

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The 'Small House' Phenomenon in Zimbabwe's Urban Space: Study in Glen Norah-Harare

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Abstract:

The ensuing study is an assessment of factors influencing the establishment of the common new marital arrangement and examining the power dynamics within this form of marriage and the effects it has on the family form and structure in Zimbabwe's urban space. The findings made herein show that inasmuch as the general beliefs constrains small housing, residents of Glen Norah are knowledgeable actors who act in contrast to beliefs. Everywhere in Zimbabwe's urban areas, 'Small House' phenomenon is a topical issue and now it seems as it is difficult to envisage an urban set up without this phenomenon. 'Small house' is a marital practice which allows the extension of the monogamous marriage institution into a quasi-polygamous system, in a nostalgic cultural way, creating a new form of marriage between two ideologies, that of modernity, and cultural adherence. Structuration thesis was utilised as a theoretical framework. To meet the study objectives, qualitative methodology instrumented by semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews were adopted. Purposive and convenience sampling were utilised as sampling techniques. Findings show that most adults in Glen Norah are involved in the modified-clandestine polygyny commonly known as small house institution. Socioeconomic and psychological factors are attributed to the phenomenon as individuals have various motives in small housing. The small house institution has-

similar functions, roles and structure as those found in established monogamous families. The small house union is an emergent form of a family which is 'fluid and a floating structured structure' which also resulted from the interplay between 'conflicting structures' and 'convenient agency'. Small House practice in Glen Norah has become a social common denominator as men and women across social strata are practising this phenomenon.

Keywords: Small House Union; Structure; Conflicting Structures; Fluid/Floating Structure; Agency; Convenient Agency; Veiled Urban Polygyny; Monogamy; Ontological Security.

Introduction

This research is a study of the 'small house' institution; an emerging form of extra marital liaison which is now common in Zimbabwean urban centres (Mushinga 2013). The study was conducted in Glen Norah high density suburb in Harare to understand factors influencing the establishment of 'small house union' and examining the power dynamics in the small house union and the effects the union has on family form and structure. A significant number of married men, rich or poor, educated or not, professionals or laymen, are having outside secret wives, commonly referred to as small houses in contemporary Zimbabwe (Christiansen, 2013). This practice of having clandestine wives is also common in other countries though it bears different names in different societies of the world, some of which are; concubines, mistresses (Europe), Diriyanke (Senegal), Ndogos (Kenya) and Disquettes (Dakar) among others (Zeitzen, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

In Zimbabwe, just like the Mapoto union studied by Chavhunduka (1979), the small house phenomenon seems to be prevalent mainly due to forces of globalization that are altering cultures (ibid). Cohabitation and other forms of marital arrangements are now common in African urban centres (Suda 1996 and Altman 2014). The urban centres which have been heavily affected by globalization have witnessed marked changes in marriage patterns in Zimbabwe (Cheater, 1986). This paper is premised on the take that while official or social and legal marriage remains highly desired by many adult Zimbabwean, small house union is an alternative to women in case the formal marriage does not materialise. 'Small house' is a concept which allows the extension of the marriage institution into a quasi-polygamous system, in a nostalgic cultural way, creating a new form of marriage between two ideologies, that of modernity, and cultural adherence. SAFAIDS (2009: 1) defined a small house: "*as a recent cultural practice in which the Western concept of monogamous marriage is upheld nominally, but in fact the husband has another secret family which he keeps in a 'small house'.*" Christiansen (2013) postulated that the term "small house" is derived from historical practice of polygamy in which men have senior and junior wives but today it functions to refer to any unmarried woman having a

permanent relationship with a married man. Karanja (1987) viewed it as an exercise which allows a man to have sexual relations with a woman over a lengthy period, with the possibility of having children acknowledged by the man who supports the 'house' financially despite the relationship being secret. Thus, it seems as if there is a wide range of arguments shown by scholars including neo-traditionalism, globalization and inter alia.

In Africa, the practice of having clandestine wives should be understood in light of a number of socio-historical aspects such as **colonialism versus tradition, modernity** (education, urbanization and industrialisation) and **religion**. The same is true to the institution of 'small house' in Zimbabwe.

Colonialism and Tradition

Colonialism altered the marriage structure and form in Zimbabwe (Barnes 1999). In the eyes of the colonialists, Africans were viewed as 'sub-humans' who were to be made 'humans' by forcibly adopting and following European way of life like doing away with polygamy, widow inheritance and other traditional practices (Zeitzen 2008). Ngondo Pitshandenge cited by Liaw and Hayse (1997:98) argued: "*colonial authorities tried to substitute polygamy by monogamy by altering marriage regulations and providing favourable treatment to monogamous men.*" Colonialism variously changed the marriage patterns and family formation in Africa (Hunter 2004, Zeiehl 1994). Before the colonization of Zimbabwe, polygamy was acceptable and was viewed as a workable and great socio-economic asset. Mukonyora (2007) notes that settler legislation like Native Marriage Ordinance and Native Adultery Punishment made it unacceptable to marry many wives and it became illegal to have more than one wife. This was meant to reinforce monogamy while undermining tradition.

The political economy of colonial Zimbabwe was in direct contradiction with the African culture (Barnes 1999). The influence of Western capitalist culture penetrated African societies that the economy became monetarized and commercialized. The commercialized economy and the accelerated consumerism radically defined sexual relations and changed the marriage pattern in Zimbabwe from polygamy to monogamy as marriage was commoditized (Chavhunduka, 1979). This increased the cost of bride wealth and the economic demands of marriage led to the demise of polygamy. In the pre-colonial period, it is alleged that women did not control the means of production and marriage meant the transferring of women's labour and reproductive capacity (Cheater, 1986). In order to avoid such 'inequality', some women found the informal marital relationship as a viable second option which would provide a money making avenue for them without excluding them from the means of surviving. The Western economic system discouraged polygamy to the disadvantage of women. Karanja (1987) argues that the cash economy encouraged many women in African to enter into some sort of conjugal relationship than none relationship at all. Thus an example is the 'small house' relationship in Zimbabwe.

Colonialism brought various forms of sexual relationships in Africa and it can be argued that small house is an evolution of hybridised sexualities and conjugal relations in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe. White (1990) opines that the presence of multi-foreign military forces in colonial Nairobi led to the emergence of various forms of prostitution: the Wazi-wazi, (prostitutes who sat outside the

doors of their rooms, and faced the streets or on the porches of the houses which they rented rooms and waited for men to approach them there), Malaya (those who stayed inside their rooms and waited for men to come to them) and the Watembezi (the elderly and juvenile street walking prostitutes who solicited men from all public places). Prostitution became a complex relationship between men and women and also women and their families and private employers (White 1990). In colonial Nairobi prostitution became socially approved to those who remitted back home to their patriarchal families the rewards of their work. The act acted as a legitimate means for women to earn a family living. Colonization obstructed conjugal and economical solidarity as husbands were separated from their spouses. Barnes (1999) opines that in colonial Harare, women engaged in informal unions to get accommodation as most urban flats were for males. Prostitution, just like the emergent Small House institution, was a means to cope up with emerging colonial-capitalist economy for women did not want only survival but to live properly as well (ibid). Settler economy was based on and involved a system of payment, true also to the act of prostitution that involves sexual favours for payment and the same to small housing where there are some forms of benefits derived from it by the actors.

Religion

The missionary teachings of Christianity emphasized monogamy and portrayed polygamy as morally wrong, considered it oppressive, shameful and labelled it 'barbaric behaviour'. Missionaries considered polygamy as oppressive to women and children (Crosby cited by Zeitzen 2008) and as a form of adultery, fornication and a sin whose elimination preoccupied their teachings of 'one man-one woman' (Zeitzen 2008, Bailey and Kaufman 2010). This was meant to reinforce the European norm of teaching monogamy based on Christian principles (Mbiti cited by Machingura 2011) and the core objective was to destroy polygamy. Polygamy was attacked, despised and made into a test of 'churchmanship' or commitment to Christ that polygamous families or some of their members were denied sacraments of Baptism or the Holy Eucharist (Mbiti 1973). The conditions to membership were meant to bring polygamy to an end by destroying Zimbabwean beliefs and practices in order to pave way for monogamy (ibid). Fight for monogamy brought mapoto which evolve to small house.

