Researching student identities and addressing AIDS in Botswana and Zimbabwe institutions of higher learning

Rob Pattman
University of Botswana, Sociology

The AIDS pandemic in southern Africa has made the development of sex educational programmes a matter of urgency. These should not be aimed simply at school children but students in the tertiary sector as well. Sex/AIDS education must be informed, I contend, by qualitative research on student identities, and should encourage students to reflect upon themselves and the gendered identities they inhabit in their everyday lives. In this paper I try to demonstrate the kind of qualitative research I have in mind by reporting on interview based research I conducted on student cultures at the University of Botswana. I argue that popular ways of constructing and categorising men and women students may facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS. I conclude by discussing appropriate sex educational strategies and activities aimed at encouraging critical self- reflection.

Introduction
The AIDS pandemic in southern Africa has made the development of sex educational programmes a matter of urgency. These should not be aimed simply at school children but students in the tertiary sector as well. At the University of Botswana where I am currently employed as a Sociology lecturer there is no formal sex/AIDS education. If sex/AIDS education is to be introduced it must be informed, I contend, by qualitative research on student identities, and must encourage students to reflect upon themselves and the gendered identities they inhabit in their everyday lives. In this paper I try to demonstrate the kind of qualitative research I have in mind. Drawing on interview based research conducted at the University of Botswana, this paper investigates the kinds of gendered, heterosexual and 'racialised' identities and relations students forge. I argue that popular ways of constructing and categorising men and women students may facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS. I conclude by discussing appropriate sex educational strategies and activities aimed at encouraging critical self-reflection.

The educated elite

We salute the student spirit and their drive to learn, to improve the nation and to make a difference. Students are our biggest asset and we must treasure and at the same time nurture the intellect they possess. [1]

Much value is placed on education in southern Africa, and on higher education in particular, as a vehicle for intellectual, material and cultural development.[2] Given the competition for places at higher education institutions and the guarantee of employment, a relatively affluent life style and social status at the end of the course, students tended to consider themselves lucky to be at College or University. In Botswana there is only one university, and the students who attend this are, as we see in the quotation above, idealised as key national assets, positioned as the elite in the making.

In identifying and defining themselves in various ways, as we shall see, men and women students were constantly constructing versions of 'modernity' and 'tradition' and negotiating their identities in relation to these. This suggests that there were tensions and ambiguities between being black Batswana or Zimbabwean and African and being one of the educated elite in an institution symbolising modernity. In this paper I shall be focusing on how

'modernity' and 'tradition' are used discursively by various men and women students in relation to the ways they construct their own and other's identities.

Also addressing 'tradition' as a discursively constructed category, and writing about educated elites in 'developing' or post-colonial countries, Fanon (1990) argues that the 'native intellectual' wants to escape the 'supremacy of the white man's culture' and, despairing that he is 'breaking adrift from his people', 'feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots' and construct these as sacred, traditional and timeless. (p.175)

Fanon views the 'claim to a national culture in the past' as part of an anti-colonial discourse which reifies and idealises culture and constructs it as the roots of a black or African identity. His understanding of the positioning of the black colonial or post-colonial intellectual, however, only partly accounts for the meanings commonly attached to culture at the University of Botswana. For he fails to problematise the impact of gender relations on the way elite intellectuals discursively construct culture. My research at the University of Botswana indicates that 'culture' is:

● associated with tradition. That appeals are made for a return to traditional cultural values in the face of a perceived crisis in sexual morality brought about by Westernisation and modernisation;
● a gendered category. Culture is mobilised against women students constructed as too 'modern.'

Interviewing students. I started researching the identities of the students I was teaching, mainly through unstructured, student-centred interviews with individual students or with students in small single sex groups. The students were aged from their late teens to mid twenties. 14 women and 18 men volunteered to be interviewed at the University of Botswana. The aim of this research was partly to encourage students to reflect upon their identities, and also to generate local resources about the social construction of gender and 'race' which I, as their teacher, could use.

In this paper I will concentrate on the ways a few students spoke about themselves and their relations with men and women in the interviews. I have selected these students not because they were more articulate or interesting than the others I interviewed, but because they represented student masculine and feminine identities which almost all the students I interviewed (men and women) alluded to. These identities appeared to be highly significant as markers or points of reference in relation to which other men and women negotiated their own identities.

