

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Reproductive Identity and the Proper Woman:
The Response of Urban Women to AIDS in Uganda

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the extent to which factors involved in women's reproductive identity construction constrain their capacity to protect themselves from HIV infection. It proposes that currently available prevention methods are impracticable for women in this setting, because it is only through unprotected sexual intercourse that they achieve "Proper Womanhood".

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I addresses the historical and epistemological roots of the problem, and the methodological approach taken. Four bodies of literature are reviewed for this purpose. Part II consists of six case studies, which provide the empirical foundations for the analysis presented in Part III.

It is argued that since the colonial era, Kampala women have struggled to establish their rightful place in the city. Doing so, however, has often meant choosing between social respectability and economic independence. This history has influenced the development of the Proper Woman construct, and contributes to its power. New dilemmas brought by the AIDS pandemic both underscore the relevance of Proper Woman values and present new obstacles to attaining them. Although AIDS is recognised as a clear and present danger, remaining HIV negative is not yet seen as a priority overriding all others. For women in this corner of Kampala, despite AIDS and the exigencies of city life, striving for decency and demonstrating respect and respectability, give shape to daily life, and meaning to the future. The thesis concludes with a discussion of how interventions should take account of the existing normative structure, and particularly of existing values and norms that influence sexual and reproductive behaviour in relevant ways.

PREFACE

The research for this thesis was conducted in Kampala, Uganda from November 1992 until early April 1994, and from September - October 1994. During the first period this work was carried out as part of a larger study, developed and directed by Professor Sandra Wallman (Principal Investigator), and funded by the Overseas Development Administration, UK, entitled *The Informal Economy of Health in African Cities: structural, cultural and clinical dimensions of the management of STD and paediatric crisis by women resident in Kampala* (ODA project #R5397). The thesis benefits from association with that project, not only in its use of some of the data, but also more generally from collaboration and discussion with colleagues, and the use of their expertise in developing my own research agenda. Nevertheless, the ideas and opinions expressed here are entirely my own and are not necessarily those the sponsoring agency, nor of my colleagues (see Wallman & Others forthcoming, for a full report of this project's findings).

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And finally, I offer humble gratitude to Karl for once again enduring my long absences and standing by me, loving me and supporting me, with endless good humour, patience and understanding.

to
Grandpa
Mom and Dad
David, Ceci and Connie
Wannette, Andy and Bill
Jonathan, Elaine, Nicholas and Zoe Rose
Uncle Bill and Stacie
Paul, Billy and Alex
and the new additions to come

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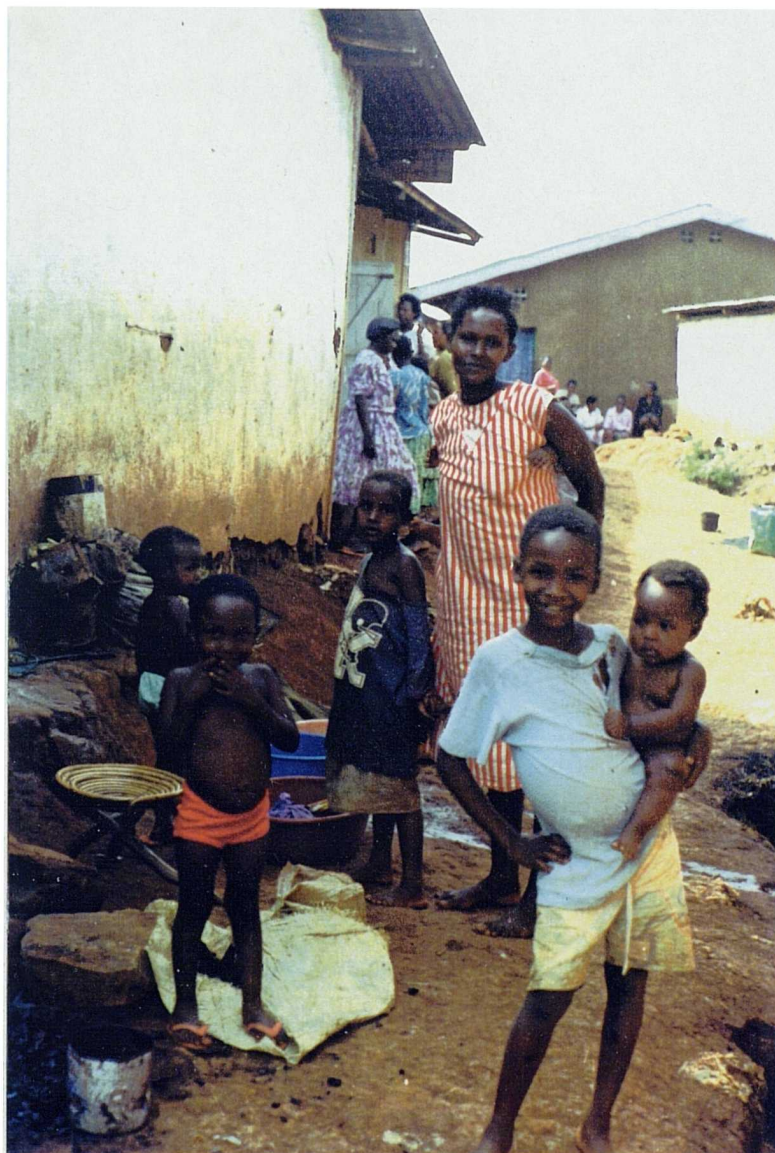
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KIFUMBIRA I Community Life



Men relaxing in the evening



Late afternoon things get busy in the neighbourhood



A group discussion in the Cluster area (note housing structures and open sewer in foreground)



A longtime urban resident

Daily life for women in the neighbourhood is both “private” and intensively public;
most of their work is carried out in the areas outside their houses



....children are bathed



... food is prepared

Women are active participants in the Informal Economy

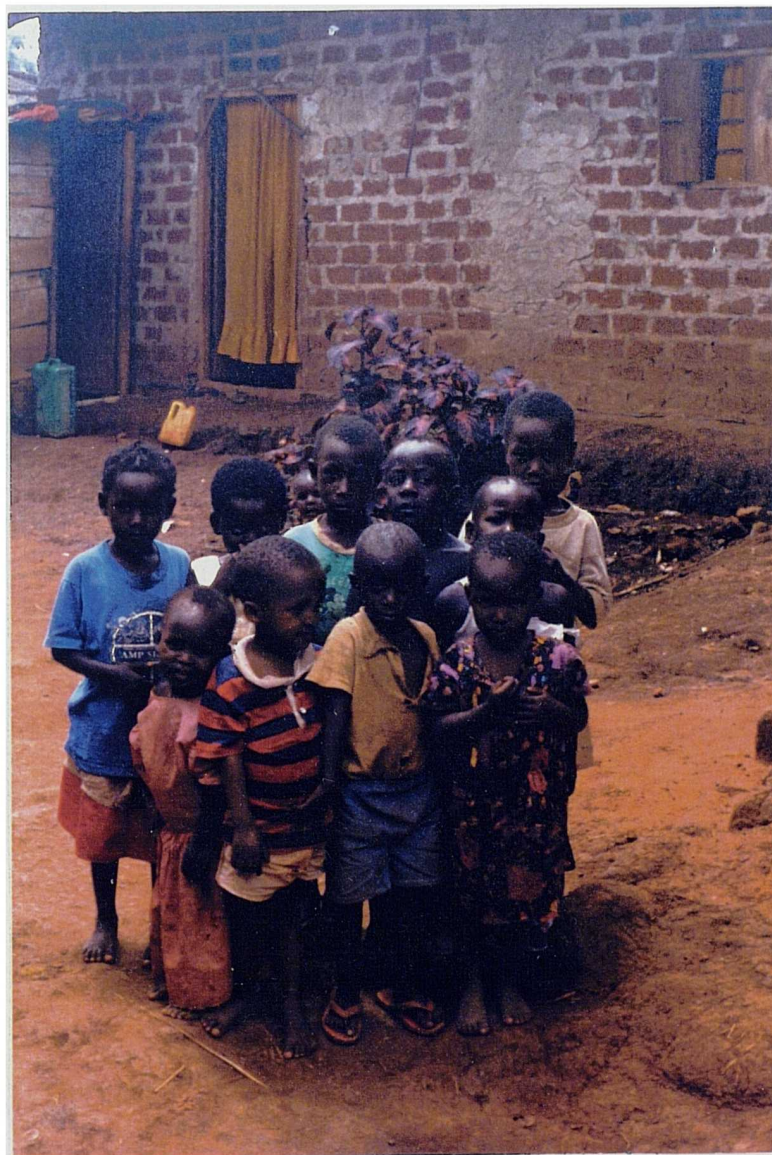
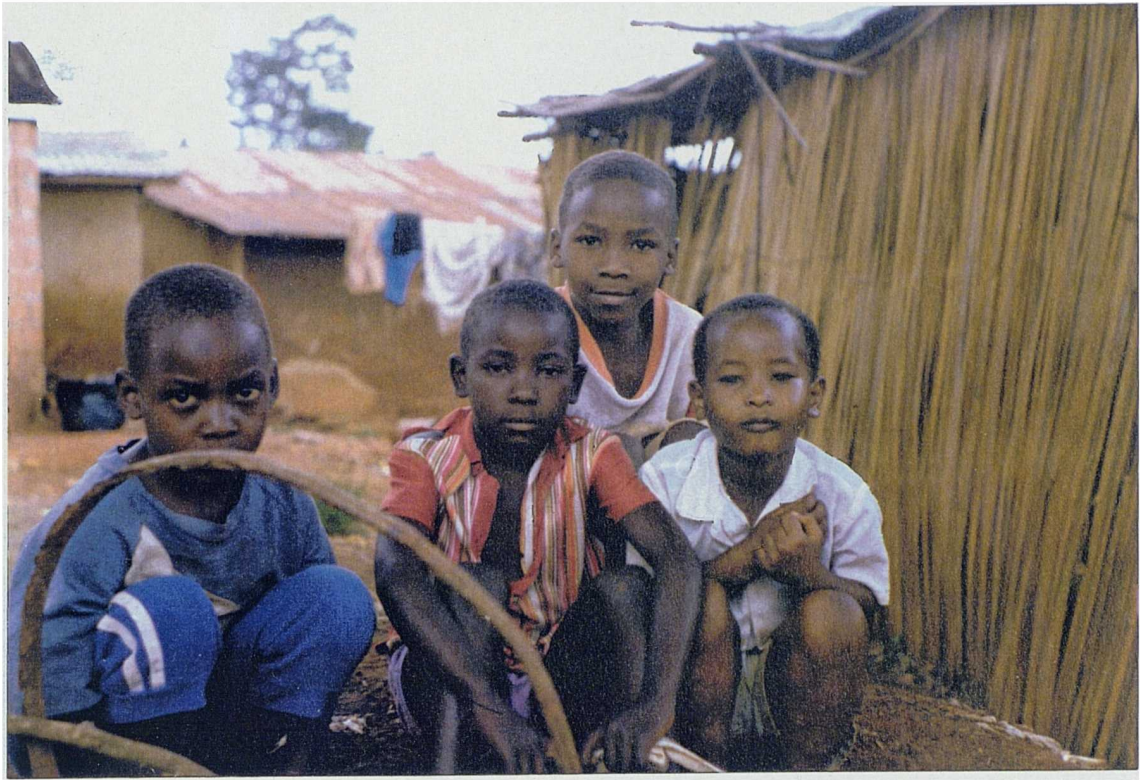


Selling chacoal and other necessities from her *midalla*



Selling cooked casava chips (and caring for a grandchild)

Children are a constant presence



Getting used to high density urban life

INTRODUCTION

The thesis interweaves four broad areas of anthropological enquiry and synthesizes these with data gathered during fieldwork. Part I is a review of the relevant literatures. Chapter 1 is primarily introductory. Section 1.1 gives an overview of the research problem and some recent figures on HIV/AIDS in Kampala. Section 1.2 then focuses in on the research site, looking first at Uganda in general (its physical, ethnic and political geography), then at Kampala, finally narrowing in on Kifumbira I, the research site itself. Section 1.3 discusses the fieldwork process.

Chapter 2 situates the research problem in its historical context. The colonial ethnography of Kampala provides rich detail for review: the reasons for rural-urban migration of women, urban marital patterns and sexual relationships and the ways in which urban women were represented is discussed. Urban women were considered to be morally suspect, and this devaluation persists in current attitudes. For these urban women, life in the city could be legitimized mainly through achieving respectability through marriage and motherhood - no simple task, then or now.

A review of the important concepts developed by colonial-era urban anthropologists in Africa is undertaken in Chapter 3. The Social Network, Norms, Gossip and the flow of information in the urban neighbourhood as described and discussed by these pioneers constitute the foundation of my understanding of the city, and the ways in which the social lives I observed there - particularly of the women - functioned. The importance of the "neighbourhood"

in the construction, negotiation and maintenance of important values and norms, and the pressure put on women to conform are especially relevant features.

The focus shifts in Chapter 4 as personhood, gender identity, sexuality and sex are defined and discussed, and the relevant literatures reviewed. An effort is made to deconstruct sexual behaviour, and expose the motivations and meanings that underlie this most fundamental human activity. It emerges that childbearing and the status "mother" are central foci for the construction of womanhood. Reproductive identity construction and negotiation feature centrally in women's sexual attitudes and behaviour.

In Chapter 5 links are drawn between the literatures concerned with reproductive decision-making and reproductive health in Africa. The complexities of the reproductive decision-making process and the relevance of this process to the transmission of HIV/AIDS is discussed.

Part II, Chapter 6, presents the case study material upon which the analysis in Part III is largely based. The lives and reproductive histories of six urban Ugandan women are presented. Each of them has come to the city for a different reason and with different resources at her disposal. Marital and financial status, and their orientations to local notions of respectability and proper womanhood emerge as importantly influencing their lives in the neighbourhood.

Part III draws together these various data to directly address the thesis question and formulate an analysis of the role played by reproductive identity in women's responses to HIV/AIDS. Possible new directions for intervention are suggested.

PART I

CHAPTER I

1.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The emergence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in Africa as a serious public health threat precipitated an impressive amount of biomedical and social research. Much has been learned about the virus itself as well as its medical, epidemiological and social effects on individuals and communities. Thus far, however, the virus has frustrated attempts at eradication or cure, and vaccine trials have yet to begin. Despite the expenditure of enormous financial resources and intellectual energy on research and intervention, many thousands of lives have been and continue to be lost, and the only means of combatting the AIDS epidemic continues to be human behaviour change: people need to change the way they conduct their sexual and reproduction relations. Condom use, monogamy with an uninfected partner - or sex only with partners that are uninfected - and abstinence are the currently available prophylactic options. The real tragedy of this pandemic is the fact that these options are largely unacceptable and/or unavailable to the vast majority of Africans, and so the day when we see the back of the AIDS epidemic seems nearly as remote as it did more than a decade ago.

An unexpected, and by no means unfortunate, outcome of this outpouring of research has been the growing sophistication in our understanding of human sexuality in Africa (as elsewhere). Presumptions about African "promiscuity" (eg. Caldwell, Caldwell and Quiggen 1989) can

no longer be made, and we can no longer speak simply of "prostitutes" and retain professional credibility. The scientific community is beginning to come to grips with the complexities of sexual behaviour, and the fact that it is inseparable from, for example, economic behaviour, especially in areas of resource scarcity. And the biomedical and clinical health disciplines are beginning to recognise the essentially social nature of disease transmission and treatment, and therefore, their own shortcomings, and the important role of the social sciences in developing appropriate intervention approaches. Thus an important dialogue has begun across and between these disciplines, although the medium of that communication is still developing. In the midst of all this academic development, therefore, the relative lack of coming to grips with - or serious analysis of - the seemingly vital links between sexual and reproductive behaviour in relation to HIV/AIDS is especially mystifying.

In a recent contribution to the AIDS corpus, EC. Green (1994:153) scans the social science literature for explanations of "pronatalism in sub-Saharan Africa", and finds that they include:

"...unilineal kinship descent, ancestor veneration or the 'cult of the ancestors', traditional land tenure, the economic value of children, early marriage, *female subordination*, ethnic or "tribal" rivalries, political insecurity, bride wealth, high infant mortality, religious traditions and teachings, lack of education, poverty, rural residence, filial piety, and patterns of subsistence agriculture dependent upon woman and child labour." (my emphasis)

It is notable that, while "female subordination" is listed as a reason for valuing high fertility in Africa, female identity and the importance and value of motherhood and childbearing are not. Even more disappointing is Green's

subsequent discussion of the need for Africans to "overcome pronatalism", dashing any hopes for a thorough-going analysis of the ways in which HIV/AIDS and (other) sexually transmitted diseases may be undermining the reproductive health and reproductive freedom of African women and men. Anthropological analyses that specifically address the connections between sexual and reproductive behaviour in relation to AIDS in Africa are, with a few notable exceptions (eg. Arras 1990; Worth 1989; Berer and Ray, eds. 1993; van der Straten et al 1995), conspicuous in their scarcity. Thus it seems that our enlightenment has only begun to challenge - and demand our operationalisation of - the more entrenched presumptions of our discipline. Notions about the roles and values associated with womanhood, motherhood, and the capacities of African women to forge positive identities for themselves within and despite patriarchy have yet to be fully explored (see Ogden 1991). This is the level at which this thesis may make its most important contribution: more fully to understand the processes underlying the vulnerability of urban Ugandan women to HIV infection.

1.1.1. HIV/AIDS in Kampala: some current figures

In order to understand the extent of this vulnerability it is necessary to have some fundamental epidemiological knowledge. But first a cautionary note: data presenting rates of HIV seroprevalence are taken largely from antenatal, hospital inpatient, and AIDS testing centre records, and are therefore drawn from particular kinds of populations - those who are sexually and

reproductively active; those who are already sick enough to be admitted to hospital and those who have reason to think they may already be infected. It is therefore likely that HIV seropositives may be over-represented in this data, and so it should be read with these qualifications in mind.

A study conducted in 1992 at Rubaga Hospital (a large private hospital in Kampala) found that of the patients who agreed to give blood for HIV serology (equal numbers of men and women) 55.6% tested positive for HIV. The same study found the prevalence to be almost 30% (28.8%) in women attending the antenatal clinic (Tembo et al 1994). In a study conducted at the AIDS Information Centre, Kampala's main HIV testing centre, the HIV-1 prevalence overall was 28% (24% in men, and 35% in women) (Muller et al 1992). Noreen Kaleeba, who set up The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) following her husband's death from AIDS, translates these percentage rates into numbers of people: of Uganda's total population of 16.6 million (half of whom are less than 15 years old), there were an estimated 1.5 million people infected with HIV-1 in Uganda in 1992. By 1993 that figure was expected to reach 2 million; at the current rate of transmission - without significant changes in behaviour and condom use - there are expected to be 4.3 million infected by 2013 (Kaleeba 1993).

These numbers are alarming and sobering, even given the possibility that the real prevalence rates are somewhat lower. The implications for "safe sex" are important: where the incidence of a sexually transmitted pathogen may be as high as, say, 20%, it may be supposed that any unprotected

intercourse makes one vulnerable to infection. This makes a nonsense of the notions of "high risk groups" and "high risk behaviour", and of the intervention campaigns that admonish people to "love carefully". In fact, recent evidence indicates that despite the fact that most women are already "loving carefully", they continue to fear infection from their male partners (McGrath et al 1993) and are afraid/unable (for reasons to be outlined in the thesis) to discuss their anxieties with these partners (see also van der Straten et al 1995). Such findings underscore the imperative to devise more appropriate kinds of interventions, and I hope that the research presented in this thesis may be able to contribute to that important project.

1.2. The Research Site

1.2.1. UGANDA

Uganda (Map 1), once known as the Pearl of Africa, is a lush, fertile country that straddles the equator in eastern/central Africa. Uganda is bordered by five countries: Zaire to the west, Rwanda and Tanzania to the south, Kenya to the east, and Sudan to the north. Lake Victoria takes up a large section of the south-eastern border. Uganda's population of 16,671,705 is predominantly rural-based: only 4.6% (775,000) of the population live in Kampala which is by far the most densely settled urban area. Jinja has the second highest population of 65,000 (Population and Housing Census 1991).

Uganda's equatorial climate gives it good overall annual rainfall of up to 1270 mm., and fairly constant year-round temperatures of around 23

Celsius. The coolest temperatures (down to around 20 C) and most rainfall occur in the two rainy seasons - March to May and August through November (Morgan 1973). This means that the vast majority of the land in Uganda is fertile, well watered, and excellent for agriculture. The main cash-export crops are coffee and cotton, while a huge variety of produce for local consumption is grown. The main staple food crop - grown throughout the country (except in the relatively more arid north) is a variety of green banana known in Luganda as *matoke*.

A number of Uganda's many ethnic groups were at one time kingdoms (notably the Baganda, Banyole and Banyoro), and although Kingdoms were abolished in 1967 (see below), they are currently being reinstated. Uganda's main Nilotic, para-Nilotic and Sudanic groups - the Acholi/Labwor, Alur/Jonam, Langi; Teso, Karamajong, Sebei; Lugbara and Madi respectively - are mostly located in the dryer northern districts. The larger of the Bantu groups - the Banyankole, Bakiga, Banyoro, Baganda, Bagisu, etc., live dispersed across the centre of the country, from west to east respectively (see Map 1). Although English and Luganda are still the national languages this is a matter of considerable debate. Part of the justification for retaining Luganda as one of the National languages is that the Baganda are numerically the largest ethnic group, making up about 20% of the total population of the country (Langlands 1975).

1.2.1.a. Postcolonial Political History-

Uganda's postcolonial existence has been riven with civil war and economic plunder. Since independence in 1962, power has changed hands seven times, each time through violent take-over or outright civil war. The first government, set up at independence, had the Kabaka (King) Mutesa II as head of state, and Dr. Milton Obote as Prime Minister. This Coalition Government lasted until 1967 when a new democratic constitution was put into effect, Kingdoms were abolished, and Uganda became a Republic. The Kabaka himself was exiled to England. In 1971 Obote was ousted in a bloody military coup, and General Idi Amin Dada became self proclaimed President for life. Amin's reign of terror, genocide and economic destruction has become the stuff of legend, and lasted until April 1979 when he was ousted by Yousef Lule's Ugandan National Liberation Front. Lule only lasted two months. In June 1979 the National Consultative Council replaced him with Godfrey Binaisa. Less than a year later, in May 1980, Binaisa was ousted in a bloodless coup, and in December elections Obote was restored to power. This second Obote period, 1980 -1985, was characterised by unprecedented repression, cruelty and violence. In 1985 Obote was again ousted amongst much bloodshed, again in a military coup, this time led by Brigadier Basilo Okello. Major General Tito Okello, Basilo's brother, became president, and began a campaign of slaughter against Obote supporters and anyone else that opposed his leadership. It was not until 1986, when Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) finally won its protracted "bush war",

fought since 1980, that relative peace and stability have ended the bloodshed and made way for economic recovery in Uganda.

Museveni's government is not without problems or critics, however. There continue to be bloody insurgencies in the North where a group of former Okello supporters defy efforts at reconciliation. Museveni has also come under fire for his resistance to the introduction of multi-partyism, although he has agreed, in principle, to bow to the will of the people in this matter. The NRM has, however, made it a priority to introduce democracy at every level of decision-making in the country through the development of Resistance Committees (discussed below) and by sanctioning freedom of speech and a relatively free press. In 1987 -1988 the NRM government invited the IMF/World Bank, albeit with some reluctance, to begin to restructure the economy (Hansen & Twaddle 1991: see Lateef 1991; Ochieng 1991; Mugenyi 1991 for a discussion of structural readjustment in Uganda), making way for foreign investment and the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure. During the fieldwork period the effects of structural readjustment were apparent on a number of levels. In addition to the infra structural developments - the rebuilding of Kampala city centre and the huge influx of foreigners and their cars and foreign exchange - the Ugandan shilling was substantially inflated against other currencies. In late 1992 when fieldwork began there were about 2,000 Ugandan shillings to the Sterling pound. By April 1994 the pound was worth only about US\$ 1,600.

During the field work period the Kabaka of Buganda, Ronald Mutebi,

was reinstated, and other former kingdoms were campaigning for the return of their own monarchies. Another important recent development was the election of a constituent assembly, set up for the review and debate of the draft constitution. Those elections were held in March 1994, and the Assembly was just convening at the time I left the field.

Despite these changes the formal economy in Uganda cannot yet sustain the population. Instead people survive through active participation in the thriving informal sector. Even those in waged or salaried employment must supplement their earnings in other ways. Poverty continues to bite hard across the social strata, but the breadth and strength of the unenumerated economy is such that almost everyone is able to find or generate an economic niche to meet their basic needs (again, see Wallman & Others, forthcoming; also Wallman & Baker forthcoming).

The political system at the grassroots-level is a central feature of people's lives. The NRM government has encouraged popular participation in national government through the institution of Resistance Committees (RCs) throughout the country. This is a pyramidal system rooted at the village level in a committee of nine directly elected representatives. These nine make up the RC1. At the next level, the RC2 or parish level, representatives are elected by the RC1 members; the RC3, or district level delegates are in turn elected by the RC2, and so on up to the level of the National Resistance Council itself. The committees are made up of a chairperson; vice-chairperson; secretary; finance secretary; secretary for mass mobilisation and education, secretary for

information; secretary for women; secretary for youth; and secretary for defence. At the RC1 and RC2 level, these officials are well known to most local residents. In addition to informing the upper levels of government of the needs at grassroots, the RCs play a key role in the daily lives of residents. They arbitrate disputes between neighbours, family members and spouses; they can liaise between local residents and officialdom on a number of levels; they provide an organisational infrastructure through which projects for local improvements can be channelled; and they can intervene on a personal level to assist residents in a variety of ways. A significant role played by the RC1 secretary for women, for example, is to give advice and solace to women who are having difficulty with their marriages - a point to which we shall return. Despite a number of more macro-level glitches (outlined in Hansen & Twaddle 1991:4), the RC system seems to be extremely popular at the village and parish level, and is an element in the general sense of optimism that pervades the country.

