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*Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS: Learning Masculinity in Zambia**

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The spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa is driven, at least in part, by particular expressions of heterosexual masculinities, especially those that entail aggressive sexuality. More needs to be known about how boys come to construct, experience and define themselves as men and about how hegemonic constructions are, and might be, contested. The recognition that masculinities are historically, socially and economically constructed, and that gender is a process, offers the potential for change. Many studies have described women's vulnerability to HIV along a number of dimensions, among them biological, economic, social and cultural. What is perhaps less self-evident in view of the real power exercised by many men in everyday life in Zambia and elsewhere is the vulnerability of men because of the demands made upon them by particular constructions of masculinity. This article draws upon life-histories collected from a cohort of men educated at a Zambian Catholic mission to explore their recollections of how they learnt to be men and their discovery of themselves as engendered sexual beings. The roots of many understandings of masculinity are to be found in domestic and extra-domestic worlds where boys observed the ways in which men took precedence and exercised power over women and children. The particular contributions of the father and the male peer group to the development of masculine identities are the focus of this discussion.

Introduction

In recognition of the need to involve men more in efforts to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, this article focuses on how boys and adolescents learn to be men. My aim is to excavate the mainsprings of adult male identity formation among a cohort of Catholic mission-educated Zambian men whom I taught at a secondary boarding school that I call St Antony's.[1] I first recorded their life histories in the early 1980s around the time they finished their secondary education. They were then mainly in their late teens or early twenties. I re-interviewed the survivors of the original cohort of 24 men some 20 years later in 2002, in the course of fieldwork that involved living in some of their homes. School contemporaries of

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1 For an ethnography of the school, see A. Simpson, *Half-London in Zambia: Contested Identities in a Catholic Mission School* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 2003).

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the cohort were also interviewed as were a number of cohort-members' wives and other household members.[2]

In 2002, the age range of the men in the cohort was between 35 years and the early 40s. They belonged to a number of ethnic groups, primarily Bemba and Tonga, but also including Lala, Ila, Chikunda, Lamba and Lozi. Although very few men (unlike their wives) regularly attended church, almost all claimed a Christian identity. Religious affiliations included Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, United Church of Zambia, Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God and various Pentecostal churches. There was a wide range of income within the group, some men earning as much as seven million *kwacha* a month and some as little as 100,000 *kwacha* a month or less.[3] Occupations included the following: doctors, lawyers, managers, lecturers, teachers, engineers, petrol pump attendants, security guards and 'businessmen' – the latter generally involved in informal trading. Several respondents were unemployed. All were resident in urban or provincial centres. All except two were married, and many of the marriages were inter-ethnic. Some wives were in professional employment; some were marketeers and traders. Others were housewives with no employment beyond the household.

There was a wide range of education level, occupation and income among the men's parents. About a third of the original cohort's parents were primary school teachers, sometimes one parent – usually the father – and sometimes both parents. Several men came from rural subsistence farming backgrounds, though there were also a number of former students whose fathers held professional posts in government and industry at various levels. Three fathers had university degrees and four mothers were nurses. Receiving their education in the period before the introduction of substantial school fees, school populations were more diverse in their socio-economic composition than they would later become, although students themselves were acutely aware of disparities in wealth.

Household and family forms and sizes varied considerably. In some households, there might be one or two siblings, in others as many as twelve or fifteen. In polygamous marriages, a boy might have as many as 50 or 60 siblings and half-siblings. There was a great range in the number and gender of siblings, the respondent's position in the children's birth order, the nature of the parents' relationships and the type of their parents' marriage – whether monogamous or polygamous. Most former students spent their childhood in households that were under the control of an adult male, normally their father. Few of these men had a childhood and adolescence untroubled by their parents' marital disputes, separation, divorce or the death of a parent. For some, at least a part of childhood was spent away from the parental household, with older siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles or away at primary boarding school.

Some former students spent their childhood almost exclusively in either rural or urban areas, while others moved back and forth between the two. Many, especially those who grew up in town, had little contact with grandparents, several of whom had died before the child was born or in his early childhood. Many boys moved residence – with or without their parents – several times during childhood and adolescence, attending a number of primary schools before going away to St Antony's for their secondary education.

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2 The present focus on men is not to deny the importance of studies that have argued for the need to put women at the centre of analysis. Women bear the brunt of the multifaceted consequences of the AIDS pandemic; many are particularly at risk and in need of empowerment because of men's violence. Violence and the threat of violence increase women's inability to negotiate condom use. However, while recognising that men play a significant role in HIV transmission, there is no intention here to demonise them nor to pretend that they form an undifferentiated category free of contestation. Among recent commentators who have spoken of the need to change men are C. Baylies and J. Bujra, *AIDS, Sexuality and Gender in Africa* (London, Routledge, 2000) and R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (London, Zed Books Ltd; Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 2001).

3 The rate of exchange fluctuated during 2002, but averaged about 4,500 kwacha to the US dollar.

None of the men in the cohort had undergone circumcision or other ritual initiation into manhood.[4] Nevertheless, they learnt manliness – often literally – at the hands of their fathers and their peers, both before and during school days. Knowledge, identity and desire grew out of certain work on the body. In a father's physical punishment, in the development of physical strength in work and training in sport, in the fighting skills needed to defend himself from other boys and in early sexual desire and experience, a boy's body became fitted to a particular moral universe.[5]

Many of these men doubted the relevance of childhood for the development of adult identities and personalities. They questioned a notion of personhood and a teleology of personal development that propose that what happens in the early years of life has salience for adult identities. I do not wish in any way to suggest that childhood experiences *determine* later masculine identities; these will always remain shifting, situated, multiple, provisional and for some, if not all, conflictual. The father's example, however, was always in the boy's eyes, even when a son might question his conduct. Childhood experiences were undoubtedly central to the making of these men as engendered beings. I am also aware of the caution required in attempting to analyse material, sometimes of a very intimate nature, recalled at my request, although what is considered intimate may vary between individuals and settings. In this instance, the ethnographer as audience was a former teacher to boot! Nevertheless, my long-term and continuing relationships with these men and the degree of trust built up over the years enabled me to discuss intimate aspects of male sexual conduct and to explore respondents' sexual identities in some detail.

Many men said they remembered little about their early childhood. For some there was an enduring early image in memory, the significance of the event apparently unrecoverable. Paul recalled walking with his father around the age of three or four to visit his father's male friend, admiring the friend's way of standing and desiring to imitate it. Many men recalled distinct emotions or events, though they were unable to date them with any accuracy. For some a tragic incident remained painfully etched upon the memory: a baby brother who drowned, having fallen from his mother's back while she was crossing a bridge above a river swollen by heavy rains; an older five-year-old sister – a nursemaid – killed in a road accident; an older brother dying in a fire when the boy was five years old. Some men wept as they sorrowfully relived the pain of losing siblings and other family members. Other memories were recalled with pleasure: a father's gift of clothes on his return after a prolonged absence, or for Christmas or a birthday, shone out as a beacon upon this time.