When interviewing I tried to cover similar topics with all my interviewees, such as their relationships with and attitudes towards students of the same and the opposite sex, and of similar and different ethnic backgrounds, their definitions of different student groups and their own identifications and affiliations, their reflections on being men and women students in institutions of higher education, their ambitions and aspirations. However though there were certain recurring themes in all the interviews, the interviews were interviewee-centred, with the interviewees, themselves, raising issues and concerns and talking about identities and relationships which were particularly pertinent to them. As interviewer I tried being friendly and informal, usually providing food and drink, and sitting with my interviewees in a circle, for I wanted the interviewees to feel relaxed. Usually the interviews lasted about one and a half hours.

Drawing on discourse theory. Gender has often come to be associated with femininity, and as far back as the early 1970s Simone de Beauvoir (1972) argued that this and the unmarked character of masculinity were features of a patriarchal culture which positioned men as universal subjects and women as the gendered 'Other'. A key concern of this paper is to make student masculine identities visible and also to present these as being constructed in relation to student femininities. For this reason I begin by focusing on the men I

interviewed, and addressing them as gendered rather than universal subjects. My work is part of the recent tradition of feminist research and analysis, influenced by discourse theory (Foucault, 1979). This takes issue with the view that gender is an essential identity which men and women possess and which determines their outlook and behaviour in fixed and preordained ways, and, instead, addresses masculinity and femininity as categories which only exist in relation to each other and are produced discursively.

Interviewing men and women about themselves, such researchers have adopted a social constructionist rather than a social realist epistemology (see Burr, 1995), focusing on the interviewee's accounts as *producing* the social identities, relationships and emotions he/she appears merely to describe. When men and women talk about themselves and the gendered 'Other', they are not simply describing gender characteristics they and others already have, but forging their identities as particular men and women in relation to each other. Investigating how people construct their gendered identities in interviews, researchers have paid particular attention to aspects of interviews which, under the influence of social realism, have been dismissed as irrelevant e.g. the emotional tone of the interviewees, and changes in this during the interview, contradictory statements, the relationship the interviewer and interviewee establish with each other. For some or all of these have been taken by various researchers[3] as significant pointers concerning the processes of identity construction going on in the interviews.

The researchers referred to above have developed unstructured and interviewee centred methods precisely because they are committed to an approach to research which puts the onus on the interviewees to determine the pace and direction of the interview. They are addressing the interviewees as active subjects who construct their social worlds and identities.

The analytic approach I want to adopt in this paper seeks to address individuals as active beings, who produce rather than simply describe their identities in the interviews I conduct with them. At the same time I want to examine popular discourses about gender and 'race' which make possible the sorts of subject positions the interviewees assume. In researching the ways various men and women construct their identities I am focusing on individuals not just as authors of what they say but as taking up and negotiating certain positions made available to them by longstanding cultural discourses. This is not to suggest they are cultural dupes, simply manipulated, like ventriloquist's puppets. Rather a great deal of work, as I want to illustrate, goes into identity construction.

Student groups and identities. I want to investigate the kinds of student groups and identities which students kept referring to in the interviews. My intention in this paper is not to provide descriptive and colourful accounts of these various groups, but to focus, instead, on these as popular ways of *categorising or constructing* different students. I am not addressing these groups as if they only exist as material bodies which reflect the different values and orientations of rich and pluralistic student bodies, but as discursive categories which are produced by students in the very process of constructing their identities. Neither shall I address these groups as if they exist independently of each other. On the contrary, I want to examine how they are produced *in relation* to each other and derive their meaning from each other. These groups have to be understood on a *symbolic* as well as a material level, as representing particular stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, tradition and modernity in which men and women students are strongly invested, identifying or disidentifying from these, and negotiating a complex path between these.

This way of conceptualising student gendered identities has important implications for developing an account of students' attitudes towards gender, sex and AIDS. For if we assume that identities are relational and that students are actually constructing themselves in relation to the ways they categorise and define 'Others', we can examine not only why

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students hold particular views about sex and gender (which may facilitate the spread of AIDS) but also why they are so strongly invested in these.

Student identities at the University of Botswana

'Ugandans': A great deal of significance was also attached to drinking as a marker of student masculinity at the University of Botswana, with the University bar a conspicuously masculine space. Most women I interviewed were afraid of even walking past that area of campus for fear of being insulted by men. Regular drinkers there were actually accorded a specific name and identity. The bar was known as 'Uganda' and they were called 'Ugandans.' This, I was told, was because Uganda denoted Africaness as well as political rebellion and the university bar was a key site for male rebelliousness. A T-shirt had recently been produced emblazoned with Uganda and the names of Ugandans, forging not only a sense of identity, but of exclusivity. Only the committed drinkers had their names on it and were entitled to wear it.