1.2.2. KAMPALA-

Kampala, Uganda's capital city, was originally at the centre of the Buganda Kingdom. Near the turn of the century (around 1890) the Kabaka Mwanga requested the "protection" of the Imperial East Africa Company, which obliged, and Captain Lugard set up his fort on Kampala hill, one of the many hills clustered in what was the heart of the Buganda kingdom (Southall & Gutkind 1957:1-4). The town was then built upon and around the basis of the

old Kingdom, on seven of these hills, although there seems to be little consensus on which seven (ibid). Joelson (1928) - making a rather flowery analogy with Rome - lists Nakasero (Kololo), Namirembe (the seat of the Protestant mission), Rubaga (the seat of the Catholic mission), Nsambya, Mengo (the seat of the Buganda kingdom), Makerere, and Mulago. Today urban sprawl is such that it is difficult to see which of the many hills in and around Kampala might have been the "original" seven.

The colonial administration thought it prudent to divide the commercial and political functions of the Protectorate between Kampala and Entebbe, a beautiful town situated on Lake Victoria about 40 kilometres to the southwest of Kampala. Entebbe was chosen as the political/administrative centre, "partly for its beauty, partly for its supposed superiority over Kampala in conditions of health, partly also for strategic reasons" (Southall & Gutkind 1957:3), and partly to distance the administration from strictly Baganda affairs. This division has always been a matter of debate, and the current administration has now moved all governmental ministries to Kampala.

The Uganda Agreement of 1900 confirmed the Kabaka's allegiance to the British Crown, and established the relationship between these two main political players. Although the specifics of the treaty changed periodically over the years, it was not abolished altogether until independence in 1962 (Southall & Gutkind 1957). It was within the framework of this relationship that legislation for the administration of Kampala as a township was eventually written and implemented. This is discussed in more detail in

Chapter 2.

Today the largest single ethnic group in Kampala continues to be the Baganda, who make up 60.6% of the total population. According to the 1991 Population and Housing Census the second largest ethnic population in Kampala are the Banyankole/Bahima who comprise 5% of the total population of the city, followed by the Batoro/Batutu/Basongora group at 3.6%, and at the lowest end of the population ladder, the Bafumbira at 1.2%. It is important to note, however, that if a census were arbitrarily taken on any given working day, the numbers of non-Baganda might be higher. It was thought that many urban-living people went home to their villages on the day of the census, both as an identity issue, and in order to boost the population figures in their home districts for political reasons. Although the actual figures are likely to be different, however, the general proportions are probably consistent.

Kampala, like the rest of the country, suffered from neglect and outright abuse through the years of instability and crisis. Much of the post-Independence population growth was accommodated in unplanned settlements. No sanitation, water, electricity, roads or regulated housing was provided in these areas, and the conditions of life were - and continue to be in some places - extremely difficult. Even the neighbourhoods that fell within the jurisdiction of the Kampala City Council fell into disrepair during the difficult years of the 1970s and 1980s. Now that peace and stability have returned to Uganda, however, so have many of the political and professional exiles, and they - together with the growing number of Euro-American and

other expatriots - are stimulating new growth in the housing and construction sectors. This prosperity does not extend, in the main, to the unplanned - but nonetheless densely settled - urban neighbourhoods in and around the city such as the research site for this thesis, Kamwokya II, discussed below (see also Wallman & Others, forthcoming, Chapters 1 and 2).

1.2.3. KAMWOKYA II-

Kamwokya II Ward, Central Division, Kampala (Map 3), is located about six kilometres from the city centre, and is within walking distance of Mulago Hospital, the main governmental teaching and referral hospital in Uganda. Kamwokya II (pronounced "Kam-o-tcha") covers an area of about .5 square kilometres, and according to the 1991 census the total population of Kamwokya II was 12,079 giving the area an overall density of 23,000 per square kilometre, the third most densely populated area in Kampala (see Wallman & Others forthcoming Chapters 3 & 4). Kamwokya II is an area of extreme socio-economic heterogeneity, and includes some of Kampala's poorest, as well as some of its better-off residents. Kamwokya II has a thriving localised economy, although its "industry" is largely unenumerated, and exists almost entirely within Kampala's growing and vibrant informal economy (see Wallman & Baker forthcoming). The ethnic composition of Kamwokya II as a whole is slightly different than that for Kampala: 49.5% Baganda, 6.5% Banyankole/Bahima, 5% Batoro/Batuku/Basongora, and 6% Bafumbira. Many of this Bafumbira population are clustered in Kifumbira I

and II, two of the ten RC1 zones that comprise Kamwokya II (from here forward referred to simply as Kamwokya). The actual research site for this thesis, discussed in more detail below, was Kifumbira I.

Kamwokya, like similar suburbs of Kampala, grew up during the long period of Uganda's insecurities over the past two decades, and the area is almost totally unplanned. There are no municipal facilities to speak of - no planned sewerage system (all waste flows in open sewers that cross-cut the area like so many rivers), and only a rudimentary sanitation service provided by the Kampala City Council. The Catholic church which has a strong presence in Kamwokya recently had standing water pipes installed, one in each zone. This recent availability of clean water has made a substantial difference to the quality of life for many Kamwokya residents, and there was some talk of a similar proposal being made for sanitation. There is, however, much debate about where responsibility for the unhealthy conditions of the 'slums' should lie (see Wallman & Others forthcoming, Chapters 5 & 11).

1.2.4. KIFUMBIRA I-

Kifumbira I is itself densely populated (1,460 people living within an area of roughly 2500 square metres) and socio-economically diverse. It is an hour-glass-shaped wedge that extends from one boarder of Kamwokya into the heart of the commercial area of the Ward (see Map 3). Residents cut across the socio-economic strata, although the bulk of the population are of low-income, and live clustered in the 'slum' area in the very heart of the zone . It is

within this most densely settled part of Kifumbira I that most of the field-work for this thesis was carried out. Field work was conducted in this area for primarily practical reasons, but data gathered on behalf of the larger ODA project covered Kamwokya more generally, and these were also available to me.⁺

The area was originally settled by migrants from Kigezi (Bufumbira) in the extreme southwest of the country (see Map 1). Almost half of Kamwokya's total population of Bafumbira live in Kifumbira I, and they still make up an important proportion of the zone's total population. Nevertheless, the zone was ethnically diverse at the time of research. It is interesting to note that, according to the 1991 Population and Housing Census, there are 318 Bafumbira living in Kifumbira I compared to 385 Baganda, 107 Banyarwanda and 83 Banyankole/ Bahima, as well as representatives from several other Ugandan ethnic groups, notably Alur, Acholi and Batoro peoples. But the influence of the Bafumbira predominance here is still subtly apparent. There is a core of long-time residents who were early migrants to the area, and these households (many headed by women) continue to attract southwesterners. Secondly, although English and Luganda are the *lingua franca*, most residents - especially the women - speak the rudiments of Lufumbira, and at the very least know how to greet in that language. Nevertheless, among the non-Bafumbira there is a very general sense of ethnic superiority. This was

These data include a large ethnographic survey of 700 households, and Women's Survey of 250 women respondents. The questionnaires for the surveys were administered by Kamwokya residents who were trained and supervised by ODA project staff.

expressed in typical boundary-statements during small-scale disputes and arguments between neighbours.

In more recent years there has been what is in effect a second wave of ethnic migration to Kifumbira I. For reasons I was unable to discern, this part of Kamwokya seemed to attract a great number of Banyarwanda - some of them first generation Ugandans. Although the situation is beginning to change in light of the recent events in Rwanda, at the time of field work the many Banyarwanda people I met in Kampala tended on the whole to re-classify their ethnicity depending on where in the country their families settled. The reluctance of the women I worked with to reveal their Banyarwanda origins indicates that there were some ethnic animosities, and these were revealed in various ways in the month prior to and following the events of April 1994.¹ Despite these general points, the overwhelming impression of the area is that, for women at least, ethnicity is of little importance in the formation of friendships and other relationships of reciprocal assistance. It is not the "difference that makes the difference" in terms of the way people organise everyday life (Wallman 1996).

In addition to being ethnically heterogeneous, Kifumbira I is socio-economically diverse. Along the outer boundaries of the zone there are some relatively affluent families who live in permanent houses with good security walls or fences, and piped water either within or near the compound. The people living in these houses are generally civil servants or other workers who are given housing as part of their salary. There may also be office workers,

landowners and other sub-elites living there. The majority of the population of the area, however, live clustered in the densely settled, unplanned "slum" in the centre of the zone.

In Kifumbira I most of the dwellings have been constructed so that each room houses an independent household. Whole families (and sometimes extended families) tend to live in one room which serves as both living and sleeping space for all household members. The houses themselves are often of poor construction - generally of mud-bricks with old iron-sheeting roofs - and the interior walls rarely reach to the ceiling. Thus, as well as there being little privacy within a household, there is little privacy between households. This is a situation which lends itself to tensions and suspicions between neighbours (Chapter 7).

Those living in this part of Kifumbira I pursue a range of economic activities. Generally speaking, residents are not employed within the formal sector. The men are largely casual labourers and hawkers working in the city centre. They are engaged at every level of the informal economy, and only their considerable skill at manipulating whatever resources may be at their disposal enables them to make ends meet. Most of the women here are also involved in income generation. Such is the degree of innovation they exhibit in thinking up ways of earning money, that a list of their occupations would be very long indeed. The essential factor for many women - especially for women who are married and/or have children - is that they try to find a way to generate income from home. The women I worked with sold charcoal and

tomatoes and other daily necessities (such as onions, ground-nut powder and packets of curry) from outside their houses; sold locally brewed alcohol by the glass from home; made mats and other handicrafts; cooked and sold fried snacks such as *sambusas* and *chapatti*. Others unable to earn from home tried to find evening work such as selling cooked food at the local candlelight market or selling sweet bananas and milk along the road in the evening. The consensus among the women was that it was important that they bring in some money, but it was also important that they be able to attend to chores in the home and look after the small children. Only a very few women in this area had domestic help, and those that did usually had a young relative from the village who worked in exchange for food and lodging.

Work is not organised cooperatively. Neighbours may help each other, however, in any number of ways. Young children wander freely amongst neighbouring households, and are seen as the collective responsibility of an area. If a mother has to go to the market or on some other near-by errand she may - if she is on good terms with her neighbours - just go and leave the children playing, safe in the knowledge that whoever is around will have an eye on them. Similarly, a woman vending from her house who is on good terms with her neighbours can trust that, if she is busy or temporarily away from her wares when a customer comes, her neighbour will sell on her behalf and give her the money later.

1.3. Fieldwork Process-

It is important to note that fieldwork for this thesis was framed by the ODA project on which I worked during the entire doctoral research period. Part of my role as field manager on that project involved establishing the project's presence in the area, and so from my earliest days in Kampala I spent quite a lot of time familiarising myself with Kamwokya and its people. I also knew from the outset of that project that I would be responsible for collecting case study data from several women at the end of the fieldwork period. Therefore the decision to locate my doctoral research within Kamwokya, and the culmination of the research in the case studies, were due specifically to my work on the ODA project. The data for three of the case studies presented in this thesis was initially collected for the larger project (see Wallman & Others 1996, Chapter 6) but while that project obtained specific additional information about treatment seeking and illness episodes not covered here, my questions on personal networks and absent children, and three of the cases themselves, are not shared with the ODA project (Chapter 6 below).

Thus the two projects were intimately linked but distinctive.

Nevertheless, establishing special and separate space for my own questions was at times logistically difficult. Locating my research in Kifumbira I was an important step towards clarification. Kifumbira I had been the pilot site for the ethnographic survey and as such it was not an area in which the project had an on-going presence or interest. This kept the confusion to a minimum, for

myself no less than for the residents themselves, quite a few of whom seemed amused that they had their very own *mzungu*^{**}. It was, however, something of a happy accident, as I selected Kifumbira I for quite different reasons.

As mentioned above, the ODA project trained and employed local residents to administer questionnaires in two large surveys. One of the residents working on the project was Mrs Jane Mugerwa, the RC1 Women's Secretary for Kifumbira I. During the survey periods Jane and I got to be acquainted. I observed that she developed a professional but compassionate rapport with respondents and that she was articulate and candid in discussing her culture and life in Kamwokya. She also seemed to administer the questionnaires with skill and care, and took an interest in the responses. At the conclusion of the second survey Jane agreed to work for me as research assistant and interpreter. As such she became an integral part of the research process and of the findings themselves.

Jane is a Muganda woman in her early 30's who has been living in Kamwokya for about ten years. She came to Kampala when she "married" a man many years her senior. Jane was educated through S4. Her husband has fairly steady work as a lorry driver, and she enjoys the independence this gives her. In addition to her own two children, aged 7 and 4, Jane fosters her "grandson" (the child of her husband's son) and provides daycare for her brother's daughter. Partly as a consequence of her time in my employ, Jane has started to raise and sell broiling hens. While she does not make a large profit

^{*}*Mzungu is the Kiswahili and Luganda term for European or white-skinned person.*

she does manage to raise a bit of independent spending money. Jane is the only woman I met in Kamwokya who has consciously and specifically decided to stop bearing children. Her husband, she says, has many children from prior marriages and is not concerned about having any more. She couches her own decision to limit her fertility in terms of AIDS, and asks: "What if I get AIDS and die? Who will look after all those children? If I have two then I will not have problems finding somewhere for them to go. If I have four, five or six what relative could manage?"

My decision to concentrate my fieldwork in Kifumbira was largely due to my decision to work with Jane. Although I discussed with her the possibility of working in other areas, she felt uncomfortable with the idea. As the women's secretary for Kifumbira I, Jane is acquainted with most of the women in the area. She is their elected representative, and they trust and admire her. Outside of Kifumbira I Jane would have had no authority to enter people's houses and make demands on their time and knowledge. In Kifumbira I she did have this right. Initially I was worried that there would be an element of coercion involved, or that as a politician Jane would "select" respondents, but in the event I was satisfied that the women who participated in the research did so out of interest, curiosity or simply kindness and hospitality. It was not difficult to discern when a respondent was unhappy or uncomfortable with our questions, and we made an effort to minimize our contacts with those people.²

I also made an explicit effort not to alienate the women I worked with

by directly asking probing personal questions about their sex lives and HIV status. This could be regarded as both a strength and weakness of my personal fieldwork style and method. Despite the limits it may have placed on the data, however, I defend the approach on the grounds that by respecting their privacy I engendered the trust of my respondents, and was thus able to pursue these issues laterally. I entered the field, and therefore their lives, with the assumption that they were "ordinary" women who were managing their lives as best they could under particular kinds of economic and environmental constraints. I was interested not in their reported behaviours but in the narratives themselves. The integrity, the logic, of the truth they selected to impart to me is the very fabric of this thesis, and I tried to reach this "truth" through various methods. It is not, nor could it be, nor *should* it be, an objective truth.

It is important to note that I did not attain fluency in Luganda, and so relied heavily on Jane's interpretation of responses. We spent many hours together going over the notes of the day, and where there seemed to be inconsistencies, or when things were unclear, we either went back to the respondent for clarification, and/or cross-checked with other respondents, and/or discussed them with other English speakers. Where particular concepts, words or ideas seemed especially key or complex I tended also to take them out of the field for discussion with Luganda speaking friends and colleagues. These conversations were at times crucial to my understanding (see note 2, Chapter 7). I also feel that the triangulation of methods I employed in carrying

out the fieldwork helped to minimize the Jane-bias. Many of our interviews, and all of the group discussions, were taped, and these tapes were transcribed into Luganda and then into English by Luganda- speaking Makerere University graduates.

When the surveys for the ODA project were completed I was able to begin fieldwork in earnest. For the first few weeks Jane took me around Kifumbira I so that I got a feeling for the size, ethnic and economic composition of the area. We had many informal conversations with residents during which the nature of my work and the fact of my continuing presence was established. Early on in this period Jane organised a group of women for the first formal group discussion which was focused mainly on the Proper Woman. We held these more formal group meetings periodically throughout the fieldwork period when I felt certain sets of questions could usefully be explored through discussion and debate rather than one-on-one or small informal group conversations. The group discussions likewise clarified issues to be taken up on an individual basis, and it was usual to have a few weeks of interviews following on from a group discussion in which the same themes were discussed first with, for example, older women, later with younger women, and perhaps even with men or youths depending on the topic³.

Participant observation was also an important method of data collection. Many hours were spent holding or minding babies, playing with small children, peeling *matoke* or simply watching life unfold. This was an invaluable way to acquire knowledge about daily life: for example



neighbourhood relations, gossip, witchcraft, economic transactions, daily chores and activities, and ethnic relations. The unstructured and semi-structured interviews, as well as the structured and unstructured group discussions, enabled me to pursue in more detail many of the questions that arose out of participant observation.

Case studies and reproductive life histories were also collected from six women (the approach and selection are discussed in detail in Chapter 6). Extra time was spent with these six both at home and, as was necessary in one case, at their place of work. Although I attempted to obtain verbal "time-budgets" from the case study women, I found that it was much more effective to obtain this information through observation. During this final stage of field work observation was mainly focused down to a small cluster of households in the centre of the zone (Map 4), and this area is described in more detail in Chapter 6. Less formalised specific case histories were also collected from a number of older, longtime residents of Kampala as well as from women with specific reproductive health problems.

In general field notes were taken in abbreviated form and written up later. In some cases I felt uncomfortable taking notes in front of my informant, especially if she was discussing something "secret" (i.e. witchcraft), or especially personal. In these cases I relied on recall - sometimes with Jane's help. Although none of the women were "paid" for their participation, I periodically gave them small gifts of soap or sugar, and often filled prescriptions, took people to the hospital and more occasionally

helped with rent or even food in times of crisis. If group discussions were arranged formally I provided sodas.

In writing up the research I have not made any effort to disguise the field area itself. All place names are real. I have also given the actual names of the officials I spoke to outside of the field area itself. The names of all other informants, however, are pseudonyms. Many of the women were known to me as Mama So and So, and it was not until we administered formal interview questionnaires that we learned their given names. I have not, in every case, maintained the tekonymy in the thesis, however, in a further effort to protect the identities of my informants.

1.The day I left Uganda, 6 April 1994, was the same day that the plane carrying Rwanda's newly elected Hutu president crashed under suspicious circumstances. This event sparked off several months of genocide and civil war. I subsequently followed events through the English news media, and via friends living in Kampala. When I returned to Kampala in October 1994, the Tutsi led RPF had regained control of the government and much of the killing had stopped. Many Banyarwanda - some of whom had lived in Uganda all their lives - were talking of returning to their homeland. Rumours were rampant that those returning would be given land, housing, jobs in the civil service, or businesses left vacant, their original owners having been slaughtered or exiled as refugees. Among the women that I worked most closely with, there was much difference of opinion about going back. Some, especially with small children, felt that Uganda was now their home, and as difficult as life was, they preferred to remain where there was peace. One of my key informants, however, and Mama Beth, known also as the Auntie of Kifumbira, was very interested in the prospect of returning, and was saving her money for the bus fare to Kigali. I recently got word that she has now returned to Rwanda where she was expected to be given land and a house in the countryside.

2. There was, for example, one old man who was extremely suspicious of me, and no one in his family was permitted to speak to us. The women told me this was because he was a strict Catholic and thought that I was there to promote contraception. Be that as it may I also heard him proclaiming that no one in the slums should ever trust a white person, as they could only be there to exploit and impoverish.

3. It must be admitted, however, that a weakness of the thesis is that I failed to discuss the issues with men in any consistent or systematic way.

CHAPTER 2

Urban Woman in Africa: seeking respect

The history of women's presence in Kampala has had an important effect on the ways in which urban women are viewed today, and therefore affects the framework of meanings within which they construct their identities. This chapter reviews some of the early, colonial-era literature on Kampala to uncover this history, and expose the foundations of this semantic framework. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 2.1 deals with the history of women in Kampala, and how the "all pervasive" and "tenacious" stereotypes of these town women as "prostitutes" arose and was perpetuated. It is argued that these stereotypes persist and play an important part in the social construction of feminine identities today. The argument is made that this history has had a special influence on the lives of contemporary Kampala women.

Section 2.2 is a brief review of the literature that exists on marriage in Kampala. It will become evident that marriage plays a key role in women's capacity to construct legitimacy in their lives in the urban context, and this literature provides the historical and ethnographic context within which the data collected for the present study must be understood.

Because this chapter reviews mainly the colonial era ethnographic literature it comes up against an inevitable dilemma. The analyst (in this case me) is at once dependent upon the data supplied by the colonial anthropologists, while at the same time necessarily critical of it. Parkin (1990)

has recently articulated this dilemma, noting that much of this work reflects "the view from the office" - the particular political and academic language of the research institutes from which it emanated, rather than the "voice from the field" - or the language of the informants themselves being used to express the data. Thus I have tried to read beyond the language of the ethnography - which is sometimes jarringly pre-feminist - to locate indications of local meaning categories, especially those related to women. At the same time, however, it is unknown, and perhaps unknowable, to what extent these categories were actually shared between informant and ethnographer. The dilemma can only be solved, it would seem, by extracting the dominant themes. In any case, the moral and semantic meanings that were being constructed through the colonial project - and are reflected in that period's ethnography - were undoubtedly influencing the norms and values of the African city-dwellers as well (see Jeater 1993).

2.1. The History of Women in Kampala: Laying the foundations for the "Proper Woman"

Southall's (1961a), now classic, urban typology posits that there are, broadly speaking, two types of African town. Type 'A' towns, he argues, are "indigenous" towns: old established conurbations with ethnically homogenous populations and relatively slow rates of growth which accommodate a gradual in-flow of migrants. The in-migrants must conform to the "scale of status" provided by the indigenous town population. Type 'A' towns retain strong links to the agricultural bases of the surrounding rural areas. Type 'B' towns,

on the other hand, are classified as newly established areas characterised by "mushrooming" growth, ethnically mixed immigrant populations, and sharp distinctions between town and countryside. Included in this category are those towns created by colonial governments as industrial, mining or administrative centres. In 'B' type towns there tended to be tight administrative controls on most structural aspects of life, and policies were developed to discourage the permanent residence of migrant labourers. Housing, for example, was assigned to labourers, and was legally contingent upon proof of gainful employment. Men who brought their wives and families to town often found it difficult or impossible to accommodate them. Furthermore, the industrial economic foundations of the urban centres did not provide employment opportunities for wives.

Taken together, these features of urban life, as Southall (ibid:9) notes, "put the women which these centres invariably attract in a highly anomalous position". Whereas the position of women in 'A' towns was established and clearly constituted an integral part of the areas' social and economic structures (the Yoruba market women, for example), the women who migrated to 'B' type towns had no structurally legitimate presence. For unmarried women the opportunities for town living were even more restricted. Southall (1961a:47-51) argues persuasively that colonial policies which were predicated on the need for African (male) labour, undermined women's options in towns, and led to all urban women being stereotyped as prostitutes (cf. Southall & Gutkind 1957).

Kampala can be considered an imperfect Type B town. Imperfect because prior to the establishment of Uganda as a British Protectorate, Kampala was the centre of Buganda - one of several kingdoms within the territory now known as Uganda (see Chapter 1). Because of this pre-Colonial existence as a cultural and political centre, Southall (1961a) originally classified Kampala as Type 'A'. When the country did come under British administration, however, and an agreement between the Crown and the Kabaka (King) of Buganda established Kampala as the industrial centre of the colony, it became much like colonial cities set up all over Africa during this period, not least in terms of its policy on women (cf. Jeater 1993; Schmidt 1992).

In time, a sizable, ethnically heterogeneous male migrant labour pool moved in from the rural hinterland. Women, too, came to Kampala, though generally not the wives of male migrants. Many, perhaps the majority, of these women were Baganda, were single or divorced, and perceived of town life as an opportunity: these women, like the men, came to town in search of their fortune (Obbo 1980). Unlike the men they did not come to join a waged work force. They came, rather, to fill economic and social niches provided by the absence of wives. Another important difference between the women and the men who came to town is that on the whole the women were immigrants rather than migrants. They came to stay (see Southall 1961a; Southall & Gutkind 1957).¹

The economic opportunities generated by the lack of wives had a down

side for the migrant women. Because the original population of Kampala was predominantly made up of male migrants, and because wives were discouraged from accompanying their migrant husbands, single women that came to the city were assumed to be prostitutes. Southall and Gutkind (1957) predicted that this would continue to colour perceptions of town women, and this seems to have been the case. The ethnographers themselves, however, seem also to have played a role in perpetuating, if not creating, this stereotype. Southall and Gutkind (ibid), for example, state that while some of these single urban women may have been "seeking husbands to give them companionship, children and the security of some recognised marital status," others developed "insatiable appetites for sexual pleasure" (ibid:72). The writers go on to claim that women in this second category made things much harder on those in the first. Generally the assumption of the colonial project was that women migrated to Kampala

" ... in search of freedom and fortune, wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of sampling many different mates... Men wish to enjoy the relatively free opportunities for loving any woman who attracts them. " (Southall & Gutkind, 1957: 72-73).

These types of assumptions were central to colonial policies on urban women, and the criminalisation of single women in Kampala was instituted in the 1950s when the colonial government established the Vagrancy Acts and the Prevention of Prostitution Acts. Obbo (1975) claims that these laws were established specifically "to harass women and the poor in general." The City Council and Kibuga officials (African appointees), Obbo writes, periodically arrested single women who were found in low income areas of the city.

According to Obbo (1975:290) this law defined as a prostitute:

"...any woman who habitually gives her body indiscriminately for profit or gain, or who persistently indulges in promiscuous intercourse with men though she derives no gain or profit thereby."

Thus almost any woman could be guilty of prostitution. Obbo argues, in fact, the law sought to control the movement of women to town by labelling all urban women as prostitutes (ibid; on similar policies in Northern Rhodesia see Jeater 1993).

Ultimately, however, the laws were difficult to enforce, and failed to deter the continuing flow of women into the growing conurbation. In fact, as early as 1953 - 1957, Southall & Gutkind found that in one suburb women made up nearly 40% of the population. By the early sixties the sex ratio in Kampala had more or less evened out (Obbo 1980), and today we have found that in some age groups women actually outnumber men (Wallman and Pons 1995). The following paragraphs explore the reasons for the migration of women to Kampala, and address the implications of these negative stereotypes on the construction of feminine identities.

2.1. 1. Reasons Women Migrated to Town

Despite legal and moral injunctions against them, unmarried and divorced or separated Ugandan women persisted in moving into the urban areas. It is likely that important changes in rural agriculture, the stimulation of the urban economy, and growing influence and importance of Christianity all played a role. These fundamental issues, however, are not addressed in the colonial-era

ethnographies concerned with urbanism in Kampala. Instead, that literature focuses on the consequences of marital breakdown in the villages, and the types of economic options eventually taken up by the women migrants.