The introduction of Christianity at the expense of African Traditional Religion also worked to the emergence of varying forms sexual relations. Togarasei (2009) opines that the politics of the bible translation into vernacular language and missionaries had worked to destroy African beliefs and practices through the power of Bible translation. Missionary education also functioned to destroy polygamy. Liaw and Hayse (1997) argue that missionaries transmitted Western type of nuclear family centred on strong conjugal bond by means of established schools. Christianity imposed a 'one-size-fits-all' form of sexual relation (monogamous marriage) at the expense of polygamy. The emergence of the African independent churches like the Vapostori sect of Marange who Machingura (2011) described as having a 'diet of wives' was a reaction to anti-polygamous teachings offered by the Christian missionaries. Besides God, polygamy was at the core of Vapostori teachings who viewed it as natural that a man can only be sexually satisfied by multiple women. Wilson (1978) argues that men's wish to have many sexual partners is grounded in their genetic make-up.

Christianity destroyed the system of polygamy replaced it by monogamy and eventually the emergence of prostitution. Christian teachings seems to suggest that the word 'prostitute' itself or other acts related to prostitution were recorded and only heard in Africa from Biblical verses. Kenyatta (1965) notes that there was no word for 'prostitution' in the pre-colonial African languages in general and Gikuyu in particular, there was no term for 'unmarried' or 'old maids'. For him women were to be under the protection and identity of men and were socialised to depend on them. Chodorow (1988) opines that woman's identity is more likely to be merged or depended on another's. Small house institution provides this protection and identity and the union is a result of nostalgic feeling by both men and women to revert back to polygamy.

Modernity

Apart from the above, the urban political economy that shifted away from agriculture to factories led to the emergence of monogamy, prostitution and other forms of informal unions like 'Mapoto-Cohabitation' studied by Muzvidziwa (2002), Chavhunduka (1979) and noted also by Suda (1996), who all contend that cohabitation in Africa is linked to the industrialization, urbanization and capitalist economy. Cohabitation is a sexual living arrangement where couples decide to live together without being married. With minor variations, the Mapoto union (especially in its polygamous sense) is closer to the characteristics of 'Small Houses' than any other sexual or conjugal relationship typology. Bourdillon (1976) asserts that the philosophy behind polygamy was that large numbers of children increased the labour force who would work in the family fields. Togarasei (2009) posits that polygamy was a socio-economic asset. Because of industrialization children changed from labour to liabilities because in towns large families became difficult to maintain. Zeitzen (2008) argues that polygamy died because large families were no longer desirable in an industrialized society where children were a liability. Therefore, factory economy determined the pace and direction of marital unions in Zimbabwe. Holman Eugene (1975) opines that man's sexual behaviour is conditioned and shaped by socioeconomic situations surround him. Changes to the marriage patterns and family formation are attributed to the economy (Hunter 2004, Russel 2003, Ramphele 1993). Chavhunduka (1979) notes that changes conjugal unions in Zimbabwe are associated to the process of urbanization and the loosening of traditional institutional constraints due to global forces. Liaw and Hayse (1997) argue that globalization and urbanization processes geographically removed a lot female adults from the traditionally social constraints of their family compounds, thus, this independence created freedom for these adult individuals to act in the way they want, defining and redefining their sexuality. *"In the urban environment, with economic recession and competition for jobs, combined with high costs of living, schooling and health care, men cannot afford to maintain formal polygamous households (Zeitzen, 2008: 156), let alone an 'outside cohabitation partner who is a 'wife' in all but a name. The erosion and absence of sexual social control mechanisms which had been present in the rural areas, but now absent in urban centres meant that even the social fences restricting women, and men, from engaging in informal marital unions were no longer available and people could now act in ways they deemed possible.*

Post-colonial era

Zimbabwe marriage patterns and family formations continue transforming due to globalisation. Dube (2013) and Karanjah (1987) argue that African polygamy was replaced by other forms of informal marital unions. Cohabitation and alternatives to the traditional marital union are now common in urban families (Suda 1996, Dodo 2014, Moore and Govender 2013, Muzvidziwa 2002). The alternative to polygamy in a modern environment is informal '*outside wives*' ('*small house wife*' in this context) that a legitimate wife may not know (Ezech 1997). Machingura (2011) noted that modernization had had a greater impact on marriage institution and how people view it. A man who has more than one wife is looked down upon as backward and barbaric as people think that being monogamous projects a modern image, thus, men practice polygamous form of union secretly. Modernity demands for individual self-reliance and this threatened the very basis of polygamy. Ojeda (2007) argues that young academics modern women gearing and preparing for gainful employment in the globalized economy, because of socioeconomic changes informal conjugal arrangements become attractive to them and consciously or unconsciously tolerate sharing and competing for sexual partner. More-so, Women activism also accelerated the mutations in conjugal unions, small house being one of the new marital arrangements which is now common in Zimbabwe's urban spaces. The Civil Marriage Act prohibits one from entering into a polygamous relationships and Customary Marriage Act permits polygamy. The study was premised on Giddens (1984) Structuration Thesis that recognises the duality of structure-agency as it argues that neither the structure nor social action exists independently, that is a structure is structuring structure and structured structure.

Methodology

The research was grounded in *qualitative methodology* and adopted *semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews*. Berg (2007) postulated that qualitative methodology is exploratory and interpretive in nature and produces data expressed in words from respondents who had real experiences. This method provided an understanding of small house actors' lived realities in their contexts and the data produced was 'rich' in detail and closer to the informants' perceived 'small house' world. The main respondents were those individuals participating in a small house union. However, some opinion people were also interviewed and these people were selected based on the important information they possessed. The respondents were drawn from four sub-sections (A- C extension) that all amount to Glen Norah high density suburb which is in the South-Eastern direction of Harare CBD. The location is home to informal traders, middle and working class individuals who most of them are Christians. Research participants were drawn from the above classes. Qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to uncover the informants' own 'narrative' on experience of the Small House phenomenon in Glen Norah.

Semi-structured interviews - For the purpose of flexibility, rapport and uniformity, semi-structured interviews were utilised. Respondents were asked the same questions. This data collection tool provided more in-depth probing into the answers given by the small house participants. As the interviews were like a conversation among acquaintances, small house participants were able to broadly express their views or comments on the phenomenon as they were also free to expand on the topic giving their own views and they explained and elaborating using examples of their own personal experiences. For clarity or further explanation, follow-up questions were asked and this guided the flow of ideas and the focus of the research. With this method the researcher obtained more specific and detailed information by comparing the reactions and responses of different Small house participants.

Key informant interviews were utilized and the relevant individuals and organization were effectively used. The researcher contacted interviews with five religious leaders, the actual actors in small houses (the men and women) and Glen Norah Zimbabwe Republic Police-Community Relations Liaison Officer (CRLO) in the study area. These interviews provided qualitative and descriptive information, providing the knowledge on the attitudes, behaviours and perspectives of the entire Glen Norah society on the Small House phenomenon and it also provided insights into the not so obvious dynamics of the small house unions as the information came directly from the actors and those associated with it directly and indirectly.

Sampling Techniques:

The research sample was based on convenience, purposive and snowballing samplings. Convenience sampling allowed the drawing of small house actors who were both easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. Convenience sampling was complimented by purposive sampling. Harper (1991) argues that purposive sampling is a way of selecting participants who are known or judged to be good source of information. This sampling technique enabled the researcher to use personal judgement to select respondents which best enabled him to meet the study objectives. Particular persons were deliberately selected for the important information they could provide that could not be gotten as well from other choices. Once initial respondents were identified, snowballing technique was used to recruit other respondents. This involved asking the first respondents to link the researcher to their peers who shared similar marital status with them for it was sometimes difficult to identify members of the desired population.

Through the above sampling techniques a total of thirteen female small house actors and, ten male actors, five church leaders and ZRP Glen Norah CRLO were interviewed. Inasmuch as a larger sample was desirable, it was not feasible to select a larger sample owing to the nature and the sensitiveness of the research topic as sexual and marital issues are considered too personal by individuals. More-so it was undesirable to have a larger sample than this as in qualitative research people perceptions cannot be quantified.

Research Findings

This section presents a detailed presentation of the research findings. As the findings of this study show, there is a myriad of socioeconomic and psychological factors that account for the 'small house' phenomenon in Glen Norah. Findings show that men and women in Small House union exercised power differently and they viewed themselves as no much different from the official marriage. People in Glen Norah view the institution with varying lens but somewhere somehow, the two parties converge as they all concurred that the phenomenon is culturally rooted. The findings are presented in thematic form and a collection of selected respondents' quotes are presented. Themes were derived from the most fundamental and pressing emerging issues raised by participants during field work.

Nature of Population Demography of Respondents in Small House

Small house women in Glen Norah are not a homogeneous category, even though there seems to be a common denominator for them to be in a small house institution but there seems to be some variances. Categories of small house women are those in formal employment, unemployed/informal traders or cross border traders (CBT) who are in themselves employers. These women range from divorcees, widowed, single mothers and the never married or mothered especially those who first dated with the sugar daddies. Female respondents concurred that the main reason for women to be in the small house institution is for lasting relationship and sexual gratification with one permanent partner who will provide emotional support. Men from across social strata, vendors, working and middle classes for various motives are found to be small housing.