All the men I interviewed spoke about the Ugandans even though only two identified as them. The attention they received in spite of their size—I was told there were less than thirty 'Ugandan' men in the University suggests that they were extremely influential as a symbolic category in relation to the ways many men students were identifying themselves. They were spoken about by other men as naughty and wasters, but also as popular precisely for their lack of commitment to the work ethic and for being so hedonistically masculine. Most other men expressed good-natured humour towards them for missing lessons and 'overindulging in male horseplay.' For example in three different interviews with men the same story about a Ugandan was told with a mixture of laughter and amazement, and was clearly a popular and symbolic one. It was about a male law student, who regularly when drunk, went to the women's hostels, sprayed them with a fire extinguisher and then had to pay damages to the security guards. The story was not about his misogyny but his perceived naughtiness and irresponsibility. Some men also mentioned, with amusement, that this man, like many other Ugandans, was repeating a year.

Though they did not identify with them, the Ugandans were clearly significant for these men in terms of how they were positioning themselves as responsible students who were still 'real men.' It was not that they were anti drinking—almost all these men made it clear that they drank sometimes at the university bar as well as outside campus, and some of them were highly critical of another group, the Christians, for their opposition to forms of student hedonism, namely drinking, smoking and extra marital sex. The Christians were usually criticised for being hypocritical—a popular symbol of this being pregnant and single Christian women students. Paradoxically, Christian men were criticised for not having heterosexual relations and therefore for not being proper men, but 'sack men', an insult commonly used among men, alluding to the large amount of sperm men without 'girlfriends' were assumed to accumulate in their scrotums or sacks. In one interview the men became almost hysterical with laughter describing the 'Ugandans' as 'sack men' for getting drunk on campus and prioritising drink over women. What was so funny was questioning the masculinity of 'Ugandans'—supposedly the ultimate male hedonists and 'real' men. When I questioned whether, and if so how, the 'Ugandans' had heterosexual relations, these men indicated that they were not sack men after all, but studs who had sex with women and prostitutes they met in the bars and shebeens outside campus.

The Ugandans I interviewed constructed themselves as 'traditional', and, as we see in the following extract from an interview with a Ugandan, Mothusi, what, in part, characterised this version of 'traditional' masculine behaviour was a very striking adherence to sexual double standards - they made drinking not only a key and defining part of their (male) culture but also a contributor to 'loose' and immoral women.

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Rob: So why don't women go along to the university bar?

Mothusi: Because traditionally (.) women are not supposed to be drinkers, because once you see a woman drinking they are perceived to be (.) loose or something. So mostly (.) it's not that women don't drink. They buy and drink. Mostly they send guys to go buy for them and then they drink in their rooms because they don't want to be seen drinking (Rob Yeah) (.) seen as loose, seen as I'd say bitches or something (*Rob*: Yeah) because it is believed that once a girl is drunk, you know they will sleep with anybody, like I wouldn't go out with a girl who drinks.

Rob: Wouldn't you?

Mothusi: No, no.

Rob: You...

Mothusi: ...I can't go out with a girl who goes to the bar who drinks

Rob: Could you go out with a girl who drinks in her room?

Mothusi: ...um... if I find out (.) that would be a problem

Rob: That would be a problem. Why's that?

Mothusi: Because it is believed the girl who drinks doesn't take good care of herself...it's a traditional belief, it's been going for a long time

Significantly Mothusi in the above passage tends to use the third person and the passive tense. When he asserts 'I wouldn't go out with a girl who drinks' he suddenly and surprisingly changes from explaining to me, a cultural outsider (a white English man) values determined by and rooted in 'tradition', to expressing his feelings in the first person. It would seem that he is slightly embarrassed telling me how the women who drink are seen —that he can not say 'bitches' without the qualifiers 'I'd say' 'or something' clearly suggests anxiety about saying it to me. It is noticeable that when making the association between girls who drink, being 'loose' or not taking 'good care of herself', he speaks as if this is not a view for which he is to be held responsible but a 'traditional belief' which, as if to emphasise its relative autonomy in relation to him, he says has 'been going for a long time.' As well as invoking 'tradition' in a way which relieves him of responsibility for these views, he is, of course, identifying, here, as a 'traditional' man.

The girlfriend figure was constructed in opposition to the whore and situated firmly outside what came to be conceived as male drinking spaces. What was regarded as the constraining influence of girlfriends upon their men's drinking time, and hence their masculinity, became a source of humour among the men drinkers. For example, Tamuka, another 'Ugandan' who was interviewed with Mothusi, teased Mothusi about not going to the university bar as often since he met his girlfriend. [4]

Identifying in opposition to cat-men and modern women

A sizeable minority of students at the University of Botswana were expatriates, mainly black students from other African countries as well as Indians. These students (though not the Indians) were spoken about at length, and in unsolicited ways, by almost all the men interviewees. They were spoken about as particular homogenous groupings embodying different values relating to gender and sexuality, different cultural and social class identities, different expectations and ambitions and different relations to 'modernity' and 'tradition' from those which were seen, in contrast, as local or indigenous.