2.1.1.a. Divorce or Separation

Southall and Gutkind (1957) were of the opinion that most women came to town after the failure of traditional marriages in the rural areas. Halpenny (1975:281) provides some statistics that reinforce this notion. Looking at marital status at the time of migration, Halpenny found that 33.5% of Ganda women in Kisenyi had migrated to town alone following a rural separation. A further 6% of the Ganda women migrants had remarried following a rural separation. 40% of all Ganda women migrants to Kisenyi in that year, then, had left unsatisfactory marriages in the rural areas. The reasons cited for ending a rural customary marriage include childlessness, polygyny (when one's husband decides to take another wife) and lack of sexual satisfaction (ibid; cf. Obbo 1980). Swantz (1985) also found this to be the case in Tanzania: there were twice as many divorced women in Dar es Salaam than in rural areas, but no appreciable differences in divorce rates for rural and urban dwelling men. The importance of the marital status of these urban migrants will become even more evident below.

2.1.1. b. Economic Opportunity

The break up of a customary marriage, for whatever reason, can place a woman in a difficult situation vis a vis her family, and give her an ambiguous social status in the village (see eg. Hakansson 1994). If the situation becomes so unbearable that she decides to leave her village, it may mean irrevocably cutting off all rural ties. Indeed some of Obbo's informants claimed that "starting a new life" was their primary motivation for migrating to town (Obbo 1980:75).

Women who migrated in this way had very little means of supporting themselves (Rakodi 1991), and were thus compelled to manage in the city on their own. The city provided occupational niches that the women could fill using skills they carried with them from the rural areas such as brewing various types of local alcohol and selling cooked food. Commercial sex work of some kind was probably also resorted to by some. Despite the range of economic niches filled by these single migrant women, however, it was this latter option that coloured dominant stereotypes (op cit:143; cf. Wallman & Pons 1995). As Obbo notes,

"Unskilled urban women on the whole adapted rural-learned skills to new situations of commoditised transactions. Urban women became unequivocally identified with commoditised sex in private and public utterances" (Obbo 1990:9).

It should be noted that there was significant ethnic variation in the styles of migration for women, as the status of single women and the kinds of economic options open to them differ from group to group. A number of

categories of single urban women emerged that to some extent reflect these ethnic differences. These are discussed below.

The preponderance of single women in Kampala prompted much interest among the anthropologists, and a number of studies were made taking single urban women as a focus. This literature is a rich resource. Much of it, however, describes single urban women in what today seems an uncritical, that is under-theorized, way. This in itself is an important part of the argument here: the negative evaluation of single urban women was indeed pervasive. It was a taken for granted status - so taken for granted that the outsider analysts accepted it relatively uncritically, and may themselves have been influential in its perpetuation. The comment made by Southall and Gutkind (1957), quoted above (p.32), is one example.

Obbo's work (eg. Obbo 1980) represents an important break with this tradition, and she offers a more female-centred analysis. The essential point to be made here is that the historical foundations laid by earlier migrants - the reasons for their migration to town, the ways in which they managed urban life, and the ways in which the wider community perceived of their presence - continue to influence the semantic field of identity construction. The challenge here is to try to untangle the various threads of ethnographic interpretation and bias. One mechanism for achieving this end is to compare some of the data presented in previous work with that collected for the present project, and this is undertaken below.

In the literature single women are usually divided into two categories:

independent and dependent, but the authors are not always consistent in their usage of these terms. Halpenny admits that by "independent" he means women who are **not** "wholly reliant upon having sex with men for their income/livelihood"; and by "dependent" he is referring to women who **are**. According to this typology, independent women are land owners (usually Baganda), and dependent women are prostitutes of one kind or another.

Obbo (1980) presents a broader, less phallocentric, typology which takes marriage, rather than men and sex as such, as the referent. Dependent women, she argues, are those who are "married" (emotionally and economically attached to a man) and cannot support themselves outside of this marriage (typically Luo women); independent women are those who can and do support themselves outside of marriage/emotional attachments to men (typically those from Bantu groups, notably but not exclusively the Baganda). In Obbo's classification "prostitutes" would be "independent", whereas by Halpenny's definition they are "dependent".

Mandeville (1979) writes of the difficulties single women encountered in obtaining formal employment. She, more in tune, perhaps, with Halpenny, argues that many single women support themselves (and, sometimes, their children) through love affairs with men, although she stresses the fact that this is not the same as prostitution:

"It is clear that there is very little that all-female households can do to raise themselves out of severe poverty, and the sufficiency of clothes, food and education, plus savings for illness and emergency, requires generous and sustained support from other people" (Mandeville 1979"50).

It should be noted, however, that for many of the women in Kamwokya, being considered "independent" is not necessarily an asset socially. Most, if not all, of the women - and men - involved in the study we conducted there (Wallman & Others, forthcoming) would agree that it is important for a woman to have some means of income generation, whether or not she is married. The ideal, however, is for a woman to be in a stable, emotionally and economically supportive relationship with a man who is able to provide for the basic needs of the family. A man in the position to provide such support would approximate the local definition of husband (*muame*). A man who does not make a significant economic contribution to the household is referred to as *muganzi* or "lover", even if he lives there more or less permanently. Emotionally and financially independent women - generally unmarried - are considered a threat to "married" women, and are often at the centre of witchcraft accusations. In the majority of cases, independent women are not considered proper women unless they are widowed or mature and well established.

I would not classify any of the women in my study as "dependent" women. I think they would also reject this label. Jane, my research assistant, referred to herself as being dependent upon her husband, but even she has started an income-generating project of her own, to lessen this dependence. My feeling is that "dependence" is much too passive a term to be appropriate in describing any of the women I know in Kampala. Some of the women interviewed for this study did have some periods of dependency during their

adult lives, but this was usually early on in a marriage, often, although not always, when resident in a rural area. When describing these periods in their lives the women usually said something like, "I wasn't doing anything. Only eating" (see Cases, Chapter 6). It may be that this is some kind of ideal statement, although it must be stressed that none of the women interviewed claimed to be "doing nothing" now. Most stress the importance of dual incomes these days, even if the husband is working fairly regularly.

The following discussion highlights and critically discusses the ways in which the statuses of single women have been treated historically and in the literature. There are three main points to be made. Firstly, the early literature discussing single urban women classifies them narrowly as either independent land owners (typically older, childless Baganda women) or as those women earning a living off the vaguely "illicit fringe" of urban life as beer sellers, bar girls and/or prostitutes. Secondly, as indicated above, there has, perhaps unsurprisingly, been a widening of status and occupational options for these women, although the more contemporary situation is no less ambiguous or fraught in terms of basic social and personal identity options. Thirdly, the original stereotypes that were derived from the earliest days of the city continue to exist despite important changes in the status and occupation options for women in town.

2.1.2. Independent women

In order to more fully understand the past statuses of urban women, it is important to note the special opportunity that exists for Baganda women in relation to land ownership.

In 1900, the year that Uganda became a Protectorate, an agreement was written up between the new administration and the Kabaka of Buganda which enabled Baganda women to inherit, purchase and own freehold land in their own right. This gave Baganda women an unprecedented choice - a choice not shared with other women in the region. They could either "do the right thing" - that which their families would expect of them - and get married, or they could remain single and become economically independent land owners (Obbo 1980: 44). According to Obbo there were women who did both. Because husbands were not generally in favour of their wives being land owners, however, some women saved up for and bought their land in secret. Obbo notes that when a man discovered this it often resulted in quarrels or even separation. After such a separation a woman might migrate to another rural area or she might move to town and establish herself there. Thus a new land owning class of Baganda women emerged. These women became known as *banakyeyombekedde* (sing. *nakyeyombekedde*).

The ways in which these independent women are discussed in the literature is not entirely consistent. Southall and Gutkind (1957), for example, refer to a "stable core" of six land owning individuals in Kisenyi. Five of these "stable" land owning urban residents were women, most of whom were

childless and fostering the children of relatives. Interestingly the authors do not address this gender imbalance, or remark upon it as being in any way special. The pattern of older, childless, women developing independent economic means is still evident today. Many of the older women in my field area were childless and have lived in Kampala for decades, running small businesses and renting out properties they have developed over the years. These women are still referred to as *banakyeyombekedde*.

Halpenny (1975) also discusses the phenomenon of the *nakyeyombekedde* whom he defines, somewhat vaguely, as a "female household head who is not dependent on a man" (Halpenny 1975:282). As mentioned above, however, Halpenny's central referent in discussing the relative independence of urban women is sexual behaviour, and this may be why he apparently failed to notice the centrality of land ownership to this particular status. He goes on to describe the *nakyeyombekedde*, stressing that "her economic independence gives the *nakyeyombekedde* the right to choose her lovers, and she may support them" (ibid). Alternatively, he notes, such a woman might choose to have rich boyfriends "who appreciate the company of mature, non-dependent women", and if she is older still, she might decide not to have anything to do with men at all. He writes:

"The *nakyeyombekedde* may visit men in their rooms or men may come to stay with her, but her economic independence is always uppermost in determining her place of residence and whatever arrangements exist with her lover" (ibid: 283).

Obbo (1980) and Mandeville (1975, 1979) also write of the relative *sexual* independence of economically self-supporting women, although in very

different terms. Obbo, for example, argues that Baganda women were at a significant advantage to the non-Baganda, particularly those from the Nilotic tribes. In her terms, where the system of resource distribution was unfavourable to women, as in the case of the Luo for example, women were less able to manipulate the status quo in town. Because Baganda women could be self-supporting, on the other hand, they asserted their rights with regards to sex, motherhood and marriage. *Banakyeyombekedde*, she argues, established the option to not bear children for a man's lineage. They derive status and identity through land ownership in contradistinction to motherhood and marriage. According to Kisekka, *nakyeyombekedde* translates as "she shuts herself in", which in addition to referring to women of independent economic means, referred to those whose apparent choice to remain single and childless was thought to be the result of some sort of abnormal sexual problem (1973:49).

Mandeville (1975) also mentions the relationship between economic independence and relative freedom in sexual matters. She writes that separated or divorced women are not keen to remarry formally. These are women whose personal experience tells them that formal weddings do not guarantee secure marriages,

"and, rather than have a husband at the price of obedience, restriction of movement, and loss of financial autonomy, most of them say that they prefer the independence of taking lovers, which also allows them to save for old age" (Mandeville 1975:187).²

In a later article Mandeville remarks that "women who are prosperous

have love affairs, and sexual pleasure is celebrated"(1979:42).

According to Obbo (1980) and Kisekka (1973), *banakyeyombekedde* existed outside of as well as within cities. They were usually mature women (35+) who, in the rural context, did not "interfere" with married men, although did they have young, unmarried, lovers with whom they often enjoyed stable relationships. Town-living *banakyeyombekedde* were apparently less discriminate in choosing their lovers. They were resented by married women and feared by men, the former referring to them as "husband snatchers" (Obbo 1980:90) or *kubasingula* (Kisekka 1973:50), and the latter referring to them as "purse snatchers" (Obbo 1980:90). Obbo concludes, that

"...if women enjoy a high degree of decision-making with regard to their sexuality, it becomes a threat to those men who observe or associate with them and have only limited categories in terms of which to think about female sexuality" (1980:90).

This fear and resentment towards women who are not in a stable "marriage" are discussed further below. The women that are currently thought of as "husband snatchers" are not, on the whole, *banakyeyombekedde*, but those without a firmly fixed status or identity outside of marriage; women who struggle to survive. Women, in short, with relatively ambiguous social identities who are presumed to want husbands above all else, and who may be willing to resort to drastic measures to get them.

2.1.2. a. Brewers and Sellers of Local Alcohol-

All economically independent women were not (and are not)

banakyeyombekedde, as that term connotes a certain age and level of affluence. In earlier days, as now, many Baganda women did not inherit or purchase land but nonetheless migrated to town and needed to support themselves. Likewise there were then, as now, many non-Baganda women migrating to towns who did not have the option for land ownership. Southall & Gutkind (1957:62) found that "together with prostitution in its varied forms, *beer selling* is one of the main foundations of the new found economic independence of African women" (my emphasis). They note that landowning Ganda women might use beer selling to supplement their "already won independence", but that

"the much larger number of landless women divorced from their husbands, and of girls who fail to marry and who see no tolerable future for themselves in their rural homes, rely more vitally on beer selling to maintain their independence" (ibid:62).

Beer selling was evidently such a popular pursuit among urban women at this time that, although "other women weave mats, act as assistants in African owned shops, hotels or bars, and sell plantains, buns or charcoal", apparently "none of these occupations can rival the attractions of beer selling, either in the ease with which money can be made or in the pleasure to be had while doing so" (ibid:62).

Consistent with his phallogocentric typology, Halpenny (1975) does not mention beer- selling as a significant economic option for the women in his

study, except to the extent that a young woman

"may get a job working in the *munananzi* (pineapple beer) business or as a barmaid, where salaries are so low that they must be supplemented by sex" (Halpenny 1975:284).

Moreover Halpenny argues that if an urban woman does not either become *nakyeyombekedde* or enter into a stable relationship with a man, "...then as she gets older *and becomes less competitive she becomes derelict*" (ibid: 284-285, my emphasis).

Southall & Gutkind (1957) provide the most detail on the local beer industry in Kampala. They describe a variety of alcoholic beverages, and a sort of hierarchy of brewing and selling based on skill, experience and ethnicity. In Kisenyi at the time of their research there were between 60 and 100 beersellers, three-quarters of whom were women (mostly Ganda, but also Batoro and Bahaya), all working within an area of around 50 acres. In those days beersellers could purchase houses from their profits which could then be rented out for additional income. Although brewing and selling local alcohol was not strictly legal at the time, successful beersellers apparently enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. In addition, Southall & Gutkind (1957) suggest, that women involved in the selling of beer tended also to be involved in commercial sex, although the ethnographers acknowledge that "prostitution" is a misleading aegis for these activities.

Brewing and selling alcoholic drinks of various kinds continues to be a largely the purview of women. At least one woman in my study area was prospering from her business of selling *waragi* (local gin) from her home. She

had even saved enough to buy a plot of land nearby on which she was building a house. The majority of single women who sold *waragi* or other local alcoholic drinks, however, did so on such a small scale that they were barely eking out a living. Mary, for example, sells *waragi* by the glass in her home. She had a small group of "regulars", but the numbers were dwindling. She lost quite a lot of business when she kicked her boyfriend out, as many of her customers were his friends. I was never able to ascertain the extent to which Mary was involved in commercial sex, and it is some testimony to the complexities of commercial sex that this is so despite the fact that I was with her nearly everyday, and many evenings, for well over a year. Another informant, Namakula, sold *tonto*, the local pineapple wine. Namakula is an old *nakyeyombekedde* who has lived in Kamwokya for nearly 30 years. She appears poor, but owns the house where she lives and operates her business. A number of young women stay there and work for her. When asked what it was these young women did, Namakula explained: "they help me to sell *tonto*".

The vagaries and complexities of commercial sex work, and its history in Kampala, are introduced below but will continue to be explored in later chapters.

2.1.2.b Commercial Sex Work-

This section provides a discussion of the various levels of commercial sex work in Kampala as described in the literature, and will explore the reasons for, and consequences of, the stigmatisation of urban women that developed as

a result. It is hoped that through this synthesis and elucidation some sense will be made of the role history has played in shaping the norms and ideals women must negotiate to forge a legitimate place for themselves in urban Uganda today.

The categories of "sex worker" fall under three broad headings. First are "true prostitutes". These are women for whom sex is a business. They charge a pre-set fee to men who may be total strangers. The Bahaya are singled out by Southall & Gutkind (1957) as well as by Parkin (1969) as dominating this particular business. Southall & Gutkind (1957:82), in fact, posit the question: "Why the Haya should be so addicted to this pursuit has never been adequately explained". Secondly there were the *bamalaaya*, most thoroughly described by Halpenny (1975). These were women who did not consider themselves to be prostitutes, but who typically had a number of boyfriends. The boyfriends gave them food, money or other gifts which provided for their subsistence. Thirdly Southall & Gutkind (op cit) refer to "good time girls" who spent their time at bars, offering sex in exchange for beer. Clearly these categories were neither mutually exclusive nor so explicitly delineated in real life. There were undoubtedly all shades in between, and certainly subtleties that the ethnographers failed to recognise. Southall & Gutkind, though, acknowledge the ambiguities in these terms, and admit that in Mulago village women who were neither married nor formally employed were labelled prostitutes, even though there were only four "self-proclaimed prostitutes" living there at the time. The women must have

resented this wrongful designation. Southall & Gutkind recount the story of one such woman who had worked hard as a brewer to earn sufficient money to build houses from which she was getting a comfortable income, "free from male interference". When a local man made the mistake of referring to her as a prostitute, this woman allegedly beat him severely (Southall & Gutkind 1957:178).

Some of the confusion between these terms is also apparent in the discussions of urban marriage: Parkin (1975) describes unformalised urban marriages as "temporary", Mandeville (1975, 1979) refers to "free marriage" and Southall & Gutkind (1957) to "concubinage". Evidence of this confusion is rife, but may be best exemplified by Halpenny's (1975:282) peculiar assertion that "the *malaaya* may sometimes think of herself, and be thought of, as having multiple 'husbands', a kind of polyandry".

"True Prostitutes"

Parkin (1969) found a specific area of Kampala that seems to have been where many single Bahaya women settled and worked. This area, called "Kwaziba", was "a thriving place of recreation and leisure, providing facilities which poorer migrants can afford" (Parkin 1969:15). Interestingly Halpenny (1975) refers to the "true prostitutes" in his study simply as the "Ziba women". These women, Halpenny writes, live in one particular area and receive men in their rooms. They do not,

"roam about, moving with men, but their total income is dependent on sexual relations with innumerable men in rapid succession...charging a flat fee per occasion" (1975:283).

Moreover, according to Halpenny, these women might save their money, buy some property and eventually retire as *banakyeyombekedde*.

Parkin also mentions another area of Kampala called "Kiswa" of which he writes:

"A large proportion of residents are prostitutes, *or just enterprising women of self-employed status*, who charge considerably more for their services than the women of Kwaziba" (Parkin 1975:15, my emphasis)

Their customers, according to Parkin, tended to be non-residents of higher socio-economic status who came into the area for beer and sex.

Obbo (1990) deconstructs the category of prostitute, and underscores the fact that in general prostitution was regarded as a moral failure of women - the men who paid the prostitutes not, apparently, being implicated. Obbo describes three tiers: 1) highly paid prostitutes catering to rich men; 2) less sophisticated women who did not derive all their income from commercial sex; 3)"hotel room" prostitutes catering for poor men.

Bamalaaya-

Most writers admit that the "flat fee per occasion"-type prostitutes were not the norm. Southall & Gutkind (1957:86) refer to a "mixed" form of prostitution that "women practise as a convenient complement to beer selling, mat making, plantain and charcoal selling or sewing". This second type of commercial sex may have been more common among the Ganda women, who

these writers claim were less frank about their sexual activities than the Bahaya. Ganda women entrepreneurs generally refused to set a fee for sex, "simply waiting to receive presents and indicating clearly whether they are adequate enough".

Southall & Gutkind (1957) also discuss the category of women who "keep lovers". Women who "practise this type of social existence try to cultivate an intimate and more or less permanent circle of men friends" (ibid:161). Men tended to see this kind of arrangement as an opportunity to try out a wife without having to make a long-term commitment. The women received gifts, food, housing, companionship and, less often, money. Halpenny (1975) discusses a category of casual sex worker called *malaaya*, which he presents in contradistinction to *nakyeyombekedde*. *Bamalaaya*, Halpenny argues, are often but inaccurately referred to as "prostitutes". Unlike the "Ziba" women, these do not charge directly for sex, but get involved with men who give them favours, gifts or food. The *malaaya* in this scheme would not consider herself a prostitute, but might get involved with a number of men either serially or concurrently. If she lives with one of her boyfriends she may consider him to be her 'husband' for as long as she stays, but these unions were apparently not necessarily long term. It is unclear whether these women had other means of income generation, although Halpenny, by referring to them "dependent" women, would seem to suggest not.³

Mandeville writes similarly of women who are "kept" by their lovers. She asks

"whether the practice of soliciting money from lovers is better viewed as a preferred alternative to employment or as an essential supplementing of inadequate incomes" (1979:42).

...and finds that "love affairs... may be more appropriately considered under the heading of domestic finance than as an adjunct to a discussion of marriage" (ibid). In other words, unemployed single women *need* these relationships to survive. Moreover, Mandeville argues that these relationships are not considered to be prostitution in the eyes of the community, and indeed that "acceptance of financial support from lovers is quite consistent with a woman's respectability" (ibid:43). Whether or not the women she writes of would be considered *bamalaaya* by Halpenny's definition is not clear. But she is explicit that she is talking of a category of single women (unwed, divorced, and widowed) who have love affairs but do not consider themselves, nor are they considered by the community, to be prostitutes. Mandeville is rather less clear about the nature of these relationships, if either partner ever expects that they will become permanent, and whether they are serial or coterminous.

"Good-Time Girls"

Southall & Gutkind (1957) discuss another category of single women they call "good time girls". These were young women who apparently spent their time in local bars and had sex with men who bought them beer. It seems likely that these girls might have been referred to as *bamalaaya* by some, or even Ziba or prostitutes by others. These categories are extremely flexible and almost seamless in their ambiguity. It is not difficult to imagine that there

were many different ways of combining these activities, whether combining them with other forms of income generation, practising them for some periods and not in others, or avoiding them altogether.

2.1.2. c. Women who aspire to marriage

Women in this category may include individuals from the previous two.

Southall and Gutkind (1957) found that one of the differences between their two research areas was that, while Kisenyi seemed to be characterised by many women of the unattached, *bamalaaya* variety, Mulago had rather more women and men who seemed to "aspire to marriage". While these researchers were told that "a man would not look for an ideal marriage partner in Kisenyi" (ibid:77), this was not the case in Mulago. One explanation for this disparity is that while the sex ratio in Mulago was fairly well balanced, there was a preponderance of women in Kisenyi. Thus, the men and women in Mulago were able to

"operate on two levels - the level of short term sexual satisfaction and the level of making a careful long-term choice of a marriage partner...Most Mulago men ... are looking for wives" (ibid:176).

Men and women got together in temporary unions as lovers under an (unspoken) agreement whereby the two lived together without undergoing any ritual or bridewealth payment. These unions might end after a few months or could last a lifetime. Southall and Gutkind note that these "marriages" were especially important for women, giving them a "seal of respectability", a point to which we shall certainly return.

In Kisenyi, on the other hand,

"Women come... in search of freedom and fortune wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of sampling many different mates...(and) Men wish to enjoy the relatively free opportunities for loving any woman who attracts them"(ibid:72).

One woman informant explained:

"After all, men as well as women in Kisenyi are like plates used in a hotel. Anyone is free to use them" (ibid).

And finally,

"Town women (like those in Kisenyi), it is felt, are bad women, and they are to be used for pleasure but not to be married. All women who work for wages tend to be put in this category. The good woman, according to this set of ideas, is the one who stays at home in her husband's room, refuses to speak to strangers and remains unprofitably idle" (ibid:77).

2.1.3. Dependent Women

The social and economic structure of Kampala during its days as a Protectorate and in the early years of independence, did not really allow for "dependent" women as per Obbo's (1980) definition (as above, p.37). On the contrary the women that were in the city were generally unmarried and self-supporting. Writing in the 1970s Elizabeth Mandeville (1979) remarks that in Kampala, the woman on her own who did not work in some way to support herself was a rarity. And, with a very few exceptions, I also found this to be the case in the present study. There is some indication of ethnic variation, however, which merits mention.

Parkin (1969, 1976) divides Kampala's ethnic groups into the

interlacustrine Bantu - the "Host" tribes -and the Nilo-Hamites -the 'Migrants,' and deals in detail with some of the differences between them in terms of occupational, political, recreational and marital style. Parkin elaborated on the contrast between these two groups most especially in relation to marriage. Put briefly, marriage for the Migrants is constituted in a high value bridewealth payment which is made in one complete or nearly complete transaction from the family of the groom to the family of the bride. This transaction gives the husband jural rights as the social father (pater) to all children born to his wife, regardless of biological paternity. It also renders the woman a member of her husband's lineage. The bridewealth is recoverable should the wife leave her husband, or, in some cases, if she should prove unable to have children. On the bride's side those to benefit most directly from her marriage are her brothers who will use her bridewealth for their own marriages, and it is the brothers who stand to lose most should the marriage fail. It is common, therefore, for a woman's brothers to put pressure on her to be a good wife and not to jeopardise the relationship by, for example, having outside boyfriends (an activity which was thought to make women infertile). Because they do not belong to their father's lineages, Migrant women cannot inherit land, and Parkin found that it was rare for them to own any property of value. Migrant men, Parkin writes, do not generally want to marry girls that have grown up in town "unless their parents or strict brothers have looked after them"(1969:95). This relatively unambiguous patrilineal system allows little room for the negotiation of a woman's identity beyond its association with wife- and

motherhood (cf.Hakansson 1994).

Marriage among Host tribes, on the other hand, is characterised by a relatively low, non-recoverable bridewealth payment, once known as a bride "thanksgiving" (Lusembo 1990). The contract is considered to be more between the bride and groom than between the two families, and the groom obtains rights only in the children he fathers himself. Women in these groups retain their natal clan membership although their children take on the tribe and clan (and religion) of the man who fathered them. Daughters in this system can inherit property, and "it is common practise for women to own property in their own right and to transmit or dispose of it as they please" (Parkin 1969:92). This ambiguity in the degree of patriarchal control over a woman's social identity, and the relatively greater economic scope this system offers women, lends a degree of negotiability to the identity construction of Bantu women not enjoyed by the Nilo-Hamitic migrants⁴.

It is clear, then, that women migrating to town from the Nilotic regions (the North and East, mainly) were coming from a system that offered less scope for identity construction than those of the "Host" tribes (from Southern, Western and Central regions). Recalling Halpenny's figures, over 77% of the Luo/Luhya women in Kisenyi were married when they moved to town, as opposed to less than 35% of Ganda women. Correspondingly, under 14% of Luo women came alone, as opposed to over 57% of Ganda women. The remaining 9% of Luo women and 4% of Ganda women migrated with their parents (Halpenny 1975:281). Interestingly these patterns persist.