Formation of the Small House Institution

Influence of Female Agencies of Patriarchy and Tradition

The respondents highlighted that women such as aunties and sisters play a role in establishing small house unions as they arrange for a secret-potential wife to their male relatives if they are not comfortable with the first wife or having problems with her. Historical tradition was found to be influential in the establishment of the phenomenon. A male respondent noted:

...my grandfather and my father were polygamous, so why not me? The practice of having multiple and even secret lovers is in tandem with our tradition. If you do not have an outside lover, know that you are contorted by your wife.

This male respondent further highlighted that his small house wife was known to one of his sisters and friends. Some male respondents view biology as contributing factor for men having small houses and examples of animal kingdom were sighted that a bull is meant to service many cows, in a flock of sheep, only one ram is a service provider. One man opined:

...it is natural for men to have multiple sexual partners as men are naturally attracted to more than one woman, so for legal rules and the churches to deny him polygyny and glorify monogamy is to deny him his natural instinct and he will device and find alternatives, hence a small house wife.

Three female respondents highlighted that, based on polygamous tradition; some of their relatives knew and supported their small house status than being prostitutes. A female respondent had this to say:

...the Zimbabwean society has always been polygamous so there is nothing new today. Small house is only but an English word to mean mainini. If you take a closer look you will observe that the society in one way or the other socialises and encourages the proliferation of the phenomenon because if the practice was really a bad thing, the small house institution could have been history now. Have you asked yourself why small housing is increasing?

A male respondent highlighted that he was socialised by his grandfather not to sire children everywhere by hiring and firing but that multiple regulated sexual unions is the best way for a family to grow big and in harmony. From childhood, some individuals grew up in small house family and tend to view it as the good family model and when grown up, they also embrace small house.

The need for Social Reproduction, Pampering and Men as ‘Sexually Greedy’ Beings

The need for a boy child and children in general forced some respondents to enter into small housing. It is a general belief in Glen Norah that one should have a boy child who would inherit the family inheritance and reproduce the family name. Male respondents blamed their official wives for the misunderstandings in marriage on issues to do with reproduction and view them as sole causers of the phenomenon. Some male and female respondents concurred that they entered into the small house union as need for a child. Sex deprivation, disrespect, junkiness, and poor communication skills were some of the weakness and problems levelled against the official wives. *...small house treats you like a king.* This was a respondent who glorified his small house. Male respondents concurred that their small house wives highly respected them. Two male respondents cited promiscuousness as causal factor for small housing among men and they argued that men are sexually greedy beings and are not sexually satisfied with one woman. One male respondent said:

As long as thighs are different, a man can have even up to fifteen sexual rounds a day. A man cannot be sexually tired for so long he mates different females and it is for that reason that some men find themselves small housing.

The Anti-Anti-Patriarchal Union (Re-establishing Patriarchy) and Men’s Reasons for Small Housing

It was also established during field-work that even those males under ‘petticoat government’ (men who live with and controlled by women) also embraced and practiced the phenomenon. Also most men, well behaved and respected figures devoted to their wives, have and regularly visit their small house partners as they argued that small house functions to maintain the stability of their official families since the official wives have a myriad of short

comings which for example if men get angered by official wife, instead of wife battering and butchering or divorce, tension relief and comfort is sought from the small house. In this institution, men are given sexy names. Men prefer small house union because unlike official polygyny, it is easy to form because there is no paper work; hence they argue it's a marriage without papers and that it is also easy to come out of it when it's no longer moving on well. A male respondent argued that a small house relationship depends on the mutual understanding between the two; it is less binding and has no legal or social backing which makes it easy to break when the mutual understanding ceases to exist. In light of HIV and AIDS, small housing was viewed by male respondents as a better way of protecting them and their official wives from possible infection by having a regulated side partner, thereby keeping sexual relations within marriage context where sexual behaviour is controlled.

The City Living, Town Life and the Small House

The research has found that town life foster small house union. Male respondents concurred that the urban environment of Glen Norah denies one to have two wives:

...life in town is costly, one cannot afford to have two or more official wives but a secret permanent sexual partner can work...the individual freedom in town permits small house wife but trying it in rural areas, you will be brought before Chief's court to officialise the relationship.

Female respondents concurred that 'the each man for himself mode of life' in town leads to those women who perceive lucky to be married, armed with the legal laws, they want to monopolise men yet traditionally it is natural for women to share a man, as one female argued: "to live with others is to share, to have mercy for one another and it is a witch who live and eat alone." Below are the sentiments of a middle class small house woman:

I haven't been officially married ...I met my husband in 2010 when I was in Bulawayo for a two day workshop. Yes he is a married man somewhere ...but you know what; there is no longer a strong link between sex-marriage and reproduction...I view myself as in marriage, enjoying sex but not reproducing but soon I will have one. If I was in rural areas I could have been compelled to have a baby if not babies by the social norms and values.

Asked whether she entered into the small house union consciously or not, the answer was, consciously.

...this guy told me that his wife was always busy and away with work that the couple had no enough time to enjoy their biological differences. For me he is a good candidate for we can enjoy sex without reproducing and without too much male control...but somehow male control is a requisite in a relationship if it is to be healthy and lasting, varume hamudi kutongwaka imi, (men you don't want petticoat government).

Education, and Acts of Parliament

It became clear during interviews that some educated women try to escape total or continuous male control by entering into small house union as their lovers do not live with them full time and this allow these women to maintain

some form of liberty. Acts like Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences that give women power to take their husbands to court for marital rape were found that if abused give rise to the small house phenomenon. John (not real name) expressed that;

After signing the marriage certificate, my wife became disrespectful to me and the whole clan. She saw herself as if was above everybody and starved me of my conjugal rights and to challenge her, you get arrested. This law is bad as it does not allow one to have another wife; the only viable option is to have one in secrecy.

Some government policies like the Civil Marriage Act were found to be the amplifiers of the small house phenomenon as they challenge and trivialise African norms, values and principles of masculinity. Based on the Customary Marriage Act, some male respondents justify the small house union as they argued that Customary Marriage Act permits one to have multiple wives, so one's small house is his wife.

'Men are a precious and scarce resource'

Most female respondents were of the view that the population disparity between men and women in Zimbabwe allude to the small house phenomenon. Female respondents were in tandem that in a country where women outnumber men, there is a fierce competition for men and each woman is always looking for the best means to out-compete her rivals. A middle class female respondent provided the 2012 population census statistics as follows: women are more than 52% with men falling below 48%. One female respondent asserted that, *half a good shared man is better than none*. Two respondents concurred that the rural-urban migration of women and the decline of traditional polygyny all have a stake in the small house phenomenon. One opinion person asserted that,

Yester years we used to know that women stayed in rural areas and that is where and when polygamy was prevalent, women could not just come to town for nothing and now being a small house is like just work.

The same female middle class respondent alluded that the Demographic Health Survey of 1989 showed that the percentage of women in polygamous unions was 16% and she even argued that the current statistics shows that the number of people actively involved in formal polygamous marriage in Zimbabwe have declined to below 10%.

Religion as anti-cultural practices

Religion forms the basis of most anti-small house sentiments. The research found that the contradictions between Christianity and traditional culture were the 'seed bed' for the small house institution. Traditional culture permits polygamous marriage and widow inheritance, yet this is contrasted by Christianity. The decline of traditional polygyny and the death of traditional ritual practice of widow inheritance all augment to the advent of the small house institution. One female respondent had this to say;

when my husband passed away all his brothers, based on their religious doctrine refused to inherit me so I ended up small housing since having one

permanent sexual partner is better than kuitwa wada watasva bhiza rapahofisi (to be sexed by multiple men willy-nilly).

Another rational explanation for the establishment of small house union given by some respondents is the traditional value attached to the marriage institution by Glen Norah residents, whether polygamous or not. The prospect of marriage was described as a driving force for some women entering into 'small house' relationship. Female respondents concurred that regardless of the nature of marriage, marriage is vital in one's lifetime. Two female respondents echoed this;

...these days it's better to have one permanent sexual partner even if he is married than to have sex with everybody, with time he can marry you.