In these accounts these students were lumped together with 'high class' Batswana who preferred speaking in English than Setswana (the main indigenous language in Botswana) and had been to expensive English medium schools, and described as 'cats.' Their styles of dress, speech and walk, their sporting interests—basketball—their general alignments and orientations were said to be American and, more specifically, black American. While the focus in the men's accounts may have been on cat-men, what was conspicuous about 'cats',

according to the interviewees, apart from their baggy designer clothes, their black American speech and bop walk, and their location—they tended to sit on the benches outside the library—was that they were gender mixed. The implication of this was, of course, that it was the norm not to socialise on campus in gender mixed groups.

When the men I interviewed were elaborating upon the differences between them and the cat-men, e.g. their different tastes in music (South African *kwaito* as opposed to rap), or sport (football as opposed to basketball) it seemed, at times, they were merely describing, in non pejorative ways, two quite distinct and different categories of male students. At other times they appeared to be describing the cat-men's as superior to themselves, as, for example cleverer because of their privileged education and home background, or as having more money and better clothes, or as being confident and individualistic or as attracting girls. Some of the men I interviewed, noticeably those from middle class backgrounds, were clearly troubled by the high status they accorded the cat-men, and appeared to undermine this and (implicitly) bolster their own position by questioning the cat-men' authenticity. It was then that they came to associate themselves, in contrast, with cultural authenticity and real macho values.

A cat-man

The one-cat man I interviewed, a Ghanaian who had lived in the West, spoke with enthusiasm about the international feel of Cat-land, which contrasted with what he saw as the xenophobic attitude of Botswana men who positioned him as an outsider. He attributed this to their 'inferiority complex', but his response to this was one which would appear to reinforce the construction of him as a foreigner with superior airs. He formed friendships, he said, only with men with whom he felt on an equal footing—and by this, he meant, men who were as affluent as him, wore 'cool' designers or, like him, engaged in small business transactions and also with other men from Ghana.

He was contemptuous of the drinking culture of the Ugandan men, partly because it wasted so much of their time and money—in contrast he presented himself as someone who worked hard at business and sport and who invested his money soundly, who wore smart clothes, who was more romantic with girlfriends, and whose relationship with them was not subordinated to his relationship with his male drinking partners. He was not, however, constructing his relationships with girls as more equal. He enjoyed elaborating on his capacity to 'woo' many girls, and his reputation as a cat-man, he said, partly depended on this.

Relations with women and anxieties about cat-men. It was concerning relationships with women that other men expressed most anxiety about the cat-men. Mothusi indicated that girls 'aspired to guys from the cat-men because they are of a higher class', and when I asked how he felt about this, he said, 'we know our targets and we know our kind of girls.' Not only was he distinguishing, now, between different kinds of girls, but implying that he needed to lower his sights. This was picked up by Tamuka who told a story about being rejected by a modern girl. His tone was one of defiance.

> Last semester I proposed to a girl and then she told me 'the way you dress'. I told her the way I dress, there's nothing wrong with the way I dress. I dress the way I afford to...she said 'no you don't come in the class I want', 'cause she likes people who dress in football jeans or [*Mothusi*: 'and have a very nice cell-phone'] football shirts

Most of the men who were not cat-men admired girls they constructed as modern for their class and beauty, but condemned them for their materialism, and, in contrast, spoke positively about 'our girls', 'traditional girls' as 'down to earth' and 'humble.' As one of

these men said, 'We have other girls who love us for who we are.' The implication here was that other women were loving the cat-men for their money and were 'prostituting' themselves.[5]

Opposition to triple-C women
The construction of women as materialistic was a popular one at the University of Botswana and was captured in the term 3-C which had become a familiar part of the University lexicon. This meant women who wanted as boyfriends men who had cars, cash and cell-phones. While most of the men I interviewed were intensely opposed to 'Triple-C' women, they wanted heterosexual relations where they 'took her out,' paying for food, drinks, ice cream, movies etc. as well as buying presents. (A few men in longstanding relationships admitted their girlfriends 'chipped in'.) This was experienced by some of the men as contradictory—they were positioning themselves as relatively powerful, yet their girlfriends were benefiting at a (material) cost to them. This was particularly clear when their girlfriends were fellow students receiving the same allowances. Perhaps their preoccupation with 'Triple-C' women reflected anxieties about lacking power in relation to women and loosing out to other richer men in their quest for girlfriends.