Wallman & Pons (1995) found, for example, that for Central Region and Kampala the overall sex ratios are well below parity, and women outnumber men at virtually all ages. Looking at the sex ratio pattern for Northerners, Westerners and Easterners, on the other hand, the situation is very different. With these groups sex ratios are low in ages up to 24 years (slightly more girls than boys). The ratios then rise sharply for adults, and adult men outnumber adult women.

"It thus seems evident that in the Eastern, Western, and Northern regions there are persisting patterns of migration which bring more adult men to Kampala than adult women..." (ibid: 11).

Obbo (1980:92) classifies those women who are either single or divorced but are unable to be self-supporting as "unattached dependent women". She notes that their lack of access to land ownership tends to make Luo women especially prevalent in this category. Obbo suggests that single Luo women in town may be: 1) widows who have declined leviratic marriages; 2) women who said that they "could never settle down" (cf. note 2, Evans-Pritchard 1984:117-118); 3) women who, for some reason, have forced their husbands to divorce them; 4) young, unmarried mothers who refuse to live in polygynous marriages; and 5) women who have objected to a first marriage so strongly that they have taken the "desperate step" of running away. If a Luo marriage is dissolved the woman returns to her natal home and remains the dependent of her father and brothers until she remarries. Traditionally there is no approved role for a Luo woman outside of marriage.

Luo women, then, tend to be in a position of dependence more often because their culture does not give them a socially recognised option to stay single. A further category of "dependent" women identified by Obbo (ibid:123) are "kept" women, who by today's standards, would probably be considered "married". These unemployed women have "husbands" who provide an easy and leisurely lifestyle for them. Obbo claims that these women "were despised" by the other women in the area, despite the fact that there was some concern for women who depended entirely on a man's income for survival. Obbo makes the point that not all dependent women intended to stay that way, and a number of women in her study area who were apparently dependent, did in fact have economic activities of which their husbands were not aware (ibid).

Today the situation is undoubtedly different in some respects, although similarities remain. As noted above it is still unusual to encounter women who are financially dependent. Few single adult women have anyone to be dependent on. Even married women are unlikely to be wholly reliant upon their husband's income, and most have some means of income-generation. In fact with the increasing numbers of early deaths due to AIDS, people are commenting that it is especially important nowadays for women to acquire income-generation skills, so that they will not be left without means should their husbands die.

2.1.4. Women as the Keepers of Tradition/ of the moral community?

Early women migrants to Kampala were faced with a male-oriented wage employment structure that gave them few opportunities for "legitimate" (legal, respectable, laudable) income generation. Nevertheless they brought certain skills and a certain kind of experience with them. They also brought expectations of a better, less constrained, lifestyle. Some of these women, in a position to exchange the burdens of conventional rural life for economic independence in town, eschewed marriage. Others, with or without independent economic means, aspired both to marriage and the legitimacy it lent to their presence in town. As demonstrated, however, these women were not generally considered by men to be potential wives. Rather, by the very fact of their presence in the city, these women were labelled as prostitutes and "good-time girls". Obbo (1980) found these lowly opinions of urban women persisting well into contemporary times. Indeed she was told by informants that "urban migration is bad for women because it corrupts their virtue, leads to marital instability, and erodes traditional norms" (Obbo 1980:27-28).

Urban residents regarded the problems associated with town life - weak family structures, increasing juvenile delinquency, violent crime - as being the inevitable outcome of the fall of women into urban debauchery (ibid). The reason urban women were held in contempt, she argues, is not only because they had broken away from and altered the system of male control over their lives. More crucially they had transgressed against a more fundamental virtue: that aspect of gender ideology that places the onus of the community's

morality on women.

Obbo argues further that, in ideal terms, women in Uganda are seen to be the "mediators between past and present, while men see themselves as mediators between present and future" (ibid:143). In a similar vein Larson (1989) argues that the "intense ambivalence expressed towards urban African women" is in part a result of the fact that

"[b]oth men and women are uncomfortable about many aspects of urban life, and the associated social changes that have occurred so rapidly. The 'modern woman' ... is equated with evil because she serves as a highly visible symbol of a loss of tradition...The viewpoint being expressed is that men cannot be expected to return to traditional ways but that society could remain pure if women did" (Larson 1989:718).

This emphasis on women as keepers of tradition, and of urban women as transgressors against traditional morality, also exists in the earlier monographs, as many of the statements already quoted from Southall & Gutkind, Parkin and Halpenny show.

Because of the persistent devaluation of their moral fortitude, urban women became increasingly concerned with respectability. This was perhaps most blatantly expressed in the curious phenomenon of 'Nubianization' (Obbo 1980:108-110). Obbo found that, "unlike other ethnic groups which blamed the decline of their cultures on female migration to the towns, the Nubi culture was itself a result of urban transformations" (ibid:108). It was possible for women who felt that they were not respected, or whose reputation was in doubt, to *become Nubi* - convert to Islam, learn the Kinubi language, and adopt some version of *purdah* - usually under the guidance of an older Nubi woman.

The transformation could take up to six months, but once 'Nubinized' a women could apparently continue her previous activities - whatever they may have been - with impunity. Obbo provides the example of one Nubinized woman who, although

"her head cover was the flimsiest in Namuwongo...men no longer talked loudly about her being 'loose'....[t]he constant lowering of the eyes in public gave the appearance of submission and obedience, and was recognised as an effective strategy that obtained respect for women who thereby appeared to be under male control" (ibid:109-110).

The dominant stereotypes of urban women as immoral and not worthy of respect, however, persist into the present day and have an important effect on normative and ideal constructions of femininity and womanhood in Kamwokya. For many women, "marriage" is the main means by which respectability can be achieved, and this is discussed below.

CURRENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS URBAN WOMEN -

KIFUMBIRA WOMEN TALKING:

Not a lot has changed regarding general stereotypes of urban women as sexually dangerous. Under his presidency Idi Amin banned mini-skirts, and although that ban was later lifted there continues to be active public debate about the propriety of wearing short skirts and trousers. During the research period a number of stories appeared in the local press of mini-skirted or otherwise "scantily clad" women being physically or verbally harassed in the streets of the city. The women in my field area had this to say on the subject during a discussion group:

- "A woman should not put on expensive clothes, because the way one dresses can make her be respected. Like when a housewife puts on mini dresses, people will not respect her."

- "...at times you can meet a woman and you really see that the way she is dressing does not fit her age. Even you, the person who has met her, feel ashamed...She even feels it difficult to walk in such a dress because she cannot make strides... "

- "I think the type of dresses that beshame us are those ones which have a slit."

- "Doesn't such a woman have a daughter? Why doesn't she take the skirt to a tailor to have [the slit] blocked? Now, if you have a daughter and you put on a slit, she will also. How will the public differentiate between you, the mother, and your daughter?"

- "The way one dresses shows what she is. One should put on a dress or skirt which is not tight, and should not put on short dresses which stop at the knee and when you see her she looks like a tree/stick!"

One informant, an older Muganda woman named Grace explained her belief that there are more barren women "these days" than in the past due to loss of tradition. In town, Grace insists, women no longer conduct the rituals at first menstruation that protect them from becoming barren.

"Now they [women] are being punished. In town if you practice some of those traditional things people will call you a "night dancer" (witch) and call the RCs. In the villages more people are doing the traditional things because no one bothers them. But for town women it is difficult. If they do the traditional things they are called witches. If they don't do those things they are barren. And these mixed marriages make things worse because the woman has not done the proper rituals for that man's tribe. Now how can she produce [children] for that clan?"

2.2 Legitimacy for Urban Women- Marriage and the Proper Woman in Kampala

"Thus, [she] was a prostitute because of economic necessity but she sought marriage as a protection from the lack of self-respect she felt"
(Obbo 1980:108)

In order to understand the texture of women's lives and the ways in which they negotiate meaning for themselves within the urban context today, one must know something of the history of their involvement on the urban scene generally and in the economic structure of Kampala more specifically. It is fortunate in this regard that Kampala was well researched by urban anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s. The ethnography generated during those early years of Kampala's existence as an industrial centre illuminates much about the patterns of behaviour, the norms, and roles of city women today. The social identity imputed to these early women migrants has had a lasting impact on local stereotypes, and consequently on the development of a set of norms and ideals that frame what is today regarded as the proper woman. It will become clear in this section that the current ideal of formalised marriage has developed for two reasons: 1) during the early days of the city all single women were criminalised, and were taken to be prostitutes. For a single urban woman to escape this criminalisation, therefore, it was imperative to find a man who would accept her as a "wife". 2) In addition to conferring legal legitimacy to one's position in town, "marriage" also gave women immigrants to town a more fixed identity as a member of a lineage. That is to say, through marriage townswomen hoped to attain the same kinds of rural and

symbolic legitimacy enjoyed by rural women.

A number of reasons why women may have chosen to migrate to town were discussed above. Whatever their reason, however, women migrants, on the whole, entered town in a state of ambiguous identity, similar to that of unmarried women in strict patrilineal systems such as the Gusii where,

"[b]ecause most women have no source outside marriage for economic security and social respectability, they value stable unions and actively seek to avoid the breakdown of both cohabitations and marriages... Women repeatedly emphasized the fear of living under the constant threat of expulsion, social disgrace, and economic depression... Leaving the man will expose her both to gossip and ostracism for being a loose woman and to economic insecurity and poverty" (Hakansson 1994: 528).

Much of the earlier ethnography took marriage and the relationships between women and men as a focus. It appears that colonial era anthropologists were concerned about the instability and lack of conventionality of urban marriages. Explanations for the instability of urban marriages included: significant sex-ratio differentials; ethnic mixing; high numbers of single women uninterested in marriage; relatively high numbers of "barren" and divorced women and economically independent women, none of whom were considered marriageable; relative weakness of corporate kin groups; and the fact that many women and men migrating to towns wanted to escape tradition and custom (eg. Southall & Gutkind 1957; Parkin 1976; Mandeville 1975; Obbo 1980). On the other hand all of the authors note that there were women and men looking for the stability, respectability and prestige that they could only derive through a permanent conjugal union.

Because of the complexity and variety of conjugal relationships observed, most of these ethnographers made some attempt at classification. These typologies are elaborated here to provide a backdrop to the contemporary situation.

Southall & Gutkind's (1957) study makes a serious attempt to illuminate the nature of sexual relationships between women and men. They note that there were, broadly speaking, three types of "temporary" sexual unions ("prostitution", "lover relationships", and "free marriage") and two recognised forms of marriage (customary and Christian) in evidence at that time. It was not uncommon for "temporary" unions to become formalised marriages, as it was the trend for men and women to live together as a means of "testing the relationship out" before making a longer term commitment.

Parkin (1976), who also conducted fieldwork prior to Uganda's independence, identified a similar fluidity, or processural quality, in marital categories in Kampala. He broadly classifies the different urban marriage styles as "permanent" and "temporary". "Permanent" marriages according to Parkin were those contracted according to "tribal custom" in the home area; by religious (Christian or Moslem) ceremony; or civil marriage at a District Registrar. He notes that any of these types of marriage may have been accompanied by some form of bridewealth payment or transaction. A marriage could be designated as "permanent" (respectable, socially sanctioned, expected to last) without any of these rituals having been performed if some form of bridewealth payment was made, and/or if children were born. Parkin

notes that townspeople used one or both of these criteria, in conjunction with the length of time the couple had been together and degree of harmony between them , to ascribe "permanence" of this kind to a union.

A temporary marriage, on the other hand, was one established in town. No bridewealth was paid, and the woman often entered the union childless. If the woman conceived, however, there was a chance that the union would become permanent. Parkin's paper also highlights the importance of ethnic affiliation in determining marital styles in town (see Section 2.1.2.c)

Obbo (1980) also pursues these themes, although by the time of her research in the 1970s the situation had changed to the extent that there were increasing numbers of single Luo women living in Kampala. She underscores Parkin's main point, however, by noting that if an unmarried Nilotic woman migrated to town, it indicated some serious social failing on her part to others from her group . For these women marriage could only be forgone at the risk of bringing "mystical pollution" to their lineage, and incurring the wrath of brothers or fathers who may have had to refund valuable bridewealth payments (Obbo 1980: 92 - 94, see above sections 2.1.2.c and 2.1.3).

Mandeville (1975), whose paper on marriage in Kampala was based on field work conducted in the 1970s, takes a more positive view of urban marriages. Mandeville indicates three points that are essential to a union being considered a marriage:

1) monogamy for the woman; 2) the man's acknowledgement of their children as his own; 3) emphasis that the partners are "husband" (*omwami*) and "wife"

(*mukyala*) and not simply "lovers" (*baganze*).

In a "free marriage", by contrast, "a man may want his lover to be sexually faithful, and she may pretend to be so to please him, but he has no right to demand it" (ibid:186). Partners in a free marriage do not necessarily refer to each other as husband and wife, and a woman in such a union may have children begotten by a number of different men.

Mandeville (ibid:187) argues that "free marriages" are appropriate in town, especially for older, economically independent women who may be divorced, widowed or separated. These women, thought by urban men to be "too independent and unreliable to be chaste, obedient wives" are not anxious to marry formally. In addition, Mandeville notes that

"[t]he contrast which women draw between their chaste and submissive approach to their first marriage, and their independent, cheerful and often predatory attitude to subsequent unions is striking" (ibid:188).

2.3. Summary-

This chapter has demonstrated that the urban experience for Ugandan women is framed by the early and persistent evaluation of their participation in negative terms. Part of this participation, therefore, has been a struggle for legitimacy through economic and symbolic means - through hard work and marriage. This struggle must have taken many different forms in the different socio-economic strata that comprise the city. The concern here is with "ordinary women", those living in the densely settled, lower-income neighbourhoods of Kampala. These are women with little formal education,

few specialised skills, and generally no access to waged employment. Many of these women came to town following the failure of rural marriages that left them with bleak future prospects in the village. They came to town to forge new futures for themselves, and they came to stay.

Chapter 3 explores the ways in which urban values, norms and ideals are generated and perpetuated, and what this means for the construction of female identities.

1. Fascinating recent evidence of this fact is discussed by Wallman and Pons (1995) who found that in certain age groups women have increasingly come to outnumber men in Kampala. A probable reason given for this shift in sex ratios is the fact that while men may tend to dominate numerically where there is a strong formal, or wage economy, when that system collapses (as it has in Uganda), women are particularly skilled at locating and generating economic opportunities within the subsequently emergent informal economy. The roots of this gendered disjunction were visible even in the early 1950s when Southall and Gutkind were conducting research.

2. Somewhat surprisingly during a recent re-reading of Evans-Pritchard's classic *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* I came across the following comments made in reference to unmarried women: "A girl is dissatisfied with the man to whom she has been espoused and provokes a divorce...This may happen a second time with a second husband and her parents may find that they cannot control her and let her do as she pleases....Those unmarried concubines whom I have known personally have been women of strong character who valued their independence and did not value matrimony. Nuer recognise that they are temperamentally unfit for normal married life and are unlikely to settle down till they are old." (Evans-Pritchard 1951/1984:117-118).

3. Today the word *malaaya* is used pejoratively to refer to a woman, invariably unmarried, who is suspected to be sleeping around with other people's husbands. It is *also* used to refer to "true prostitutes", typically women who dress up and go to tourist hotels, discos and bars to find men with money. During the course of field work I never heard the word 'Ziba'. It may have fallen out of usage since that particular part of Kampala, Kwaziba, in which it was current, is not the site of the Nakawa College of Business and Commerce. It is no longer a residential area.

4. In a recent article Hakansson (1994) discusses the importance of the nature of patriarchy itself in determining the negotiability of a woman's status and identity. He argues that not all patriarchal systems are equally unambiguous in terms of the identity of women. Even within the Bantu cluster he finds there is wide variation. Where the patriarchal value is stronger women have less negotiability and fewer identity options; where the patriarchal value is weaker there is more scope for negotiation. This is an important revision of his earlier work which took unambiguous patriarchal control of women's lives as given (cf. Hakansson 1987).

CHAPTER 3

Norms, Networks and the Flow of Information in Urban Settings: towards an understanding of some basic concepts

In Part III of this thesis the notion of the proper woman will be defined and discussed. It will become evident that certain rules of behaviour and demeanour appropriate to women are encoded in the notion. The proper woman, or *omukyala omutufu*, transcends ethnic boundaries and defines status. It is not a single norm or ideal, but a whole package, a framework for behaviour as well as a yardstick against which one is measured and can measure herself.

As Chapter 2 shows, urban women in Uganda have historically been considered sexually free and morally inferior to rural women. Some Baganda women were able to over-ride these negative definitions of their persons by becoming *bakyeyombekedde* and asserting their economic and sexual power and independence. Most migrant women, however, did not have this option. For these others, marriage and motherhood were crucial for casting off the negative stereotype and achieving respectability. Paradoxically, however, as the Kisenyi example from Southall & Gutkind (1957) cited in Chapter 2 (p.52) illustrated, the fact that women were so negatively viewed meant that formal marriage was rarely an option for them. In light of this, and other aspects of the urban scene, men and women came together in companionate unions. These "marriages", although insecure in some respects, did offer women a chance to establish themselves as wives and mothers in town, always with the hope that if they were "good enough" their husbands would marry them

properly and secure their futures (Chapter 2). It is not difficult to see how, in this context, a notion of 'proper womanness' would emerge, and that marriage and sexual morality would constitute important aspects of it.

Knowing what, or who, the 'proper woman' is, and where the notion comes from, however, is not sufficient. It is also important to understand how and why the concept took root in this setting; why there seems to be such consensus on the meanings encoded in the concept, and how it is perpetuated. Answers to these basic sociological queries are sought in the pioneering ethnographies of colonial urban Africa; especially the literature concerned with network, norms, neighbourhood and the flow of information.

3.1 Social networks, roles, and the generation, negotiation and perpetuation of norms-

Two objectives are met through this review. Firstly the methodological framework of the thesis is established through a review of some of the important early literature, a central concern of which was to understand the mechanism which "operates to enforce the norms of married behaviour" in urban areas (Epstein 1969a:112). Through this the second objective is met, namely establishing vital features of the setting in which the data for this paper was collected.

3.1.1. Social Networks and Norms in African Urban Life

In this section the literature of the "Manchester School" and what was then the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in the 1950s and 1960s is reviewed. The work of these scholars articulated with the prevailing colonial concern with the effects of migrant labour and the growth of the new African urban centres on African social systems. A major concern of colonial administrators, reflected in Chapter 2, was the instability of marriages and the proliferation of "prostitution". Colonial era anthropologists were sent to the cities to study marriage and social change, and generated an important body of ethnography and anthropological theory in the process.

The concerns of the colonial administration gave birth to African urban studies: the study of the normative basis of urban life; how people in African cities construct and maintain their social worlds in what was regarded as a context of moral chaos, flux and social change. An important general outcome of this research was the understanding that African cities and towns were viable social systems in and of themselves, and not simply bastardised versions of rural "traditional" culture. This position was later modified and refined as anthropologists began to see that city dwellers in fact moved with some ease between town and country. Mitchell, for example, found that

"The individual does not bring his social institutions with him to town. The institutions are parts of different social systems and the individual moves from one into the other" (1966:47).

The urban system was thus recognised as a social system separate from the village and "the starting point for analysis of urbanism must be an urban

system of relationships" (ibid:48), or the Social Network.

The Bott Hypothesis-

In trying to make sense of the apparent social disarray in African urban centres, the Manchester anthropologists were much influenced by the work of Elizabeth Bott in London (Bott 1957/1971).

Bott's contribution to theories of African urbanism was two-fold. Firstly, she established that there is a relationship between the ways married couples organise themselves within the structure of the family, and the way they organise their external contacts. She took as her basic unit of analysis the roles that each spouse is expected to take on in the routine of daily life, and the degree to which the roles of husband and wife are connected. Where there was a high degree of "conjugal role separation" - respective spousal roles being performed independently of each other - husband and wife tended also to have separate and distinct extra-domestic networks, and their respective networks were "close-knit" (network members knew each other and were also members of each other's networks). Where roles were more jointly performed in the household, on the other hand, external networks of the spouses tended also to be more "joint", and the overall network "loose-knit" (individual members of the network being unlikely to know each other; that is, there tended to be less direct overlap between individuals in the family's network).

At the next level of abstraction, Bott suggested that the nature of the social network will have an effect on the nature of the normative framework.

Again to summarize: close knit networks encourage a consensus of norms because within them there is consistent informal pressure to conform. When many of the people a person knows also interact with each other, they come to "agree" that certain modes of behaviour and demeanour are appropriate to their group. Furthermore, Bott established that where there is a high degree of mutual dependence and assistance within the network social control is stronger. Where the networks are loose, on the other hand, and the members of a person's network do not know one another, more variation in norms is possible. Social control and mutual assistance are more fragmented and less consistent.

A further contribution of Bott's seminal work was her recognition of gossip as an important social and sociological activity. Gossip, she found, functioned most importantly in close-knit networks, among women living as neighbours in the inner city. The two main functions of gossip observed by Bott were in defining group membership (ibid:68), and in stating and reaffirming the norms of that group (ibid:205).

Southall's African Urban Typology-

The Bott Hypothesis, as it came to be known, gave the anthropologists working in the African urban context much food for thought. Another early and important contribution to African urban anthropology was a paper by Southall (1961a) published as the Introduction to a collection of papers presented at the East African Institute of Social Research in Kampala.

Southall's 'Introductory' established an important theoretical framework for thinking about the ways in which social systems change, and how the people living in these social systems adapt to and, indeed, generate this change. In this paper Southall also presented his typology of African cities, discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 28-30). This typology established the fact that African cities differ in terms of historical, political and economic structure, and that these differences affect the nature of urbanism, as well as the direction and nature of urban social change.

Southall's urban typology is not without its critics (see, eg. Hannerz 1980, Chapter 4). The simplicity of the typology, which is one aspect of its heuristic value, is also one of its main drawbacks. The two options offered - Type 'A' and Type 'B' - do not adequately provide for the wide diversity and complexity of urban styles across the continent, and many cities do not fit tidily into one or the other category. Nevertheless the importance of recognising structural differences between the towns under study was raised, and the implications of these differences for the character of urbanism brought into the theoretical debate. The approach also brought the "female population of towns" into analytical focus, problematised their presence, and recognised their significance in framing and forming the structure of change. Southall's typology, however imperfect, raised awareness of the diversity of urban forms, and gave urban anthropology one more valuable tool to think with. Before engaging with this debate, however, it is important that the concepts of "network", "role" and "norm" are clarified, as these are the basic terms used in

the discourse on cities.

3.1.2. Role

"The city ... is (like other human communities) a collection of individuals who exist as social beings primarily through their roles, setting up relations to one another through these. Urban lives, then, are shaped as people join a number of roles together in a role repertoire and probably to some degree adjust them to each other. The social structure of the city consists of the relationships by which people are linked through various components of their role repertoires" (Hannerz 1980: 249).

A role, according to Bott (1971), is the behaviour expected of any individual occupying a particular social position. Mitchell (1966) thought of role as pertaining to behaviour in a "structural position". Banton (1973) defines role as a "set of rights and obligations" that exist in social situations, highlighting the significance of *relationship* to role. Hannerz (1980:245) offers a useful distillation of the many definitions of role, and discusses the concept, as a "purposive situational involvement, with dimensions of consciousness and resource management". Different roles will correspond to the different situations in an individual's life, and the totality of a person's constellation of roles is known simply as a role repertoire. The full complement of roles within a major social unit (such as an urban neighbourhood) Hannerz glosses as the "role inventory" of that community (ibid:100 - 105).

An important characteristic of "roles" is that they are generally defined in normative terms, and are subject to normative pressure and control. The extent to which a given role is normatively controlled will depend on the type

of relationship in which the role is being enacted or performed. The amount of *personal information* the social actors have about each other will be one significant facet as it will affect the type and level of expectation involved (Hannerz 1980; Mitchell 1966). Where there is little shared personal information, actors may rely to some extent on aspects of the other's role repertoire that are immediately apparent (such as sex, skin colour and in some cases ethnicity).

Roles themselves are complex and shifting. New roles can be generated, old ones abandoned, and new role repertoires assembled on the basis of newly contracted relationships and networks (Hannerz 1980). Behaviour in any one role is not necessarily consistent with that in another (Mitchell 1966), and it is this inconsistency and conflict within a person's own role repertoire that may seem (or may have seemed) especially characteristic of urban life.¹

3.1.3. Norms

Norms are socially constructed, often morally defined guidelines for behaviour relevant in a given social setting or situation; a baseline or standard against which variations can be compared and measured. Norms are not always "hard and fast rules of conduct", but can also be symbolically expressed as "aspirations" or ideals (Southall 1961a:20). In her discussion of how marital behaviour is normatively encoded Bott makes this distinction explicit:

"If expected behaviour is not felt to be ideal, or if ideal behaviour is not expected, I make a distinction between *ideal norms* and *norms of*

expectation. If expected and ideal behaviour coincide I do not use a qualifying adjective" (1971:194, my emphasis).

Bott devised a sort of catalogue as a first ditch attempt to sort out what seemed to her to be the various levels of sociality that are affected by norms. She discusses social norms, which are defined as the views informants assume they share with other members of their social circle; norms of common consent are those norms on which there is in fact a consensus; and personal norms are those ideals and expectations that informants think are their own private standards. This qualifying and requalifying of an analytical concept, however, indicates some confusion about its general applicability. This is further demonstrated by Bott's surprise that her informants in some cases had difficulty articulating the norms of their social group.

Part of the problem surely lies in the fact that, as Southall (1961a:14) points out, "the concept of norm tends to exaggerate consciousness of thought." Although the essence of norms is that they encode *shared* meanings specific to a particular social situation, Mitchell (1987) reminds us that 'norm' is really an analytical construct. People living out their lives do not cognitively perceive of themselves acting out shared meanings in social situations. It is important as analysts that we are aware of the level of perception we are discussing for a given situation. As Mitchell (ibid:11) puts it,

"The general perspective then is that the behaviour of social actors may be interpreted as the resultant of the actors' shared understandings of the situation in which they find themselves and of the constraints imposed upon these actors by the wider social order in which they are

enmeshed. Both components of the situation - the shared understandings and the notion of a wider social order - are in fact the constructs erected by the analyst as a means of interpreting the social situation as a whole."

