

SUGAR DADDIES AND THE DANGER OF SUGAR: CROSS-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, HIV/AIDS, AND SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN ZAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

This chapter seeks to explore the nature of and motivations for cross-generational relationships, and to examine how these relationships structure, limit and enable access to schooling for youth in Ndola (Zambia). Amidst increasing HIV infection rates and decreasing economic opportunity, youth experiences in and outside of school provide information about the impact of macro-level influences, particularly global economic trends and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, on the lives of these young women. Utilizing qualitative methods that seek to explore the lived realities of Zambian youth, this study examines perceptions of the phenomenon of "sugar daddies" and how they are seen to effect educational access and opportunity for young women. Although the study finds that young women are finding ways to cope with being enmeshed in a

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context characterized by severe economic decline and an extensive HIV/AIDS crisis, the strategy of securing a "sugar daddy" is one that may result in deadly infection and social isolation. Furthermore, policymakers in Zambia can and should take the opportunity to rethink austerity measures and hostility to social spending as well as the content of public health education.

Many scholars and practitioners have discussed the role of cross-generational relationships, and their often corresponding power asymmetries, in facilitating the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (Longfield, Glick, Waithaka, & Berman, 2002; Luke & Kurz, 2002; Vavrus, 2003). The material conditions framing many of these transactional sexual encounters have been linked to region-wide economic decline over the past two decades, including in Zambia (Garbus, 2003). The HIV infection rate in Zambia is 17 percent and, while many wealthy individuals are infected (UNAIDS, 2006), risky income generating activities such as prostitution and transactional sex have been identified as a primary cause of infection among the poor in Zambia, especially among poor women (de Waal & Whiteside, 2003).¹

Once a middle-income country, 64 percent of Zambians now live on less than one dollar per day (UNDP, 2004). The worldwide drop in copper prices beginning in the 1970s had a ripple effect on other sectors of the economy, resulting in Zambia's need to borrow large sums of money from international financial institutions and accept the conditions of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which are generally characterized by market liberalization, privatization of state-owned industries and services, and decreased government spending in the areas of health and education (Mehmet, 1997). Decreased government spending on health, education, and food subsidies, in turn, has rendered costly these previously free state provisions (Saasa, 2002).

For example, the implementation of user fees for education, although abolished in 2003 at the primary level, has had an adverse effect on enrollment and completion rates in Zambia. Data appear to support this assertion: from 1985 to 1994, the first decade of SAPs in the country, Zambia saw an overall decrease of 20 percent in the number of students completing grade seven, and a significant drop in girls' participation in education (Kelly, 1999). In the Copperbelt region, boosted by the prosperity of the copper industry in the 1970s and early 1980s, enrollment in primary schooling reportedly reached 100 percent; but by 1999, enrollment had dropped to just 79 percent (Kelly, 1999).

Although at the national level, government spending on education has decreased, resulting in a decline in both enrollment and educational quality, the public health crisis nationally has also limited the ability of Zambian families to bear the indirect costs of sending children – boys and more often, girls – to school. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed to declining enrollment for young women when family resources become stretched thin and health expenditures take precedence over school fees. As a result, girls are often relied on for domestic responsibilities when a female guardian falls sick, prohibiting them from doing schoolwork or attending classes in many instances (Kelly, 1999). With school enrollment rates declining for African girls in certain countries, some young women have sought other avenues for fulfilling their desire for education as well as other commodities and services.

Cross-generational relationships, particularly those involving a younger woman and an older “sugar daddy,”² have become increasingly prevalent in Zambia. Another, possibly related, danger to young women between the ages of 15 and 19 (high school age) is data which show that they are six times more likely to be HIV positive than their male counterparts (Glynn et al., 2001).³ It is important to note that cross-generational relationships have existed historically in many societies and in Zambia, these relationships overlap with longstanding cultural practices such as polygamy and widow inheritance (Gausset, 2001). Therefore, these relationships are not historically unprecedented, nor can they be reduced to economic motivations entirely. Apart from cultural practices, the scale and frequency of cross-generational sexual relationships are unknown due to the inaccuracy of self-reports of sexual behavior and the associated social stigma (Plummer et al., 2004).⁴