When asked about the kind of boyfriends women students wanted (in a questionnaire I gave my class on gendered identities) all the men (as well as the women) indicated that women students wanted men as boyfriends who in some form or other resembled 'sugar daddies', who were richer, older and possessed the 3-Cs. When this was discussed in class, no one dissented from this view, with both men and women laughing at what they saw as women students' cynical fixation with triple-C.

What was particularly striking, in the responses to the questionnaire, was the huge discrepancy with the women between their constructions of the kinds of boyfriends U.B. students wanted and their ideal boyfriends. When asked about *their* ideal boyfriends none of the women even mentioned cash, cars, cell-phones or age as qualities. Indeed they elaborated upon personality characteristics which seemed to dovetail with discourses of romance. Also none of the fourteen women students when interviewed identified as 3-C women (as they came to be known). It would appear that the contradictions between the kinds of boyfriends women students were assumed to want and the kinds of boyfriends they wanted themselves were significant in the construction of their own gendered identities. They were (to some extent) caricatures from which they distanced themselves as specific romanticised individuals, and on to which men projected their anxieties.

Women identifying as traditional
In the interviews it was noticeable that it was women who defined themselves as traditional, who constructed University women students *in general* as 3-Cs and as 'prostituting' themselves. Two such women, Angela and Keditse, who were interviewed together, told several stories in a tone of amazed disgust about the drinking and sexual exploits of particular women students. It was clear that these were well known—at least to both of them—and 'well worn stories'(see Kehily, 1995). Stories become 'well worn' partly because of the investments people have in constructing themselves and others in particular ways through telling them. These were presented as extreme accounts of the immorality of modern women students and were symbolic, as if this was the logical extension of the values of such women.

They defined themselves, in contrast, as traditional, because they were monogamous— other women, they complained, patronised them about 'missing out' on 'the fun' of 'going out and playing the field.' Also they emphasised the importance of allowing their male partners to engage in what were seen as 'masculine' activities, even if they did not really

approve of these. For example, Keeditse did not like her boyfriend drinking, getting drunk and smoking. These were seen as things which men did which women had to tolerate. This, as we see, in the following section, also applied, in the accounts of some women, to 'cheating.'

Men cheating and women blaming other women

It may be appropriate to conceptualise women's expressed opposition to (other) 'materialistic' women and their investments in discourses of romance as a response to anxieties about being exploited sexually by men. These anxieties were never far from the surface, as illustrated in an extract from an interview with three women students, Lorato, Wame and Masego, on the topic of boyfriends.

These women constructed themselves as women in very conventional ways, defining themselves and their aspirations in relation to their future male partners (introducing themselves, they all said they wanted to be 'married and happy') and describing themselves as women who cared about their hair and make up and looked 'like ladies.' These women had been speaking in highly romanticised ways about boyfriends, and it was when I asked if there were 'any negative things about having a boyfriend' that they spoke at length about men 'cheating' on them. They presented this as something women had to tolerate, and also as not particularly serious, turning what was obviously for them a familiar topic almost into comedy, caricaturing the men as 'stupid' for not being able to 'hide it', and punishing them, it seems, like naughty children, by slapping them. (When slapping was mentioned everyone burst into raucous laughter) They were constructing the men in non-threatening ways, not as nasty and deceitful.

But when I asked how they felt about *their* boyfriends cheating on them, although they continued to maintain they had to put up with it, they became much more excited and agitated, talking over each other. This suggests, perhaps, a discrepancy between what they were saying—resigning themselves to men cheating on them and blaming other women for not doing so—and their emotional tone—the highly charged emotions and anguish this caused them to feel.

The sense in which little—morally—is expected of men, (and, by contrast, much of women) has a long discursive history. Indeed this appears in some versions of feminism in which women are reconstructed as morally strong, in opposition to their subordination in patriarchy, as exemplars for their children, and as educators of men who are presented as morally weak and irresponsible.[6] But, as illustrated in the conversation with Lorato, Wame and Masego the idea that men were cheaters, irresponsible and stupid was a discursive construction which disempowered rather than empowered women. Furthermore having higher moral expectations for women means that women's behaviour is subject to forms of regulation and control which do not apply to men. This results in the formation of a specific category of women—not men—who are deemed 'loose', and immoral, as we saw in Angela's and Keeditse's characterisation of modern women students. As black African feminist writers such as Molara Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) have observed, women are idealised as repositories of 'culture', and demonised as influenced by 'modernity'.

Women identifying as modern

One of the women who was most likely to be called modern was Lebogang, a charismatic and well known student and an extremely confident and fluent contributor in class. I interviewed her with a friend, Malebogo, another assertive and articulate speaker in class.