Thus in those situations where norms implicitly or explicitly encode rules for appropriate social behaviour they operate at the level of *social* perception. But there is a further layer of experience, of course, and that is the level of *individual* perception. In a given situation an individual social actor may find it serves his or her personal interest to negotiate, reinterpret or reorient these "shared meanings". Mitchell offers as an example an incident occurring in *The Kalela Dance* in which a man acted in a way inappropriate to a particular social situation and subsequently tried, unsuccessfully, to redefine the situation to make his behaviour acceptable. In the incident a man fondled the breasts of a woman at the dance. When faced with public outrage he insisted that he and the woman were in a joking relationship with each other, and this behaviour is accepted as 'normal' in the context of ethnic joking. The woman, however, denied the relationship, and the man was unsuccessful in his redefinition of the situation. Had she agreed, however, he would have successfully negotiated the social norms in relation to his perception of the event. The point being made is that individual perceptions exist and may indicate contradictions in social norms, but this does not mean that the meanings are not shared. For although "a renegotiated definition of a social situation may completely transform the meaning to be attributed to the actions of individuals involved" (ibid:13), the meanings or norms that provide the context of that redefinition are sustained.

3.1.4. Norms and the flow of information: women's neighbourhood networks

Social networks are described variously in the literature, and one of the problems for analysis is that there is some inconsistency in the use of terms. Generally speaking networks are situationally based webs of relationships radiating out from a central individual, or "ego". By studying a person's network of social relationships, it is thought, much can be learned about the ways in which that individual functions in his or her society, and at a further level of abstraction, how the society itself functions. Mitchell (1966) suggests that social relationships in town can be thought of as coming under three broad categories: 1) structural (work relationships); 2) categorial (those that arise where contacts are superficial and perfunctory, referred to elsewhere as "traffic" relationships - see Hannerz, 1980); and 3) personal. It is primarily through networks of personal relationships, he argues, that information about the norms and values appropriate to urban life is circulated. Here, largely through the processes of 'gossip', city dwellers learn the roles and behaviours expected of them. Personal networks and relationships are those that pertain most directly to the experience of women in the African urban context, and these will be the primary concern here.

In addition to their concern with the ways in which norms functioned to define appropriate marital and sexual behaviour (eg. Epstein 1969a), colonial era urban anthropologists were curious about the continuity of "tribal" norms in town: to what extent are tribesmen tribesmen and townsmen townsmen (cf. Mayer 1971; Gluckman 1956)? The question of the inter-

relationships between "tribal" and "modern" norms raised issues of social change and the impact of the city on the migrants' cultural categories (Southall 1961a; Mitchell 1966). Southall (1961a:18) makes the point that "it is important to distinguish the rapidity of change in a system or situation from the rapidity of change in persons". Migrants finding themselves in a new social milieu will find the norms of behaviour appropriate to their lives in the villages are no longer appropriate. Over time the individual learns the social rules and what behaviour is expected of him in the new setting.

But the migrant is not just reactive. According to Southall (ibid:19),

"...The impact of each migrant is infinitesimal, yet this situation and its norms change under the collective impact of migrants, their objectives and the reactions which they set up in (an) urban situation."

Mitchell (1966) reinforced this general notion, stressing in his analysis that the rural-urban split in roles and norms is situational. Norms do not exist in people outside of a specific social context. Migrants carry their norms to town much like their physical belongings, and like their physical belongings they will put away those that are not useful to their present life. It now seems a common-sense point: norms in town are different from norms in the village because it is a different social situation. As the situation changes the migrant becomes adept at code-switching. Mitchell (1966:47) puts it rather more elegantly:

"The individual does not bring his social institutions with him to town. The institutions are parts of different social systems and the individual moves from one into the other".

This debate led to the conclusion that urban norms, or norms in the

city, are just that. They are relevant to the social situations that gave rise to them, and they will reflect, to some degree, the meanings that migrants carried with them to town, and to which they orient themselves upon returning to the village to live or to visit.

3.1.5. Consensus on norms in urban situations-

As indicated by Mitchell (1987) and Southall (1961a), consensus on norms is not always straightforward. People can agree on the basic principles of norms but act on them differently, as Mitchell showed in relation to ethnic joking at the Kalela dance. According to Southall (1961a: 17-18) there will tend to be a consensus on norms in those social situations that have endured for long without significant changes. Conflict occurs when the situation is changed in some significant way as when new combinations of people come together, each individual bringing his/her own "stock of accumulated norms" to the setting. The resulting conflict can be creative in so far as new norms are generated out of it.

Some analysis dealt specifically with the ways in which pressure was brought to bear on individuals to conform to *familial* norms. Following Bott's early efforts, analysts explored the important relationship between familial norms and social networks. The dominant notion introduced by Bott and later taken up by Epstein, Mitchell and others is that normative control will be stronger where social networks are more close-knit. Bott suggests that situations characterised by close-knit networks engender consensus on those

norms that relate to family and conjugality. Consistent informal pressure to conform is brought to bear on the members of those networks through the informal sanctions of gossip and public opinion. Where more loose-knit networks prevail there is greater variation in the norms to which people are exposed, and therefore less social pressure to conform to one specific constellation of social rules (also Mitchell 1969).

The lesson to be drawn from this discussion is that, as Mitchell (1966) put it, norms and values buttress social relationships, and it is through networks of social relationships that information about norms and values is passed on (cf. Epstein 1969a & b). The most effective way for this to occur is through the types of close-knit networks that densely settled, inner city neighbourhoods tend to engender. In African cities much of this 'social work' is carried out by the women who live, work and raise their children in these neighbourhoods. This process is explored below.

3.1.6. Norms in the Neighbourhood: Gossip and the flow of information

What *is* Gossip about? Gluckman Vs. Paine-

"A fuller understanding of growth of new norms of married behaviour, and the pressures towards acceptance of them, may be found in the operation of the network" (Epstein 1969a: 112).

According to Epstein (1969a), the process by which networks enforce and reinforce norms of married life is casual conversation: chat and gossip. He notes that

"Implicit in much of this conversation are the norms, values, and attitudes of general or special application, recognised in the society" (ibid: 112).

Gossip, which he defines as the discussion of the affairs and behaviour of people in their absence, reaffirms shared norms and also provides a forum for new ones. Gossip can often be condemnatory of others within the group, but this in itself implies the presence of some norm in terms of which character or behaviour is evaluated and condemned. "Victims" of gossip are not selected at random. The fact that one is gossiped about indicates membership to the group, and "not to be talked about is the mark of social insignificance, of exclusion from the set" (Epstein 1969a:113).

The importance of gossip as a sociological activity has long been recognised. In a seminal study on the subject Gluckman (1963) refers to gossip as "among the most important societal and cultural phenomena we are called upon to analyse" (ibid:307). Far from being "idle chat", Gluckman (ibid:308), inspired by Colson's (1953) monograph on the Makah Indians, argues that gossip is "part of the very blood and tissue of ...life". According to Gluckman, gossip and scandal

"clearly maintain the unity of morals and values of social groups. Beyond this they enable groups to control the competing cliques and aspiring individuals of which all groups are composed"(ibid).

Thus gossip defines and unites members of social groups who share a certain set of norms and values. It is itself a strongly regulated activity with specific rules. Breach of these rules can result in the loss of social esteem.

Robert Paine (1967, 1968) takes Gluckman to task, and argues that

gossip is not about group cohesion and the management of social norms, but rather must be understood as a means to "forward and protect individual interests" (1967:280). He finds that Gluckman and others fail to recognise that gossip is most importantly about communication and the management of information. Paine argues that Gluckman's analysis overemphasizes the importance of group cohesion and unity, and thereby wrongly places the *community* rather than the *individual* at the centre of analysis.

"It is the individual and not the community that gossips" writes Paine. "What he gossips about are his own and others' aspirations, and only indirectly the values of the community" (ibid:280-281).

Paine (ibid) argues for an understanding of gossip as communication *across* "we group" boundaries, not just within them. He sees the gossipier as someone who is constantly trying to control the flow of information so that he receives more than he gives.

"...there is always some information that he wishes certain people to possess - e.g. as a reassurance to them about his activities - in order that his, and not their, definition of the situation prevails" (ibid:283).

Thus gossip according to Paine is a social instrument of potential power when effectively and consciously managed by individuals in specific social situations.

In his reply, Gluckman (1968) maintains that Paine's transactionalist perspective is fundamentally misguided because it removes the individual gossipier from his/her cultural and social context. The essence of gossip according to Gluckman (1968:32), "is that it usually consists of comments on the actions of others assessed against codes of values, morals, skills, etc". In

fact Paine's assertion that "it is the individual and not the community that gossips" (Paine 1967:280) cannot be sustained. Individuals gossip, but they do so only in the context of social relationships - in pairs or in groups - and gossip flows amongst individuals along networks. The fact that people may try to control and manipulate this flow of information does not necessarily preclude the fact that the information relates to the basic norms and values that guide appropriate social action. As Gluckman (1968:32) puts it, "the necessity to appeal to values is of crucial importance. It transmutes the nature of self-interest to support these values". Self interest, he concludes, should not be too narrowly construed, as an individual may feel an interest in the persistence of his networks and the group to which he belongs.

3.2 Neighbourhoods and Gossip Sets-

AL. Epstein (1969b) found that in the densely settled urban neighbourhoods of the Copperbelt, social ties were forged solely on the basis of physical contiguity and proximity. The houses were small and close together, forcing a "certain minimum of cooperation" (ibid:95) among the inhabitants. These areas were much more socially important for the women residents because, unlike the men, they rarely left the area. Epstein describes the scene:

"Neighbours help one another in a variety of ways: they borrow money from one another, or items of foodstuff if they should suddenly run out, or they may put up your mother-in-law ... Beyond this, sets of adjoining houses become small gossip clusters in which the affairs of the neighbourhood are made known, discussed and criticised. Neighbours tend to know a good deal of one's private life and movements" (ibid:95-96).

Epstein distinguishes between the "effective" close-knit networks women establish in the neighbourhood, and "extended" (shallow and far-reaching) networks which transcend neighbourhood, spreading to the locality and beyond. It is within the effective networks, and the gossip clusters within them, that the normative framework of women's lives is constructed and maintained.

Parkin (1969) found a similar situation in Kampala. Neighbours, primarily women, formed gossip sets in which "statuses and the appropriate norms of behaviour" were ascribed to members. In this setting status distinctions between the women or their husbands were important in creation of gossip sets and the maintenance of gossip-set boundaries. Membership to a gossip-set, or exclusion from one, can hinge upon the extent to which one fits into the normative pattern set by that group. Parkin describes one example of a woman being excluded because she had stopped childbearing at an early age. "Referring to the connection between promiscuity, including adultery, and infertility, they said she must have been unfaithful to her husband" (ibid) and used this as a pretext for exclusion. Exclusion from the social life of the neighbourhood made life for this woman and her husband so difficult that they eventually moved away.

Similarly Bohman (1984) found that in a Colombian *barrio* called La Rosa,

"Most women, if they stay long enough ... and if they become recognised as morally sound and respectable, develop certain relationships based on proximity" (Bohman 1984:251).

In La Rosa, the rules guiding proper neighbourhood conduct were highly specific. Admission to 'gossip sets' was based on whether a woman was a good neighbour (*buena vecina*) and if she conformed to the stringent moral code. The importance of moral turpitude was illustrated by the fact that the morality or perceived immorality of women was the most prevalent topic of gossip. Again to quote from Bohman:

"Women who, through the consensus of other women, are labelled *replentes* or *indecentes*, may be kept outside of most social contacts" (ibid:254).

In this setting, as we shall also show for Kampala, exclusion from the gossip set means being labelled as "not a proper woman", or as a "bad neighbour". In addition to a loss of social and self-esteem, this exclusion can have a disastrous effect on a woman's ability to effectively manage her affairs and the affairs of her family within the community. Part of group membership is to be engaged in relationships of reciprocity and exchange -the multitude of daily transactions between neighbours of food, money, advice and other resources is an important part of 'belonging' and of survival. By conducting oneself according to the norms and values of the community - by behaving properly - a woman shows that she is "willing to participate in the community of the neighbourhood" (ibid:255).

"In order to be accepted as a *buena vecina* a woman must ... first of all be eligible in terms of moral status: she must be able to show that she is a respectable woman and worthy of being a member of the moral community" (ibid).

Here Bohman could as well have been referring to Kifumbira I, and the parallels become clear in Chapter 7.

3.3 Summary-

Urban neighbourhoods are an important locus for the definition and enforcement of the norms and values regulating behaviour in town - particularly for women. Gossip, one of the mechanisms by which these norms are reaffirmed and maintained, also serves to mark-off one network cluster from another in terms of status and shared values. Through gossip the moral and normative framework for appropriate behaviour specific to the 'set' is constructed and expressed, and the sense of belonging and identity reaffirmed.

1. To simplify Hannerz's argument, he makes the point that where there is a congruence between roles, as in smaller scale societies, issues of identity may be less problematic. In Western industrial and post-industrial societies, however, there is a profound disjunction between roles and the self leading to the experience of alienation - the proverbial identity crisis of late 20th Century Euro-America. Banton (1973:47) also discusses the differences between role in "small village societies" and urban societies. He writes that in the former: "One person interacts with another on the basis of several different role relationships, giving rise to a tightly interlocking network of social ties. In the city, on the other hand, many kinds of social relationships are confined in separate compartments and the urbanite has scope to choose his associates; there is much less change that his partner in one relationship will be his partner in another". While acknowledging the validity of Banton's explanation as it relates to some kinds of urban system, he applies the idea too universally. Not all urban systems are the same in this respect, nor will all dimensions of a given urban system be consistent. High density networks, similar to those in "small village societies" do exist in those parts of cities that operate like small villages as will be demonstrated below.

CHAPTER 4

Personhood, Womanhood and Motherhood: the importance of childbearing

This chapter seeks to accomplish four things. The first part of the chapter highlights a selection of the literature concerned with constructions of personhood and identity. The second discusses ideas about the formulation of sexual identity and gender, setting the stage for a consideration of the semantic content of sexual intercourse in African societies. The final part of the chapter unpicks the notion of "reproductive identity" by exploring what childbearing means to women as mothers, as wives and as full adult persons. In Chapter 5 the implications of AIDS in the presence of these meanings are discussed.

4.1. Social constructions of personhood, identity and gender-

This thesis has been informed by a body of work concerned to,

"understand how human beings understand themselves and to see their actions and behaviours as in some ways the creations of those understandings. Ultimately, the trend suggests, we must appreciate the ways in which such understandings grow, not from an "inner" essence relatively independent of the social world, but from experience in a world of meanings, images, and social bonds, in which all persons are inevitably involved" (Rosaldo 1984:139).

Thinking of 'selves' as culturally constructed goes some way towards freeing philosophical enquiry from the perils of essentialism. In coming to understand the human condition in all its complexity as being framed by, and inseparable from, culture, we are no longer prone to the kinds of biological

reductionism that clouded previous understandings, and robbed them of depth. In particular it has enabled a new kind of analysis of the condition of women, who had for long been seen as fundamentally oppressed by their own reproductive capacity. Interestingly, feminists have been relatively slow to embrace the potentialities presented by this alternative analytical framework. Because so much of the feminist project was founded on the negative premise of female subordination, it felt dangerous if not subversive to try and understand women's lives from a more positive premise - that women's reproductive capacities do not alienate and marginalise them, but are in many societies at the core of women's participation in social and political life, and entitle them access to and control over important resources. More important still, bearing and/or rearing children places women at the centre of social networks, and their "intrication" in these networks, their engagement with social life on this level, is an essential aspect of their constructions of self. The feminist conversation with these ideas is now well underway (eg. Sacks 1979; Moore 1988; Ramazanoglu 1993; Chodorow 1995).

The first part of this section addresses what anthropologists have come to understand as the two dimensions of personhood: the 'experienced self' and the 'moral person'. It is argued that constructions of 'self' and constructions of 'person' encompass dialectically opposed qualities that give form and balance to social life. The 'self' is primarily generated through personal life experience. The 'moral person', on the other hand, is about locatedness in social relationships derived through a culturally explicit set of rules, rights and

obligations- one's place in the moral community. The literature concerned with the ways in which persons are constructed through their social relationships will then be reviewed. Finally the literature concerned with the complexities of 'the person' in gender relations is considered.

4.1.1. Personhood

Marcel Mauss (1939) was among the earliest of the social scientists to explore the dualistic nature of the meanings through which personality and person are constructed. His seminal contribution is the inspiration for much recent writing in this area (see Carrithers et al 1985), as well as earlier work by, for example, Fortes (1973). Mauss made a distinction between what he called 'la personne morale', the ideological definition of personhood in terms of rules, roles and representations, and, 'moi', the awareness of self (La Fontaine 1985; Jackson & Karp 1990). These two aspects of the self have been variously described as, for example, the contrastive 'cultural' and 'experiential' aspects of personhood (Jacobson-Widding 1990), and the 'cognitive' and 'affective' levels of the self (Rosaldo 1984). On the one hand is the social concept of the person, a complex of jural rights, moral responsibilities and social relationships. This aspect of the duality has also been referred to as the "authoritative description of personhood" (Jacobson-Widding 1990), and the "official ideology" (eg.,ibid; Karp 1987; Jackson & Karp 1990). On the other level is an often contrasted "innerness", a sometimes "counter normative domain" (Jackson & Karp 1990) of the self lived through

experience. This second aspect, the affective, is constituted through the individual's interpretations of the more authoritative cultural/ideational definitions, and is, therefore, always culturally informed.

"In thinking about personhood and selves, the analyst distinguishes between a public discourse and a less accessible inner life, the first described by role and rule, and the second by a less articulate discourse of gesture, tone, and hidden truth" (Rosaldo 1984:147) .

4.1.2. The person in social relations

Much recent anthropological theorising about constructions of personhood takes as its premise that "persons" are constituted in their relations with others (Strathern 1981a:92, see also Moore 1988:39). Strathern suggests that among the Hagen the construct 'person' is of some analytical merit, but warns against the conflation of this construct with the "ideological 'individual' of Western culture. The latter is best seen as a particular cultural type rather than as a self-evident analytical category itself" (Strathern 1981a:168).

Whereas Western ideas of the person revolve around conceptions of being an *individual*, that is, an entity unique and separable from society, "Melanesian persons are as dividually as they are individually conceived" (Strathern 1988:13, after Marriott 1976). Persons are not constructed everywhere by their "indivisibility" as they are in the Western conception, but rather by the extent to which they are the "composite site of the relationships that produced them. They contain a generalised sociality within." (ibid).

Wagner (1977), also writing of a Melanesian culture, likewise indicates that a 'self' is primarily derived through the mediation of "things, persons and

situations of the world", these being "its mediators, its reflectors, and sometimes its mirrors". Thus Strathern (1981a & b; 1988) and Wagner (1977) concur that far from being defined by an individuality, free from the 'constraints' of culture, Melanesian persons seem to be constructed through their social relationships.

Borrowing from mathematics Wagner (1977) developed the notion of the 'fractal' person ("a dimensionality that cannot be expressed in whole numbers") to clarify the point. Taylor (1990) finds this notion useful in explaining Rwandese personhood construction. According to Taylor the person in the Rwandese conception is "neither singular nor plural", but is "perennially incomplete, ever involved in the process of being added to, built upon, and produced by the gifts of others. At any moment he is a 'fractal' person."

Other analysts writing in this vein include Reisman(1977), Jackson (1988, 1990), and La Fontaine (1985). Reisman (1977) found, for example, that the Fulani emphasise social connectedness in their personhood concepts. In that study he notes that there was a discernible contrast between the "Western emphasis of individual autonomy and identity" and "the Fulani emphasis in the way each person participates in far-reaching networks of relationships" (ibid). Similarly Jackson (1990:64) argues that among the Kuranko,

"unlike the English word 'personality', *morgoye* (personhood) does not suggest notions of personal identity, distinctive individual character or autonomous moral being. *Morgoye* is a quality of being realised in social praxis..."

In a comparative study of three African societies, La Fontaine (1985) describes a situation whereby the completed person is the product of a lifetime of social engagement that can even transcend social relations in life to connect with those of succeeding generations. Taylor (1990) similarly notes that the individual in Rwanda is not conceived of as a "countable monad, ontologically separate from society", but that social actors have "mutually implicating relational identities...The group constructs the individuals that comprise it and is constructed in its turn" (Taylor 1990:1024). Some of these theorists argue for an *absence* of inner-ness, sensing that the presence of a "felt inner-core" is at odds with the fact that our 'selves' contain a "generalised sociality within" (op cit.). Others have argued that because 'selves' are socially constructed they are historically variable (Foucault 1991) and therefore not in any way determined by a hidden, inner mysteriousness.

These ways of thinking about the construction of personhood have not gone unchallenged. Although there is general consensus that, following Mauss (1939), there is a duality inherent in the constructions of persons: the cultural/ideational self and the individual/experienced self, two contradictory threads emerge. On the one hand are those who find that the 'experienced self' derives meaning from a position outside of social engagement as among, for example, the Kuranko (Jackson 1990), where the 'felt' self is located within a counter-normative domain (the 'bush'), and where individuals are free to "express their selfhood in ways that are chosen rather than merely imposed by tradition or inscribed in collective representations" (Jackson & Karp 1990:14).

Lienhardt (1985) also argues for the significance of 'innerness'. Citing an array of Yoruba proverbs and folktales, Lienhardt argues that these people appear "to have an inner activity...that may be ultimately more important than the outer activity, the persona or mask, in Mauss's terms, presented to others" (ibid:143) and that the proverbs attest to the "recognition of the importance of an inner, mysterious *individual* activity" (ibid:143).

There are also those among whom the importance or existence of 'innerness' is not in question; who ask instead, how is this 'innerness' shaped by sociality? In some societies the nature of the 'self' outside of the domain of the person is not so easily discerned. The 'person' embraces qualities that resound with Culture. While 'selves' are defined by what is unique about experience, 'persons' can only be constructed through shared experience in social relationships. In the societies discussed, 'personhood' derives not from a concept of individuality, in the Western sense, but of the dialectically related and quite inseparable qualities of a 'self' constructed through personal experience and a 'person' moulded in culture and social networks. The ability to engage actively in social life requires that both aspects are fulfilled.

4.1.3. The cultural construction of Identity

Concepts of identity have been used variously within anthropology to explain a wide range of sociological issues. Part of the vastness of the topic, and the difficulties inherent in the term, derive from a central feature of identities: that they are multifaceted (Wallman 1983) and context specific

(Wallman and Sachs 1988). This overview is primarily concerned with the inter-relations between the identity of women as Women and the ways in which childbearing and motherhood feature in that identity. Before exploring these issues in detail, however, a brief review of some of those writers whose work has been influential in developing the general concept of identity will be undertaken.

At the foundation, questions of identity are raised whenever the question "Who am I?" is asked (Wallman 1983:70), and it is a question to which there is no single answer (Wallman 1984). Answering this question is a reflexive process, requiring the individual to reflect inwardly ("who am I?") and at the same time outwardly ("who am I not?"). Thus the dualism of the self becomes conscious: the interface of the experiential and cultural qualities of the person becomes visible to him/her. The answer to the question will depend primarily on the context in which it is being asked, and the answer may not always be the same, even within a particular social context, throughout a person's life. People make identity choices based, at least in part, upon their relationship to the social ideals appropriate to their gender, age, "status", occupation, etc. New identities are generated, existing ones reaffirmed, negotiated or abandoned. Thus Wallman describes the process:

"... 'something' in the individual reacts to or on the organisational/ affective/ecological options of the environment and causes him or her to identify in a particular way" (Wallman 1983:70).

In addition to being flexible and negotiable, identities are also "multiple". Both Goffman (1970) and Wallman (1983) point out that people

do not restrict themselves to one identity, but represent themselves according to a composite of identities. Self-identities can be thought of as "prisms" (Wallman 1983, 1984), or as "layered" (Goffman 1970). Wallman points out that "... real life identities represent facets of a single self, not separate selves", and, though it is unlikely that an individual will do so consciously, he will shift from "one identity to another... putting together new and different combinations for new and different purposes" (Wallman 1983:73) depending on the way in which the "light" of context falls on the "prism" of the self.

Identity processes, like the construction of personhood, operate on various levels. In addition to being generated from "within", identities are also imputed from outside of ourselves. Goffman (1970) goes some way towards deconstructing the identity process. Because his analysis centres on issues of stigma, one of his primary concerns is to explicate how identities are imputed from the outside and assigned to the individual on the basis of some trait which sets him or her apart in some socially important way.

Goffman notes a contrast between his definition of "social identity" and what he refers to as "personal identity". By "social identity" he means characterisations made by an 'other' pertaining to an individual's adherence to the normative framework. Norms regarding social identity, according to Goffman's definition, "pertain to the kinds of role repertoires or profiles we feel it permissible for any given individual to sustain". A number of other writers offer similar definitions. MacCormack and Draper (1987), for example refer to social identity as "a person's position in society derived from the status

they have in the social groups to which they belong". Similarly Sanday (1990) defines social identity as "the way people are culturally categorised as socially significant persons."

In contrast, 'personal identity', according to Goffman, has more to do with what differentiates the individual from the group. This differentiation is always socially informed. To clarify this point Goffman (1970:74-75) employs a useful, if viscous, metaphor:

"...around this means of differentiation a single continuous record of social facts can be attached, entangled, like candy floss, becoming then the sticky substance to which still other biographical facts can be attached."

In Goffman's analysis, both personal and social identities are products of the outsider's interpretations: the *social* identity describing "what a person like you should be", and the *personal* connoting "what I think you are, based on my knowledge of you." These imputations may (or may not) affect an individual's own self-concepts, defined by MacCormack and Draper (1987:149) as, "a person's consciously or sub-consciously held image of himself or herself". Goffman refers to these self-concepts as the 'ego' or the 'felt' identity, defined as the subjective sense of one's own situation: the continuity and character an individual comes to obtain through social experience. Wallman suggests three levels of identity are discernable: the social and "personal", which are imputed from the outside, and the unique, experiential "inside" self (personal communication). It is at the interface of the social and felt aspects of identity that the meanings attached to them can be

negotiated.

In the sections to follow, the theoretical literature dealing with women's identity as Women, and the importance of social networks and childbearing to their construction of identity and feelings of social worth will be reviewed. The issues raised are also dealt with in many ethnographic accounts that take up the issue of the position of women in society. The literature covered here, however, deals more directly with the theoretical issues per se. Examples from relevant ethnography are provided as appropriate.