The research showed that Christians consider polygyny as a form of adultery and or fornication, a sin whose elimination preoccupies their preaching. A female Christian respondent narrated;

...the church denominations we belong to, discourage widow inheritance and being in a polygamous marriage as they argue that being so is akin to murder of the first wife. Single mothers are encouraged to be like a biblical Paul; but how can it be while we are still sexually active? My first husband died in 2008 and in 2011 I got in love with my current one who already has his wife in Glen Norah 'A'. Failure for one to have a permanent lover leads to prostitution and the flourishing of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

A male respondent has also this to say;

I don't belong to any church denomination but biblical Jacob was married to Leah, Rachel and others. The Apostolic sect members marry many wives but many churches discourage polygamy and it is a shame for one to practice it openly, let alone secret small house.

This respondent narrated a story of his friend who was a member of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), who when he highlighted his intention to marry a second wife, for his first wife was infertile; he was viewed as sinning and the respondent narrated that his friend was treated in the same manner to that of Ebola person, church members stayed away from him, quarantined and allowed only the professionals (pastors and elders) who were properly kitted with biblical verses and counselling skills. Eventually, he opted for a small house partner.

The Lens of Women in Small House Union and the Phenomenon

The research found that the main reason why respondents were small housing was the need for lasting relationship and sexual gratification with one permanent partner who would provide emotional support. A female middle class respondent said that;

yes; formal marriage has failed...my husband was abusive to me... but because of HIV/AIDS, having no permanent sexual partner means...you will be forced to have and make love in gloves (condoms) not naked love for the rest of your life. Eating sweets in wrappings and bathing with raincoats cannot be possible for one's entire life. Being a small house wife is solution to such difficulties

as single motherhood, it regulates whatever form of one's behaviour, provides social networking and there is an element of liberty within this union.

Though the small house women respect the formal wives, they accuse them of being strict adherents of family planning as opined by one female respondent;

...official wives no longer want to bear children in order for the clan to grow.

This respondent gave an example of a couple she knew who had two children, a boy and a girl, and secretly the wife made her womb removed and when the husband wanted a child, he looked for a small house.

Some female small house respondents blamed the official wives for the small housing behaviour attributed by their husbands. One respondent noted that those married women should know that even after marriage competition is rife; to prevent one's husband from looking for another partner one has to satisfy him meeting all his needs. These respondents concurred that in Zimbabwe there is a secret fierce competition for men and that it is better to be a small house wife than to be alone till death. In the face of HIV and AIDS small house respondents highlighted that they were safer than prostitutes. Respondents argued that the institution is good and can limit the spread of HIV/ AIDS in the sense that if a man is not sexually satisfied from the official wife then that sexual gap can be filled by them and the man cannot have a chance to look for prostitutes. The study found that women in small house union usually do not participate in formal kinship functions, but they interact informally with very few trusted family members especially females, friends and co-workers but for some women, the small house institution is part of normal marriage life.

Power, Patriarchy and Experiences in the small house union

The research established that gender roles within the small house union are similar to that of a traditional patriarchal family where a woman is expected to do all the domestic chores. A man as 'assumed' head of the household performs the husband duties. In decision making process, most female respondents argued that they suggest for a man to decide but on rare cases can her suggestions be turned down. Role differentiation was found to be beneficial to both parties. On consumption related issues, because of the hard economic situation in Zimbabwe better off small house wives were found to be the de facto breadwinners who make spending and consumption decisions. The decision for procreation was found that it was determined by the reason why the concerned individuals decided to small house in the first place. Woman's responsibility was also found to be making her partner happy as opined by one female respondent:

...men are like small children, they need to be looked after and make sure that they are properly fed. ...you hear that small houses tie the men's shoelace, no! it's only good man handling, knowing what the man wants and at what time and how to do it. I give due respect to the husband on fatherly matters not to antagonise like what some official wives do.

Just like in formal marriages, the research established that there are also men who are under petticoat government in some small house union. Small house women have power over reproduction or their sexuality and they can even advise their lovers to go for HIV counselling and testing. It was clear during the field work that small house wives know how to influence their male counterparts for

HIV testing and according to the female respondents many men came to know of their HIV status through following the advice of a small house partner. One female respondent said;

When I fall in love with my partner, because I did not trust his health status, the way how he coughed and his skin texture, at first, secretly I used a female condom until I advised and convinced him to go for HIV testing and that is when he came to know that he was HIV positive. Later he had to take his wife for HIV testing too. Until then and now we are doing protected sex and even with his wife he is now doing the same.

Asked if she was also HIV positive, the answer was No, but she highlighted that she much loved him for he was just good for her in providing all forms of support she needed.

Children as a Cause and Effect and their Role in Power Differentiation in small house

The establishment of a small house can be based on the need for procreation by one or both sex actors. The research unveiled that children can also be a product of the phenomenon. Some male and female respondents concurred that it was by need or by accident that they ended up having children born out of small housing. Usually, no matter how the child comes about in a small house union that child bears man's (father) identity, surname and that gives him more chances to dominate the wife as it is a common belief in Glen Norah that a child belongs to a father and that in case of death, a child cannot be buried without the consent and presence of him or a father's blood relative. Birth certificates are commonly obtained secretly and are kept by the mother. The child also provides power to the mother to control the man by means of blackmailing when the relationship seems to be deteriorating. One female respondent argued that when her husband was no longer frequently coming to her home, she threatened to go to court for maintenance claims and as a result the relationship was normalised. Sometimes the birth of a child gives a couple opportunities to popularise the union if they feel so. Where the child is born, the resultant effect may be the further strengthening of the union. A child will normally link with very few close trusted-fathers relatives and as noted by some female respondents, the children always have a nostalgic feeling of meeting all the relatives. Respondents argued that it is only if the child is grown up and reason well and that is when he/she links with more relatives. The very few close relatives will be aware of the child even from its embryonic development. Most respondents concurred that time shall come that it will be no longer a secret and the official wife will get to know of it and eventually, any person comes to know of his/ her relatives. Decision making process concerning the upbringing of child is joined but final say rests with the partner who has better material means.

Small House Actor's Perceptions, Glen Norah Area and the Small House Structure

Social attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of people in Glen Norah are largely that small house is immoral, hence it is privately practiced. These attitudes, beliefs and perceptions were identified by the respondents as both enabling and constraining the phenomenon. Glen Norah people respect officially married

women more than small house women since formal marriage is valued. Small house union was found to be stigmatised but not to be a strongly stigmatised phenomenon as it is only condemned in theory but secretly and practically, it is condoned. Small house female respondents highlighted that they have not yet come across stigmatisation and to them, if ever there is any they care not as long as their relationship is moving on well. Also, whether paid lobola or not, the men is known to some women's relatives. In the event of death of a male spouse, small house women don't inherit anything; they can only benefit the goods and property that will be in their possession. The research also found that small house wives have limited social recognition and statuses for husbands don't declare them publicly to all relatives as their wives. Contrary to the popular notion that those small house women are a parasite to men's financial resource, the research found that even the unemployed small house wives don't consider money seriously. To them money is not a big issue, rather some engaged in CBT to provide even for the men. A lasting relationship and even marriage is of value to them. One female respondent argued.

A man having his child doing University education shows you his payslip, after the budget, \$100 is extra money and he gives you \$50 for the up keep our child. Most responsibilities are towards the first family. So you embrace for cross border trading. It's a lie that small houses are money mongers, with the current economic situation, where do men get money to give us? How many men are still employed in Zimbabwe? It is us small house women who are now providing for the men.

Small House Union, the Marriage Institution and Winners and Losers of Small House

The research found that small house actors view the small house phenomenon as a marriage type and argued that it is a new life style among the city living individuals. Economically better off small house respondents opined that they entered the union for sex, companionship and sometimes for children or marriage. Some small house female respondents view the institution as a precursor to marriage that will even lead to social upward mobility. One respondent argued that if one thinks small house is good practice for marriage, then she is already preparing herself for marriage and she is likely to work towards it. Small house actors, both men and women were found to view small house institution and marriage as almost the same thing, as part of the same process of being together as wife and husband. The research found that women entered into the small house union to fulfil social obligation of having a sort of marriage which is valued in Glen Norah. A middle-class female participant argued;

...because of modernity marriage modes have changed and that any manner that brought the two parties together qualifies to be called marriage. So in one way or the other small house is just like unregistered marriage as they are all not recognised before the courts of law.

Save for the non-payment of lobola, small house participants asserted that their relationship was not different from the formalised one as the domestic, home and romantic language and personal arrangement in the small house institution are similar to big house. Romantic language used in formal marriage like 'daddy' 'sweetheart', 'mamma' dominated the small house union that the small house

couples viewed one another as husband and wife and to a greater extent they identified themselves as such. To a certain extent, the general populace also views the couple as such. It has also been found that both marriage and small house union are greedy institutions as they are both based on commitment and consumption.

