

THE EARLY HISTORY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH IN ZAMBIA

BY

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Presentation Outline

- Historical Perspective of Social Science in Zambia – Foundation of Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research
- Contributions of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute to Social Science Research in Zambia
- Rhodes-Livingstone Institute post-independence

Historical Perspective of Social Science in Zambia

- The pioneer institute of Social Science research in Sub-Saharan Africa is the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research (RLISR) which was founded in 1938 in Northern Rhodesia today known as Zambia.
- After colonization of African countries, the British government established an International Institute of African Languages and Culture with its headquarters based in London in 1926.

Historical Perspective of Social Science in Zambia

- The aim of the Institute was to help the British government understand the impact of colonialism in Africa.
- Many research fellows were sent to different African countries where they produced studies which were advanced in both theories and methods of social sciences.
- However, different countries experienced different challenges related to colonialism, and industrialization.

The need for a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia (1)

Northern Rhodesia had its own challenges that warranted the need to establish a research institute

- Firstly, like many other countries in the world it had just experienced world depression
- Secondly, it was undergoing colonialism and industrialization at a rapid speed
- Thirdly, the colonial government had just established urban centres along the railway line and along the Copperbelt, thus changing the lives of the local people.

The need for a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia (2)

- After colonization the British government established four copper mines on the Copperbelt. As a result there was an influx of people migrating from the rural areas to seek jobs in the mines. The British also established urban centers along the railway line and along the Copperbelt.
- However, African Mine workers were working under quite unfavorable conditions as compared to their counterparts from Europe. For instance, the African mineworkers worked long hours but earned much less than their European counter parts.

Map of Zambia



The need for a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia (3)

- In 1934 the Governor W. H. Young of Northern Rhodesia realized that industrialization had grown rapidly and this had resulted in a number of problems that could not be thoroughly understood nor handled by government without some expert advice.
- He proposed that a research institute be established to inquire on and find solutions to the problems.
- However, his idea was not favoured by the British government of that time.

The need for a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia (4)

- The need to establish a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia only became apparent in May 1935 when the African mineworkers at Roan Antelope mine in Luanshya on the Copperbelt went on strike for the first time - resulting in six miners being killed by the police and 22 wounded.
- The strike was a direct result of the inequalities and poor working conditions for the African mine workers in comparison with European mine workers.
- In 1937 when the new Colonial Secretary W. Ormsby-Gore was appointed, Governor Young pursued the matter of opening a Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia and the government agreed.

Establishment of Rhodes-Livingstone Research Institute

- In 1938 resources were mobilized to establish a Social Science Research Institute in Northern Rhodesia. The first Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was housed at the Livingstone Museum which had been established already in 1934.
- The museum was incorporated into the Institute and the Director of Livingstone Museum became the Secretary of the Institute.
- In 1946 the two units separated at the same time the Rhodes-Livingstone Headquarters moved to Lusaka.

Aims of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research

- To find solutions to the race issues on the Copperbelt and the railway line.
- To provide accurate information to the British government about the social life of Africans.
- To disseminate information as widely as possible.

Contributions of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute

Conducting research for a variety of clients who included:

- the British government which required information that would assist their officers to make policies, formulate development plans, and make decisions.
- the mining companies who hoped to benefit from the research;
- political parties, trade unions, the churches, and native authorities;
- different societies and communities and
- conducted research on areas selected by the Institute itself.

Godfrey Wilson (1938-1941)

- The first Director of the Institute Godfrey Wilson initiated scholarly publications at the Institute
- He published his own research findings from a study he conducted on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa
- This was followed by a study co-authored with his wife entitled "A Study of an African Society."