Global forces necessarily play an important role in the construction of masculine identities and the local can only be understood within larger global frames. In Zambia, imperialism and global capitalism have had a significant impact on gender identities. Ethnographers have documented shifts among matrilineal groups, such as Bemba and Tonga, in the balance of roles between father and mother's brother, and between husband and wife.[6] The father and husband have, in the main, assumed more power. Men's early engagement in

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4 It has been observed that higher rates of HIV transmission in Africa are found in regions where circumcision is not practised. See A. Buve *et al.*, 'Multicentre Study on Factors Determining Differences in Rate of Spread of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa: Methods and Prevalence of HIV Infection', *AIDS*, 15, supplement 4 (2001), pp. S5–S14. One estimate of people in Zambia living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2003 puts the adult rate (15–49 years) at 16.5 per cent, with a low estimate of 13.5 per cent and a high estimate of 20.0 per cent (UNAIDS/WHO epidemiological fact sheets on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2004 Update).

5 L. Wacquant, 'The Prizefighter's Three Bodies', *Ethnos*, 63, 3 (1998), p. 346.

6 E. Colson, *Marriage and the Family among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958); E. Colson, 'The Father as Witch', *Africa*, 70, 3 (2000), pp. 333–58; H.L. Moore and M. Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees* (London, James Currey, 1994); A.I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet* (London, Oxford University Press, 1939); A.I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions* (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4, 1940).

the money economy through labour migration came to define men – in their roles of husbands and fathers – as being the 'breadwinners', the providers of food, clothes and 'Western' household commodities. I recognise the need to go beyond the Oedipal triangle of mother and father and to acknowledge the contributions of many women – not least among them sisters – and men to a child's education in manhood.[7] Here, however, I wish to highlight the roles of the father and the male peer group, as recalled by the men, in order to consider their significance for the particular nuances of masculine identity formation. In a man's retelling of his childhood, it was his father – usually described as a silent, emotionally distant figure – who set the measure for his son of what it meant to be a 'real' man, a position most boys strove earnestly to attain. There was a marked consistency between the narratives of childhood relationships with fathers first given to me in the men's late teens and again 20 years later. Memory is constantly being constructed, but what was striking was that although the details of a father's training in discipline remained the same, the moral evaluation of that training had shifted to become a wholly positive one. I recognise, of course, that what are often missing in the accounts I collected are contests with others over memory. Because of the intimate nature of the material I was endeavouring to collect, these men produced their accounts in privacy and *as individuals*.[8]

Father and Son

Cohort members and their school contemporaries almost unanimously characterised the relationship between a father and a son during childhood and adolescence as a difficult one. From an adolescent son's perspective, his relationship with his father was, at best, ambivalent, because of his fear of him. Paul described having such fear of his father, a youth worker, and yet commented, 'I desperately wanted to love and honour him'.

Distance between a man and his son was, former students said, 'normal in African families'. Birth order, however, was often a significant factor in the tenor of the relationship both in boyhood and in later life. The conduct and behaviour of first-born sons often received very particular paternal scrutiny, to be explained perhaps in part by the fact that the first-born son was expected to become the 'father' of his siblings when his father died.[9] Emotional distance evaporated with younger siblings as the father grew older; the relationship between the youngest son and the ageing father became more like that between grandfather and grandson, a joking relationship in which both parties enjoyed a considerable degree of familiarity. Older boys, however, strove to maintain distance, judging that the best course of action was to keep as far out of their father's path as possible. Work took fathers away from the home either on a daily basis or, in a number of households, caused them to be absent for weeks or months at a time. As one former student commented, 'We just used to see my father in chapters.' In rural households, boys accompanied their fathers in activities such as hunting and fishing, though this became less common once the child started school. Beer drinking also often took fathers away from the household, both at night and during a child's waking hours.

7 See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, Polity, 1995), p. 122, on the necessity to go beyond the mother and father in any analysis of how boys learn to be men. C. Shire gives an autobiographical example from Zimbabwe in 'Men Don't Go to the Moon: Language, Space and Masculinities in Zimbabwe', in A. Cornwall and N. Lindisfarne (eds), *Dislocating Masculinity* (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 147–58.

8 A monograph that overcomes this shortcoming is R. Werbner, *Tears of the Dead: the Social Biography of an African Family* (Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

9 Meyer Fortes suggests that the birth of the first-born, especially the first-born son, marking as it does a father's irreversible transition to parenthood, draws his particular attention to the child in a relationship that entails ambivalence and ambiguity. 'The First Born', *Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 15 (1974), pp. 81–104.

It was when fathers were drunk that they were at their most brutal, quick to strike out against a boy, his siblings and his mother.

The distance of 'respect' demanded by adult men meant that sons at times felt they knew little about their fathers – a cause for regret for those who lost their fathers at a relatively early age. What the men experienced as the absence of emotional warmth and physical affection from their fathers, once past infancy, was often contrasted – in discussions with me – with the supposed warmth and affection that white fathers were thought to give their children. As adolescents, former students cited instances witnessed in towns or scenes from television that depicted fathers hugging boys and young adults, commenting, 'You Europeans really love your children!' Many respondents were uncertain whether to describe their adolescent feelings towards their fathers as those of respect or fear, though in discussion many of them came down on the side of fear. Part of the problem for the ethnographer is that the two concepts are inextricably intertwined in the vernacular expressions former students used to encapsulate the essence of the father–son relationship – in Bemba *umucinshi*, in Tonga *bulemu* – and carry both connotations on a sliding scale. Most men would – as boys – position themselves towards the fear end of the scale in their relationships with their fathers and at least *some*, if not all, men of his generation. A distance was usually maintained. This contrasted sharply with the close relationship with his mother normally described by a son, even though in the early years she was usually the one to maintain discipline through the exercise of corporal punishment.

Almost all men recalled an emotional closeness to their mothers when they were children; this close tie, men said, remained in adulthood. Former students revealed that they were more trusting of their mothers than of their wives and other sexual partners. In their ethnographies of marriage and family life, both Richards and Colson have remarked upon the enduring closeness and affection between a mother and her son.[10] Other commentators have contended that the unsatisfactory resolution of the weaning crisis might well explain later marital difficulties.[11] In the mother–son relationship described by this cohort, however, there was no evidence of the conscious resentment, at least towards the mother, that one might expect to find because of the alleged trauma a child might suffer through the experience of abrupt weaning after being fed on demand. In the exceptional cases where a son expressed resentment towards his mother, it was because the boy had felt rejected by her, either temporarily or permanently, when they were separated because of divorce or because of the mother's absence from home through work, training or study. Step-mothers, however, often figured prominently in memory as cruel – causing distress to the boy, at times disrupting his often already fragile relationship with the father, although at times strengthening it.

Boys' Work and Play

There were differences in the chores which boys and girls were required to do in or around the household. The work also varied between those who lived in a rural household and those who lived in an urban household. The designation of chores revealed explicit ideas about gender-appropriate tasks. Earlier ethnographers described aspects of childhood play at around the

10 Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, p. 140; Colson, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 240.