Some male respondents opined that the small house institution was seen to be burdensome and strenuous to the individual's meagre resources such as money and time since a man should always avail himself to his small house companion. If a man doesn't exercise caution, the practice was found to be disruptive to the family institution as he is always exposed to comparison model of life, comparing his official wife to a small house wife. The study also found that according to ZRP statistics the reported cases of domestic violence had a bearing on small housing. At the individual level the most disadvantage female respondents identified was that small house union deprive them of the joy of dressing as brides and having a showing off memorable wedding. Some female respondents highlighted that when they first small housing the hopeful idea were to get married but their partners are not prepared to pay lobola.

Small House, the Family and the Moral Entrepreneurs

Pastors admitted the prevalence of the phenomenon in Glen Norah and based on their leadership and counselling experience, official wives complain more of their husbands being snatched away by small houses women. Religious leaders viewed small house as an unholy family, however, they were in tandem that at times the official wives are to blame as they tend to relax, forgetting that love is like a tree which needs to be watered and that if they get angry they don't perform their wifely or family duties forcing their husbands to perform domestic chores and this result in repelling the husbands away who eventually form the small house family where they perform non-domestic duties. The study found that three Glen Norah church leaders resort offering lessons to married women on proper way of handling a husband. Another area of agreement by these respondents was the high prevalent rate of the phenomenon in Glen Norah and that believer and non-believers are trapped in what they call 'promiscuous family'. Lack of clear cut division of labour between sexes and women emancipation were cited by Christian leaders as examples fuelling the union which to them is a demonic union. These moral entrepreneurs also blamed the Dutch-Roman Law for undermining patriarchy and vilifying the sacred union (marriage). A Pastor respondent gave an example of a civil servant who divorced her husband just because she rumour heard that he had a small house lover, yet in actual fact she wanted to free herself from dominance as she depended on her financial self-sustenance. Another example cited was that of a dispute between the couple which was almost solved religiously and traditionally but when one partner opted to go to the Glen Norah police station, the whole effort was turned into oblivion when the police officer also buttressed the point, '*a person is not forced to love a person whom he/ she no longer loves.*' These respondents acknowledged the small house as an 'unholy family resulting from Dutch-Roman Law and promiscuousness.

The small house institution was found to be a catalyst to the proliferation of female headed families which are prevalent in Glen Norah either if man deserts his official family starts living with a small house wife or if the man quits small

housing leaving a born child with the woman. One elderly respondent asserts that in Zimbabwe bride wealth is highly valued and each parent with a girl child expects bride wealth in return; but if the child becomes a small house wife, then all the social, economic and financial investments that were previously vested on the upbringing of the child will be just like the money thrown into Mukuvisi river. Both the small house actors and non-actors view the small house institution as a form of a family which is neither religiously nor traditionally sanctioned.

Discussion of the Findings

This part of the paper discusses the presented findings. Discussion is premised on Giddens (1984) Structuration Thesis. Due to structural forces of globalisation, marital relations are inevitably changing, always and everywhere and the pace of change is manifestly rapid in Glen Norah. But the vitality of African cultures as opposing to globalisation (*conflicting structures which Giddens is however silent on*) and human agency should never be underestimated (structure-agent: duality) as the old ways and old thinking are not being simply obliterated preferring totally new imported cultures. Agents are fusing the old and new social structures and the hybrid is a new '*fluid social structure*', a small house. The nature of man and also his sense of human dignity is reflected in marital relation. His nature is not only biological and psychological; it is also historical, therefore, is always being shaped and conditioned by changing and differing socioeconomic situations (Hilman Eugene 1975). What is normal behaviour among small house actors is abnormal to those outside the union but it does not mean that either way is better than the other. It's only a cycle that can be viewed as rationalisation and irrationality of agents. Human behaviour is either enabled or constrained by socio-psychological elements and forces which make it almost impossible for some individuals to realise subjectively some of the objective goals of small house institution. Therefore small house is not homogeneous or uniform, it has distinct attributes and many adults from varying socio-economic groups rationalise to be in this consensual union. Several factors explain this situation and these include socio-cultural-psychological and economic.

Enablers of the Small House Phenomenon

The small house institution can be said that it is induced by a dilemma between two structures; tradition and globalisation. The conflict between Christianity and tradition as *conflicting-structures* enabled the formation of the small house union as Christianity embraces monogamy whereas tradition glorifies polygamy. Publicly, conditioned by Christianity the small housing men appear monogamous but secretly are polygamous, longing for traditional culture. Therefore the desire by people to revert back to traditional culture of polygamy has a bearing on the small house phenomenon as traditional environments in which agents are born and bred influence their behaviour. Machingura (2011) argues that traditional Shona culture and philosophy of the family allows man to have as many wives as possible. Therefore, women in small house union are stamped into pre-set frames which the 'general beliefs' in Glen Norah has set for them, as among Zimbabweans, a high degree is placed on marriage to the extent

that its variant in the form of small union house is a better choice for women in light of immaterialised official marriage. Thus Giddens (1984) argues that structures are a series of reproduced practices. Hence, the general beliefs or dictates in Glen Norah and marriage enable the small house institution. Traditionally a man is perceived normal if he has many sexual partners, hence small housing in Glen Norah is becoming a part of normal traditional life for both men and women. Shona people are not prepared for a monogamous marriage especially if there are challenges in the first marriage (Machingura 2011). Hence small housing by people of Glen Norah is a cultural indigenisation of African tradition. Zeitzen (2008) argues that man with multiple sexual partners represent an African cultural renaissance for it is based on principles that are rooted in African traditional values.

Small house institution is an element of a polygamous lifestyle and this suggest that the structural institution of polygyny remains strong and is actually adapting to modern domestic arrangements between partners, hence traditional culture continue to influence profoundly the lives of most people. Social structures do not exist in time and space, rather social phenomena have the capacity to be structured (Giddens 1984). So the small house union is a structured *floating-structure* and patriarchy provides fertile ground for the small housing as man seeks a small house wife if the first wife gives birth to female children or if she is infertile. Machingura (2011) opines that among the Shona polygamy could come as a result of the search for sons particularly if the couples have girls only or if the woman is unable to sexually satisfy her husband. Therefore, small house in Glen Norah is conditioned and moulded by the culture (patriarchy and polygamy) that existed even before actors and have promoted, sustained and justifies patriarchal structures.

Globalisation did not come as a melting-pot that produce a '*fixed-homogeneous*' cultural pattern based on the '*hegemonic*' Western values and lifestyles. Here one can argue that globalisation brought small house in Zimbabwe, thus, it is a capitalist socio-sexual relationship: capitalism commoditized labour and less economically sound small house wives commoditized their sexual labour power. Globalisation as a socioeconomic-political structure has enabled the formation of the small house union as it has disorganised the African way of life and urbanisation has brought individual freedom (the power to deviate from the main traditional norms and values) and people no longer maintain a closer physical connection with their parents and other kinship and the loosening of social constraints bring marital uncertainties in marriage. Obviously, divorce became easier to accomplish; and the divorced women prefer small housing to prostituting. Machingura (2011) asserts that modernisation has had a greater impact on how people view the marriage institution, for people look down upon individuals in a polygamous marriage as backward and out-dated. Thus the small house is polygamy practiced secretly by women and men. Small house, being a symbol of polygamy, then city living in Glen Norah is somehow traditional. Karanja (1994) cited by Liaw and Hayse (1994) argue that the decline of polygamy in urban areas of Sub-Saharan Africa has resulted in multiple forms of informal marriages which involve regular 'outside' wives. Hunter (2004) opines that change in marriage patterns and family formation is attributed variously to the global economy. Therefore, the urban political economy (global structures) provides fertile ground for people to believe that marital and

economic uncertainties brought about by modernity are solved in the small house union.

More-so, due to urbanisation (structure), the creation of sexual and marital ties is no longer fixed by parents and kinsmen but depending on individual initiative-*'convenient agency'* and selection represents freedom for individuals to advantageously control their sexuality. Hence, the small house phenomenon is linked to the process of urbanisation, as the traditional institutional controls are weakened and the phenomenon represents modern polygamy. Thus Giddens (1984)'s argument that a social phenomenon is not brought about by social actors but is continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as structured actors holds water. The urban environment of Glen Norah allows the divorcees, widowed and single mothers to independently maximise socioeconomic, cultural and psychological potential of their sexuality by entering into the small house union where woman maintains high level of independence on decisions that concerns her sexuality and women generally position themselves to vantage side that meet their relation expectations and the survival of the relationship.