This chapter, however, examines the economic dimension of these relationships as it pertains to educational access and opportunity in an era in which neoliberal economic policies have resulted in limited employment prospects, decreased government support for education, and heightened economic uncertainty for young women and their families (Saasa, 2002). The “sugar daddy” phenomenon – understood, as well, in light of historical, cultural, and social constructions of masculinity and femininity in Zambia – intersects with economic decline and HIV/AIDS by structuring, enabling, and limiting educational access and opportunity for young women in different instances. Given strong social taboos, discussions about cross-generational relationships are often carried out in the third person; as a result, this chapter examines the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents with regard to the motivations for, nature of, and attitudes toward

cross-generational relationships in schools and communities in Ndola (Zambia).⁵

Ndola, capital of the once-prosperous Copperbelt province, was an instructive site to carry out research on educational experiences as an urban center greatly impacted by global economic trends, particularly demand for basic commodities. Ndola experienced high levels of urbanization in the mid-1900s due to the rapidly expanding copper industry (Burdette, 1988), followed by frequent return migration to villages once the copper industry began its decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bond, 1982). Currently, Ndola has the highest rate of HIV infection in the country estimated at 28 percent (Glynn et al., 2001). As a result of these unique migration patterns and their outcomes, researchers have noted that the Copperbelt “becomes an especially productive site for rethinking anthropological ideas about history and modernity” (Ferguson, 1999, p. 25). In this social context, young women’s changing roles and the impact of social inequalities on educational opportunity are an important area of inquiry.

METHODOLOGY

The information for this chapter was collected as part of a larger study on youth experiences with schooling in Ndola (Zambia) during one year of fieldwork spanning 2003 and 2004. The data in this chapter come from semi-structured interviews with approximately 75 students, teachers, parents, and alumni of Ndola private and government secondary schools through individual interviews and focus groups. The majority of participants lived in the Pamodzi township or around the Chifubu market, neighborhoods home to largely lower- to middle-class families.

I primarily relied on qualitative methods in this study. I utilized participant observation, visited and observed classes at approximately 10 government and private schools in and around Ndola, and attended teacher trainings on occasion. Additionally, 22 high school pupils (grades 8 through 12) were identified through criterion sampling to participate in the “sibling pair cohort,” comprised of siblings of similar age who attended different secondary schools. Pupils in the cohort were interviewed and given a confidential research notebook to complete written assignments on their attitudes toward schooling, HIV/AIDS, politics, and their futures. Additionally, each sibling cohort member was given a “free-write” section in his/her notebook to discuss whatever issue he or she deemed important. The notebooks were completed over a three-month period and collected in June 2004.

Following the fieldwork period, the data were coded for significant themes and then organized according to those responses that were representative. The information on cross-generational relationships presented below comes from the interviews, observations, and written materials collected during the research period primarily from the sibling cohort group, as well as from general interviews with other pupils, parents, secondary school graduates, and teachers.

The methods utilized sought to address the following question: In what ways do youth and adult discussions of cross-generational relationships reflect their role in limiting, structuring, and/or enabling educational access and attainment for young women in Ndola (Zambia)? The respondents frequently referenced social attitudes and stigma around such relationships; thus, data are presented to offer a picture of the social landscape in which young women pursue or acquiesce to the advances of older men, due, in part, to their material conditions and educational aspirations. An overview of previous research on masculinities, power, and HIV/AIDS is necessary in order to situate the subsequent data within its cultural and social context.

CONSTRUCTING THE SUGAR DADDY PHENOMENON

This chapter focuses on perceptions of mostly consensual (though often coerced) sex; however, the data collected in this study suggest that some of the same motivations that drive the rape of young girls also motivate cross-generational relationships in which both parties are willing.⁶ The sugar daddy phenomenon in Zambia can be seen in its relationship to material inequities and as an extension of constructed masculinities (Simpson, 2005; Varga, 2001).

Simpson (2005) discusses how Zambian men learn about sex and the exercise of power through aggression and sometimes violence. Through practicing and learning about their gendered roles with regard to sex, "the expression of male sexual identity was often figured as 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" (p. 585). Simpson further notes that expressions of virility are also linked to multiple sexual partners as well as power over them, elements that often characterize cross-generational relationships. Although it is important to note that the social constructions of masculinity can contribute to the prevalence of cross-generational relationships, neither all men nor all women accept these roles

unquestioningly. Even when women assume subservient positions, such as those induced by cross-generational relationships, a notable shift occurs from victim to agent in analyzing their actions and decisions.

Scholars have increasingly acknowledged the sexual agency of African women in general (Reddy & Dunne, 2007) and young women engaged in cross-generational relationships in particular (Hunter, 2002). In his work on cross-generational relationships in South Africa, Hunter (2002) offers a distinction between young women engaging in transactional sex for *subsistence* and those engaging in it for *consumption*. The use of income generated from cross-generational relationships for increased educational opportunity does not neatly fit into either category but perhaps lies somewhere along the spectrum between subsistence and consumption. Whatever the use of the income generated, the line between consent and coercion is often blurred by the “gendered material inequalities that provide a basis for such [cross-generational] transactions” (Hunter, 2002, p. 116).