Summary of 4.1-

Two main points have emerged from literature on personhood and identity. Firstly it was argued that engagement in social relations is central to the construction of personhood. "Personhood" will vary cross-culturally, but will in each instance reflect a dialectical relationship between the unique/experiential and the social/cultural aspects of the self. This dualism is also present, at a less abstracted level of experience, in the process of identity formulation. Identities are a multifaceted and reflexive interaction between social and personal definitions of the self in a given context. The next section will briefly highlight some of the literature that underscores the significance of social relationships, both for identity generation and the consequent acquisition of social worth and self-esteem.

4.2. Gender, Sexuality and Identity

4.2.1. Gender Identity

Gender refers to the existential aspect of 'being' composed of "features immanent in cultural definitions of what it is to be 'male' and 'female'" (Hakansson 1994:517). As Welbourne notes, the gender perspective "recognises that women and men have different roles and experiences, which often result in their having different opinions, needs and options" (1992:8).

Gender identity can be thought of as the way in which one is defined and defines oneself in relation to biological sex, social roles and life stage within a specific social context (Shore 1981:194). Like other aspects of identity, gender constructs, though fundamentally cultural, are linked to concepts of 'self', personhood, and autonomy (Strathern 1981a; Moore 1988).

The construction or negotiation of gender identity entails the consideration of choice, moral worth and social value as they relate to actions of individuals. This is one area where connections between symbolic or cultural aspects of social life and the social and economic conditions under which life is lived can be clearly recognised and investigated (Moore 1988). Once again it will become evident that part of the identity generating project emerges through the dialectic inter-relations between the socially assigned meanings (gender 'stereotypes') and those that emerge through lived experience. In the realm of gender relations the disjunction between what people say they do/are and what people actually do/are becomes most readily apparent. As Strathern (1981a:178) notes:

"Gender imagery faces two ways. On the one hand it affects the identity individuals claim, and influences the evaluation of men's and women's activities; on the other, notions of maleness and femaleness receive input from specific cultural concerns... and in turn can be used to evaluate other ideas and activities... that a contrast between male and female is used to symbolise an antagonism between men and women does not *ipso facto* imply antagonism between men and women."

A useful explanation of the disjunction between levels of gender meaning is offered by Schlegel (1990) who divides them into categories of "general" and "specific". She argues that the context of the general ideology of gender is the context of the culture as a whole. In contrast, the context of specific ideologies of gender are situations in which relations between the sexes occur; in this case the meaning ascribed to gender has more to do with social reality than with the ways the meanings fit with other symbolic categories. Thus 'general' meanings can be thought of as the stereotypic definitions of 'women' and 'men' which appeal to an abstracted level of Society: its institutions, morality and norms. They circumscribe behaviour in so far as they define the parameters of socially acceptable relations between categories of women and men. Specific gender meanings, on the other hand, are about some particular aspect of gender within a specified context. They may assign broadly conceived gender characteristics as these arise out of, for example, the politico-jural rights and responsibilities of each sex within the wider context of culture. The extent to which gender meanings are mutable and negotiable, however, is likely to vary from one context to another. Thus,

"...the specific character of the immanent features of women's existential identities in any society may constrain or facilitate negotiation of their socially approved roles" (Hakansson 1994: 157).

There is at least one other level of meaning which encodes and, more certainly, describes the relations between women and men. This is the level of lived experience: the way people 'do' gender relations. In the context of the construction of gender identity this level of praxis may be thought of in terms of social or sexual roles. The importance of the enactment of "sex roles" in the transmission of gender identity is illustrated, for example, by Wallman (1978), who notes that while remaining childless, a woman "outsider" (anthropologist) finds that her gender may become irrelevant, superseded by other identity markers such as colour and status. From her own experience, Wallman found that as a woman in the field, having children and being a mother allows people to identify you with women insiders and you are seen, because of your enactment of a culturally recognised gender-role, as a female person.

4.2.2. Sexuality and Identity

Aggleton, Homans, et al (1989:68) define the difference between sexuality and gender, two terms that should remain analytically distinct although they are often conflated:

"Whilst sexuality categorises people in relation to those they are romantically and sexually attracted to, gender refers to the social and cultural characteristics associated with men and women respectively".

This definition is useful in providing the most basic level distinction between the two concepts, but fails to bring in the significance of context and practice. As Nelson (1987) points out, the two concepts are linked in important ways;

"views about the nature of sexuality form a significant part of a society's total complex of cultural constructs relating to the nature of men and women and the right and proper relationship between the genders"

The notion of 'sexuality', like the related analytical constructs 'identity' and 'gender', is difficult to pin down. Ascertaining people's views on the subject demands enquiry into the most intimate aspects of life and identity. These are areas that are not generally open to public discourse, much less frank discussion with a stranger/outsider. The anthropologist's own relationship to sexuality in their research areas is necessarily complex and sometimes contradictory (cf. Wallman 1978; Vance 1991), and it is perhaps for this reason that, as Vance indicates, "anthropology as a field has been far from courageous or even adequate in its investigation of sexuality" (Vance

1991:875). Due primarily to the AIDS pandemic, serious and committed efforts are being made to redress this inadequacy (eg. Barton 1991; Caplan, ed 1987; Soc.Sci.& Med. 33(8), 1991 special issue on anthropology and sexuality), but it remains fraught with methodological and theoretical problems (Ogden & Wallman 1992).

It is, perhaps for this reason that, as Pat Caplan (1987) indicates, there have been generally inadequate attempts to "grapple" with the concept of sexuality within anthropology until quite recently. Early explorations into the topic tended toward erotica, focusing on the most "exotic" aspects of sexuality and sexual practice in the so-called "tribal" societies, description generally unaccompanied by much serious analysis or contextualisation (cf. Malinowski 1927, 1929; Evans-Pritchard 1965). Vance (1991:880) discusses some of the potential pitfalls involved in the study of this complex topic which some earlier, and no doubt more recent researchers, have experienced. She notes the dangers inherent in making *a priori* assumptions about the nature of the social construction of sexuality, and urges those using this approach to problematise and question Euro-American folk and scientific beliefs about sexuality rather than project them onto other groups. She argues that anthropology is especially well-suited to this effort to look critically at naturalised categories and to lead the move away from essentialism.

"In the midst of the creation of new discourses about sexuality, it is crucial that we become conscious of how these discourses are created and our own role in creating them...We need to be explicit about our theoretical models, mindful of their history, and self-conscious about our practice" (ibid:881).

An important by-product of this anthropological heritage is that, when dealt with outside of the realm of the exotically erotic, sexuality has been treated primarily in the context of procreation. This is probably because sex is most often socially sanctioned for reasons of continuity, family and transactions in property. Thus anthropologists' descriptions of circumcision ceremonies and other public rituals dealing with sexuality have been analysed primarily as the cultural construction of gendered adults, and the celebration of fertility (eg. Boddy 1989; Llewelyn-Davies 1978; Nelson 1978; Deluz 1987). In a more oblique, if related, dimension, sexuality has been regarded in terms of its relation to marriage, and sometimes, economics (eg. Hakansson 1987, 1988, 1994; Schoepf et al 1988; more classically, Radcliffe-Brown 1950). Other aspects of the sexual encounter - such as "sex for partnership" and "sex for pleasure" have not been thoroughly studied by anthropologists, although this is changing as we try to come to grips with AIDS (eg. van der Straten et al 1995; Obbo 1993).

4.3. Sex in Context

A more complete understanding of the sexual encounter must precede a more thorough understanding of sexuality and sexual identity. As Wallman indicates, in spite of its biological aspects, sex is a *cultural* activity, and "sexuality takes its form and meaning from the social context in which it occurs" (Wallman 1990 in Ogden & Wallman 1992: 17). It is analytically useful at this juncture to look more closely at the various purposes for which sex takes place. These Wallman has spelled out as Pleasure; Partnership; and Procreation (ibid). For women all three of these are, at certain times in their lives, inextricably linked, and all three have implications for identity (as they must also - if in different ways - for men). Because the central question of the thesis is 'how do women's reproductive identities affect their responses to AIDS', and because AIDS is transmitted during sexual intercourse, it is vital that sex and the identity investment of women in each aspect be explicated.

4.3.1. Sex for Pleasure

When sex is discussed in the literature it is almost always qualified, regularly coming up against other social issues such as morality, reproduction and kinship, and so we are left to assume that people engage in sex for pleasure and indeed love. Morality is especially important in relation to 'sex for pleasure' and yet in many ways it is the most elusive of these dimensions. "Morality", sometimes couched in the language of honour and

shame, is often cited as a reason for curbing or socializing the sensual aspects of sex, especially for women, and there is a certain ambivalence associated with female sexuality in many cultures. In Euro-America this ambivalence has been called the 'Madonna - Whore' complex, and, as Wight has noted, unrepressed female sexuality is often "elided with worthlessness and dirt" (1992:16). Unrestrained female sexuality is also conflated with a certain kind of feminine power. Although some study has been made of the inter-relationships between pleasure, power, and femininity in Euro-America (eg. Foucault 1980; Ramazanglu and Holland 1993), few studies have systematically problematised these relationships in a theoretical way for the African context. Where the linkages are discussed it is usually in relation to a specific ethnographic context (eg. Taylor 1990) or occult activities (eg. Boddy 1989).

Speaking generally, women's sexuality and their sexual pleasure are seen as socially dangerous, particularly in those cultures in which the dignity and "honour" of the family is vested in the behaviour of the women. Among the Gusii of Western Kenya, for example, sex is always discussed in terms of *chinsoni* (shame) and *amakisane* (respect). Levine (1978) found that concern with these concepts prevented women from discussing their sexual experiences - and experiences of sexual pleasure - explicitly. As a result of the dictates of *chinsoni* and *amakisane* Gusii women do not take responsibility for their sexuality, and find it "almost impossible" to admit to sexual desire, claiming that when they have sex, "it is the man who insists" (ibid:363).

In Islamic societies there are also strong ideas of shame and honour, and "women are regarded by men as weak, morally inferior beings, *oversexed and inherently inclined to wantonness, devoted to sensuality*" (Boddy 1989:53, my emphasis). A number of anthropologists working in Islamic societies have noted that women and men are considered to be invested with differing amounts of the two opposing/complementary life forces of *nafs* ("animal" life force, including lusts, emotions, and desires) and *agil* (reason, rationality, ability to control emotions and behave in a culturally appropriate way) (ibid; Dwyer 1978; Rosen 1978). Men are thought to acquire relatively more *agil* with age and maturity than women. Boddy claims that men

"propose that women are wholly governed by their carnal natures: being less intelligent than men, they are unable to exercise conscious restraint. Hence the need for circumcision to curb and socialise their sexual desires, lest a woman should, even unwittingly, bring irreparable shame to her family through misbehaviour" (Boddy 1989:53).

This foregrounding of sexuality and sensuality in regard to circumcision, Boddy argues, is an essentially masculine point of view. For women in this particular Sudanese society, however,

"the principle concern is, and should be, their fertility...Fertility and sexuality are, of course, two sides of the same coin, yet each sex publicly emphasizes one more than the other" (ibid).

Because of the radical form of circumcision performed in 'Hofriyati' society - infibulation or pharaonic circumcision - female sexual pleasure is physically subordinated to their procreative capabilities, and so it

may appear quite reasonable that women there should chose to celebrate and emphasize fertility over sexual pleasure. But infibulation is not only, or even mostly, about robbing women of sexual pleasure; this would make it an explicitly de-structive practice. On the contrary, according the interpretation of Boddy's informants, infibulation is a constructive activity because it is through it that women's bodies are made ready for procreation. Infibulation is the creation and re-creation of 'virginity' and it is only as a 'virgin' that a woman is fertile in a culturally appropriate way. As Hayes succinctly put it, "In Sudan virgins are made, not born" (Hayes 1975: 622 in *ibid*:54), and only "virgins" are appropriate procreative agents. The careful cultural construction of these womens' physical sexual/reproductive bodies through infibulation and re-infibulation following the birth of children also attests to the cultural construction of their moral rectitude:

"Women see themselves as powerful, as valuable contributors to Hofriyati society; they are the repositories and reproducers of morality, the rightful loci of fertility" (*ibid*:113).

The relationship between infibulation - the cultural construction of femininity and fertility - and sexual pleasure is less straightforward.

According to Boddy,

"Infibulation neither increases nor for that matter limits male sexual pleasure - this is largely irrelevant here - so much as it ensures or socialises female fertility. By removing their external genitalia, female Hofriyati seek not to diminish their own sexual pleasure - though this is an obvious effect - so much as enhance their femininity. *Pharaonic circumcision is a symbolic act which brings sharply into focus the fertility potential of women by dramatically de-emphasizing their sexuality*" (*ibid*:55, my emphasis).

For these women, then, the pleasure element has been taken out of the sexual equation. Their concern is, first and foremost, successful fertility. Boddy mentions in a footnote that the women "did not object to their husbands' visiting brothels, so long as they did not spend too much money"(ibid:55), and remarks in a later passage that first intercourse is sometimes made so difficult and painful for both parties that the young bride has to be surgically opened for the marriage to be consummated. The possibility that sex may be engaged in for other kinds of sensual pleasure, however, is not addressed. Sex is seen only in its culturally ascribed context, and female sexuality is discussed only in relation to fertility.

The linkages between female sexual pleasure, fertility, morality and women's sexual identities is not so explicitly ascribed in all African cultures. By no means all African cultures remove pleasure from the sexual arena, however closely linked sex may also be with social morality and reproduction. According to Nelson's Kikuyu informants in Nairobi, for example, the sex drive is strong in healthy adults (Nelson 1987). Men "need" a lot of sex and a variety of sexual partners; women also have a strong sex-drive, saying that "only virgins can do without sex" (ibid:220). For these women, as for the case described by Boddy, circumcision (here clitoridectomy, a less radical surgery than infibulation), is the cultural link between sexuality and fertility. Clitoridectomy is a transition into womanhood whereby a girl passes from a state of "ignorance, inactivity, impotence and

asexuality into one of activity, knowledge, sexuality and reproduction". But, according to Nelson, the focus of this sexuality has "more to do with procreation than pleasure", and even more specifically, procreation for the patrilineage. This brings out a further linkage between female sexual pleasure and the wider social context - marriage and kinship - and this is discussed further below.

It is fortunate for this study that among the relatively few African ethnographies where female sexual pleasure has featured are several studies from Uganda conducted by Ugandan anthropologists. It is relevant that these writers note that "traditional" notions concerning the sexual pleasure of women underwent changes in the urban context, as concerns for the morality of urban women came to the fore. In one notable ethnography of Kampala for example, the (non-indigenous) writers note, while some urban women try to maintain the ideal of female fidelity,

"..those women who develop *insatiable appetites for sexual pleasure* make harder the task for others who look for husbands to give them companionship, children and the security of some recognised marital status" (Southall & Gutkind 1957:72, my emphasis).

According to Obbo (1980:46), among the Bantu tribal kingdoms (Baganda, Banyoro and Bahaya), princesses enjoyed more privileges than ordinary women. Women of the royal families in these areas were denied normal marriages, and one result of this for the Baganda princesses is that they acquired a reputation for "sexual freedom." This, argues Obbo, gave support to the argument that "women should be left to do as they please for, after all,

they were just copying those at the top of society whence power and authority emanated" (ibid). Other ethnographic sources also note the sexual mobility of Baganda women relative to women of other Ugandan ethnic groups (eg. Southall & Gutkind 1957; Mair 1934; McGrath et al 1993). This in combination with the fact that Baganda women were entitled to inherit property (and therefore acquire some financial independence), gave a certain quality to the sexuality of Baganda women which, it has been argued, set the tone for Kampala women generally (cf. ibid; Southall & Gutkind, op cit; Larson 1989).

In a recent study based in rural Buganda, both women and men respondents emphasized the importance of sexual pleasure for both partners, and said it was "sexual satisfaction that makes 'what we call marriage'" (Naibatu et al 1994:245- 246). Lack of sexual satisfaction is cited as a legitimate reason for divorce (ibid; cf. Obbo 1980, 1993; McGrath et al 1993). The ideal is for the man to maintain an erection of 'adequate stiffness', that intercourse be prolonged, and that the woman is expected to have no fewer than two orgasms before she and her partner climax together (Kisekka 1973; Naibatu et al op cit). Indeed, a Baganda man is considered impotent if he does "not obtain a second erection after an orgasm and his erection lasted five minutes or less... [whereas] a potent man lasted 30 to 40 minutes" (Obbo 1993:214-215). After her orgasm the woman might say to her partner: "*nkuwerezza ekirabo kya*": "I have presented you with a gift" (Kisekka 1973). Despite this apparent sexual candidness, intercourse ideally takes place in the

dark, and it is thought immodest for a couple to see each other naked (ibid). Finally, although among the Baganda it is customary for a woman to use a special cloth (*enkubi*) to clean her partner's penis after intercourse, men are generally suspicious of a woman's handling of their genitals because it is a customary and effective means of sorcery (Obbo 1993:215).

A girl is formally taught about sex by her paternal aunt (*ssenga*) sometime prior to her marriage, but other female relatives are informally involved in her education (Obbo 1980; Kisekka 1973; Naibatu et al 1994). The Baganda do not circumcise women. On the contrary, at the age of 14 girls are shown how to elongate their labia minora, and this practice, literally translated as *okusika enfuli* and more euphemistically known as *okukyalira ensiko* ("visiting the jungle"), is thought to enhance sexual pleasure for both partners (Kisekka 1973). Kisekka notes that in the past a girl who had not performed this procedure was liable to be divorced, or failing that was vulnerable to neglect by her husband and abuse by her in-laws (ibid). In my own research I was told that if a woman has not elongated her labia, her partner will say "you are like a house without a door". During quarrels a woman's husband will tend to bring it up, using it as evidence that, as my informant put it, "you are not the perfect wife for him because you have not done it". For this reason, my informant said, all good mothers want their daughters to "pull", and will find a way of ensuring that it is done even if they are living in town.

A final note about the Baganda which further indicates the

possibility that sexual pleasure itself is an important part of the construction of sex, is that there is no age beyond which sex is considered inappropriate (Kisekka 1973). In my own fieldwork I was told that as long as a woman's husband is alive she may expect to continue having sex. During one group discussion the women were asked if women generally continue to have an active sex life after they cease childbearing. A lively debate ensued:

- Faith - "If one has a husband at home then she continues having sex, but if one's husband is dead then one stops because there is nothing that a woman is hoping to gain."
- Facilitator - "Is this what society says or is it a personal decision?"
- Faith - "It is a personal decision from deep down in one's heart"
- M.Beth - "There are some people who can continue doing so [*having sex after menopause*], but generally once one has stopped menstruating and producing if it isn't an individual's habit a woman wouldn't even think of going ahead to have sex."
- Faith - "If a woman had a partner there is no way they will 'sleep in separate beds'³, and there is no way a woman can refuse to have sex with her partner because for as long as they are together the man is the boss."
- Irene - "My grandparents sleep in separate beds [*taking the phrase literally*]. It is because of age. They are too old to play sex, they don't have the energy".
- Faith - "But I personally believe that they play sex once in a while ..."
- Irene, laughing,
- "But it would be secretly..."
- Faith, now also laughing,
- "Mine (grandparents) had separate beds, but in the morning we would find grandfather in grandmother's bed. So don't you see...?"

The sensual, pleasurable element of the sexual encounter is one that is fraught with social sanction, rules and limitations. This section has

The phrase translating as "separating beds" is a Luganda expression that actually refers to a couple who do not have sex any more. They are figuratively speaking sleeping separately. In other contexts, as for example in rural polygynous marriages, a husband and wife may actually sleep in separate beds most of the time, but they continue to be lovers.

made an initial attempt to unpick the inter-relationships between morality, sexual pleasure, female sexuality and feminine power. It seems that 'sex for pleasure' is rarely socially sanctioned as a legitimate end in and of itself, and so is often linked to procreation and marriage. Speaking very generally, outside of these more strictly sanctioned contexts, sexuality - and in particular the sexuality of women - is considered inappropriate. As Levine wrote:

"Sexual pleasure belonged, for a woman, to a short period of irresponsibility. At marriage a woman reordered her priorities. Sex became a serious business, the only means to the most important end of all", childbearing. (Levine 1978:363)

4.3.2. Sex for Partnership-

For women in the contemporary African context there are at least two categories of heterosexual coupling: 1) marriage, in which a woman has one main sexual partner; and 2) relationships (love affairs), that happen outside or in lieu of a mainly monogamous relationship, where a woman establishes concurrent relationships with a number of men within her own socio-economic group. Some of these relationships may involve exchanges of cash or kind for sex. For an urban-living woman with little in the way of independent economic means, these lateral links may, at least for limited periods, be an important means of survival. In real life the two categories may represent the ends of a continuum rather than an either/or situation. Urban women are likely to have experience of both, although the ideal is for monogamous marriages (see Chapter 2).

Multiple Partner Relations/ Lateral Strategies-

Since AIDS appeared within the anthropological purview, a number of studies have focused on the various kinds of commercial relationships involving sex in African towns and cities (eg. Schoepf et al 1988; Schneider 1989; Bledsoe 1990a & b; Larson 1989; Obbo 1990). This focus drew attention to the fact that in situations of economic crisis and deprivation, it was not uncommon for a woman living on her own, often supporting children and family members, to "maximise her chances for economic security by creating links to several men" (Bledsoe 1990b:119). Thus, "although a woman cannot marry polygynously, she can be managing ties with several men at once, through what Guyer calls 'polyandrous motherhood'¹ (cf. Halpenny 1975) , making marriage almost incidental to a woman's reproductive career" (ibid; see also Guyer 1994). According to Bledsoe , children are at the heart of these networks because a woman may be better able to press her demands on a man if she has borne his children, and "the more networks a woman can create ties to, via her children, the more resources she can call upon" (1990a:3). This resonates with work done by Parkin (1966) who found that unmarried, economically independent women in Kampala might have children by a number of different fathers in order to establish their own matrifocal households.

Schneider (1989), picking up on the economic dimension argues that "a good deal of female sexual behaviour in Africa can be viewed as economic survival", and that women may take on multiple sexual partners in

order to provide for themselves and their families (ibid:83). Most of these writers stress, however, that although the women engaging in these relationships do get remuneration of various kinds in exchange for sex it is not the same thing as prostitution. Larson (1989) argues, for example, that the giving of gifts as an expression of affection, respect and gratitude is a common element in the interaction between lovers in parts of urban Africa. These gifts, however, are not generally thought of as "payment", and these types of short term relationships are a means of making ends meet, not of engendering prosperity.²

Kisekka (1973) indicates that, while it was not necessarily condoned, the extent to which Baganda women were entitled to multiple partnerships is not altogether clear. She notes that although there is a fertility disorder known in Luganda as *amakiro* which is believed to be caused by pregnant women committing adultery with many men, "many men" could mean anything "from five upward" (after Orley 1972:9). The option of not having any extra-marital relationships is not considered to be practicable according to these writers. While younger women might want to "try out" a number of lovers before settling down with one, older women in more established relationships might also have a relationship with an outside lover "to make ends meet or to keep their alternatives open in case their current relationship deteriorates" (Bledsoe 1990a:2-3; cf. Parkin 1966). In a more recent study, Baganda women in Kampala gave the following reasons for having extra-marital sexual partners: 1) if a husband fails to provide adequate

material support; 2) if the woman is not sexually satisfied by her husband; 3) to take revenge on a philandering husband (McGrath et al 1993: 433). Most women in that study cited "economic reasons" as being the main factor inducing women to have more than one sexual partner. Unfortunately this study does not specify the extent to which these activities are accepted socially.

Thus attaining access to certain resources is one dimension of sex for the women who are compelled, or who chose, for one reason or another to construct lateral networks via a number of different male sex partners. Children are part of this approach (as per Guyer 1994), marriage may be one outcome, and presumably pleasure also features in some way.

4.3.3. Marriage and Sex for Procreation-

Within a marriage, sex is perhaps most closely associated with procreation and fertility. Sex in marriage is legitimate because it is associated with childbearing, and so with the continuity of the lineage. We are left to assume that in cultures other than our own, sex within marriage is not also made legitimate by being an act of love between two consenting adults who have made a life-long commitment to each other. This aspect is not generally discussed in ethnographic accounts which are normally restricted to discussions of the social meanings of the outcomes of sex in the context of marriage, i.e., children produced for the couple and for the lineage. The nature of bridewealth payments - the means by which marriages are contracted

in patrilineal societies - speaks to the way in which the "products of a marriage" - children and a wife's labour - are controlled (Gluckman 1950; Parkin 1980, 1966; Hakansson 1988, 1994; Ngubane 1987). Marriage, in short, is a context for "good" (as in appropriate, socially meaningful³) sex because sex in marriage is supposed to result in the birth of children. It is also what, in many patrilineal societies, gives women their social identity as women, and enables them to obtain access to resources (cf. Ogden 1991 for a full discussion).

In most of the classic texts on "traditional" societies, it was almost taken for granted that women normally marry, and that the purpose of marriage is the production of children as heirs for the main lineage, be it matrilineal or patrilineal. Sex outside of marriage was generally frowned upon unless it served a specific function; for example determining a prospective bride's fertility as among the Kamba (Mwaria 1985). Pre-marital sexual activity may also have been tolerated (if not condoned) as among the Maasai and Samburu where adolescents enjoy a brief period of sexual experimentation before circumcision and marriage (cf. Spencer 1973, 1988; Talle 1987; Kituyi 1989), or during special ritual occasions as among the Gusii (Levine 1978). For women in these societies there is no social identity outside of marriage and motherhood, an argument stressed by Hakansson (1987:3, but also 1985, 1988, 1994) who notes that all the words denoting adult women in the ekeGusii language also denote 'wife'. The fertility of women was of paramount importance to them as individuals and to the clan and lineage. It was through

the "fruit of her womb" that a woman gained her rightful place in the genealogy, and in many societies it was only through her children that a woman was able to gain access to and control over important resources⁴.

The close association of fertility and marriage is also illustrated in the many Luganda proverbs that speak to the loneliness, isolation and social pressure that barren women are vulnerable to. For example, the proverb "Losing all the way; like paying bride price for a barren and lazy wife" (Kisekka 1973: 70), evokes that sense that, as Kisekka claims,

the husband and his relatives feel that a barren women is useless and only wasteful of his money and food...Many barren women thus end up getting divorced, and the high number of barren prostitutes in Kampala may either be a cause or consequence of barrenness (ibid:61).

Although the reproductive imperative is perhaps most easily attributed to women, procreation is also important for men - although the values and pressures may be different. The young Sudanese men discussed by Yamba (1992), for example, demonstrated the importance of their procreative capacity when, in order to protect their future fertility, they overcame huge stigmas and began to use condoms to avoid contracting sexually transmitted diseases when visiting prostitutes.