The small house union is a modification of polygyny, a *'hidden or veiled urban polygyny'*. Chavhunduka (1979) noted that the marriage alternative in urban centres is a result of the demands of urbanisation and capitalism that view marriage in terms of its supposed benefits to an individual. Therefore, the small house is a response to capitalism and urbanisation where individuals benefit and are less dependent on their kin relations and cultural traditions, with the result that they can live without them. However, the small house union has managed to survive for so long because it is flexible to adapt to the demands of capitalism and tradition. Industrialisation and modernity commands nuclear family and the small house institution is an ideal one for urban dwellers and again the traditional component within the union gives it survival advantage.

The ascending level of female contribution in the labour market altered the quality of the relationship between men and women (Moore and Govender 2013). Thus the dual roles of women; production and reproduction, exacerbated by industrialization means that working women in Glen Norah are either left by husbands who would look for a small house partner or those single working women, because of their visibility in the economic and political spheres, result also becoming small house wives. Chuma and Ncube (2010) noted that at times the work pressure *'dominos'* negatively affects the female managers' social lives like increased workloads and strained social pressures on social relations and marriage. As per Zimbabwean tradition (structure), a woman is expected to execute motherly or wifely duties regardless of her *'other outside'* or elsewhere responsibilities. If a wife fails to perform her expected duties, husbands and female relatives arrange for a small house wife.

Socialisation process reinforces traditional structures. Giddens (1984) opines that structure is what gives form and shape to social actors, but it is not itself that form and shape. The fact that from birth to old age, individuals in Glen Norah interacts, certainly conditions their personalities, values, and the behaviour to engage in. Both men and women in the small house union were once socialised to small house as some women actors are from previously the small house families. Chodorow (1988) argues that from birth the girl remains attached to the mother thus there is no sharp break from the mother and later her identity is

merged with or depended on another's; first her mother and later a man. Therefore, the small house actor's behaviour is conditioned and moulded by primary or traditional socialisation acquired; the situations experienced by their parents or by imitating others. In one's life time, a Glen Norah man is socialised by peers and relatives to have multiple sexual partners hence a small house wife who can compensate polygamy which is gradually diminishing. So the socialisation process reinforces the traditional belief that the practice is a badge of power, prestige and Africanism.

Giddens (1984) defines structure as the structuring properties (rules and resources) which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them systemic form. The small House phenomenon is a result of the '*conflicting-structures*' which however Giddens is silent on, for example the co-existence or contradiction between Customary Law and the Dutch Roman Law. Arguing from an African perspective, Chapter 5:11 of Civil Marriage Act that embrace monogamy opposes African tradition. By tradition, an African man is entitled to have multiple sexual partners and also African women entitled to share a man polygamously. Civil marriage which is monogamous provides almost equivalent legal protection and rights in the marriage hence constraining polygamous marriage. Faced with this scenario, individuals in Glen Norah apply the '*convenient agency*' where they find the small house union to be a viable option that frees them from the hustles of the Civil Marriage Act.

As noted by Giddens (1984) that structure is made possible by the existence of rules and resources, men in Glen Norah have justified reasons to small housing. Their argument is based on culture and biology that it is part of Zimbabwean culture and nature that man should have several sexual partners. In actual fact men attributed the small housing behaviour to their biological make up. Therefore, the small house phenomenon is biologically determined as the practice is heterosexual; the actors get into the union for emotional involvement and sexual pleasure. The biological structure argument is buttressed by researches showing that world over; there are many marital unions, though bear different names but are similar to small house. Wilson (1978:24) opines: "*studies of sexual behaviour of animals show that males are normally promiscuous than females of the same species.*" Therefore, men justify the small house phenomenon by equating the animal behaviour that proves polygynous mating system where one male mates several females. Since time immemorial, the African tradition was built based on the demands of nature; hence tradition and biology is a structure. For that reason therefore, if the behaviour is genetically motivated then it is natural and this can be summarised by the phrase, '*one can take a baboon from the bush but cannot take the bush from the baboon.*' So no matter how one is Christianly indoctrinated but '*socio-bio-tradition*' as structure take a centre stage on the small house phenomenon in Glen Norah. Wilson (1978) argues that biologically men are inclined to impregnate as many women to make sure that their seed has the highest survival greatest chances.

However, an increase of the small house union in Glen Norah is not a rejection of the formal marriage but is a practice that still has marriage as an aim though it is hidden to achieve that aim. The marriage structure conditions the behaviour of women in Glen Norah as the Small house institution is enabled and it provides meaning to social behaviours associated with formal marriage as the

small house women behave like those officially married women. Hunter (2004) argues that informal marital arrangement is an organisational alternative to marriage that includes behaviours also associated with marriage as it carries expectations for behaviours. Thus, the small house institution is a form of a family that came as a result of '*convenient agency*' of men as they attempt to combine monogamy publicly with polygyny privately. However, the phenomenon leads to '*identity crisis*' as children born out of this union have a confused sense of identity, a mixed-up view of which they are for they are only well acquainted to mother relatives but with only very few of those who bears the same surname with them.

The Power of Actors to Navigate in Between Traditions

Agency is equivalent to power and the Small House itself is a result of human power to navigate through, playing around and modify the hegemonic social structures as actors moulded small house institution '*somewhere in between*', '*neither here nor there*' as it is neither an individual nor a group thing, polygamy nor monogamy. Therefore, the phenomenon is counter hegemony to global hegemonic structures as individuals are resisting new forms of power. Rationality made it easier for men in Glen Norah to establish a structure, a separate household in case of marital dissatisfaction. After cost benefit analysis, single women in Glen Norah concluded that the small house union would provide legitimacy to would be children of theirs. In addition to the above point, since in the Zimbabwean context being a lone parent, whether ever been married or not face social disapproval, women lone parents in Glen Norah resort to small housing to conceal those judgemental comments like 'deserted wife' or 'single mother'. Dictated by general negative belief on 'prostitution' in Glen Norah, single women use their mathematical ability to be in the small house union so as to avoid being labelled as 'prostitutes'. Since in Zimbabwe, it is legally, morally and culturally wrong for women to prostitute, and to avoid prostitution women rationalise and enter into the small house unions for the traditional culture demands that a woman should have a husband. Kenyatta (1965) argues that the African custom demands that all women must be protected by men and that to deter prostitution (hence in Gikuyu language there is no word for 'prostitution') all women must be married. Therefore the reasoning and calculative capacity of single women in Glen Norah find them confirming to customary demands that as women they should have a husband and to that effect the small house institution provides a safety net to the unmarried women.

In and through their activities, humans manufacture the conditions that make the activities possible (Giddens 1984). Men in Glen Norah innovate for small housing to manage the tension emanating from the family institution. Thus, the small house institution is a '*painkiller and shock absorber mechanism*' that reduces tension and pressure on men and their legitimate wives who are sometimes unable to cope up with the sexual greedy or appetite of their husbands. The women in small house union innovate varied tactics to please men and can properly handle men and they have the power and ability to make a man happy; romantically, sexually, socially, psychologically and to others economically as well. The innovativeness of women in small house institution acts as a tension regulator in formal marriage. For men, the small house institution is a result of rational analysis as men do not just conclude the type of marital relationship by

merely reading or following the demands of *'fixed hegemonic social structures'*. Before concluding a man evaluates what the relation should be by examining the benefits and values it can serve him and the family. For men and single women in Glen Norah, personal values come before structures; they navigate and determine how the *'dominant structures'* must advantage them. By analysing the personal relationship in the family sphere and the general beliefs in Glen Norah, a man is provided with a pattern and structure of the marital relation to make, thereby creating the *'fluid social order'* of the day, the Small House union as an agented structure.

In line with Giddens' (1984) assertion that humans are not only self-conscious but they also engage to monitor the on-going activities and structural dictates. So women in Glen Norah as conscious and knowledgeable actors, based on marriage structure find the small house to be an alternative to advantageously place themselves. In light of marriage difficulties, educated women reason and prefer small housing to 'official second wives' and even labelled as such. Thus, Giddens (1984) opines that individuals have the ability to construct and reconstruct their lived environments. Individuals in Glen Norah have reasons and power to act and these motives involve the wants and desires that deliver action. Therefore it is motivational power that provides people in Glen Norah the general strategy to act and it plays a significant role in their conduct. For them small housing is end product of agency that also act as survival avenue which is pursued as they develop and maintain it for in their daily experiences could offer psychosexual and socioeconomic survival ways as these ways act as both sociocultural and as an effective system of exchange. Muzvidziwa (2002) notes that informal union, just like the social networks ensures that woman continued staying in town. The informal union is the tangible and intangible wealth that urban people need for survival (Mararike 1999). Hence the small house union is a strategic means to be happy and a survival strategy for individuals in Glen Norah.