Given the complexity and diversity of cross-generational relationships, particularly with regard to consent, power, and motivation, it is useful to conceptualize what Weissman et al. (2006) have termed the “continuum of volition” with regard to such relationships. In analyzing the various factors that structure cross-generational relationships, the authors offer a useful framework for understanding the knotty problems of consent and coercion (Fig. 1). It is important to note that not all cases fit in this schema. Cross-generational relationships in Zambia include phenomena such as children

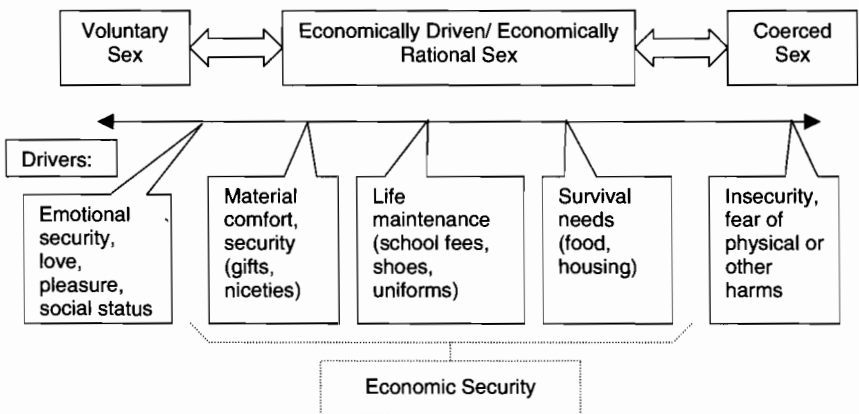


Fig. 1. Reasons/Drivers for Sexual Activity along a Continuum of Volition. This Diagram has been Re-printed with the Permission of the Authors.

being raped because of the perceived curative powers of such sex. Here, of course, the issue of volition is irrelevant and this chapter does not address such practices (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002).

In Weissman et al.'s diagram, economic rationale are but one motivation for young women entering into cross-generational relationships, and school fees are but one use of the money obtained through such, although peers and elders often assumed that economic motivations were the sole cause of young women seeking out, or acceding to the advances of, older men. With these complex constructions of gender in mind, I now examine the ways in which secondary school students encounter evidence of cross-generational relationships in their schools and communities.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS

Motivations for Cross-Generational Relationships

Various motivations that fall along the spectrum between subsistence and consumption (Hunter, 2002) exist for cross-generational relationships. For young women, having a "sugar daddy," or an older man with economic resources, can help offset the financial costs of secondary schooling. Mr. Mayombo, a teacher at Umutende government secondary school in Ndola, discussed a student in his eleventh grade English class and her "sponsor" or sugar daddy.⁷

The phenomenon of sugar daddies is quite common definitely, from the primary school, secondary school, even at the tertiary level including the university. I have noticed quite a few of them; some of them are being paid for by these taxi drivers and minibus drivers. Some of them are more or less like full-time wives; when she is at school, she's a schoolgirl. When she goes home, she doesn't go to her parents' home, she's in the man's house. But yet, that's not a formal marriage. One girl is 18 years of age, she's in grade 11. I have seen three of them [in my class]. I found out that their parents couldn't afford their education, but the girls are really brilliant. In the end, they are being promised to be married to those sugar daddies. There is something very unfair in the state of affairs. These girls will be made to get married to persons who they do not want to marry simply because they have an obligation to fulfill. The man that I know who is with Eunice is 45 years of age and she's 18. Parents know, [but] they have no money to pay for school. He's a minibus driver and has two wives, legally. She . . . is being anticipated to become the third wife. In Zambia, polygamy is legal. This man has volunteered to pay her fees up to whichever level the girl will go to, as long as she is obliged to bend towards the man's requirements. She lives with the parents, [but] she has an obligation; she can be taken at

anytime by the man and she is the most favored amongst the three women because she's the youngest, and to him, she's sweet.

Mr. Mayombo highlights the need for school fees as a factor that contributes to female secondary school students having relationships with older men. The desire for education and the lack of financial resources for it were among the motives offered by many adults and schoolgirls for why young women engage in cross-generational sexual relationships.