In addition to the practical and social importance of fertility in marriage, appropriate procreation has its more existential aspects. Kisekka (1973) for example, found extreme importance attached to the idea that one can achieve a kind of immortality through one's children. This is illustrated in Luganda proverbs such as "An attribute gets destroyed on a barren person" and

"A parent does not die"⁵.

Yamba points to similar feelings among the Wad Falleta of Sudan, and the Mossi of Burkina Fasso. The latter have a saying to the effect that "death ceases to triumph once we can point to a person and say that he or she is the child of the one who has died"(Yamba 1992:32). Likewise in Africa generally, "...the importance of being able to reproduce and perpetuate oneself as the member of a lineage, an ethnic group, or quite simply, as a human being, is seen everywhere on the continent as being of paramount importance"(ibid:31). Not only is immortality achieved through procreation, but "personhood" is itself contingent upon this continuity (La Fontaine 1985), and it seems that this is true for both women and men across cultures (cf. Strathern 1988; Nelson 1974; Dahl 1987; Moore 1988; Talle 1988).

MacCormack and Draper's (1987) analysis of their Jamaican material provides a succinct summary. They found that in Jamaica sexuality is itself linked with the desire to create children, and that "for both men and women, perceptions of self-identity and social power are contingent upon the expression of sexual potency which is confirmed by the birth of children" (ibid:143). Sex and birth affirm the attainment of adulthood, and constitute the bases for the construction of reproductive identity. In the following section the reproductive identity concept is defined and deconstructed. It is argued that childbearing confers important statuses and roles on women - not only as mothers and wives, but also as adult persons in their own right. In lived experience these three statuses are linked and together constitute

reproductive identity.

4.4. Reproductive Identity: motherhood and the meaning of "Woman"-

At the outset it is important again to signal an awareness of the pitfalls of essentialism. The women who are the subjects of this discussion are not the objects of their biological capacities. Mothering occurs within specific social contexts "that vary in terms of material and cultural resources and constraints," and that mothering is constructed

"through men's and women's actions within specific historical circumstances. Thus agency is central to an understanding of mothering as a social, rather than biological, construct" (Glenn 1994:3).

This discussion is undertaken specifically to explore the relationship between women's procreative roles and their self-concepts. It is recognised that reproduction does not define the whole of a woman's social and ideational world, but it is deconstructed because it informs sexual praxis and therefore influences ways people may be responding to HIV/AIDS.

Motherhood and mothering are at the centre of a woman's social world, central to its construction and maintenance, both practically and ideologically. Childbearing contributes to a woman's existential identity, but also to her ability to gain access to important resources - human and economic. Although in some societies women only achieve socially recognised status through the birth of children in marriage, children also enable women to develop as social persons by providing them with a context and a pretext for important mediatory activities. It is through these links to others that their own personhood is constructed (3.1.b). It is also through her children that a woman is able to make claims on the property of her husband and affinal kin.

In societies with very stringent patrilineal rules, childbearing may also affect a woman's status as daughter and sister, and so influence her position within her natal family (Hakansson 1994).

Summary-

Childbearing enables a woman to become "Woman" in her own eyes and in the eyes of her community. Not only is a "woman without children an insignificant woman" and "a barren woman ... a wilderness" (Llewelyn-Davies 1989), but it is primarily through her fertility that a woman is able to "exchange in the currency of women" (Sandelowski 1990a:35) and so be recognised as a fully adult person. Finally, childbearing within marriage secures a woman's important social role of wife, and enables her to maximize the political and economic options that wifehood engenders. Women carry the knowledge of the importance of childbearing with them into the sexual arena, and these issues are an important part of the semantics of sex. Thus, while there are a plethora of reasons for engagement in sexual activity, for women the possibility that intercourse will result in a pregnancy features in important ways. Reproductive identity and sexual behaviour are linked. In Chapter 5 some of the consequences of this connection are discussed.

1. J.I.Guyer, "Changing Nuptuality in a Nigerian Community: Observations from the Field" (Paper delivered at the IUSSP Seminar on Nuptuality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current Changes and Impact on Fertility, Paris, 1988).

2.This is an important distinction because it separates ordinary women for whom sex as one of a limited number of resources which may be used for 'getting by' from the professional prostitutes for whom it is the primary means of income generation (cf. White 1990).

3.The concept of 'meaningful sex', tentatively developed by Mundy-Castle (1991) may be of some utility here in qualifying the possible gender differences related to sexuality and sexual intercourse.

4. A woman's identification with her children, and the economic significance of their relationship, is often expressed through teknonymy whereby a woman is called *Mama So and So*, usually after her first born child.

5.AIDS raises new challenges to people's expectations of immortality. New proverbs such as *sifa bwomu* (I will not die alone); and *Are we going to be made into furniture?* (and so continue to exist after death), and *Did AIDS come to kill trees?* (as mortal humans we are all vulnerable to AIDS, we are not like trees that seem to live forever); speak to the fact that people are at once coming to grips with their mortality, and fighting against it by continuing to bear children even if they suspect they may be infected. These issues are explored in more detail in Chapter 5 and the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

Reproductive Decision-Making: AIDS, family planning, and jeopardised motherhood

AIDS has made it dangerous, even life-threatening, for women to obtain access to those areas of social value most central to their constructions of personhood: motherhood and marriage. This chapter reviews some of the literature that has explored the ways in which AIDS is affecting the reproductive and sexual decisions of women in various social and cultural contexts, but with specific reference to Uganda.

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...a lack of economic, social, cultural, sexual and technological options combine to lead vulnerable women to concentrate on addressing the more immediate risks in their lives: poverty, homelessness, and the frequent disruption of socio-economic support systems...The process by which decisions are made about using condoms (and other forms of contraception) is related to a complex mixture of social, economic, and cultural influences that promote the role of motherhood for a woman even when she knows that she might already be infected with human immunodeficiency virus. (Worth 1989:297)

Although Worth is describing the situation for low-income, inner city women in New York, the same comments could apply to women the world over. Reproductive decisions are not made in a vacuum, but encompass issues that resound with the full complexity of life. Firstly, to assume that women make these choices in isolation would be to lose sight of the fact that decisions about fertility are very often political ones. The reproductive decision-making process is complex for the very reason that it involves the intimate relations between men

and women, as well as their political and social relationships, networks and identities: reproductive relations are also, in many ways, *productive* relations, and implicate these in their processes. Secondly, reproductive outcomes are rarely the result of consciously made decisions on the part of the woman by herself, the woman and her partner together, or by some other interested party: many pregnancies occur unplanned and many longed-for babies are never in fact born.

Page suggests that an overall weakness in academic and political discussions of reproduction, as well as many programmatic activities, is that they tend to rely on the "simplest possible decision-making models: that fertility decisions are made by individual bearers and begetters, who are assumed to be those who will have the direct rights and responsibilities associated with socializing as well as producing the next generation" (1989:402). This, she notes, is an inappropriate assumption for most of sub-Saharan Africa where, though tremendous importance is placed on parenthood as a social ideal, there paradoxically exists a high incidence of children being reared by people other than the biological parents. This segmentation of parental roles enables the process of social reproduction to extend beyond the primary parents of the child. Thus,

"...social reproduction constitutes a very flexible system in which the distribution of children and of parent-child relationships brought about by fertility can be extensively manipulated socially" (ibid:403).

Bledsoe (1990b) also critically assesses the common assumptions made about reproductive decisions, focusing her discussion on fosterage as an important post-natal form of managing both family size and social networks. Sargent (1989) looks at a different aspect of reproductive decision-making. She found that among

the Bariba, the decision of where to deliver a child was becoming political: home deliveries are 'traditional', and are symbolically important for Bariba women, but hospital births are increasingly advocated by the government and are therefore strongly encouraged by civil servant husbands. Even this, more remote, component of the reproductive decision-making process is thus often affected by factors external to the decision-makers themselves.

In addition to the political implications of the process of *social* reproduction are the problems inherent in identifying the locus of reproductive decision-making in the dyadic relation between men and women. Many family planning programmes in Africa are targeted at women and tend to deal with a primarily female clientele, as are most peri-natal programmes. This is true despite the fact that in most African contexts (and many non-African contexts as well), men are seen as having control over sexual relations, and the overt expression of female sexuality is considered to be inappropriate and socially dangerous (see Chapter 4). But despite their apparent lack of control over sexual intercourse itself, and the relational nature of social reproduction in general, it remains a peculiar truth that women are held responsible for *contraception*, and are expected to bear the associated risks (cf. Schneider 1989).

The ways in which women's and men's roles work themselves out within the household may also have an impact on reproductive decision-making. As Rakodi (1991) notes, the household is no longer assumed to be a unified economy, but can encompass several often competing economies (after Bruce 1989). Rakodi emphasises the point that within the household "...the interests, behaviour

and contributions of men and women may vary considerably, with respect to their economic roles, fertility decision-making and the demand for children..." (Rakodi 1991:41).

Thus reproductive decisions must be understood as relational both in terms of interpersonal relationships, as well as the orientations these persons have in relation to their particular cultural and "social" situation.

In making choices, decisions are influenced by wider economic, social and political structural constraints, familial and kinship constraints and responsibilities, individual aptitudes, skills and preferences, and the range of knowledge of alternatives available to household members (ibid:42).

In the running of everyday/any day life, one or another of these structural influences may be in the front of one's mind. The extent to which one or another is prioritised will depend on the "other things going on" in one's life at the time.

To wit a caution from Firth (1972:38, cited in Wallman 1977:5) is relevant:

"...There is a structure at all levels - in the phenomena, as in the perceptions which order them and in the concepts which interpret their logical relationships; and it is presumptuous to assign to one level more 'reality' than to another" .

5.1 Specific Threats to Reproductive Health-

The World Health Organisation defines reproductive health as:

"...the ability to enjoy sexual relations without fear of infection, unwanted pregnancy, or coercion; to regulate fertility without risk of unpleasant or dangerous side-effects; to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth, and to raise healthy children" (Germain and Antrobus 1989:18).

Where a situation of highly valued fertility occurs together with economic resource scarcity, women's reproductive health is likely to be at risk. For a woman

in this situation, childbearing represents a means to economic stability and respectability, and so it makes more sense to have unprotected sexual intercourse, perhaps with more than one partner. The cruel irony of this state of affairs is that doing so seriously jeopardises her fertility or the fertility of her partner (through contracting and transmitting STD) or/and their very lives (through contracting or transmitting HIV)¹. As one writer commented, in this era of AIDS, "what once appeared to be a survival strategy [sexual networking] has been transformed into a death strategy" (Schoepf 1988:629).

Many women, therefore, are caught up a double bind. Their reproductive health is threatened by the very means employed to ensure it. This situation is trebly binding for women who have already been diagnosed HIV seropositive:

"HIV infected women - the same class of women who have traditionally been encouraged (or coerced) to limit reproduction on behalf of themselves, families or society - are now being encouraged to limit reproduction to prevent the transmission of disease to their children, on grounds of costs to society. However, at the same time their options for making the choice independently are being restricted." (Levine & Dubler 1990:342).

A number of writers, including Arras (1990), echo this point, indicating that often, when childbearing is a central means of becoming a socially legitimate woman, HIV positive women have few alternatives for "self realisation, satisfaction and comfort". Therefore, "asking them to refrain permanently from childbearing may ... amount to asking them to forgo their only remaining source of personal identity and social status" (Arras 1990:368).

5.2 Reproductive Health & Reproductive Choices- Who's in Control?

Sargent (1989) explores the political and economic constraints on Bariba women seeking obstetrical care, and the beliefs and values that inform obstetrical choice. She proposes a typology to deal with the complex set of individual goals and priorities, or in her terms, agendas, that frame these choices. For the Bariba these four, as mentioned previously, are (i) cultural proverbial virtues, (ii) religious factors, (iii) status aspirations, and (iv) medical concerns. These four agendas constitute the cultural dimension of the decision-making process. Because they are "cultural", they are informed by factors external to the belief systems of the individual decision-maker - such as politics and economics - the constraints and definitions elicited by public policy. The ways in which an individual woman, particularly an urban woman, orients herself to these agendas, will depend upon a number of other external factors including her own occupation and social class (or the social class to which she may aspire), the occupation of her partner and his social aspirations, educational level, etc. Sargent's book is relevant because in it she discusses the important interplay between social and personal values and their impact on reproductive choice. While she does not deal specifically with "risk", much information pertinent to risky choices can be extrapolated.

Much of the anthropological and sociological literature on the decision-making process takes as its premise the fact that decisions are shared, even if not through explicit negotiation: that is they are relational. The process is further complicated in the case of reproduction because it involves

negotiating with the integrity - physical as well as emotional, financial and otherwise - of the female *person*. As Gordon & Kanstrup (1992) argue, whoever has control over a woman's sexuality also controls the level of risk she is exposed to. If a woman controls her own body and essentially makes her own sexual decisions, this control can be a significant source of power and influence, and can enable her to pursue goals for herself and her family. When a woman's sexuality is used by others for economic reasons, they argue, the woman will be "far more vulnerable to risk." Bloor et al (1992) discuss the implications of control in the sexual power relationship between a male prostitute and his client, asserting that where the client is in control of the encounter, risky sex is more likely to take place. When the prostitute asserts his own control over the contact, condoms are more likely to be used.

The literature on reproductive decisions fluctuates between assuming women's control over their own sexuality, and claiming male or other control over heterosexual relations. Schneider (1989) points out that many AIDS intervention programmers urge women to be responsible or to take responsibility in sexual intercourse, thereby locating women as controllers of sex (eg. Nilsson & Sundstrom-Feigenberg 1988); elsewhere writers and policy makers argue that women are powerless, subjugated, and unable to assert their own claims or negotiate in sexual relations. Van der Straten et al for example, found that in Rwanda men dominate in sexual decision-making and that "coercive sex and violence between partners is not uncommon" (1995:940). In actual practice, for most women, the situation is probably neither one nor the

other all of the time, but partly a bit of both at least some of the time. It should be remembered, that even when they do have some control over the sexual encounter, women may not always choose the least medically "risky" option. The main point seems to be, as highlighted in the Van der Straten study, women and men have different reasons and motivations for having sex (cf. Chapter 8, endnote #5). The women in that study tended to feel that men have sex for pleasure and women have sex for childbearing. This last disjunction crucially exposes the contradiction, alluded to in 4.1, between women's reproductive roles and their reproductive health (see also Carovano 1991), and identifies what may be an important factor - if not THE important factor - influencing sexual negotiation.

5.3 Condom Use: risk and reproductive decision-making

Wight (1992) offers a useful discussion of the impediments to safer sex, with special emphasis on the uses of condoms among young adults in the UK. In this context, condoms are used primarily as a method of contraception, although the contraceptive pill is generally preferred among people in this group.

Some of the problems with condom use as described by Wight's young informants may also be relevant to the urban African setting.

1. Even among the young, women are expected to be the ones responsible for contraception. Because condoms are a male-controlled method their use may require a shift in this assumed locus of

responsibility. Wight found that it was difficult for girls to introduce condoms as a possible source of contraception.

2. While condoms are used primarily for contraceptive rather than prophylactic purposes, they are nevertheless linked with AIDS in many people's minds.

3. This association tends to add potency to the already existing situation whereby supposedly unrepressed female sexuality is elided with "dirt" and "worthlessness". Thus young women who carry condoms are doubly polluted: they are seen (also) to belong to the polluted category 'slags'.

4. Because of these problems the use of condoms may entail some degree of negotiation in the sexual encounter. Many young men assume that, if there is any negotiation involved prior to sex, it is concluded when the woman agrees to intercourse: contraception is rarely a part of this prior negotiation and it does not start at that point.

For Worth's study participants - adult HIV positive women in New York City - the primary problem with condoms is that they preclude conception (Worth 1989; cf. PANOS 1990). Secondary to that issue was the fact that "in discussing HIV infection and condom use, women often express

their anger about being made to feel responsible for men's sexual behaviour" (Worth 1989:303).

These women insisted that "men decide what is going to happen sexually," and if the staff at the HIV clinic wanted the men to wear condoms they would have to talk to the men (ibid).

This group of women noted six reasons why men were reluctant to use condoms:

1. Because they (men) have little or no control over themselves when they are having sex;
2. Because they are embarrassed about their bodies and/or sexual performance;
- 3...they cannot tolerate spontaneity and prefer to use a method such as the pill or IUD that is already in place prior to the sexual encounter;
4. They don't think about sex at all, they just respond to it
5. If sex should be "natural", condoms make it unnatural and undesirable.
6. The perception of the women that men "don't like" condoms makes them reluctant to suggest or insist upon their use.

As in Wight's research setting, condoms were not just seen as contraceptives or protection against STDs; "they carry with them the same social and cultural implications that intercourse does" (Worth 1989:303). If a woman carries condoms it means that she is sexually active, available for sex, or "seeking" sex.

"In many communities, such associations violate traditional normative behaviour, which dictates that women play a passive sexual role. A woman who suggests using a condom can be perceived as deviating from the cultural norm, resulting in the loss of her sexual desirability and social status." (ibid)

The most serious deterrent to the use of condoms by this group was the threat it posed to a woman's expression of her identity through pregnancy and the development of her self-esteem. Worth argues that this will be especially pertinent among groups in which gender- or sex-role confusion exists (for example in groups undergoing rapid acculturation or migration; see Obbo 1985 for a discussion of this problem in Kampala). In these settings, Worth maintains, "a woman's fertility or potential fertility often has great significance, defining her social role and therefore her self-esteem" (Worth 1989: 303).

Using condoms in a sexual encounter - or at least for a woman to introduce the use of condoms - carries risks to her on any number of levels, including risks to important social values, self-esteem, and aspects of her identity. Not introducing them, not encouraging or insisting on their use, also carries substantial risks to women of a biomedical nature. However, as Worth notes,

"by the same token, if a man introduces the use of condoms, his behaviour can be construed as an attempt to 'use' the woman, by removing the possibility for her to fulfil her culturally sanctioned role of motherhood. It can be perceived as failure or refusal to fulfil the male social role as an impregnator of women"(1989:303).

The important principle here is that men are also vulnerable in this situation: both women and men have a lot invested in the sexual encounter - a lot to gain, and a lot to lose. One thing is clear from Worth's study, however, and it is an issue that appears throughout the 'safer sex' literature: *control* is a major factor

in the use of condoms (cf. Bloor et al, 1992). If the person in control of the encounter wants a condom to be used, for whatever reason, they will be used; if not, they will not. Either way, condom use is problematic because it has to be negotiated with every sexual contact. Every time a woman asks a male partner to use a condom she must address the issue of control over sexual decision-making. "This leaves a woman vulnerable to the emotional, sexual, physical or economic vicissitudes of their relationships at the moment of use" (Worth 1989:304). While the consequences might be different for men as introducers of condoms, there is also an element of risk to them in that negotiation. In a study of Ugandan youths, for example, 80% of girls and 75% of boys did NOT agree with the statement "A man who uses a condom respects his partner" (Turner 1993:76).

5.4 AIDS and Motherhood: familiar dilemmas, new consequences-

"It is crucially important in understanding women with AIDS to recognise this issue of motherhood, but motherhood embodies a set of relationships embedded in the broad contours of women's lives."
(Schneider 1989:75)

For both women and men, self-identity and, to differing degrees, social power and capacity derive from the expression of sexuality in the birth of children. This is true to some extent across cultures. In the context of sub-Saharan African cities, the AIDS pandemic threatens the very foundations of these important personal and social constructions.

In Kampala, as was shown in Chapter 2, single women have had to struggle against negative stereotypes ascribed to them through both legal and social means. Larson (1989) points out that the symbolising of urban women as 'tradition lost' has been written into many AIDS intervention programmes, exacerbating the complexity and depth of the crisis, and impeding effective and sensitive interventions (cf. Frankenberg 1992; PANOS 1990; Bledsoe 1991; Schoepf 1987).

The literature has suggested that motherhood, female sexuality and identity are all importantly implicated in the livelihood systems of women in this region. The CONNAISSIDA project, based in Kinshasa, has further confirmed this basis of knowledge by identifying (but not analysing) the "multiplex meanings" that link sexuality to procreation, personal identity, socially constructed gender roles, household economics, trade, patron-client relationships, and to interpersonal and public power (Schoepf 1991): that is,

the broad contours of people's lives. This is not a situation that calls for bio-medical intervention alone. This is a situation in which the meanings that shape our lives and our 'selves' are being directly and uncompromisingly challenged.

5.4.1. "Women Die Faster, It's a Disaster"

Before concluding this section it is important to note that the prevalence and progression of HIV is different for women than for men, and that pregnancy often complicates and aggravates the onset of AIDS related infections (eg. Schoepf 1987; PANOS 1990; Aggleton & Hommans 1989). It has been estimated that the highest rates of infection in Uganda are in women aged 20 - 30 years, as noted in the introduction (McGrath et al 1993: 430). There are also heavy moral issues surrounding the rights of HIV positive women to continue childbearing after their seropositivity has been established (see Worth 1989; Levine & Dubler 1990, Arras 1990, and various contributions to *Milbank Quarterly* 68(3)). For many women, however, to die childless is to be cheated by God (Barnett 1991). As one woman interviewed for the PANOS dossier so eloquently states:

"...the loss of the ability to have a child is right up there with losing a family member. *It's your potential...* I'm experiencing the loss of someone who never existed but it's someone who I had always planned to get to know one day" (1990:46, emphasis added).

5.5 Summary-

Because the factors involved in the transmission of HIV are so central to people's lives, actually changing behaviour to preclude transmission is extremely complex. At the moment it appears that the more immediate risks to wellbeing and indeed survival, the avoidance of which often necessitates exposure or possible exposure to HIV, are of more central concern. If the choice is between putting food in her children's mouths and trying to negotiate safe sex to avoid potentially becoming exposed to HIV, most women would feed their children. Similarly, if childbearing, or the prospect of childbearing, represents important intrinsic components in the construction of a social person (through the development of social relationships that parenting entails), the construction of that person's identity and maintenance of her self-esteem, these factors may also be involved in women's sexual decision-making in these settings.

1. The association between sexually transmitted infections and infertility is well established (see, eg. Carael 1994: 256 - 258). Because of the stigma associated with sexual infections, and the private nature of these diseases, women - more than men - are especially likely to delay or avoid treatment, or to obtain inadequate doses of the necessary antibiotics (Pitts et al 1994; Wallman & Others, forthcoming). This delay in the treatment of, for example, gonococcal or chlamydial infections is likely to lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and, eventually, infertility or sub-fertility (Griffith 1963; Arya et al 1980; Careal 1994:257). It is also now empirically evident that presence of (other) sexual infections - particularly if these are genital ulcerative diseases - leaves people especially vulnerable to HIV infection through unprotected sexual intercourse (Grosskurth et al 1995; Nsubuga et al 1990; Basset & Mhloyi 1991). Thus there are strong linkages between STD, infertility and HIV. The extent of the direct clinical effect of HIV on the fertility of women remains unclear, although this is a topic currently under study (Gregson 1994; Gregson & Zhuwau 1994; Mmiro, Marum, Nakabito et al. 1994).

PART II
CHAPTER 6
CASE STUDIES

6.1 Introduction and Background -

Mitchell (1983) writes that the case study is a "detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibit(s) the operation of some identified general theoretical principle" (Mitchell 1983:192). The case study approach as used in anthropological enquiry is essentially heuristic, reflecting "in the events portrayed features which may be construed as a manifestation of some abstracted theoretical principle" (ibid). The detailed nature of the case study material also throws up new insights that can be used *post facto* to explore still other theoretical principles.

Six case studies were conducted in Kifumbira I: five with women living in one cluster of households, and one with a woman who lives just outside the cluster area. Although the main case study period was in February 1994, the women themselves had been known to me for more than a year at that point, and so the case material is supplemented by data gathered during more general fieldwork. All six are ordinary women; none of them are desperately poor by local standards, and none would be considered wealthy, although one case, Ann, is considerably better off financially than the other five.

For the purposes of the present analysis, the case studies demonstrate

how varying orientations to the local notion of the proper woman (*omukyala omutufu*) may affect women's construction of reproductive identity. The extent to which individual women are able to manoeuvre within the tight moral and physical spaces of the city also becomes apparent, and is taken to be relevant to procreative options and reproductive health overall. Each woman has come to the urban area in a different way, and the particular way in which each individual woman is situated within the urban context (her history, activities, networks) is considered. The criteria for selection of the six participants, therefore, was social status and relative conformity to a constellation of factors that constitute the proper woman according to local definitions¹. Thus the six women were selected with knowledge of their respective position in the community as well as the ways in which they define themselves within and are constructed by that community. The data from three of the case studies - Mary, Mama Catherine and Ann - was partly shared with the ODA project (see Chapter 1).

6.1.1. Reproductive Life Histories [Figure 1]

The main interview guide used in the collection of data was a lifeline/ reproductive life history chart (figure 1). Further details were taken from those women with "absent", non-adult children: children born to them who are currently living elsewhere. Network diagrams [Figures 2 - 7] were also filled in for each women, with varying degrees of success and exactitude. In addition,

Ethnographic and Women's Survey questionnaires for each participant provided an important information supplement *. The model used for the life history collection was similar to that developed by Sundstrom (1991) for the collection of reproductive life histories among gynaecological clinic patients in Sweden. It is "an appropriate method for learning to understand individuals in relation to the society and culture in which they live" (ibid:2). It enables the researcher to see reproductive (and sexual) events in relation to other significant life events, movements, and situations. Sundstrom argues that the value of this type of approach is that it elicits sociological (and medical) information while allowing scope for the more existential aspects of significant life events, such as childbirth and sexual encounters, to be illustrated.

"A life history provides insights into the influences that form us and steer our actions and will reveal previous experiences, the current situation along with dreams and thoughts for the future....[It] presents a picture that we recognise and are able to absorb and which leaves us to draw our own conclusions." (Sundstrom 1991:2).

The life histories collected in this study, although informed by Sundstrom's model, differed from it in a number of important ways. The difference in research setting is significant, for it affected the types of questions asked and the nature of the responses given. As a biomedical doctor, Sundstrom used the clinic setting and her relationship with her patients

Three of the case studies were conducted under the auspices - and for the specific purposes - the larger ODA project. The Ethnographic and Women's Survey questionnaires were designed and administered during the course of that project. See Wallman & Others, forthcoming, especially Chapter 2.

as the foundation of the interview. The interest in her study was more strictly reproductive health. The research setting and primary research questions in my study, of course, were different, and the model was adjusted accordingly.

