have changed. There are also other aspects of marriage that have changed over time, for instance the idea that modern women are now living away from their families due to work demands. Two of the working women in the study pointed out that they only spent time with their families during holidays and weekends since they stayed in the township during working days. Thus there is need for future studies to

focus to study the effects of long distant marital relationship on marriages. Even though the institution of marriage is dynamic and diverse, it will always remain a very important social institution in every society as is responsible for the primary socialisation of children and legalisation of conjugal unions. Despite the idea that prior literature and also findings from the present study reveal that infidelity among married people, particularly women is on the rise, marriage is likely to survive and thus it remains an important area for scholarly inquiry. More studies on marriage in general and extra marital affairs by women in particular therefore need to be studied further.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, E. S. et al (2005). Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors in engaging in and responding to extramarital involvement. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 12(2), 101-130.

Blow, A. & Hartnett, K. (2005). Infidelity in committed relationships II: a substantive review. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31(2), 217-234.

Blumstein, P. & Schwartz, P. (1983). *American couples: Money, work, sex*. William Morrow: New York.

Bourdillon, M,F,C. (1997). *Where are the ancestors? Changing culture in Zimbabwe*. University of Zimbabwe Publications: Harare

Carter, S, M.& Little, M. (2007). Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research *Qualitative Health Research*, 17 (10), 1316-1328

Crotty, M. (2003). *The Foundations of Social Research: meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage: London.

DeMarris, A.(2013). "Burning the Candle at Both Ends: Extramarital Sex as a Precursor of Marital Disruption". *Journal of Family Issues*, 34, 1474–1499.

Edwards, J. & Booth, A. (1976). "Sexual behaviour in and out of marriage: An assessment of correlates." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 38, 73-81.

Edwards, J. & Booth, A. (1994). Sexuality, marriage, and well-being: The middle years." In Rossi, A.S. (Ed.). *Sexuality Across the Life Course*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Forste, R., & Tanfer, K. (1996). Sexual exclusivity among dating, cohabiting, and married women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58, 15-39.

Foucault, M. (1994). *The History Of Sexuality*, Pantheon Books: New York.

Giddens, A. (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.

Giddens, A. (1997). *Sociology, Third edition*. Cambridge: Polity.

Glass, S. P. & Wright, T. L. (1992). Justifications for extramarital relationships: the association between attitudes, behaviours and gender. *Journal of Sex Research*, 29(3), 361-387.

Isiugo-Abanihe, U, C. (1994). Extramarital relations and perceptions of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. *Health Transition Review*, 4, 111 – 125

Jacobs, L and Jacobs, J. (2013). Narratives on Alcohol Dependence in the Family in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Addiction and Research Therapy*, 4, 152. doi:10.4172/21556105.1000152

Johnson, R. E. (1970). Some correlates of extramarital coitus. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Aug, 449-456.

Krips, H. (2010). The Politics of the Gaze: Foucault, Lacan and Žižek . *Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 2,91-102.

LaRossa, R and Wolf, J, H. (1985) On Qualitative Family Research *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 47(3), 531-541.

Lofland, J.& Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observations and analysis (3rd Ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Matthews, S, H. (2005) Crafting Qualitative Research Articles on Marriages and Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 799-808.

Mandova, E. & Chingombe, A. (2013) The SHONA Proverb as an Expression of UNHU/UBUNTU. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* January 2013,2(1), 2226-6348.

Mangena, T and Ndlovu, S. (2013) implications and complications of bride price payment among the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2013, 3(2), 472-481.

- Mawere, M (2012). Buried And Forgotten But Not Dead': Reflections on 'Ubuntu' in Environmental Conservation in Southeastern Zimbabwe. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Geography & Environmental GeoSciences*, 12, 10.
- Muzvidziwa, V, N (2001). Marriage as a survival strategy: The case of Masvingo, Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*, XXVIII (ii).
- Olson, M. M., Russell, C, S, Higgins-Kessler, M. & Miller, R.B. (2002). Emotional processes following the disclosure of an extramarital affair. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 28, 423-434.
- Police Public Relations Officers (2008). *Domestic Dispute Log Books*. Harare: Zimbabwe Republic Police.
- Plummer, K. (2003). Queers, bodies and postmodern sexualities: A note on revisiting the sexual in symbolic interactionism. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(4): 515-530.
- Treas, J. & Giesen, D. (2000). Sexual infidelity among married and cohabiting Americans. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 48-60.
- Touesnard, L. (2009) *What's Love Got to Do With It? A Study of the Effects of Infidelity on Contemporary Couples* University of Waterloo: Ontario.
- Richardson, L. (1988). Secrecy and status: The social construction of forbidden relationships. *American Sociological Review*, 53, 209-219.
- Stivens, M. (1998). Theorizing, Gender, Power and Modernity in Affluent Asia. In *Gender, Power and in Affluent*. 1-34, Routledge: New York.
- Swee Lin, H (2012). 'Playing Like Men': The Extramarital Experiences of Women in Contemporary Japan. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, 77(3), 321-343.
- Wiederman, M. W. (1997). Extramarital sex: prevalence and correlates in a national survey. *Journal of Sex Research*, 34(2), 167-174.
- Zare, B. (2011). Review of studies on infidelity. *IPEDR* 19, 182-186.