11 J.F. Ritchie, *The African as Suckling and Adult*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 9 (1943); H. Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa, The Human Situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York, Harper and Row, 1960); J.L. Epstein, *Urbanisation and Kinship: The Domestic Domain on the Copperbelt of Zambia, 1950–1956* (London and New York, New Academic Press, 1981); and *Scenes from African Urban Life: Collected Copperbelt Papers* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992). Not one of the cohort or of their school contemporaries expressed any conscious memory of being weaned.

ages of five or six that closely mimicked the adult world. Colson noted that young children acted out the particular type of work associated with each sex in the Tonga game known as *mantomba* – the boys building shelters, the girls preparing food. She commented, 'The fact that they emphasise the difference in masculine and feminine activities shows how deeply it has already become a part of their general acceptance of what is right and proper'.[12] Colson was unsure about the degree of early sexual experimentation. Former students, especially those who grew up in rural areas, recalled such games with their gender-appropriate roles but invariably associated such play with early sexual knowledge. Imitation of the adult world always meant the boys taking on the role of husband. Christopher recalled his rural childhood and his earliest sexual experiences in this context:

> I would say that I learnt about sex like other kids. I just found that I knew it. I think it is because of playing. You know, in the villages in the evenings when it was starting to get dark, as kids we would play games. There would be some big boys and girls and some younger boys and girls in the group. The bigger boys would say, 'Let's make some shelters!' And then they'd say, 'Ok, this is your wife and this is my wife', and so on. Then they'd say, 'We'll go and sleep now'. And maybe they'd say, 'The little ones will be dogs and cocks'. Now you who were dogs and cocks you would see what was happening. They would know you were watching them. They would do the act and you would see, so, now, as you became big – big in your mind I mean – you would also try to do it with your age-mates. Maybe you'd steal some mealie-meal from home. You see, then, you'd be just like people at home in a village.

Many of those who recounted early sexual play stressed that, although they were unable to produce semen, what was important to them was that the boy should lie on top of the girl. From an early age a boy was conscious of the necessity for him to assert the active role, spatially expressed as 'above' and for the girl to take the passive role – 'below' in the encounter.[13] Several men described seeing older boys and adults – often older male siblings and uncles – engaged in sexual intercourse and recalled their noting that the proper way to have intercourse was for the male to be on top. None of the cohort members spoke of seeing their parents having intercourse. They may well not have done so, or the taboos around witnessing such an event may have prevented its being reported or indeed the memory might well have been repressed.

Men recalled that decisions about work tended to rest with their fathers. Any departure from what were generally judged appropriate duties for men and women was signalled by a father's willingness to perform 'womanly' tasks such as cleaning the home, cooking and washing dishes. A father's willingness to engage in 'women's work' appeared to have had an impact upon those men who saw this and who, in their turn as husbands and fathers, took at least some share in indoor household jobs and childcare. They were also the ones – the minority – who expressed a desire for at least a measure of equality between husband and wife in their marriage.[14] Allocation of tasks depended in part upon the number and gender of siblings within the household. Where sisters or other girls were present they were expected to assist their mothers in the 'feminine' tasks of collecting and heating water, washing, cleaning and cooking. Where there were only male children, or where the majority were males, outcomes varied. In some of these households, boys were told to undertake these tasks; in others, said to be very 'traditional', fathers forbade their sons

12 Colson, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 261.

13 Former students' wives were only taught how to perform the missionary position in the instruction they received immediately prior to marriage. While they were taught that a wife's correct position was below her husband, they were instructed to be anything but passive in their sexual performance. They had to demonstrate to their women instructors that they had learnt well how to please a husband by 'dancing' in bed.

14 A recent draft report based upon surveys, questionnaires and focus group discussions conducted in and around Ndola, on the Zambian Copperbelt and entitled *Heads and Tails* (n.d.) reported that men and women in all age-groups were 'somewhat reluctant' to accept the concept of gender equality.

to engage in activities apparently considered to have the potential to emasculate. Kangwa described the situation with regard to chores in the household of his boyhood, observing that he felt 'fine' about it:

> Well, even though we were eight boys and one girl, even so, my mother had to do everything because my father would not accept [allow] that we boys should do anything in the house. Okay, he did give us work to do in the garden. But he didn't allow us to do anything in the house.

Boys of cattle-keeping fathers were given herding responsibilities at a young age. These tasks were explicitly described – by fathers to sons and by respondents to me – as training in manhood and in the independence that was the mark of a man. They often afforded the boys a sense of freedom because they provided an extended period of escape from direct parental surveillance. Men happily recalled days of wandering through the bush, picking wild fruits, killing birds with their catapults, hunting duikers and porcupines, swimming and impromptu games of football – called *chipombwa*, the ball made from pieces of plastic bags wrapped tightly together and tied with bark or string. Some boys told of how they were reluctant to forsake this freedom for the discipline of school life. There was the new challenge of establishing one's position among the gang of boys also entrusted with herding duties. A prime peer-group value was physical strength, exhibited in the way a boy handled the animals in his charge, but what was also demanded of him was evidence of fighting prowess. Early in life, violence became an affirmation of manhood. One's place in the pecking order of the boys' gang was determined by the outcome of a physical struggle between various opponents. Boys were made to fight by older boys. The victor won from older boys the right to be exempted from work. Hambayi recalled how his father had told him that a Tonga man with no cattle was no man at all. At the age of six, he was sent with the other herd-boys in his village and described how he grew in strength, becoming a skilful fighter, able to control cattle:

> We used to look after cattle with older boys. We younger ones would refuse to go and bring back stray cattle from crop fields. An older person would go and do that and when he came back he would make us younger ones fight. He would tell us that the loser will be the one controlling animals so that they don't stray. I became strong by the age of nine through fighting. That's how I developed my physical strength.

Not all the boys readily accepted the pugilistic regime of the peer group. Those who fell into this category were generally also the ones who delayed their sexual debut until their late teens or early twenties, or exceptionally, like Peter, a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, until marriage:

> Sometimes the bigger boys would make the bulls from different villages to fight, and then the dogs, and then the smaller boys. I had to undergo all that. I never liked fighting. I easily cried. Immediately I lost my temper I would cry. Somebody would be slapping me in the face, I would only cry. My emotions are still the same. When I am touched, especially when I see the depth of suffering in some people, I shed tears very easily. People tell me that it is not usual and it is not good to do that. That is how I am and I don't regret being that way because somehow it has something to do with my life because I am so religious.