Young women's motivations for cross-generational relationships were cited as primarily economic, but older men's motives varied. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, cross-generational relationships have existed in Zambia historically, particularly given the polygamous traditions of many ethnic groups where significant age differences between co-wives and their husband is common (Gausset, 2001). Amidst the current economic situation of decline and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the urban townships of Ndola, two primary reasons, aside from cultural or personal preferences, emerged in this study for older men entering into cross-generational relationships. These reasons were, first, the perception of lower risk for contracting HIV/AIDS from younger girls and second, the belief among some men that a sexual relationship with a virgin could cure one of HIV/AIDS.⁸ One parent, Mrs. Lombanya, noted the motivations for older men to engage in sexual relationships with schoolgirls, citing a colleague of her husband discussing his relationships with younger women:

There was a time my husband was talking about someone and said, "That guy, I wonder why he likes going out with schoolgirls?" He had an opportunity to ask him and he said, "You know the young ones, they are fresh. They haven't met any man. So meeting her, I'm assured that she's not sick." And so he'd go for a schoolgirl, thinking that "She's all right; she's not sick." Forgetting that now he's the one who is going to make her sick. And then this girl will go for another man. You know they can't go for their fellow boys; the boys have nothing to offer them. What they want probably is what they can't get from home.

Aside from the preference for "fresh" girls, the age differential also corresponds with the power dynamics of learned masculinities as noted by Simpson (2005). Instructively, it is important to note the increasing presence of cross-generational relationships between older women and younger men in Zambia, driven perhaps less by conventionally gendered roles than by more immediate social and economic realities.

Sugar Mommies

The incidence of transactional sexual relationships between *older women* and younger men offers an interesting counterpoint to the sugar daddy

phenomenon as rooted in discourses of masculinity. Participants' accounts suggested that the phenomenon of sugar mommies was less prevalent, but nevertheless present with the reported motivations being sex and companionship. Although young men may enter into such relationships for economic reasons similar to those of their female counterparts, older women may be responding to the growing widowhood among middle-aged women due to deaths from HIV/AIDS rather than to the belief that young men might cure them of the disease. An Ndola social worker, Lucy, commented:

We are seeing sugar-mommies going for small boys; those [ladies] who have money. Maybe it's because most of the women have lost their husbands due to HIV and AIDS. Some are left with a lot of money so they can do whatever they want to lure the young boys so that they sleep with them. In turn, it's the sugar mommy giving the small boy money. Especially the school-going and those young men who are in employment, who aren't married and they want some extra money. Some are not in employment; they just want someone to look after them.

Although these older women may be reacting to the loss of their spouses when seeking out a young sexual partner, they, too, are placing young men at risk for contracting the virus when a woman's partner has already passed away from AIDS. Although the phenomenon of sugar mommies merits mention, most cross-generational relationships continue to involve younger women and older men, and accordingly this chapter focuses primarily on this type of relationship.

Cross-Generational Relationships in School and Society

Examining the way a cross-generational relationship begins highlights further the social inequality between older men with resources and female students without them. Respondents described the types of signals and interactions that lead young women to understand that a sexual arrangement is being negotiated. In a cultural context where elders who are not related are often addressed as "mama," "aunty," "uncle," or "bashikulu" (grandfather), it is important to note the differences between a non-sexual and sexual relationship between an adult and an adolescent, and how these relationships may change over time. The origins of such cross-generational relationships were discussed in detail in some student diaries. For example, Agripa, who had previously studied at a government high school in the Copperbelt town of Mufulira, discussed under a topic, which he titled "sexual abuse in school," the ways that teachers and students initiated sexual relationships in school:

On this page, I'm gonna holla about teenage pregnancies in schools and about how teachers manipulate the girls into having sex with them. In our government schools, it is

very common to hear about a teacher having an affair with a pupil. No teacher has ever been dismissed from work for flirting with a pupil, more still for making her pregnant. The girl pupils are enticed with special favors like special treatment, immunity from beatings, leakages [of answer papers] during exams, promises of money or high life, etc. in exchange for a lust filled relationship because it certainly isn't love.

Agripa's response indicates disdain for such relationships between his female classmates and teachers. Many other respondents, both students and teachers, noted the prevalence of cross-generational relationships within secondary schools. When asked why these relationships took place, responses ranged from mere attraction and human nature to coercion and incentives offered by teachers to young women willing to become sexually involved with them.

Students discussed how relationships with their teachers changed over time and how these changes were often noted by their peers. One student, Precious, noted how what seemed like a normal student-teacher relationship changed:

My teacher sent me to his office to collect some textbooks and I did so. When I reached the office, I found that the door was locked so as I turned I saw him staring at me as if he had seen an angel or a ghost. He knew what the problem was and he opened the door for me. I hesitated to enter, but he told me that I was wasting his time. So I entered and he tried to grab my breasts and he held my hand saying that he loved me so much, but I managed to run away from the office.