Patriarchy as a social structure has a bearing on the small house institution as men exercise some form of power but women in small house women institution continuously manipulate the patriarchal weaknesses. Continuously humans monitor their own thoughts, activities and their physical and social contexts to advantage themselves (Giddens 1984). Therefore, women in small house union are not more different from official wives, but they are *'strategic good man handlers'* to the extent that men expose the weaknesses of their official wives and women in small house union capitalises on that and by all means try to portray themselves as better. Unlike the official wives who might not know that there is competitor out there, a woman in small house union knows that she is always on competition and always reason to compete for a win. Nyamnjuh (2005) likened diriyanke (small house in Senegal) to a millipede, and this suggest that, in either way one would never be certain which of its multiple legs will be used as a carrot to lure men. As such women in small house union innovates to advantage them and the small house itself is a result of human rational choice and analysis.

The small house actors have the adaptive power to suit and influence the constraining commonly held beliefs in Glen Norah. Agents mould the small house to suit and meet the social functions of the family; regulating social behaviour, reproduction, economic function, providing affection, protection and emotional support. Muzvidziwa (2002) argue that marriage is becoming increasingly less formalised and delocalised. Hence, the small house union is on the increase and

individuals in Glen Norah are embracing, glorifying and celebrating it. The power of small house individuals is best expressed by Giddens (1984) who opines that in expressing themselves, individuals participate in practices and it is by their action that both consciousness and structure are produced. Therefore, the small house is the agents' power that acts as a re-identification of; and by Glen Norah people with an authentically indigenous way of life that involves more than dress code, neo-traditionalism as the practice serve and safeguard the values of the small house participants.

Social Arrangement-Small House Actors Symbiosis

The small House institution is characterised by the interplay between '*dominant-general beliefs and coercive constraining structures*' in Glen Norah and the '*human strategic innovative power*' to put thoughts into action, a duality. Ranger (1983) argues that individuals find it imperative to 'revoke and reinvent' African traditions to liberate them from colonial history which undermines traditional cultures like polygyny. Monogamy that the Small House actors innovate against was achieved by ignoring and outright condemnation of tradition and indigenous cultural values, that are deeply rooted customs and social structures. Here again the small house union is an outcome of the duality of '*conflicting structures*' and the '*daring innovative power*' of individuals in Glen Norah. Monogamy constrains individuals to polygyny but humans, dictated by and acknowledging the presence of polygamy innovate to form a '*floating or fluid*' small house structure which has some resemblances or commonalities with either monogamy or polygyny. The Zimbabwe Constitutional Commission Report (1999) indicates that most women in Zimbabwe want polygamy to stay. Shaming it results in men and women in Glen Norah secretly hunting one another for the accomplishment of secret polygamous small house marriage. Traditionally, polygamy is assumed to be normal hence the small house phenomenon is a result of individuals' structured-innovative agency. Individuals' power to form the small house union is enabled, an outcome of 'general-commonly held beliefs' in Glen Norah. The small house institution is a structured structure that also conditions behaviour of the actors. Glen Norah people's agency and tradition cannot be conceived of apart from one another. Therefore, agents are not fully free, the traditional culture enables man to have a small house partner but the wife and marriage legal laws are a constraining force. So there is an intricate relationship on dominant coercive social arrangements and small house actors.

Education as emancipatory brought freedom for both sexes to pursue marital relations that suit most their needs as a man with an employed wife can also spare a little for his small house. Manting cited by Hunter (2004) argues that urbanisation came with the need for independence, and flexibility among women and it plays a major role in increasing diverse forms of marriage. However, this enabling structure enables Glen Norah women's power to challenge what they perceive as '*dominant exploitative patriarchal structural men's rights*' and demand for fairness in marriages. Berger and Pullberg cited by Jary and Jary (1995: 501) argue: "*that a social structure cannot stand alone, apart from human activity that produced it but once produced individuals encountered it both as alien facticity and as coercive instrumentality.*" Eventually, the emancipatory structure (for example, gender equality laws and education) leads to divorce as men armed with enabling tradition calculate and apply 'convenient agency' as

they are not prepared to relinquish and hand over that form of power which they believe contradicts patriarchal African society. Because of high value on marriage in Glen Norah, those emancipated women divorcees strategically and conveniently chose to small housing than prostituting. Therefore, the duality of marriage and women emancipatory structures in one hand and men's convenient agency and women divorcees on the other hand; and because of this dialectical relationship a floating small house structure is produced.

Factors that correspond closer to society and demographic conditions influence Glen Norah people's marital choices as small house institution is derived from single-women rational analysis against population sex ratio. The small house in resulted from the constraining population structure and the power of unmarried women who are even on increase from the country side to manipulate demography. Giddens (1984) asserts that only structures can exist in and through human actions and that structure is constraining. Moore and Sanders (2001) argue that rural-urban migration by women in search of greener pastures provides fertile ground for informal marital unions in urban centres. Population disparity between men and women has effects on sexualities of both sexes. Faced by this scenario, the small house women circumvent the social and demographic structures by viewing men as a scarce and precious resource for there is a shortage of marriageable men in Zimbabwe. Because of population disparity, single women in Glen Norah have become men vultures; using their innovative tactics, they are always in the hunting field looking for married men to snatch resulting in the formation of the small house. Hence, Giddens (1984) argues that structure-agent compliments. Therefore, the loneliness and social stigma that unmarried woman in Glen Norah endures where marriage is valued; enable women to modify the hegemonic marriage type and invent small house. Hence there is a symbiotic relationship on core social arrangements and individuals in Glen Norah.

The inter-play between the general beliefs (dominant structures) in Glen Norah and individuals power to interrogate those beliefs enhances the cycle of marriage (from formal to small house and probably to formal again) and this interplay results in the redefinition of a marriage/family structure. Hence Giddens (1984) argues that society is both the ever present condition and the ever-reproduced outcome of human agency Most of the women in small house institution are either from previously failed marriages or widowed, thus some women in Glen Norah experience divorces and remarriages in their lives and mostly these remarriages come in form of the small house union. Conscious of their previous marital shortcomings women in small house union reasoned, corrected them and try to avoiding new ones, hence they always innovate to keep the small house relationship burning. Dodo (2014) opines that women in informal unions are good in pleasing men both socially and sexually as they practice tolerance, sexual antics and sexual gyrating. Because of the negative economic environment, the informality of the country's economy (constraining structure), women now participate even more in the public economic activities (agency), and as such some women in small house union are even economically making men happy. To them men has become a precious resource that needs to be provided, scrambled and protected. The picture is that, it is the general beliefs and marriage etiquettes as structures that made divorcee women as failures in Glen Norah and again constrain them from meeting social expectations and it is the

calculative actions of these women that now challenge and influence the structure of marriage and the general beliefs.

Society in the form of marriage rules, procedures and dominant beliefs which are influential in Glen Norah constrains individuals and the small house institution from being costumed to formal marriage. However, individuals in Glen Norah are calculative beings who know how to go by their way in manipulating the all social constrains. Hence the small house is also formed as a result of manipulative power of individuals in manipulating the general beliefs in Glen Norah that any adult woman should be married and not prostituting. The small house participants reason to consider the institution as equivalent to marriage but the negative societal attitudes towards it indicate that the two cannot be equal. Hence, general dominant beliefs in Glen Norah regulates and defines individuals' behaviour and the consequence of that behaviour also form the small house union; influence and redefine those hegemonic structures.

The absence of bride wealth payment makes the small house union not recognised as a marriage. Chavhunduka (1979) posits that bride wealth formalises and legalises the marriage relationship and it acts as insurance against marriage dissolution. Therefore, the absence of legal and customary marriage procedures or bride wealth negotiations and payments made it easy for the small house union to dissolve when mutual understanding between the individuals fades. Here is the power of agents to form and dissolve the formed structure. Accordingly, the small house institution is very much in harmony with the prevailing attitude of Glen Norah people as almost every mature adult male and almost every adult unmarried woman is practising small housing, hence one can argue that it is '*a postmodern family*' and because that the union require no divorce to end is its advantage to the actors. If the small house union is a social common denominator for adult majority in Glen Norah, who then can actively condemn his/ her own invent? Nobody! Hence somehow the union is tolerated and it is an open secret that the small house union is every sphere discouraged but is the most loved type of relationship by majority adults as dictated by the intricate individuals power-commonly held beliefs relationship. Here one can see that neither the marriage nor the small house actors can claim dominance over the other as actors are constrained by hegemonic marriage rules from publicising their union as normal but at the same time the small house actors' rationality is influencing the form and structure of the marriage institution and perceptions of the general populace in Glen Norah.