Urban childhood also required that boys develop fighting skills in order to defend themselves individually or to mark out with other boys their gang's territory and defend it against the encroachments of others. Paul took up karate in order to withstand his father's beatings and the cruelty of his stepmother but also to fend for himself, in the absence of his older brothers, on the streets of the Copperbelt town where he grew up. He was not alone in his description of the manner in which fighting skills and 'toughness' were also inculcated in sons by their fathers, though he recalled times when he realised that discretion was the better part of valour:

> My father had a philosophy: if you were beaten by somebody, then you had to go and [take] revenge. He would never allow you to cry – you know, in front of his house. If he found you crying, 'What are you crying about?' – that's my father. 'It's that bigger boy – he beat me!' 'Go back right now and do what he did to you – back to him – and then come back again'. But if he was too big (laughter), you know, you'd go behind the house and behind the trees and then come back again. (laughter) 'What has happened?' 'Yes, I've revenged. I've whipped him!' (laughter). He'd say, 'Yeah – that's right! Now you can sit!'

Most of the cohort remembered older boys whom they admired unreservedly and who became their mentors. It was their strength that they admired – their physique and fighting skills. These mentors accorded them protection from bullies. Paul's first mentor was his cousin, a skilled fighter whose ambition was to be a professional boxer. In grade five Paul had another mentor, one year older than himself, whom, he recalled, he 'absolutely admired' because he appeared to be so 'cool'. Again it was the boy's powerful bodily presence and his skilful fighting that attracted Paul. His friend was even shorter than himself but stocky in build and an accomplished boxer. Hambayi recalled his own mentor at primary school. No boy dared to lay a finger on him, protected as he was by this older boy. A mentor not only shielded his protégé, he also instructed him in the art of approaching girls, often speaking to the girls and preparing them for the novice's advances. The growing ability to fight and to defend oneself against others was often associated with a growth in the confidence – the 'courage' – needed to approach girls.

Fathers' Discipline

Training for adult life involved learning the importance of discipline. An important method of a father's discipline was physical punishment. Beyond the pain and shame experienced when a father punished his son in this way, the boy was offered certain lessons about the way an adult man conducted himself in relation to his children (and his wife) from whom respect was demanded in recognition of the father's superior status. This is not to suggest that *all* sons in their turn expressed themselves in a similar manner towards wife and children. Paul and Peter, both of whom suffered violence at their fathers' hands, gave no indication of following in their fathers' footsteps in this regard. Nevertheless, episodes of a father's physical punishment – and the almost constant threat of it – played a crucial role in many boys' growing awareness of the meaning and the expression of manhood. A father's actions towards his son expressed his power over him and indeed his 'ownership' of him, and of his siblings and his mother.[15] Fathers generally discontinued the physical punishment of their sons when their offspring reached their mid- or late teens. Sons noted that, by then, their father's strength was beginning to wane. It was also, of course, the period when they themselves, while still economically dependent, were reaching the height of their strength and vitality. Very early in their lives these men, as boys, discovered that in the prevailing hegemonic discourse, 'real men' claimed 'superiority' over women and expressed this, in part, by exhibiting strength – at times in verbal and physical violence and in the repression of emotional expression.[16] Such instruction in masculine force combined with a boy's education by his peers played a key role in the production of the majority of the cohort's adult sexual identity and in their assertions of sexual virility.

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15 For a discussion of the relationship between corporal punishment and claims of 'ownership', see M. Last, 'Children and the Experience of Violence: Contrasting Cultures of Punishment in Northern Nigeria', *Africa*, 70, 3 (2000), pp. 359–93.

16 Former students regularly based their claim of 'superiority' over women on men's supposed greater physical strength and greater intelligence and upon women's greater susceptibility to spirit possession. In addition they pointed to 'African tradition' which, they claimed, always gave men precedence over women, and to Christianity – especially the Creation story in the *Book of Genesis* – where, they stressed, it was clear that man was created *first* and thus should take precedence.

Former students vividly recalled their fathers' discipline in the home. Many described the almost habitual harshness of their fathers in their dealings with them, especially in their early adolescence. Sons depicted fathers as 'violent', 'brutal', 'rough', 'harsh' and 'fierce'. A father's beatings were always remembered as more severe than a mother's, though neither were portrayed as mere tokens of disapproval.[17] Many boys witnessed their fathers beating their mothers during arguments or in drunken brawls.[18] At school, in class discussions with me about violence towards women, some students had regularly defended their right to beat a future wife – their *own* wife – but not other men's wives because they didn't belong to them. Twenty years later, several members of the cohort reluctantly described physically attacking their own wives in the heat of a disagreement, in moments of jealous rage, out of frustration or when drunk. They told me that they had later regretted their actions – though in one case only because the man feared a court case and possible imprisonment; they were reluctant to discuss the incidents in any great detail. Others said, even boasted, that they had never used or threatened violence against their wives or other sexual partners, though some had no compunction about a 'prostitute' getting hurt in the process of giving them sexual services.

Reflections on childhood such as 'You were brought up with a stick' and 'You were looked after with a stick' were common. Harshness was experienced as painful physical punishment. Robert, the sixth-born in his family, recalled his fear of his father, a fear quite frequently expressed among the cohort and their contemporaries: 'I was very afraid of my father when I was young. Usually in those days, they'd tell me, "Your father has come" and I'd stop being playful or whatever I was doing.' Robert carried on his body a memento of his father's wrath:

> When I look back, well, of all the boys in our family, I am the one he has beaten the most ... I used to go off and play and come home late at night and he didn't like it so he beat me. He even burnt me once. He took a piece of burning wood out of the fire and beat me and it burnt me here in my stomach [pointing to a scar]. Well, he was quite drunk at the time. Both my parents drink, but he was trying to ask me where I had been when I came home late one weekend. And then I fumbled [failed to answer coherently] and he got angry and he got a piece of wood. He really hurt me. At times I would feel that I had been wrong and therefore it was all right to beat me, but at times I would feel that it was quite unfair. Of course, I couldn't tell him. He stopped beating me when I was fifteen. I was changing and working hard. It was just part of life. I love my father very much.

A father's physical punishment was also recalled as emotionally distressing, as much in sudden unanticipated slaps as in staged moments of punishment in the presence of others. Many respondents were also distressed by the words of rebuke their fathers chose and the tone which they used to address them. Paul, at eighteen, had commented that his father – like other 'African' fathers – 'underrated' his sons. Nearing 40, he recalled how his father used to 'observe' his children, especially his sons. Paul described how he would do all he could to keep his distance from him, speaking of his childhood fear that his father would 'jump on' him at any moment. Like the majority of the cohort's fathers, Paul's father was now dead. He described him as 'a good hard-working man'. Paul recounted numerous occasions throughout his childhood and early adolescence when he was 'beaten', 'flogged' and 'slapped' by his

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17 While some caution needs to be taken when respondents are using English as a second language (see Last, 'Children and the Experience of Violence', p. 367), the severity of many of the beatings described is evident.