Lebogang characterised the 'majority' of students as coming from the rural areas and as being 'inflexible' in contrast to 'free' and 'adjustable' urban people, like her and Malebogo. She praised Malebogo because she was educated outside Botswana (in Zimbabwe), and

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both of them harboured ambitions about leaving Botswana, though not to Zimbabwe or indeed any other African country. Speaking about these ambitions, it was not the rural-urban divide, but another one, that between life in Botswana and life in the West which came to symbolise their constructions of tradition versus modernity. Asked how they saw themselves in ten years, they spoke about their desire to be successful and to live in America or Britain. Significantly, however, Lebogang stressed that she would like to live where there were blacks, whom she described as 'my people'. This, she said, was because she did not want to experience racism. However, her very identification with black Americans as 'my people' allows her to see herself not in the way that she might be caricatured by other 'traditional' students as a modern woman who has become contemptuous of her people and wants to desert them.

Both Lebogang and Malebogo indicated that they had, or at least wanted more equal relations with men. Lebogang was strongly opposed to accentuating or 'emphasising', in Bob Connell's words 'femininity' (Connell, 1995): 'I hate talking about my make up, my hair, my boyfriend's this and that.' Interestingly both described themselves as tomboys or ex-tomboys. They spoke about their boyfriends as friends with interests in common. These were things constructed as masculine such as sport, and things constructed as feminine such as soaps. It appeared that they were identifying as modern, at least in part, by rendering gender difference less significant than those women (and men) they viewed as traditional. At the same time, however, they spoke about being 'taken out' by men on campus, for example being taken to watch movies and bought ice creams. Though their friendships with men may have drawn accusations of being 'triple Cs', they, themselves, were critical of 'triple C' women, indicating that their relationships with their boyfriends were not mediated by power or money, but were equal, individualised and based on love. (This way of conceptualising love relationships is a feature, according to Giddens (1992), of contemporary Western culture) They were highly contemptuous of heterosexual relations between students which reproduced the sorts of gender polarised roles which Angela and Keditse wanted.

Implications for developing appropriate sex/AIDS educational strategies
Appropriate and effective sex/AIDS education needs to draw upon and encourage students to reflect critically upon their own sexual cultures. (See e.g. Epstein and Johnson, 1998) By sexual cultures I refer not only to values, attitudes and behaviour regarding sex, but also, crucially, to the very identities students construct which are not just sexual but gendered, 'racialised' and classed. The emotional engagement of my interviewees suggests that far from simply describing themselves and their relations with others, they were actively staking out these identities. Indeed the emotions they expressed (and changes in their emotional tone at different stages in the interview) and their preoccupation with particular issues—the 'snobbery' or 'artificiality' of the cat-men, the 'insularity' of 'traditional' Batswana, the 'promiscuity' of 'modern' women, the 'cheating' of boyfriends, the 'naughtiness' of Ugandans provided important clues as to processes of identity construction going on in the interviews.

Addressing women. Women who constructed themselves as traditional were doing so in opposition to women they criticised for being modern and promiscuous. When talking about the incidence of AIDS at the University, not surprisingly their focus was upon what they conceived as the immoral behaviour of women students. Their very identities were tied up with constructing women and AIDS in this way. While some of these women also blamed men for being irresponsible, it was noticeable that they did so after blaming women and usually after I had asked them if they thought men also bore responsibility for the

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spread of AIDS. Furthermore when they blamed men this was for being 'irresponsible' rather than 'immoral' as if men were naturally like this, and could not be expected to live up to the high expectations they had for women. This attitude towards men was tied up with the construction of themselves as responsible in relation to men, and moral and loving in relation to other 'modern' immoral and materialistic women. Reluctantly putting up with their boyfriends' cheating and blaming women was clearly a position which made them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. In developing HIV/AIDS educational initiatives, it would be important not to treat these attitudes either as illogical or as the inevitable manifestations of a reified culture. Instead we should ask why these women are so invested in constructing themselves as 'traditional' in this way. As I indicate, this may be a way of responding to men's cheating in which, ironically, they derive a sense of power (and support from other 'traditional' women) as responsible, moral and loving people.

AIDS/sex education should address the vulnerability of women students, constructed as 'modern', 'loose' or 'triple-C' to richer, older and more powerful men, but, also it should examine women's investments in being 'modern', and how and why they differentiate themselves from 'traditional' women. It would seem, indeed, that women who identify as modern, such as Lebogang, are committed to much less gender polarised and more equal relationships with their male partners. Lebogang was the only interviewee who mentioned having an AIDS test with her sexual partner.