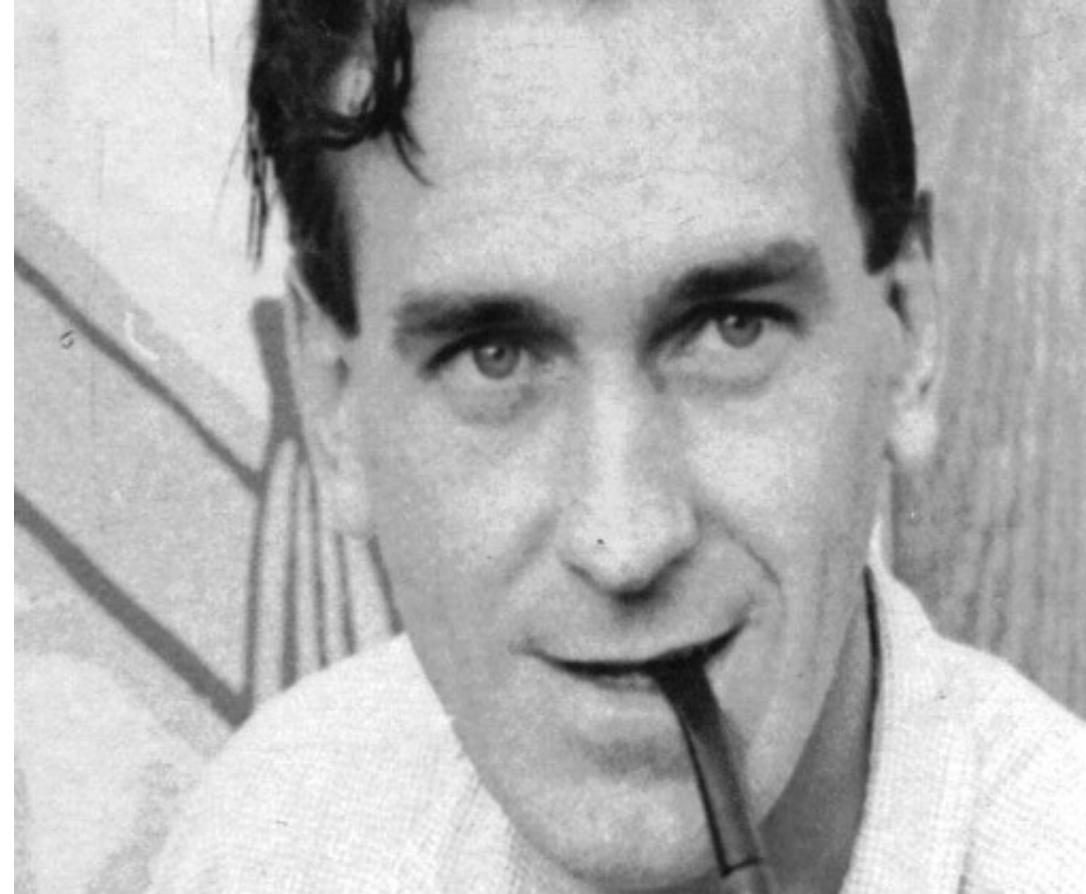


Godfrey Wilson

- In 1939 he undertook field research among the African mineworkers in Broken Hill
- His methodology involved living with the African miners
- The management of the mine and the government expressed displeasure over his research methodology and they considered him an ally to the mineworkers
- The mineworkers threatened to terminate his research if he did not change his methodology
- Wilson refused to change his methodology and as a result he lost favor with the colonial administration and was forced to resign in 1942.

Max Gluckman (1942-1947)

- Wilson was succeeded by Max Gluckman, a South African Jew who had joined the Institute in 1939.
- Prior to joining the Institute Gluckman worked as an Anthropologist in Zululand
- Gluckman was familiar with the challenges his predecessor and other social scientists had with the Northern Rhodesian government.



Max Gluckman

- His strategy was to avoid confrontations with the government by participating in a number of government-sponsored researches.
- He produced many publications on the Lozi people and these papers and others helped the Institute to gain an international reputation.
- By 1964, 37 papers had been published in anthropology, history, law, economics, and nutrition.
- In 1944 Gluckman launched the first social science journal in Northern Rhodesia entitled "*the Rhodes-Livingstone Journal on Human Problems in British Central Africa*".
- During World War II Gluckman virtually ran the institute alone.

Max Gluckman

- After the world war, he trained a number of researchers in research techniques He came up with the Seven Year Plan – a plan to extend the influence of the Institute beyond the borders of Northern Rhodesia.

This received a lot of criticism from government despite:

- being approved by the Trustees;
- highly praised by fellow anthropologists in Britain and South Africa,
- warmly approved by the Colonial Social Science Research Council in London, and

Max Gluckman

- winning Gluckman the prestigious Wellcome Medal in 1945 by the Royal Anthropological Institute in recognition of the plan's significance.
- In 1948 Gluckman left to take up a teaching post in England.

Elizabeth Colson (1947-1952)

- Gluckman was succeeded by and American sociologist - Elizabeth Colson.
- During her directorship, Colson modified the aims of the institute and include sociological research .
- She wanted to stimulate interest in finding solutions to social problems in British Central Africa.
- Colson conducted most of her research among the Tonga people of Southern Province.



Elizabeth Colson

- In appreciation of Colson's relationship with the locals, Colson was given a local name "Kamuchembele" meaning "a young girl".
- Colson became assimilated to the Tongas and lived in Monze until she died on 3rd August, 2016 and was buried on 5th August at Morning Side farm.



Post independence

- In 1965 Rhodes-Livingstone Institute became an integral part of the University of Zambia. Consequently, it changed its name to the Institute for Social Research.
- In 1971 it was renamed Institute for African Studies (IAS) and
- In 1979 it was again renamed and became known as the Institute for Economic and Social Research (INESOR) the name it is known as to-date.

Conclusions

The Rhodes-Livingstone has a long history in Social Science Research in Zambia.

- The Institute was established not primarily to undertake research for its own sake but it was to serve the interests of the colonial British government.
- The early Social Scientists at the Institute set the standard by using good methodologies and Zambia has benefitted from their expertise.
- In the early history there was use of research by the government in making policies.

- Thank you!