18 C. Campbell has explored the manner in which boys in Natal first learn within the family to view violence as a socially sanctioned means of resolving conflict, in 'Learning to Kill? Masculinity, the Family and Violence in Natal', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 3 (1992), pp. 614–28. In surveys, 40 per cent of Zambian women have reported being regularly physically abused. See L. Heise, A. Raikes, C. Watts, A. Zwi, 'Violence Against Women: A Neglected Public Health Issue in Less Developed Countries', *Social Science and Medicine*, 39, 9 (1994), pp. 1,165–79. Comparable figures for other African countries were Kenya, 42 per cent, Tanzania, 60 per cent, Uganda, 46 per cent.

father, often in the presence of siblings and peers, which made the punishment all that more difficult to bear, especially when he judged the beating to be unjust:

> I wasn't able to talk to my father when I was growing up. He was a great disciplinarian. Sometimes he would get annoyed with you – and he would want to give you a piece of his mind. And he would have a stick with him and he would not hesitate to beat you up. In a sense, when I was growing up, the kind of disposition I had towards him was one of apprehension and – well, more or less, fear. Fear that anything might happen – no holds barred. If he was whipping you and you touched your buttocks in pain – then he wouldn't count the previous stroke. He would say (laughter), 'It has just given birth to another one'. So he was – well, it was very strange – he disciplined me so much when I was young that by the time I was in grade five and I was joined by my elder brother who was staying with my grandparents, I was almost immune to his physical punishment. He beat me a lot! It's not that I didn't do wrong things – I did of course . . . He didn't inflict permanent injury – but it would be quite painful and it would be done in such a way that emotionally you could be devastated – because sometimes he would slap you right there on the spot – like he would call you, 'What is this?' By the time I was in grade four, I'd got quite immune to the beatings. When he'd say, 'It's time for a beating!' I'd get my strokes, I'd look away. I wouldn't touch my buttocks and I would walk away and go and sit and not even cry because, I think, it became meaningless. I mean I received these strokes quite a number of times. Strangely enough, every time he came back home, he would try and find a reason to beat you, I mean he would search you out – until he found a reason – terrible beatings. I mean it wasn't just for me at some point – the discipline extended to all the older boys in the family.

Promise, 37 in 2002, the first-born of his father's children, recounted several occasions when he felt the pain of his father's wrath:

> Up to now, my father is a very, very tough man. We children never used to associate with him, but we were very much with my mother. As a family we used to fear him. He was rough, really rough! He never used to beat anyhow, that was the good thing, but when he touched you! I remember at one time, when I was in grade four, well, I was fond of beating my sister. I cannot forget. He got a knife. He took me in the bathroom and said: 'So, it seems to be a tendency with you. Now I will kill you! After killing you, I will kill myself!' Then he got hold of the sharp part of the knife. Then with the blunt end, he started beating me on the head. Beating, beating – all over the head. The whole head was swollen for a week. I was even admitted to hospital. Mother came crying – trying to intervene – because it looked like he was going to – well, according to what he was saying, 'He is giving me problems!' He was a violent man, especially towards his family.

In conversation with me, Promise's father said he was unable to remember any of this. He said he had never had to beat Promise because he had always done what he was told without question. Indeed, he recollected, Promise was very obedient and hardworking. He was unable to recall an incident in which, according to Promise and other family members, he had escorted his son back to boarding school at gunpoint after his son had absconded to spend time with a girlfriend.

Several members of the cohort in turn used physical punishment on their own sons, though beating daughters, once past infancy, they told me, was 'taboo'.[19] When I invited them to discuss the manner in which they disciplined their children, they often remarked that they felt that their own beatings 'had a limit' – unlike the beatings they had at times been subjected to by their own fathers – especially when the latter were drunk. Some members of the cohort, among them Hambayi and Promise, recognised that their teenage sons were afraid of them. My own observations seemed to bear out their assessment – the boys hardly speaking in their father's presence and doing all they could to keep out of the way and beyond reach. When they were called by their fathers in my presence, their voice tones and pitch,

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19 This taboo suggested a general fear of incest between a father and daughter. Affluent Zambian men who were in the habit of hugging 'big' daughters were often criticised by members of this cohort for adopting, in *this* instance, dubious 'Western manners'.

gestures and body language expressed deference; many knelt, heads bowed in front of them and only spoke to answer questions put to them. Some of them exhibited clear signs of nervousness.[20]

Some punishment directly concerned work. Colson has noted that when a Tonga boy was set to work herding cattle the affection between father and son soon became subject to 'severe strain': 'When he tires of the task, his father still drives him to the cattle kraal, sometimes with a flourish of the cattle whip. There are quarrels between them about his derelictions from duty, which grow heated if the cattle have been left free to invade the field or if they have suffered from his neglect'.[21]

Hambayi, at 40, recalled such incidents at the age of seven or eight, seeing them in retrospect as necessary, indeed invaluable, training for a man's life. His mother would do what she could to mitigate the harshness of his father's discipline:

> My father cared about the welfare of the family. But then he had some ways of punishing us – to make us feel that life is not easy. He did that in his own ways – we never knew what he was driving at – but at least he cared for the welfare of the family. He would say, 'Okay, fine, you are looking after animals [cattle]'. But if they grazed somebody's field [crops], he wouldn't let us sleep in our house. We would go into the bush. He would beat us up with the animal skin we used to tie animals with. We would be eating *nshima* by the fire. He would hide the whip. When the *nshima* was about to be finished he would whip us all and we would scamper in different directions. And he would tell us, 'If you are really boys, don't come to my home.' We would be there in the bush for two days or so, but our mother used to care for us. We would come in the night; she would hide food for us in our room. We were two, I and my elder brother. We would sleep in the bush! In the bush, honestly. We took that as a test to make us real boys. We were immature but what he did to us helped us at [to get to] the level which I am now. I still thank him up to this time because he has educated me.

School and School Work

Most of the men in the cohort and their school contemporaries started their primary education between the ages of seven and nine. Some of them attended as many as five different primary schools, often because their fathers' work necessitated the transfer of the family to a different part of the country. Several boys failed to gain sufficiently high marks in their first attempt at the grade seven exam and so repeated the last year and sometimes the last two years of primary school in order to 'pass', that is, gain entry into secondary boarding school.

Men who attended primary schools as weekly or termly boarders described some school regimes as harsh. The discipline of the teachers was surpassed in severity by the regimes imposed by older boys as bullies or as prefects, to whose excesses teachers turned a blind eye. Some boys, homesick and frightened, preferred to return home.

From the vantage-point of a successful career, Henry, approaching 40, looked back upon his primary education at a boys' boarding school and concluded, 'It made me'. He explained that he had learnt how to 'fight dirty' in order to defend himself from bullies. The daily routines he recalled as particularly tough, however:

> We, the very small boys, were told to wake up at three in the morning and go and sweep outside. It was very cold. It was an extremely cold place in the cold season. Then we were told not to come back to sleep. So, as we waited for dawn, we used to go and sleep in the ablution blocks. You got your blanket and you went to sleep there. That's how the prefects portrayed life there. So you sweep outside. You are given a number that you have to remember. When the evening comes,

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20 Although some of this respectful behaviour might well have been occasioned by my presence, I observed such conduct both from a distance and by chance, and it was a regular feature in some homes.