Although students reported being unsure about the nature of female students' relationships with their male teachers, many reported the practice of teachers' explicit solicitation of sex from girls, offering incentives, such as good grades and extra lessons, in exchange. A male student in the tenth grade noted the way that sexual resources could be exchanged for favoritism in class:

The teacher is teaching and he's just looking at the same particular girl. Then when the subject is over, they go and talk. Sometimes maybe the whole class is being beaten by the teacher, but not the girl. There was a day [when] my friend came to tell me that this is what happened in their class. They were all writing an exam. They were given the scripts to start writing. Then, the teacher started writing something very fast. When he finished, he went to a girl's desk, he took away the paper the girl was writing, and he gave her the paper he was writing. And the girl passed.

In this student's account, the advantages of engaging in a relationship with a teacher were noted, but some of the adverse consequences of such relationships were more clearly seen by young women who chose not to engage in them.

Some students were skeptical about the benefits of cross-generational relationships and highlighted instead the risks. A twelfth grade student at Chilemba government high school, related the following process by which teachers and pupils become involved and the risk of acquiring AIDS when this happens: "The teachers mingle with pupils. When I was in grade ten, they found this biology teacher – he even died last year – he was caught with a grade eight girl in his office having sex." Sexual relationships between students and teachers, whatever their cause, include power asymmetries that may increase the risk involved in such encounters since teachers are one of the groups hardest hit by HIV/AIDS in Zambia. It is estimated that Zambia will have lost nearly 24,000 primary and secondary school teachers between 2000 and 2010 due to AIDS-related illnesses (Bennell, Hyde, & Swainson, 2002). Consequently, the adverse future impacts of such relationships – ranging from social isolation and abandonment to HIV infection and death – are sometimes outweighed by the immediate benefits, whether real or perceived.

Student accounts describe how teachers encourage young women to get into sexual relationships through promises of passing exams, and they offer examples of how such relationships begin and end to the detriment of the student. Young girls who enter into relationships with teachers are often economically disadvantaged and seek to rectify their limited access to money to obtain favors and privileges by securing these things through sex. These relationships, and the corresponding outcomes for young girls, such as unwanted pregnancy, contraction of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, or dropping out of school, serve as evidence of social inequality between the wealthy and the poor, as well as between older men and younger women that is perpetuated in government secondary schools (Bajaj, 2005). Student accounts also cited how cross-generational relationships begin both inside schools and beyond the school gates.

Outside of school, interactions between young women and older men in public places (or "on the way" to them) facilitated, in many cases, the establishment of a cross-generational relationship. Mary, a twelfth grader at Chilemba High School, discussed the signals indicating a sexual relationship is beginning:

You can be sent somewhere and you meet him on the way, "I'll give you a lift, jump in the car." He gives you money. You, without knowing, [think] it's just a lift. He asks, "Where do you stay?" You give the correct answer, because you don't know. He drops you where you are going. He gives you money for a drink. You go. The next day, or he even gives you two days, he'll come back. "Hi, hi there, but don't tell your parents about me." This one is giving you money; again he gives you money. At the end, he will

demand for something and that's sex. And you don't resist because you think, "this one is giving me money and if I do this, if I sleep with him, he will start giving me more money than he does now." So you fall into that trap, and then you get addicted to money. When you get addicted to money, it's very difficult to stay without money. So if that person is gone, you go for another old man because you know that old people are the ones who give money to young people. [The man could be] a manager, a person who works for a big company. It's common wherever you go to find a young girl and an old person. Sometimes you can even say the man [is] the father or the uncle, but that person is not. He even comes to pick [her] up at school. You think maybe that's the father, but someone says, "No, that's the boyfriend"; the so-called "man-friend."

Exposed to cross-generational relationships in their schools and communities, young women learn the social mores surrounding them. Operating in educational and social contexts characterized by economic inequality, students learn the benefits of responding positively when approached by older men offering them money. They may become "addicted to money," as Mary noted, because the funds allow them to pay for school expenses and other things they need or desire, such as clothes, shoes, mobile phones, and food. Weissman et al.'s continuum of volition, presented in Fig. 1 earlier in this chapter, highlighted the complex interplay of psychological and economic factors that structure the decisions of young women engaging in such relationships, yet the material conditions of young women's lives play a central role in their decision-making.

Young girls living in the townships of Ndola reported being approached by older men and sometimes accepting their requests for sex because of the material benefits that such relationships provided. For example, 12-year-old Victoria mentioned that older men had already started offering her food or money in exchange for sex. Victoria noted that female orphans may accept the sexual advances of or seek out older men given their often-precarious economic situations. Given the estimated 800,000 orphans in Zambia and their escalating numbers due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (ZMOE, 2003), economic hardship becomes a particularly salient motivation for young women to either seek out or respond favorably to "sugar daddies."