Addressing men. It is important not only to examine how women construct themselves in relation to other women and men, but also to connect this with men's identity construction. For this, as we have seen, is predicated on ways of categorising and evaluating women as well as other men. For men who identified as traditional one significant identity they could inhabit was that of Ugandan. This represented a caricature of male naughtiness and hedonism, and contrasted sharply with the position 'traditional' women took and were expected to take by 'naughty' men. Their sexual double standards were unjust and dangerous—in the light of AIDS—but AIDS education must not only address this. It must also address men's investments in operating double sexual standards and how these were tied up with the construction of versions of 'real' and 'traditional' masculinities. The men I interviewed who identified as Ugandans spoke about how different they were with their girlfriends than when they were drinking when they would tease each other about their girlfriends 'taming' them, insult women who walked by or go to sheebens where they would meet 'bad' women. This was how they were defining themselves as real men, as occupying gender-polarised positions in relation to their girlfriends. While most of the men I interviewed were not Ugandans, they also constructed themselves as irresponsible in relation to women. For example some said they reported using condoms in the company of women and not when they were talking only with men. They also spoke in a jokey way about Ugandans having unprotected sex with prostitutes.

The emphasis in sex education should not be on reproducing men as a homogenous and unified group (in opposition, of course, to women) but on deconstructing this appearance. It must examine men's investments in stereotypes of masculinity as powerful as well as the hierarchical relations and differences men established between themselves and the costs of this to men. One clear finding which emerged from the interviews concerned men's, and not women's, preoccupation with defining themselves and other men in terms of class, as illustrated in common references to humble students and lower class students, and University celebrities, upper class students and cat-men. Only three of the men I interviewed were 'Ugandans' or cat-men. Yet the positioning of men students both in relation to the 'cats' as high class males symbolising modernity as well as in relation to the 'Ugandans' as 'real' men embodying the popular stereotype of male hedonism and

irresponsibility was a major theme in the interviews and one that ought to be the focus of any sex educational initiatives.

Addressing intersections of 'race' and gender. A discourse which elided assertions of male power with anti colonialism appeared to frame students' accounts of gender relations, though some, notably women who identified as modern, resisted andro-centric versions of black or African culture. This was reflected in the opposition to 'modern' women for being immoral, which, in part, appeared to be motivated by anxieties about being rejected by independent, assertive and relatively affluent women and, also to the cat-men for being artificial, which appeared to be rooted, partly, in concerns and jealousies about the cat-men's affluence, high class and attractiveness to women. Significantly when the men I interviewed spoke about the cats, they were referring to men, even though the mixing of men and women was taken to be a striking feature of 'cat-land.' The omission of women here reflects, I think, a tendency to construct women students *in general* as susceptible to seduction or corruption by modernity.

The relationship of educated people to 'culture' was ambiguous, for 'culture' was not only idealised but associated with backward rural values in opposition to which educated people asserted their modernity. As the most conspicuously 'modern', the cat-men were simultaneously derided and admired.

Sex/AIDS education must address 'race' as a key aspect of identity and examine how gender power relations are tied with the construction of men and women as 'authentically' black or African. Such education could aim at encouraging students to imaginatively reconstruct 'culture' and 'tradition' in ways which were not oppressive to women.

Examples of appropriate forms of sex/AIDS education

I have written elsewhere about the sorts of sex /AIDS education strategies and activities I adopted at Masvingo Teachers' College, Zimbabwe, when I was co-ordinating the sex/AIDS education programme from 1991-93 (Pattman, 1996). This was aimed at students both as potential sex educators and as people at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. A key aim was to develop sensitivity to the kinds of identities men and women were constructing in relation to each other not only outside class but in class as well.

Thus, at Masvingo Teachers' College a major concern of mine was the quietness of women in relation to men in sex/education classes and how this was connected with issues about identity. For articulating their views in the lecture theatre, with men present, they were liable to be seen as violating 'culture.' This was especially the case when they were talking about gender and sex, and when they were disagreeing with men. I want to briefly and critically   examine strategies I developed which were aimed not only at encouraging a voice to women in the mixed lecture theatre, but also at transforming gender relations and identities in a way which would enable this.

Single sex then mixed groups. Often I split students into single sex groups giving them, as topics to discuss, extracts from popular cultural texts and interviews I had conducted with them about their experience and understanding of culture, gender and sex. This was followed by feedback and discussion in a mixed gender plenary session. This seemed to work. Women students told me they felt freer to speak in single-sex groups and to speak about issues which affected them as women. In the mixed debates which followed the group feedback, as many women as men contributed. Often these debates were polarized on gender lines. For example, women argued for the right to wear trousers or against sexual double standards, and men 'defended' 'culture' and 'tradition.' Other women cheered, clapped and hissed, indicating a sense of solidarity which contrasted dramatically with the

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kind of competition, conflict and jealousy between women which had been emphasised by the women I interviewed.