21 Colson, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 234.

> while you are sleeping, you think they have forgotten you. But then they'll call you out into the centre of the dormitory. Then they call your number. And if you didn't do your work properly, well, you were really beaten up, slapped, maybe even whipped.[22]

At primary school, as would later be the case at St Antony's, much emphasis was placed upon sport, and this proved an important avenue for a boy to become recognised within a school and bring prestige to it. A boy's abilities and potential in sport were always highlighted in the reference provided by a primary school head when the boy won a place in grade eight. Engaging in sport was understood to be beneficial to both body and spirit, encouraging sportsmanship, healthy competition, and the ability to be part of a team while developing a boy's skills in football and athletics. School sports regimes played a central role in masculinising boys' bodies as they learned 'a specific combination of force and skill'.[23] Many boys were anxious to develop their physique both to defend themselves against other boys but also to develop a body that others – especially girls – would admire. Men who had been particularly gifted in sport at school recalled that there were always a number of girls ready and willing to have sex with them. Boys who could not compete in this field, but who were good at 'difficult' subjects like mathematics and science, were also a source of attraction for girls who sought their assistance and who often repaid the boys with sexual favours.

At both primary and secondary school, pupils accepted a teacher's right to give them corporal punishment for misdemeanours – the punishment recalled most vividly when a boy was chastised in the presence of fellow pupils and other teachers because his experience of humiliation was all the greater. Poor performance in primary school tests gave a father further cause to discipline his son. Many men in the cohort spoke of the stress they felt they were under to perform well, and the beatings they received when they did not. Indeed for some fathers it appeared that nothing but the best – the first position in class – was good enough. Education was figured as an essentially masculine enterprise.[24] Parents – especially fathers – repeatedly reminded their sons that they would not always be there; they might die at any time. At times the question was starkly put to the child: 'What will you do if we die?' Boys were warned to achieve independence as soon as they could. In contrast, parents explained that a daughter could always marry and be provided for by her husband. Acting 'like a man' entailed achieving independence. This was to be done by getting academic qualifications that, in theory, would deliver a well-paid job, enabling a man to marry, provide for his wife and children, assist his parents in their old age and help other members of his family. Boys understood going away to boarding school – both at primary and secondary level – as the necessary preparation for being able to 'stand alone' and for the achievement of the hegemonic adult male role by becoming a provider for many dependants. As in the tradition of the British public school, boarding education was expected to make a man of him.[25]

Peter recalled the beatings he received from his father for his examination results. He described his father as 'a man who liked fighting'. Throughout his childhood, he had seen his father attack various people without warning, repeatedly beating his mother and even on one

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22 Prefects at St Antony's, acting *ultra vires*, would also mete out corporal punishment, Simpson: *Half-London*, pp. 114–115.

23 R.W. Connell, *Which Way is Up? Essays on Class, Sex and Culture* (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1983) p. 18. For similar observations on the links between excellence in sports and school work and the ability to attract girlfriends, see I. Niehaus, 'Towards a Dubious Liberation: Masculinity, Sexuality and Power in South African Lowveld Schools, 1953–1999', *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 26, 3 (2000), pp. 387–407.

24 While boys accepted women as primary school teachers, at St Antony's students often questioned a woman teacher's ability to teach, especially in the senior grades. When girls were first admitted as day-scholars, some students and former students lamented that *their* school had been 'contaminated' by the presence of girls. See Simpson, *Half-London*, p. 28.

25 C. Heward, *Making a Man of Him: Parents and their Sons' Education at an English Public School, 1929–1950* (London, Routledge, 1988).

occasion slapping and punching Peter's male primary school teacher. Like other members of the cohort and their contemporaries, Peter had come to think of his father, now dead, in a positive light, expressing gratitude for the painful, but, he judged, necessary lessons that he had received:

> [My father] used to beat me terribly, terribly, especially if I got more than five mathematics questions wrong. He used a belt on my buttocks. Beating always hurts. It was terrible . . . At that time I hated him for that, but this time when I realise that he was teaching me a very good lesson, I like him for that and I wish he was still alive. I was going to tell him frankly that he was teaching me a good lesson . . . The last time was when I was doing my mock exam for the grade seven exam. I was seventeen. It was just a slap because I got second position. The first was a girl – by one mark. Just there – in full view of my teachers – he slapped me. In the meantime my teachers gave me a present . . .

Simon spoke about the strain that he felt he was under from his father, a university graduate:

> There was that pressure that I should act more like a man and not like a girl. I should grow up to be a man. And, like, I mean my father helped me a lot with my arithmetic – in grade six and towards grade seven. And those teaching sessions, well, sometimes they were not the best sessions that I ever had! He would beat me on the head with the cooking stick! (laughter) It wasn't just symbolic. It hurt. I think he felt that I was going to lag behind and if I didn't make it as a boy, as a man, then I would be in problems, because there is always that thing that with women they can always get married. But with a man, you support yourself.

Fathers and Sons Living Apart

In some cases, tensions between father and son led to a son's decision that they would to live apart, illustrating that a school-going teenage son could act against his father's wishes. Difficulties occurred even in father–son relationships characterised by a degree of fondness. When criticised or scolded by their fathers, most sons reported that they had kept silent, their silence an expression of respect; but they felt that they couldn't speak in their own defence and were fearful of provoking an even fiercer response should they attempt to 'answer back'. The idiom of 'respect' was silence. In exceptional cases, a boy took it upon himself to argue with his father. Edmund recalled his childhood and adolescence, brought up mostly by his paternal grandmother after his mother died when he was five and his father had remarried:

> My dad and I, all along, we had our own problems. Dad was fond of me. I liked him, but then we could never stay together for too long before differing on principle and other things because I would always speak out my mind. He never liked that. He didn't like it when I defended my brothers by justifying their actions which my father thought were wrong. At one stage he scolded me, 'Why do you always want to be their lawyer?'

Kangwa, the first-born in his family, had grown up mostly with his grandparents. He had chosen to go to a secondary boarding school, he explained, to escape from his father. At his mother's suggestion, even in the school holidays he did not reside in the household his father, a council worker, shared with Kangwa's brothers and his mother, who had a stall in a local market. Kangwa, at 20, had explained that he lived with his cousin to avoid getting drawn into quarrels and fights between his father and his mother:

> Often my father goes and drinks a lot and then there are domestic quarrels and then, when my mother is right, I just have to tell him the truth. And for that he doesn't like me. I can't say, 'Father, you are right', when he is wrong. I show him that what he has done is not right . . . I think he is a bit out-of-the-ordinary, because when he *hasn't* drunk, he is not OK. And yet, when he is drunk – which he often is – well, then there are problems. Even recently, he tried

> to beat me up and even myself, I've lost control, I've lost my temper with him. So, like now, now I am a bit big, well, I don't know what I am supposed to do when he starts challenging me. Well, let me tell the truth. The truth is I have never liked to stay with my father for a long time. It doesn't mean that he doesn't like me. He likes me! But I don't like his ways.