Appendix A-Research Instruments

Questions which were asked:

1. How do married women who engage in extra marital affairs view and experience the institution of marriage?

Can you tell me about yourself about yourself – background, age, religious affiliation, educational level, occupation etc?

What type of marriage are you in? - has that always been your idea of a perfect marriage? Why do you say so? How long have you been married in your current marriage? Is this your first marriage? – If NO how many times have you been married? How did it end? How did that made you feel?

What do you expect from your husband? What is it that he is doing right or wrong? Where do you think he should improve?

What is it that you like or hate about your marriage? Are you satisfied in your marriage- why would you say that? What would you like to change or remain the same in your current marriage?

What do you think brings happiness in a marriage? How is that missing/happening in your current marriage?

What is your opinion concerning marital fidelity by women?

Do you think there are situations/times that extramarital sex by women can be justified? If so, can you describe a situation whereby extramarital sex should be justified, or considered OK within the context of a marriage? How is this similar or different to what is transpiring in your affair (s)

Has that always been your opinion or something/someone made you change the way you see things regards marriage fidelity?

Why do you think women engage in extra marital affairs.-What are your reasons?

Research also shows that when polled, most people consider extramarital by women affairs to be always wrong. Do you concur with this statement?

2. What strategies do married women employ in their conduct, consolidation and maintenance of their extra marital affairs?

Can you tell me about how you meet other men?

Are you concerned that other people might learn about your affairs?-Does anyone else know about your affairs?

Do you keep your affairs with them public or private? - If affair is kept private how do you manage to do so? If affair is made public- why is it that so? Do any of your relatives, friends know about this? If YES what do they say about your affair(s)? If NO would you want them to know about this-why?

Are you concerned about what other people may say about your affair(s)?

How long do your affairs usually last? How and why do you think that happens? Who usually ends the affair?

How long have you been in your current affair?

Do you remember when you first started engaging in extra marital affairs? What had happened? Do your affairs include sexual encounters, emotional attachment, etc?

3. What are the consequences of women's involvement in extra marital affairs- perceived and real?

Are there any cultural beliefs concerning the consequences of married women's involvement in extra marital affairs that you are aware of?-Do you think this applies to you.

What do you think might happen to your family as a result of your engagement in extra marital affairs?

What do you think might happen to you if you were caught by your family members?

Has anyone close to you ever discovered about your affairs?

How did they react? How did it affect your marriage and family (husband, children and extended family)?

What can you say have been the negative/positive outcomes from your extra marital relations? What are the benefits-money, emotional support, companionship etc-and losses?

Research has shown that the greater part of marriages that go through infidelity do not end in divorce (even if the affair is disclosed). Why do you think that happens?

Research has shown that very few extramarital relationships end up in marriage. Why do you think that happens?

Even if they do marry, their divorce rates are very high. Why do you think that is?

Do you think that some other women are involved in extra marital affairs?

Do you see fidelity existing in marriage in the future?

What advice would you give to younger women who are involved in extra marital affairs?

Appendix B- Invitation/Introduction Letter

University Of Zimbabwe



Invitation/Introduction Letter:

November 5, 2013

Dear Participant:

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study that I am conducting for the University of Zimbabwe for the partial fulfillment of my Masters of Science Degree in Sociology and Anthropology. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part. The participants in this study must meet the following criteria:

- 1) You must have a relationship with someone other your spouse while married
- 2) You should be a resident of Wadzanai Township

This study will focus on marital relationships that have experienced infidelity. My goal is to gain a more thorough understanding of the lived experiences of women that are involved in extra marital affairs. With your valued participation, I will be able to seek a better understanding of how a married woman involved in extra marital affairs view a fidelity, family and marriage in general, how an individual manages infidelity while they remain married, how it positively and/or negatively affects one's marriage.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately one hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location.

You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, in-person interviews to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. With your permission, I will come back to you to confirm whether I have captured your responses well and if need be, to seek further clarifications.

All information you provide will be considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Only the researcher and supervisor associated with this project will have access to the information.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0715643250 or by email at pchadambuka@gmail.com. I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received permission at the University of Zimbabwe. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Prof V.N Muzvidziwa at the University of Zimbabwe Sociology Department on 04 303311. I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to you and others who have an interest in a better understanding of infidelity and marital relationships. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Patience

Appendix C- Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Patience at the University of Zimbabwe. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that every precaution will be taken by the interviewer to retain and store data as securely as possible.

I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact Professor Muzvidziwa at the University of Zimbabwe on 04 303311

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

Participant:..... Signature:.....

Date:.....