However this approach was problematic because it leads to the sorts of exchanges which simply reinforced the gender polarized positions men and women students commonly took up in and outside class. It is important that women are encouraged and enabled to articulate their concerns and criticisms and men to listen to them. But the danger is that this automatically elicits defensive responses from men and the assertion of familiar versions of masculinity, men as cultural arbiters, leaders, hedonistic, drinkers, possessors of a massive sex drive and so on.

Producing drama. Sex education, as I have argued, needs to encourage men to poke holes in the idea of a homogeneous masculinity which reflects the interests and orientations of all men. One student centred sex educational approach which can be effective in this respect, in encouraging students to explore their gendered identities and power relations between and within genders, is drama production. Drama was entertaining and effective in transforming the academic context and raising 'sensitive' issues and was a method I used in the sex/AIDS education programme at Masvingo Teacher's College.

I split students into mixed groups and asked them to produce their own AIDS drama, selecting themes and objectives, context and characters, and creating dialogue through improvisation. I hoped students would be able to express in the drama they constructed issues about AIDS and sexual and gender relations which concerned them as men and women students. After being performed, the issues they raised—notably the particular dilemmas and pressures facing various characters and how the characters behaved with and related to people of the opposite sex—were discussed.

The dramas the students produced were not reflections of reality, but particular representations or constructions of gender and sexual relations and identities, and provided a basis then for investigating these. For example, dramas about sugar daddies—an extremely popular presentation—focused much more on the pleasures and dilemmas of the sugar daddy than his girlfriends, albeit constructing the sugar daddy as irresponsible and silly. His girlfriends—usually playing the part of first year students were shown wearing flashy, Western clothes and had much less to say than the sugar daddy. Clearly from the reaction of the student audience, as these plays were being performed, his girlfriends were the most contemptible figures—when they spoke it was usually when they were boasting to their women friends about the gifts their sugar daddies had bought them, and this elicited much booing and jeering from the audience. In the discussion afterwards, questions could be raised as to why the girlfriends, rather than the sugar daddy, were blamed for being immoral and violating culture, and also the focus could be switched from relations between sugar daddies and girlfriends to hierarchical relations between men and anxieties about richer and more powerful men students or businessmen 'taking' first year girls.

The dramas provided insight into and basis for discussion not only about student concerns concerning AIDS and particular familiar identities and relationships, but also about the dynamics and relations in the various groups. Who decided which parts people played? Were people happy playing their parts? Were men or women playing more central parts? In those groups where men dominated the proceedings, women tended to play the part of 'loose' women seduced by 'modernity' and sugar daddies, or virtuous women, faithful to their boyfriends. Where women were more influential in their groups, they were presented in the dramas they produced not as men's assets but as strong and having decision making power, with much greater prominence being given to women's conversations and interpretations of relations. Significantly in drama where women were given a strong voice, this did not alienate men and did not lead to gender polarised debates in the discussion after they were performed. Reflecting in this way upon the different dramas different groups of

students produced focused attention on (oppressive and non-oppressive ways) of categorising women, without eliciting a defensive response from men.

Notes

Address: Rob Pattman, Department of Sociology, University of Botswana, P/Bag 0022, Gaborone. *Email:* <pattman@mopipi.ub.bw>. I would like to thank those students who participated in the interviews for being so open and direct. All names in the text have been changed.

1. From an advert for a design and graphics company in Botswana, featured in the *UB Post*, the University students' magazine.
2. See Simpson's analysis of students' perceptions and experiences of education in a Zambian secondary school, Simpson 1999
3. For example Hollway (1989), Wetherell and Edley (2000), Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (forthcoming)
4. Researching student identities at a higher education institution in Zimbabwe (Masvingo Teachers' College) (Pattman, 2001), I found that much prominence was also given to drinking as a symbol of real masculinity and male hedonism as characterised by the 'beer drinkers', a group which which closely paralleled the 'Ugandans.'
5. In her study of student politics and gendered identities in the University of Zimbabwe, Rudo Gaidzanwa (1993) found that middle class and urban women were experienced as undermining the authority of men, though especially by those men from rural and working class backgrounds who, themselves, aspired to middle class lifestyles. As in Masvingo Teachers' College, these women were criticised for their 'Western' and 'provocative' clothes (Pattman, 1999) and even 'stigmatised as wanting to be like whites.'
6. See for example Lucy Bland's analysis of 19th century English feminism, (Bland, 1995).

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