Although many students noted that men propositioned schoolgirls, other students also cited the initiative of girls in seeking out such relationships. The manner in which girls sought out older men sometimes hindered their participation in school, leading to a complex situation in which cross-generational relationships may, for different participants and in different moments, limit and/or enable educational pursuits. For example, Catherine, a tenth grade student at Umutende government school, noted, "Sometimes instead of being in class, [girls] go out and start looking for sugar daddies who can give them money to buy whatever they want to buy. I know some

of them. They go during school time. They go to different buildings like bars and guesthouses [where] the men are." This example suggests that young girls may exert their sexual agency and decide to work the system to their immediate advantage by responding to the advances of older men or actively seeking out relationships with them to pay for their education and other things. Yet the fact that young girls encounter this situation early in adolescence, coupled with strong social taboos around parents talking with their children about sex, often results in girls experimenting with relationships where they may lack the power to negotiate safe sex.

Economic hardship and being orphaned, in particular, may also drive girls to accede to the propositions of an older and more affluent partner. Lucy, who is a social worker, highlighted this point, "These sugar daddies come maybe with a 50,000 kwacha note [US\$10]. This man will do anything to this girl because she wants some money to sustain herself; maybe to pay for school. So the sugar daddies have taken advantage of the poverty situation." Noting the contextual forces that drive such relationships and their presence as a common feature of students' social world, it is important to explore the attitudes held by students, teachers, and parents toward cross-generational relationships and how these attitudes are linked to discussions of HIV/AIDS.

BLAMING THE VICTIM: SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CROSS-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Through experiences with commonplace corruption in government secondary schools, such as having to pay off a headmaster to secure a spot or being coerced to bribe teachers to receive instruction, young women are socialized to seek out financial resources to try and level an unequal playing field (Bajaj, 2005). For those who lack money and engage instead in cross-generational relationships, they are the ones frequently blamed by peers and elders for violating "tradition." One student commented that women are not following their cultural tradition by "wearing trousers" and that "girls of nowadays no longer cook like their mothers, but drink like their fathers."

Other respondents noted that these attitudes suggest a fixed notion of culture and tradition that does not reflect how current economic and social realities are affecting how individuals and families are shaping decisions about their survival. A seventh grader noted in her diary the parental involvement in decisions about cross-generational relationships writing that

“Some parents are telling their children to go out and sell their bodies in order to get some money.” Schools assimilate youth into the norms of an unequal society and students learn indirectly to leverage their financial and sexual resources to advance within it.

However, this does not mean that there are no social consequences for youth who engage in cross-generational relationships. Parents, teachers, students, and community members acknowledged the occurrence of cross-generational relationships particularly in regard to the economic hardship that often fuels them; however, at the same time, they often expressed extremely negative attitudes toward those who engage in such relationships. Families frequently shun young women who are in cross-generational relationships, often referring to them as prostitutes, especially if they are found to have contracted HIV/AIDS as a result. One seventh grade student, a 12-year-old named Annie, reported:

My own aunty, my mom's younger sister has got a child. I think the dad of the child rejected her. [My aunty] doesn't want any job. All she wants is that men come, pick her up, and pay her to go places like very big hotels, guesthouses, cinema halls, bars, and clubs. We don't stay with her because my mom told her that she couldn't allow any of the things she was doing in our house. So she had to move away and find her own house. Maybe a man comes, and if [he] just has money, she'll accept. One of the things about prostitution is that the girls are lacking education.

In Annie's account, cross-generational relationships and prostitution are synonymous. In recent years as well, the stigma associated with commercial or transactional sex has also become associated with the risk and contraction of HIV/AIDS.

On discovering that a relative is HIV positive, families may be embarrassed by the stigma that the disease holds and the implications for the family's social standing. One eleventh grade student wrote in her diary about her best friend finding out that he and his girlfriend were HIV positive: “They decided to tell their families about their HIV status [and] they were abandoned by their loved ones.” She continued writing that her friend wanted to commit suicide because of his HIV status, highlighting the social stigma around it.

The stigma that young women and men face, whether infected with HIV or not, influences their position in society and opportunity for mobility within it. Decisions to participate in cross-generational relationships therefore often carry the burden of heavy stigma. It is interesting to note that no respondent in this study admitted to being involved in a cross-generational relationship and most condemned them; however, several young women

respondents were rumored to be involved in transactional sexual relationships with older men.