Twenty years later, Kangwa spoke of how his relationship with his father had improved. They had become 'very good friends' in the years prior to his father's death in the early 1990s. Kangwa felt he had come to understand his father and he expressed no bitterness towards him. Nevertheless, he once more vividly recalled quarrels between his parents, and the sorrow he felt seeing his father beating his mother. In his opinion, such behaviour was not atypical of men of his father's generation, although he argued that his own generation, having enjoyed the benefits of education, had come to see that such behaviour was wrong:

> My father and my mother seemed to have quarrels all the time, especially my father when he was drunk. I used to get upset, seeing my mother so miserable. I think he only drank normally, like other men, but then that was always a danger because he would get violent. He used to hit my mother and here, well, it seems to be accepted here in Zambia. He only beat her when he was drunk. But among the older generation it was common for a man to beat his wife, but now, well, it's changing. I think it is changing among our generation because of widespread access to education. I think before men saw it as their right to beat their wives. Well, I think, in general in Zambia it is believed that a woman does belong to the household and does belong to the husband, meaning that her position in the household is low, almost as low as that of children. And then, in some groups, so much money is paid to get a woman, a wife, so they almost become possessions of the husband.

There *were* instances of a close relationship between father and adolescent son, not clouded by fear, but these were the exceptions. When they occurred, it was often in families where the son had also observed a measure of equality between his parents and, indeed, where a father had rejected certain stereotypically hegemonic 'masculine' poses and been ready, for example, to take a share in child care and household chores. Close father–son relationships also arose at times when a young boy's mother had died or when a child had remained with his father following his parents' temporary separation because of marital difficulties or divorce. It is striking that former students refrained from explicit censure of their fathers' extramarital relationships that often precipitated the temporary separation or divorce of their parents. Other periods of a son's separation from his mother were caused by a mother's absence because of study and work, or because of childbirth or illness. While men in these cases recalled the early pain of separation from the mother, in extreme cases describing it as 'torture', some of these men described how fathers became 'mothers', that is, gentle and affectionate, in their caring attention to their children.

It is noteworthy that, reflecting as adults upon their upbringing, these men unanimously expressed gratitude towards their fathers for the punishment they had received at their hands.[26] They described this training in discipline as formative and were ready to overlook instances of a father's unjust punishment, especially when he was drunk. How should we interpret the absence of any expressions of resentment? Was this merely the extension of the respect due to elders? Was it the result of the forgiving and tolerant attitude that many men held as an important human value? Or would the depiction of a disreputable father by an unforgiving son reflect too painfully and shamefully upon the teller both in his own eyes and in the eyes of others? Perhaps, for men whose fathers were now dead, there was no desire – indeed perhaps an unspoken fear – to speak

26 The absence of a child's reproach for the physical punishment received at the hands of parents has been described elsewhere. See, for example, P. Harvey, 'Domestic Violence in the Peruvian Andes' and P. Wade 'Man the Hunter: Gender and Violence in Music and Drinking Contexts in Colombia', in P. Harvey and P. Gow (eds), *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience* (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 66–89 and pp. 115–37.

ill of the dead. Dead fathers, for some men, continued to exist and were thought to dwell not far away from the living.

Absent Fathers

Men who had had to grow up *without* a father nearby expressed feelings of bitterness. This was most usually because the son felt he had been abandoned and left without a father's physical protection and material support, even though in several households it was the mother's contribution, often raising money through brewing and selling beer, that had enabled a boy to go to school. At nineteen, Sampa, who had last seen his father seven years prior to our discussion, explained his feelings:

> My father took my mother when he was already married to the niece of my grandfather. When my mother came to see my grandfather, things went berserk. Then my mother became pregnant. It was really bad – married to one woman and having sex with her sister. It is a bad thing! I think I would have been happy if my parents had married.

In later life, Sampa explained that he had little to do with his father because he had discovered that he was suspected of being a witch. Sampa had decided it was better to keep his distance. In his 30s, Hambayi had harboured similar suspicions of his own father, explaining to me, when I expressed my doubts, 'We cannot know what is in his heart'.[27] Hambayi's first wife and two of his children died. His visits to various diviners had confirmed his suspicions about his father's involvement in their deaths. The past and past relationships, however, were open to revision. At 40, and with his father now dead, Hambayi concluded that his late father would not have acted in this way towards him and his family.

Maxwell, the last-born of his mother's three children, at 21 described his bitterness – a bitterness that remained in later adult life – towards his father who, he said, had abandoned him.

> The first time I saw my father was in 1969 when I was ten. I didn't feel I had a father because I had never seen him. Growing up without seeing your father is not easy. He went to work in Zimbabwe. He worked there for seventeen years. He started another family there – a son and two daughters. I haven't met them. I have only heard about them. He forgot about us for some time. He didn't help us. There was only my mother who had to support us. She was depressed but she did all she could to make the family go on. She said very little about it. She said very little about my father. Now he's back and my parents are together again. It is difficult to be friends with him. I feel bitter towards him because I had very little support.

In spite of a boy's fear of his father, a father's temporary absences from the household might create apprehension in a son and other family members, often because of the quotidian threat of thieves, especially in urban areas. Although Paul had lived in the fear that his father might 'jump on' him, he vividly recalled his anxiety, feeling unprotected when his father was away:

> There was always that sense of insecurity because my father used to go away for long periods of time. What if a thief came at home? You used to hear footsteps outside the house, 'What's that?' My heart would be pumping. You'd be – I'd be just watching. There were these orange streetlights which would easily cast a shadow if someone passed near the house. I'd be watching for a shadow, wondering what would happen next. So we learnt to sleep with weapons under our bed – me and my elder brother – you know, to defend ourselves.

27 Colson, 'The Father as Witch', offers cogent arguments for the increase in accusations of witchcraft by children against Tonga fathers.

Joshua's father had died when he was an infant. His ailing mother had not remarried. He, too, had been anxious about thieves and about the fact that his mother had no adult support in the home. Indeed, Joshua attributed his lack of 'manly' characteristics to the absence of a father figure. He agreed with others, both men and women, who said that he 'acted like a woman', even though as a married man with several children he had achieved adult status and a prominent position in his town and within his church. He explained:

> I think not having a father contributed to the element of fear that I always had. When we were children, my mother was living alone with us. A few times thieves broke into our home; neighbours fought over land and so on and over children's behaviour. My mother stood up to the families that came with their husbands to complain about what my sister may have done or the son may have done. As a child I could not run to somebody when I saw my mother being confronted. That has made me believe that if there had been a man in the home I would have been a more formidable character. I say to my children that had my father and mother lived on, I would have been much better – a better person, a stronger person, much more decisive. My character is not confrontational. I normally don't want to confront. I would stand up to argument and quarrel to a reasonable extent, but when people become physical or violent, well, I don't match them. I think this problem is due to the absence of a father. Had my father been around I probably would have learnt to fight and even handle a gun much earlier.