It is by human rational definition and redefinition that social change came about. Due to this human rationalisation marriage cannot be tied to one form which is valid across time and cultures hence cannot be a one-size-fit-all. The small house union like all social institutions; is conditioned by the general social system, which acts as a superstructure in which it is situated and due to innovative power which people in Glen Norah poses, the social systems are constantly changing. Social relations or family, the state, the law as structures, due to human calculation are not fixed and immutable entities, they adopt to changing circumstances and the adaptation involves change of meaning, change of idea or concept and a change of order. Owing to that; the ways in which the small house actors calculatedly design the institution is based on the changing nature of superstructure. Therefore, the small house institution points to the fact that simultaneous polygamy is both an immemorial custom and a contemporary

reality in Glen Norah, hence a *'fluid or floating structure'* that can suit anywhere. The argument is that it is the human agency that brings the small house union as part of social evolution but they don't do it freely as they do so under the dictates of existing social structures. Hence neither one nor the other can claim superiority.

The small House union has no legal or cultural recognition, thus, it is neither civil, nor customary marriage, but dictated by the commonly held beliefs, values and norms; actors have moulded it on the form and structure of both the traditional and urban nuclear family. So in the face of small house union, traditional definition of a family needs to be re-examined. Bledsoe and Pison (1994: 78) opine that: "*African 'marriages' are fluid and malleable as partners continuously restructure the relations and various individuals perceive unions differently at varying times.*" Marriage patterns and family formation in Southern Africa have changed like the inclining rate of informal marriages Moore and Govender (2013). Therefore, the small house institution is an emerging form of marriage and family type in Glen Norah. Constrained by dominant beliefs, practices and social environment, individuals in Glen Norah calculated and become more knowledgeable actors who know how to circumvent the limits and manoeuvre on; but in doing so they do under the confines of social environment and the result of this symbiotic relationship is a change of order, hence the emergence of new fluid and floating social structure, the small house institution.

Ontological Security as an Objective behind Agents' Powerful Calculative Rationality

Single women in Glen Norah develop avenues that provide them a sense of security like small housing that enable them to effectively deal with their social lives. In Giddens' (1984:46) words: "*in their search for a sense of security, actors rationalise their world*". Women in small house union live a dual life, dubious, rapacious, a chameleon like life, officially 'single' but unofficially 'married', hence unofficial marriage provides them ontological security. Muzvidziwa (2012) asserts that for social security, the majority of women prefer to enter a steady relationship with a man if that opportunity passes their way. Musick and Bumpass (2007: 12) argue: "*informal union is advantageous than formal marriage for the union also provides some form of the marriage benefits without the costs directly associated with the more prescribed roles, duties and public character of formal marriage.*" The small house union free women in Glen Norah from what they perceive as limiting and constraining effects of marriage, for them, what they want is some sort of permanent intimate relationship with man. Wilson (1978) argues that women at a given time have only one egg that can be fertilised, have no biological interest of being sexed by many men, instead they want stable partners to protect the biological inheritance invested in the protection of their children. For women in small house union permanent sexual relations with man is a crucial way to obtain security. Giddens (1984) asserts that ontological security or trust develops through the continuous activities of agents involved. The small house institution provides protection against what women in Glen Norah perceive as material and status vulnerability that results from divorce, widowed or singlehood.

Single women in Glen Norah expect to improve their social status through establishing a small house union which is a source of sexual fulfilment and companionship. As such, the union provides social support or status that gives Glen Norah unmarried women a sense of belonging to someone. Chodorow (1988) asserts that women feel that the absence of a close relation to another person threaten their self-esteem. Oppong and Abu (1987) opine that majority of women perceive marriage as a vital union for women's socio-economic status and also for her personal happiness. Therefore, the small house union enables Glen Norah women to enjoy emotional and economic benefits from their partners without risking losing the independence and control of their resources. Overall, most of the small house women strongly wish to be formally married but they also see advantages in their small house status as for them that it is better to know whom one's partner is dating than staying in the darkness like what the official wives are in.

Being in a small house institution is viewed as having a positive effect on the life chances of a woman that made Glen Norah women clinging on it. The relationship in small house union can be viewed as a straightforward exchange of services both men and women in Glen Norah can offer to each other for socio-emotional security. The small house institution is characterised by openness, mutual respect and frees women to pursue her objectives and desires. However, it is not automatic that small house improves life chances of women in Glen Norah as others have been small housing for many years but men still refusing to formalise the relationships, so the small house institution is sometimes optimistically cruel for women who keep clinging to it. These women live an optimistic life hoping that one day their marital dreams may come true. Berlant (2006) argues that institutional attachment is inherently optimistic as it forged through promises but agents may not realise or 'feel optimistic'. Zeitzen (2008) posits that despite the fact that some women gain from the informal relations, they tend to be insecure and sometimes left destitute if the cash paying boyfriend lose interest in them.

The socioeconomic securities that the Small House union offers qualify it to be a form of marriage. Dodo (2014) suggest that due to variety of lives being followed, cultural hybridisation, globalisation effects, and development in general, all forms of unionising should be embraced as formal marriage method. The small house union in Glen Norah is argued to be a marriage and family type since it is a regular and lifelong sexual union and at times children are born hence it's an alternative reproduction mode in society that provides socio-emotional security to the actors and off springs. Again the lifelong commitment of the small house institution qualifies it to the wedding vows (till death do part us) of officially married couples who are to start a family. Karanja (1994) opines that due to the commonality of informal unions, men are willing to shoulder the responsibility of the outside children and their mothers. Differently put, the small house union should be embraced as a '*formal marriage method*' in the face of varying lives 'enjoyed or endured' by Glen Norah urbanites. Over and above, the bond between the small house partners carry the meaning of marriage for both parties commit themselves to start a family and to lead independent lives conforming to their convictions. Moore and Govender (2013) assert that informal marital union should be viewed as marriage form and structure since partners reap some form of the marriage benefits. Both informal relation and marriage involve one living

with an intimate partner who potentially is a confident, caretaker, provider and both involve social roles that are seen to improve health and well-being and someone to be an informant, health monitoring and reminder of issues (Waite and Gallagher cited by Musick and Bumpass 2007). Therefore, the 'Small House' as a union; it is argued that in the African tradition, a 'union' is a house and a house is both marriage and family, so the small house union is an emerging family form.

Conclusion

This research has provided an overview of the cocktail factors that influence the establishment of the small house phenomenon. The small house institution is both a response to and an outcome of the demands of urbanisation, tradition, economic and government policies and apart from religious underpinnings, certain social conditions like the need for social reproduction, pampering and the '*conflicting structures*' provide climate within which small house institution can thrive. As such small house is a multidimensional phenomenon and it is not possible to isolate any single sociocultural, economic, demographic or social condition as causing small house institution since faced with a dilemma, agents apply the '*convenient agency*' in making marital decisions. Mutual understanding between the small housing partners maintains the union alive and the '*fluidity nature*' of small house gives it survival advantages. In this union '*gender role segregation*' is highly pronounced as there is a clear-cut division of labour for men never perform domestic chores. Where a child is born a small house wife assume some form of power over men and a child become a means for life-relationship cementing between partners. Decisions are jointly made but usually those of a material or economic providing spouse supersede. Small house union is not much different from the official marriage as romantic and family language is similar to that of recognised marriage. So it is an emerging form of a family. The advantages derived by participants from the small house institution outnumber the disadvantages. Women derive social security from small housing and for men it is also a '*painkiller and a shock absorber mechanism*' to the difficulties found in the official family. The phenomenon cut across all social strata and this suggests that one's socioeconomic status has nothing to do with sexual behaviour, particularly small house union.

Most women in small house union are those who would have failed some part of their lives according to social standards. Most women desire to form a family in a formal marriage but several factors make small housing appears as a better option. The dualism between the Civil and Customary Marriage Acts also has a bearing on the proliferation of the small house phenomenon. Women in small house union play a role in maintaining the stability of their partners' formal marriages as men in Glen Norah are nursed the marital ills in the small house institution and the reason why either by default or by design men initiate, enter into and celebrate this phenomenon.

The importance of the economic component in small house union differs greatly from individual to individual or context to context. At one end, a woman may be a small house for the sake of personal 'conviction-social status' and sex

gratification while at the other extreme, the relationship may be purely economic as either man or woman will be the economic provider. Again, on the furthest extreme, the relationship can be a result of both socioeconomic reasons. Small house institution sustains social values to Glen Norah urbanites and it seems that it will continue be practised in the foreseeable future. As Zimbabwe is increasingly going through the small house phenomenon, this article has therefore contributed to the understanding of 'new individuals' marital relations' in the face of globalisation. As noted elsewhere in this paper, for various reasons; a significant number of Glen Norah urbanites men are having small house partner and the small house institution functions as a 'secret or veiled urban polygamy' as it is counter hegemony to hegemonic structural forces of globalisation.

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