DISCUSSION

The preceding sections offered frameworks (Hunter, 2002; Weissman et al., 2006) on cross-generational relationships broadly to understand young people's experiences in and around their secondary schools. Both Hunter (2002) and Weissman et al. (2006) identify the spectrum of motivations for such relationships that exists between survival and subsistence on the one hand, and consumption and material comforts on the other hand.⁹ The data presented in this chapter provided greater texture to the picture of the space between survival and consumption where desire and demand for education lie. In order to understand how the "sugar daddy phenomenon" influences young people's educational pursuits, respondents' perspectives were presented on (1) how and why young women and older men enter into such relationships amidst the backdrop of economic uncertainty and HIV/AIDS; (2) how cross-generational relationships occur and are viewed within schools where teachers are the older men and their students the younger women; and (3) young people's (especially young men's) and families' attitudes toward such relationships, and the social consequences for young women who engage in them.

In examining cross-generational relationships in and around schools, it becomes increasingly clear that the incidence of "sugar daddies" (and mommies) in Ndola (Zambia) must be understood as a complex phenomenon involving discourses of masculinity and the material inequities that structure the physical and discursive space occupied by young adults and the schools they attend. Although young girls (and boys, though differentially) undoubtedly exercise agency in numerous ways, these choices with regard to cross-generational relationships occur in the context of extreme inequalities and severe social stigma that limit the value of such choice. One of the myriad reasons young women enter into cross-generational relationships is to secure their school fees since parents are increasingly weighing the potential future benefits of schooling against their present economic circumstances.

Functionalist assumptions about the causal relationship between education and employment are being questioned throughout the global South as the ranks of the educated unemployed swell (Jeffrey et al., 2007). Without extensive personal connections, secondary school graduates in Zambia

(as has been noted in other countries) have limited employment prospects (Bajaj, 2005). Young women who engage in cross-generational relationships as a means of securing a better future through continued education put themselves at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and may still not be able to access the anticipated economic outcomes that initially drove their decision-making. Further research can help to elucidate the intersections among gender inequalities, education, and employment, particularly in contexts such as Zambia where the combined impact of economic decline and HIV/AIDS has adversely affected all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

Policy Implications

In carrying out research on cross-generational relationships and schooling in Zambia, the question arises: What are the implications for policymakers? Steady (2005) posits in her framework for gender research in Africa that the practical aspect of research is of utmost importance for the continent;

Western scholarship places a high value on theorizing and theory-building at the expense of pragmatism and relevance. For Africa, there are many economic and social problems, not least of which is its dependency on the West and its marginalization through globalization, which theory cannot solve. (p. 322)

Although theory is not rejected in an analysis of the phenomenon of sugar daddies in Ndola (Zambia), the following recommendations for practice also emerge from this chapter.

First, the considerable funding being devoted to HIV/AIDS prevention programs needs to take into account social and gender inequities that fuel risky sexual behavior. Without an analysis of power asymmetries, interventions may miss the mark in reaching vulnerable populations. Given that young women have more than three times the HIV infection rates in sub-Saharan Africa as compared to their male counterparts (Fleshman, 2004), more effective policies and programs linking public health education to material well-being are sorely needed to curb the impact of this devastating disease. Although the particular nature and specific architecture of a policy platform to address economic decline and the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a highly politicized and complex venture beyond the scope of this chapter, policymakers might do well to consider measures that involve or result in job creation or a raising of base levels of income as well as the political and institutional obstacles to achieve these goals, as will be touched

upon later in the discussion of the resistance to social spending. Policy-makers would also do well to further consider and address cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity in the development of programs related to HIV/AIDS. Young women must be included in designing and implementing such programs so that their realities are adequately considered and addressed. It may very well be that young women do not see these cross-generational relationships as problematic since they can provide income or advantages, despite negative social attitudes toward them. However, programs can focus attention in an informed manner on the power differentials of such relationships and the risk of contracting HIV for these young women.

Second, the high incidence of teacher–student sexual relationships – consensual, coerced, and non-consensual – must be addressed by the Ministry of Education through more stringent sanctions for teachers engaging in such behavior. Although teachers are supposed to be dismissed for engaging in relationships with students (ZMOE, 2003), many respondents noted teacher impunity and corruption in the process of teacher discipline. Better mechanisms and more efficient administration would limit the ability of teachers to initiate relationships with young women in schools by offering educational advantages. A significant portion of cross-generational relationships, as noted by Bledsoe and Gage (1994), consists of those between teachers and their students. Better educational policy and its enforcement may serve to dissuade teachers from abusing their power and status within schools for their personal benefit.