Conclusion

If men are to be 'brought in' in the fight against HIV/AIDS, more needs to be understood about their relationship to constructions of masculinity and about how this affects the way they perceive and experience their gender and sexuality. They need to be disabused of the illusion of an abiding gendered self.[28] I have concentrated upon the father and the male peer group. In doing this, I am well aware that attention must also be paid to the structural, political and economic forces that influence gender identity, often severely limiting the choices available to both boys and girls, holding them in a 'prison house' which is both material and symbolic.[29] In this article I have given insufficient attention to contests around masculinity and emerging alternative masculinities, often linked to church involvement.[30]

For some men, childhood and adolescent lessons in manliness militate against their playing a positive role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. All the men in this study felt they had to struggle as boys among their peers to achieve manhood, and this routinely involved trials of physical strength and, for many, unprotected sexual intercourse. The majority of the cohort and their contemporaries had a number of sexual partners before the end of their secondary – and in many cases before the end of their primary – education. At times, former students used force to achieve their aims. By the time they left school, several students had already fathered a child.[31] Sons had become teenage fathers. For men, demonstrations of sexual potency needed to involve penetrative vaginal intercourse – the only activity that was judged to be 'proper sex'. Former students explained that they understood coitus should be achieved with force and used violent imagery to describe this. In adolescence and in adult life, many men spoke of the necessity of 'firing several rounds' into a woman. They explained that they would often forego using condoms because of their need to prove their virility by the 'strength' of their performance. The expression of male sexual identity was often figured as

28 J.P. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 140.
29 R. Parker, R.M. Barbosa, P. Aggleton, *Framing The Sexual Subject: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality and Power* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000), p. 17.
30 I am writing about this elsewhere.
31 The claim of sexual experience – though not of having fathered a child – formed a central part of adolescents being granted masculine status by students at St Antony's. See Simpson, *Half-London,* pp. 133–34. See also Niehaus, 'Towards a Dubious Liberation', p. 393.

an inherently violent activity in which, in competition with other men, the conquest of women was the central element. Male 'superiority' had to be demonstrated.

Nevertheless, my observations in day-to-day life among former students of St Antony's revealed that there should be no simple portrayal of men as uniformly dominant and women as subservient.[32] Constantly shifting power within gender relations could be observed within marriages and households. In intimate relations, in marriage and in extramarital encounters, men might well fail to live up to their proclaimed ideal of sexual conquest. Many married men, however, showed that they were still under the sway of this reading of the measure of a man. They continued to experience peer pressure to demonstrate that they were not 'under' any woman inside or outside the household, anxious not to be accused by fellow men – and indeed by other family members, both male and female – of acceding to 'petticoat government' in their households. To demonstrate their independence they did not allow their wives to know their whereabouts or to question them about their movements. In contrast, wives constantly reported their movements beyond the household. Some men engaged in extramarital sex. Concerned to appear to be 'real men', they sought multiple partners and yet refrained from using condoms because they feared that condoms would impair their sexual performance, especially if they had been drinking beer.[33]

Their fathers had invariably been silent where sex was concerned. Some former students, as adults, drew upon the model of a silent, harsh father and husband, a man among men. In memory, a boy's father could become an exemplar of how to behave towards his own wife and children and of what to require from them, as well as how to behave in intimate relationships with other women. The tenor of most Zambian father-son relationships during a son's childhood and adolescence is best described as a relationship of fear and emotional distance. This relationship altered during the life-course, when fathers might later become 'good friends' with sons who had surpassed them in vigour and often in material wealth, and especially after a father's death. Perhaps this was out of compassion and empathy. More likely it was because the son, in achieving the status of husband and father in his turn, now wished to claim for himself the privileges that he had seen his father enjoy.

Violent discipline at home and at school had taught the adolescent the importance of toughness, of hiding fear and pain in the presence of others. This discipline did little to foster communication and the development of relationships of trust and care.[34] The relationship with the mother, who often acted as a buffer between the boy and his father, was a notable exception. He was sure that she would *always* care for him, whatever the circumstances. Although Zambian men readily reiterated the phrase 'Your wife is your mother', few of them appeared able to establish such a relationship of trust with their wives or with other women who became their sexual partners. Several men who suspected they were HIV positive answered my question about whether they had discussed this with their wives with a question of their own: 'How could I even begin to talk about this with my wife?' Men recognised

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32 For a nuanced analysis of relations between men and women in Northern Zambia, see K. Poewe, *Matrilineal Ideology: Male–Female Dynamics in Luapula, Zambia* (London, Academic Press, 1981).

33 There were other reasons too, not least among them the desire to achieve intimacy in long-term relationships. See A. Simpson, 'Courage, Conquest and Condoms: Harmful Ideologies of Masculinity and Sexual Encounters in Zambia in the Time of HIV/AIDS', in D.A. Feldman (ed.), *AIDS, Culture and Africa* (Gainesville, The University Press of Florida, forthcoming) on this and on the consequences of certain constructions of masculinity for condom use. In their research, E. Lagarde *et al.*, 'Condom Use and its Association with HIV/Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Four Urban Communities of Sub-Saharan Africa', *AIDS*, 15, supplement 4 (2001), pp. S71–S78, revealed that reported frequent condom use with all non-spousal partners in the Zambian Copperbelt town of Ndola was in the same range as in other urban sites in Benin, Cameroon and Kenya: 21–25% for men and 11–24% for women.

34 See A. Jacobson-Widding, *Chapungu: The Bird That Never Drops a Feather* (Uppsala, Uppsala University Library, 2000), for similar descriptions of a boy's relationship with his father and mother and of the ideal male personality type among Shona-speaking Manyika of eastern Zimbabwe.

the value of a wife for the everyday comfort and care she provided. It was through her that a man could gain the status of husband. Her daily performance of respectful attention to him spoke of his place in the world. Yet, in contrast to their nurturing mothers, men often portrayed their wives as acquisitive and overly demanding of material things for themselves and for the home, expressing resentment towards their wives because of this.

While within the cohort and their school contemporaries there *were* exceptions, throughout childhood and adolescence sexuality for many men was a place to create and restore masculinity. It was a sexuality that for many stressed technique and performance and that had as its focus penetration and speed of ejaculation.[35] The spoken and unspoken lessons of childhood and adolescence recalled by these Zambian men – and partially witnessed by me during their teenage years – provoked for many a restless anxiety to conform to an ideology of hegemonic masculinity. Among the consequences was sexual activity that put both men and women at risk in the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

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35 Similar observations regarding gay Latino men and childhood experience are made by R.M. Diaz, 'Cultural Regulation, Self-Regulation, and Sexuality: A Psycho-Cultural Model of HIV Risk in Latino Gay Men', in Parker *et al.*, p. 198. See J. Holland *et al.*, *The Male in the Head: Young People, Sexuality and Power* (London, The Tufnell Press, 1998), for the importance of performance in first sex for boys and adolescents in the UK.

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