Finally, it would be remiss not to mention a reconsideration of the role and use of social spending as a policy tool. Although not a comprehensive policy solution in itself, secondary school fees are an example of an additional hindrance to young women's educational access as discussed in this chapter. Since Zambia received significant debt relief in 2005 from international financial institutions, policymakers have an opportunity to rethink the austerity measures vis-à-vis social spending previously implemented as part of SAPs; such spending must consider and work to alleviate the economic hardship that drives many cross-generational relationships. In 2006, then President Mwanawasa announced that healthcare would be free as a result of monies freed up from the debt relief granted to Zambia by the G8 (BBC, 2006). In education, one productive move would be to abolish all fees for secondary education in Zambia, a move that government officials have stated their reluctance to implement, except in the case of orphans (Times of Zambia, 2005). Recent debt relief or redirected donor aid may provide the resources necessary for making secondary education less of a

financial burden for families in a time of economic decline. The demand for schooling is but one factor that motivates young women to seek out “sugar daddies.” Still, by emphasizing the role or place of education – albeit one with better regulations for disciplining erring teachers – alongside measures to increase job creation and base levels of income, the *Zambian* government may be able to rectify some of the inequalities that contribute to the prevalence of cross-generational relationships in the country today.

The intersections among cross-generational relationships, schooling, and HIV/AIDS are complex and have various manifestations throughout *Zambian* society. Although young women are finding ways to cope with being enmeshed in a context characterized by severe economic decline and an extensive HIV/AIDS crisis, the strategy of securing a “sugar daddy” is one that may result in deadly infection and social isolation. By examining cross-generational relationships, HIV/AIDS, and education in *Zambia*, this chapter offered suggestions and preliminary recommendations for the role of educational policy in addressing economic and health crises. Further attention to the ways that young women respond to these crises can help explore possibilities for greater gender equity and educational advancement in highly impoverished and unequal contexts such as *Zambia*.

NOTES

1. For the purposes of this chapter, I rely upon the explanation of Kuate-Defo (2004) that offers multiple reasons for and dimensions of cross-generational relationships “Non-consensual and consensual sexual relationships between young people and older individuals are influenced by factors operating at several levels including individual, family, community, neighbourhood, province, region within a country, and by the international context of globalisation. Individuals engage in such sexual behaviours for a variety of motives including procreation, love and affection, pleasure, entertainment, conformity, recognition, competition, power, domination, submission, self-determination, stress reduction, financial security, favours, money and presents. These motives are usually age-dependent and are greatly influenced by individual attributes, conditions, life options and opportunities” (p. 21). In this chapter, the link between schooling and cross-generational relationships was frequently discussed with regards to the monetary benefits of such relationships. As a result, while it would be reductionist to assume that economic motivations are the sole cause of cross-generational sexual relationships, the material dimensions that do exist in many of these relationships are discussed with regard to educational experiences and opportunities.

2. The term “sugar daddy” refers to the older man in a cross-generational relationship where there is at least a 10-year age differential with the younger woman and where there is significant difference in access to economic resources. The term

“sugar mommy” refers to the woman in the inverse relationship between an older woman and a younger man where there is at least a 10-year differential, though empirically these relationships seem to appear with much less frequency.

3. For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between gifts and sex, see Hunter (2002), Kaufman and Stavrou (2002), and Standing (1992). Although attentive to the historical presence of inter-generational relationships, this chapter primarily deals with the economic nature of such relationships and how youth and adults perceive their influence on schooling in present day Ndola (Zambia).

4. One of the few studies that attempted to determine the scope of cross-generational relationships found the occurrence to be relatively low. In Kisumu (Kenya), a study defined a sugar daddy as a man 15 years older than his partner. The researchers studied 1,000 men aged 21–45 and found that only five percent of their sample fit the definition. They did find, however, that 84 percent of the men in the study had given money to a non-marital sexual partner in the past month and that 60 percent of the adult men had at least one adolescent partner (Luke, 2005). These findings suggest the impartiality of our knowledge with regard to the prevalence of cross-generational relationships. This chapter addresses youth and adults' perception of the frequency of such relationships and how these are believed to be affecting educational opportunity. Hence, actual figures for the incidence of cross-generational relationships are of less importance for discussion here.

5. Given the stigma around discussing sexual relationships, most respondents offered information about friends, students, or neighbors rather than about their own actual behavior. Information gathered through interviews suggested that even some of those respondents who condemned such relationships, reportedly engaged in them, indicating the complexity of studying such a topic.

6. For a more extensive treatment of gender violence in schools in the region, see Leach, Humphreys, and Dunne (2006).

7. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms for the purposes of confidentiality.

8. Although not discussed extensively here, the belief that sexual intercourse with a virgin cures HIV has driven an increasing number of rapes of young children in Zambia, as noted in regular news articles about the disturbing phenomenon. Research in South Africa has explored this myth in further detail (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002; Pitcher & Bowley, 2002).

9. These models acknowledge, but do not delve into details about, relationships that are at either of extreme of being purely consensual or forced/coerced with violence.

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