The life-history interviews were semi-structured, and the questions asked were based upon an *aide memoir* developed prior to the case study period². The charts were drawn on large pieces of brightly coloured poster paper to encourage the respondents to participate in filling them in. On the first half of the chart age, place, household composition/house type and financial contributions of each household member were recorded for each life stage. It was initially supposed that five-year intervals would be appropriate, but we found that it was better to leave the intervals open, demarcating them according to changes significant to each participant [see Fig.1]. The result is that from the year of birth to the present time a picture emerges of that woman's life: where she has lived, when and with whom (thus overall mobility and the nature of that mobility - whether rural - urban, rural -rural, intra-urban etc); and the financial, educational other significant activities she and other household members have engaged in. On the second half of the chart details of sexual and reproductive history are recorded. Each woman was asked about any sex-education she acquired as a child and from whom; date and circumstances of the onset of menarche; date and circumstances of first sexual intercourse and dates of all successive (sexual) partnerships (if children were fathered; whether it was a marriage, and if not what she would call the relationship in her own language); pregnancies/miscarriages/ births and deaths

of children; family planning methods used. In this way each of these sexual/reproductive events can be seen in relation to other significant life situations and events, and can richly inform analysis of the overall context of sex and reproduction in the lives of these women.

Collecting life histories in this way has many advantages, some of which are spelled out by Sundstrom (1987;1991). Their value increased further taken in conjunction with other data collection tools. It is important to note, however, that asking someone to reveal the minute and very personal details of her life is that it gives her the opportunity to construct, or even reconstruct, her past and her social and sexual identity.

It is significant that almost all the sexual partners reported by the women were men that fathered their children. This, of course, may actually be the case for these women. It may be that these are the partners reported because they are the only ones of significance for one or another reason. It is also possible that this is revealing something about the appropriate context for sexual behaviour, and the way that these women want their sexuality to be documented. 'Mary', for example, once joked that she could not possibly remember all of her partners. At a different interview she worried that I was going to go back to my country and tell everyone that she is a prostitute because she has children from many different fathers. Indeed the only partners she chose to report were the men that fathered her children.

6.1.2. 'Absent' Children [Figures 8, 9, 10] -

All of the case study women come from patrilineal Bantu societies, in which children belong to the lineage of their biological father - the genitor. This means that when a relationship ends the children generally go to their father. If he remarries, his new wife is expected to care for those children as her own. If the biological parents of the children were formally married, the biological mother may retain some say in their upbringing, as well as some rights to her former husband's property through them. If the couple were unmarried then the mother may lose all rights in the child. I considered this feature of their reproductive lives significant, especially for those women who have borne children with more than one man. Thus I felt it important to trace each child born, identify its father, and determine the extent to which that child maintains contact with its mother. The mother's current relationship with, and feelings about these children were also recorded.

6.1.3. Networks [Figures 2 - 7]-

The network diagrams used for the case studies are based on those developed by Wallman for studies conducted in London (1982; 1984), although they were adapted somewhat to the different field situation and research focus. The objective for the present study was to derive a general sense of the relative amount of support available to each woman, and whether she seemed to rely more on kin or non-kin, near neighbours or those at a distance. The concentric rings represent affective distance from the household/self (innermost circle). I also hoped to learn more about the degree of 'belonging' each woman enjoyed

in the neighbourhood. On the non-kin side, those in Ring 1 are likely to be near neighbours upon whom ego relies for companionship and some reciprocal assistance. Participants were asked to identify anyone in this ring with whom they exchanged everyday items such as salt. Ring 2 are those who visit fairly regularly and may be approached for some assistance, but who probably live at a distance (in Kamwokya or even elsewhere in Kampala). Ring 3 are those acquaintances with whom ego deals in a non-intimate, business-like, but friendly way on a day to day basis. These are people - such as people ego knows at the market, RCs, regular customers - who may give some practical support such as credit, or advice on non-private medical, official or legal matters. Those in Ring 4 are mostly "traffic relationships" - those who one may recognise by sight and greet in passing, but with whom no special exchanges are made (cf. Hannerz 1980:244). It is interesting that some women chose to claim that there were "too many to count" in Ring 4 (such as Mama Beth), while others such as Ann, did not claim anyone for Ring 4. In another way, though, it was a bad question because it is considered proper to greet everyone encountered along the road whether known to you or not, and this caused some confusion during the interviews.

The kin side of diagram similarly relied on informant's impressions. Ring 1 was to be "important" or "close" kin, not necessarily living nearby, but upon whom ego relies for regular support. Ring 2 are those with whom ego is in regular contact but does not get regular support from. Ring 3 are family members who, although ego does not know directly, have been an important

influence. Most of the women listed grandparents and even great-grandparents here. Ring 4 are those kin seen occasionally, but who are not considered integral to the household livelihood, or to ego's sense of self. These are people who would be recognised if encountered, but with whom regular contact no longer exists; most often seen at main family functions such as weddings and funerals.

6.2 The Cluster Area

In the Introduction to this thesis the research setting, Kifumbira I in Kamwokya II, Kampala, was described in some detail. Here the cluster/neighbourhood itself is described briefly so that the reader is able to situate the cases in physical space. The map of the cluster area (Map 4), and the photos opposite add some visual clues.

I developed a sense of the particular geographical designation of the 'cluster' during the course of field work as I realised that the area was socially as well as geographically meaningful to the women living there: it contains all their "near neighbours". Each one of the five case study women living there told me that this was her neighbourhood. Both Mama Beth and Sylvia were able clearly to show where the neighbourhood ended. Although most of the women go out of this small area on most days, this stretch of Kifumbira I constitutes their main social and personal space.

The cluster area is densely populated. The houses, made of mud bricks with old iron-sheeting roofs, are in generally poor repair, and the average rent

is Ush 15,000/ (roughly £9) for one household room. All of the houses are infested with rats and mosquitos. The main open sewer runs through the middle of the cluster, at one point - just beside Sylvia's house - intersecting with another deep sewer. Individual women battle endlessly against the dirt with any means at their disposal. Most are able to cover the floors with woven straw mats, and some have hung cardboard on the walls to keep the mud from crumbling. Floors, dishes and clothing are washed daily. Most children are bathed twice a day. Many people decorate their rooms with colourful pictures cut from magazines as well as local crafts (baskets, gourds, etc) from their home areas.

Ann lives outside of this space, and this point is significant. She might have occasion to pass through, but it is unlikely that she would do so on a regular basis, and the women living in the 'cluster' area are outside of her normal acquaintance.

6.2.1. The Rhythm of the Day-

During the day most men are away, working, looking for work, schooling or spending time with friends talking politics, drinking local brews, playing drafts and trying to think up new and better ways to support their families. Some women, especially those who will spend the day preparing cooked food to sell in the evening, go early to Kalerwe market to buy food at cheap "morning" prices - greeting and chatting with friends along the way. The bulk of the day for the women, though, is spent outside in the areas

around their homes. It is here that they peel piles of Irish and sweet potatoes, cassava and *matooke*,³ and cook on small charcoal fires; pound ground-nuts; wash clothes and dishes; sell their wares; bathe, feed, enjoy and discipline their children; sew, knit, weave and crochet for profit or relaxation; and socialise with their neighbours. There are few times during the day that a woman will be inside her hot and stuffy house - when cleaning the house itself; when she and/or her children are eating; when she is resting or bathing; and if a special guest comes for a visit that requires either decorum or privacy.

Three of the women in the cluster - Mama Catherine, Mama Beth and Mama Rose - sell charcoal. These women live in very close proximity to each other (see Map 4). There does not seem to be serious competition among them; each woman has her own regular customers. If a customer comes to a woman's place when she is absent, one of the others will sell her charcoal and give her the money later. Both Mama Rose and Mama Catherine also sell tomatoes and onions. There is also one shop in the centre of the cluster area, and one at the far western end (see Map 4, houses I and IV respectively); Mary sells *waragi*, (local gin) brew from her home, and a woman living at the far western end of the cluster area sells *tonto* (pineapple wine). Although the charcoal sellers are busy all day long, the women who sell alcohol work primarily from 5pm until mid-night. Sylvia, who sells cooked food in the candlelight market at Kidomole, is busy from dawn to dusk preparing the food to sell.

The atmosphere in the neighbourhood changes drastically once the

heat of the day has passed and the men start to filter in. Bars and shops open their doors, put out benches and play music to draw customers. People begin to gather around these areas to talk and share events of the day. Women bathe themselves and their children and are busy greeting returning husbands and preparing tea. As evening fades into night, those women who are not setting off to the market to work, tidy up their things from outside and lock-up their houses against the drunks and thieves that roam at night. Eventually food is eaten, and as the market, shops and bars close down for the night the neighbourhood is quiet again until morning.

Thus life for the women of Kifumbira I is both domestic and intensively public. Networks are close-knit and mobility is generally restricted to areas within the zone. Personal finances are strained and families are often *in extremis*. The scrutiny under which these women live out their days is intense: what an individual does, when, with whom and in what manner is general neighbourhood knowledge. It is not surprising therefore, that there are strong ideas about what constitutes good and bad neighbours, good and bad women, and that most people work hard to adhere to the norms. This constellation of norms and values are subsumed within the concept of the Proper Woman, discussed in detail in Chapter 7, below.

This data resonates with the work done by earlier analysts of urban Africa - notably the scholars working under Gluckman and Mitchell at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Lusaka (later at the University of Manchester) and at the East African Institute for Social Research in Kampala under

AI.Richards in the 1950s and early 1960s. As noted in Chapter 3, these writers draw attention to the fact that in the African urban context the neighbourhood is an important locus of sociality - particularly for women, but through them for the community generally (eg. Parkin 1969:61; Southall 1961b:224). The networks that are formed are close-knit and dense (Mitchell 1966, 1969; Boswell 1969; Southall 1961a, 1961b). Normative control is high, and is effected at least in part through gossip and the formation of 'gossip sets' (Gluckman 1963; Epstein 1969a, 1969b Paine 1967). For present purposes they provide a theoretical context within which to read the six case studies.

THE CASES-

1. Mama Catherine/Sally-

Reproductive Life History-

Sally, a Muganda, was born in November 1968 in Luwero, one of seven children. Her father had a coffee plantation and her mother cultivated groundnuts, beans and maize both for cash and home consumption. When she was five years old her father "went mad" and her mother left him, taking Sally and three of her children to live with her parents elsewhere. The three other children went to live with an uncle. Sally's father had been "charmed" and later recovered, but her parents never reunited. Her father remarried, her mother did not.

Sally's grandparents also had a coffee plantation for generating cash and grew beans, groundnuts and maize for home consumption. Sally's mother had a small 'hotel' for a short period where she sold cooked food and tea. When her business did not thrive, however, she left it and started to cultivate beans, maize, cassava and groundnuts to sell in the local market.

Sally attended the local primary school through to Primary 7. She feels, however, that she had a poor education because she never learned to speak, read or write English. She finished school at 15 and stayed at home to help her mother cultivate food crops.

At fifteen Sally began to menstruate. She had no prior information about it, but told her grandmother when it happened. She was then secluded in the house, ate special foods (mushrooms prepared without salt), was given her

own *gomezi* (the dress traditionally worn by adult women) and was pampered by her family for one day. She gave her first pad to her mother who hid it in the rafters above the door. This is a traditional means of preventing premarital pregnancy. As long as that pad remains hidden the woman will not conceive. Sally explained that it is the responsibility of the mother to keep the pad with the first blood hidden, because if a step-mother or co-wife finds it she can prevent the girl from ever conceiving. When the mother sees that it is time for her daughter to have children she will remove the pad and dispose of it. This is the only method of birth control that Sally has ever used.

When she was sixteen a marriage was arranged and Sally's paternal aunt (her *ssenga*) "told her everything" about sex. Sally refused to marry the old man that they chose for her, however, and the wedding was called off.

In that same year she had her first sexual experience. "It was a Sunday and we were in the bush", she explained. A friend of Sally's had an eighteen year old brother visiting for Christmas, and they were all talking together. The boys convinced Sally to go into the bush with the visitor 'just to talk with him'. She finally agreed, not realising that they had all been planning that the two would have sex. Sally says that this boy forced her to have intercourse with him, and she never saw him again. She had a difficult time deciding what this "relationship" should be called, finally choosing *mukwano* ('friend') or *namuganzako* ('one time only').

Soon thereafter, when she was still sixteen, Sally met another boy and fell in love with him. He was also living in the village and they fancied each

other. "We negotiated and I agreed" to have intercourse. She was his girlfriend for next the eighteen months, and he was *muganziwe* ("my boyfriend") to her. She believes that if she did not have to move to Kampala and had not met her current man, she would still be with him today: "I loved him very much."

When she was seventeen Sally was sent to Kampala, Kamwokya (Kifumbira I), to take care of her sister who was having a difficult pregnancy. Sally says that she stayed with her sister for "four months and one week". After the first two months of fulltime care giving, Sally got a job serving cooked food in Kamwokya's main market. She worked there for two months.

During this period Sally met her third and current partner, a Munyarwanda two years her senior. He was a friend of her sister's and because he was known to her family Sally never "feared" him. They began to fancy each other and he wrote her a letter professing his love and "begging" her to "marry" him. She wrote back agreeing in principle. They took time to get to know each other, she says, and "studied each other's families"**. Finally, when she was 18 and he 20 she agreed to live with him, and they moved into their own place which they have shared ever since. Sally explained that there is no proper name for a relationship such as theirs because he has not yet been formally introduced to her family. They consider themselves to be married (she calls him *muame*), however, and he is

*** All of Uganda's Bantu tribes practice clan exogamy. It is therefore important that two people intending to marry (or have a sexual relationship) ensure that they are not from the same clan.*

recognised by her family informally (he goes with Sally to weddings and funerals). They would like to have a formal introduction but do not have enough money to do it, nor can he afford the bridewealth her family would demand. Sally says that before she moved in with him there were many richer men that wanted her, but that she refused them and "stayed with this one who has nothing because I love him".

Soon after moving in together Sally and her 'husband' were joined by two of his brothers and one cousin who was a young woman. The men were all still in secondary school and were selling milk in the evenings to earn some money. The women were not earning money at this time.

During the following year Sally became pregnant with her first child. She attended antenatal clinic at Mulago and also took local herbs which she purchased from a woman who sells them outside the antenatal clinic. One brother and the cousin left the household, and a cousin of Sally's came to stay for a few months.

Realising that he would have to earn more money to feed his new family, Sally's husband stopped going to school and started to sell milk fulltime. He was paying school fees for his brother, although the brother also made financial contributions to the household from his milk sales. When Sally was twenty she delivered her baby girl at Mulago Hospital.

The following year she got pregnant again, and a sister of her husband, also pregnant, came to stay with them. Although Sally's husband and brother-in-law were still selling milk she realised that their resources would be strained

further by the new baby. Mama Rose, her sister-in-law who was selling charcoal at the time, gave Sally some of her charcoal to sell on her own and advised her on how to start her business. She soon expanded from selling charcoal only to selling tomatoes, onions, and other necessities such as pounded groundnuts and curry powder. Sally's second daughter was born at Mulago Hospital in 1992. Soon thereafter Sally's brother-in-law left, but the sister-in-law stayed to deliver her baby.

Once his brother left, Sally's husband no longer had to pay his school fees, and he started to get regular work painting houses. After delivering her baby the sister-in-law also started to support herself and her baby by selling water at the community taps nearby. When her son was nine months old she took him to the village to be cared for by her mother. The cousin continues to live with Sally and her family but works all day at a market in town and only comes home late at night. Sally's first born started attending a local nursery school in January 1994. Her third baby, another girl, was born at Mulago Hospital in March, 1994. Sally continues to sell charcoal and the other items. She gets an average profit of Ush 500/ for each large sack of charcoal she sells, but she also use it for cooking and that saves her a bit of money. Most of the people that buy her charcoal are regular customers. The tomatoes, onions and groundnut powder are no longer selling well, but she buys them cheaply and the family uses them. Occasionally a passer-by will buy something. Sally and her husband pool their money and share the financial responsibilities. He does well when he is working, but the work is erratic, and there are times

when the family relies on the income from the charcoal.

Networks (Figure 2)-

Non-kin - Sally listed three women in Ring 1. These are Mama Beth, her friend Mama Sula, and one other woman who used to live opposite her but who has now moved away. Mama Beth and Mama Sula are the only two women she knows that she can tell things to and they will "keep them to their heart". She feels, though, that generally speaking,

...in town you cannot tell other women about your difficulties because they just go and tell everyone. The woman that used to live opposite was my best friend in Kampala, but she has gone back to the village. I don't want to meet people here in Kifumbira I because they say things about you that are not true. They deceive, and try to ruin your reputation in the neighbourhood.

I asked if there are people she cooperates with for things like child care and cooking. She said that she has never really tried to cooperate. Her best friend, Mama Sula, lives elsewhere in Kamwokya so she cannot easily ask her for help. If she goes to market she just leaves the children at home and all the other mothers keep an eye on them.

In Ring 2 she has listed six people, but says that there are many more. I did not press her on who these might be. In Ring 3 she included three RC1s, a woman friend at Kidomole, and a man who sells cooked food at Kidomole. This man gives her "nice food and good prices" even if she sends her daughter instead of going herself. She also listed the people she buys her charcoal sacks from.

Kin- Sally also has rather extensive kin networks. In Ring 1 she lists five people - two on her husband's side and three on her side. The three on her side all live in the village, although one, her sister, was visiting Kifumbira at the time of the interview. In Ring 2 she listed a further three relatives on her husband's side, and five from her side (three who live in the village and two who live in town). In Ring 3 she has listed a number of ancestors, living and dead: the grandparents of her father, two great granduncles, three sisters of her father (these are still living), the grandparents of her mother and one maternal uncle. In Ring 4 she says "there are too many to count".

Sally feels that it is better if your neighbours are non-kin because relatives tend to interfere too much in your life.

If they see that you have managed to buy something they are jealous. Other neighbours can't bother you, but relatives all want to be on the same level. They don't like to see others in the family improve their standards if they are not also improving.

Summary of relevant information:

Length of time living in Kifumbira - since 1987; "Married" since 1988 (town marriage)

Reputation- 'Proper woman' and good neighbour

Children born- 3 girls, will keep trying for a boy.

Ideal number of children in town: 4 (two girls, two boys)

Ideal number of children in the village: 8 (four girls, four boys)

2. Sylvia

Reproductive Life History-

Sylvia is a Munyankole, born in around 1955 in Ankole, Western Uganda. She was the second born of four children. Her parents were farmers who grew bananas, wheat, groundnuts and maize. They also kept bees for honey. Her parents died in an accident, though, when Sylvia was ten, and so she moved to Kabale and lived with her paternal aunt for eight years.

This aunt was a traditional healer whose own husband was already dead. Sylvia says that she was a formidable and frightening woman. The aunt had "spirits" but did not specialise in treating any particular disease. She used to send Sylvia to collect medicinal herbs, and so Sylvia learned how to treat certain kinds of illness.

Sylvia began to menstruate when she was around 13 and she did not tell anyone about it. She now reckons that "maybe this is why I am in troubles now. I am not well." She said that if her mother had been there she would have told her, but that "it is not good to just tell anyone because they can do something to you". Sylvia feared telling her aunt who was "very tough. Even men were not joking with her!"

When Sylvia was around 14 she went to Kololo, a suburb of Kampala to live with her sister in the hope that she could find a job. Her sister's husband worked as a cook for an Asian family, and her sister sold waragi. They lived in the "boy's quarters". Sylvia got a job as a nanny/housemaid for the same family. During that year she met her first lover. They decided to

"marry" as best they could by having a small party during which he was introduced to Sylvia's sister. The man was not introduced to Sylvia's grandmother, however, until after the birth of their first child. He worked as a mechanic and lived in Makerere - Kivulu. Sylvia went to live with him there, continuing to work for the Asian family. During this year, 1971, Sylvia had her first baby, a boy, who was born at Mulago.

The following year (1972) the Asians were ousted from Uganda. Sylvia lost her job, and she and her husband moved to Nakulabya (a nearby suburb). He continued to work as a mechanic. During this year Sylvia took her son to the village to visit her grandmother. The family would not let Sylvia go back to Kampala, however, until the husband come for introduction and paid some nominal bridewealth. Eventually he complied.

During the following year Sylvia and her husband began to have problems and she left him once she managed to get a job as a cook for a young doctor living in Kololo. Sylvia says that she wanted to have her own place again. She rented a room in Kololo where she stayed for three years. At some time during this period Sylvia's son went to live at his father's village, and Sylvia has not seen him since.

In 1975 Sylvia had another child, a boy, who died of measles when he was one or two months old. It is not clear who fathered this child. If she was separated from her husband it may have been another man, but she did not specify. While she was living in Kololo her husband came looking for her every year, and for two years running she chased him away. On the third visit

he brought all her property from his place and deposited it with a flourish in front of her room. For some reason, Sylvia said, she found this extremely funny, and she stood there laughing with all her things around her. Her laughter caught on, and she and her husband stood laughing together for a long time. Once they regained their composure, Sylvia says, she realised how much she really loved him, and she took him back. They lived together in Kololo from 1976 until 1983.

In 1981 her third child, another boy, was born at Mulago hospital (her third caesarian section).

In 1983 Sylvia had her fourth child, and when the baby was three months old they left Kololo and went to live in Kifumbira I, Kamwokya. Her husband was still working as a mechanic and she soon started to sell cooked food in the candlelight market at Kidomole.

Sylvia's fifth and final pregnancy, in 1986, ended in tragedy. Sylvia said that all of her deliveries had been by Caesarean, and although she worried each time, she and her husband were trying to have a girl. When she finally delivered her daughter she was sterilised. Although the doctors did tell her that she should not have any more children, she says that they did not obtain her consent before sterilising her. Sylvia described this procedure:

The doctors turned the uterus upside-down because they do not like it when you have many Caesareans. Sometimes they let you have six. It depends on how healthy you are and on the strength of your uterus.⁴

Sadly her daughter died of measles nine months later. Sylvia wonders

if some of her reproductive health problems are due to the fact that she did not observe the proper rituals when she began to menstruate, and was never given any form of sexual education. She says that she was so ignorant that with her first born she did not even know she was pregnant. She went to the hospital complaining of abdominal pain, and was asked by the doctors "if the womb was ready". She didn't know what this meant, and said no. She was given some medication to stop the pain and she went home, but they did not help her. Eventually an old woman came to see her and explained that she was pregnant and that it was time to deliver her baby.

I went to Mulago. The white doctor gave me strong tea. He said that the baby is now tired and so they have to operate. I was scared and refused. But those doctors were tough! [she laughs] They said, 'Do you want a live baby or a dead one?' I said that I wanted a live baby and so they took me off to surgery. After that they just operated every time, even when I asked for a regular delivery.

In 1989 Sylvia started to foster her sister's sixth child, Maria.

Apparently Maria was born with some kind of learning disability; she cried incessantly throughout infancy, even in her sleep. At their wits end the parents began to beat her for crying. She was taken to traditional healers and treated, but nothing worked. When Maria's father died, her mother moved to Kampala and found a new man, so had to find new homes for her children when she got a new husband. Maria was taken to live with an uncle, Sylvia's brother. When Sylvia found the three year old child being mistreated by her brother's wife, however, she decided to take Maria back to Kampala with her, and they have been together ever since. Sylvia thinks of her as her own, and

"although she is simple, since she came to Kampala she has stopped crying".

In 1991 Sylvia and her husband, who was now quite ill with AIDS, began to quarrel again. He was drinking heavily and had lost his job. Sylvia was providing for the family alone, and he was taking her money to drink. He began to accuse her of having boyfriends, saying "all the RCs are your boyfriends! I don't ever want to see any of them around here!" At one point she packed her bags and was going to leave him but the RCs convinced her to stay and "keep the marriage".

Sylvia and her husband then began to argue about their son who had been sent to the village twenty years before. Sylvia desperately wanted him back. She insisted that her husband go the village and retrieve their son. He went a number of times, but each time failed to convince his mother to let him take his son back to Kampala. On one such trip Sylvia's husband fell ill and died. She has still not seen her son (see 'Absent' children, below).

After her husband's death Sylvia found out that he had been having many "outside" women. Although there had been rumours to that effect before, she had just ignored them, refusing to believe what people told her. Now, though, she produces a photo of the woman she believes gave him AIDS. "This is one that has killed us" she says indicating a smiling woman in a red dress. This woman had a sister who was also sleeping with Sylvia's husband. Sylvia has photos of them all together: "Now they are all dead", she says. She found the photos after her husband's death.

There are days when Sylvia misses her husband terribly. She says that

when he died, at first people were not kind to her:

"They said, 'you see that woman? She was so proud with her husband... now look at her alone, with those children, just struggling'. But now I have their respect. They see that I just work to take care of these kids. They are surprised to find my kids are so big [*healthy, strong*]! They are getting some education [*at the free Catholic Church school for orphans*], and this one [*the eldest*] is top of his class. I have no boyfriends, my life is just working for them...Christmas times are the hardest. It is when they really miss him [*their father*]. Remember last year when they decorated the house and then cried because their father would never see it?"

Sylvia continues to sell cooked food at Kidomole candlelight market.

Her profits are hard to determine because they depend on a number of factors:

1) if she is able to use produce from her own garden at the Kampala Golf Club, and 2) if and when her customers get around to paying her. Sylvia explained that she has a number of regular customers who pay every week or every two weeks. She has to trust these people, and they usually pay. But some other customers cheat her and leave without paying. It is very busy at the market, and some nights it is difficult to keep track of everyone. She charges from 150/= to 300/= per plate. Some people bring their own dishes and buy food to take home. Otherwise they stay and eat from her plates. She complains that people steal her plates and spoons all the time. 3) It is difficult to predict how much she will sell, and she often ends up having too much left over at the end of the night. This means she loses money. "There's nothing to do about it - it is the nature of the work."

Sylvia dreams of buying some land in the village where she and her children can live and cultivate. When asked if she means her husband's

village, she says no, that she does not have good relations with his family (they blame her for his death). She will go to Masaka to where her sister (Maria's mother) is, and establish herself there. Her fear is that she will die and leave her children with no home and no means of looking after themselves.

Networks (Figure 3)-

Non-Kin - Sylvia identified very few people on her network chart. She explained that she does not borrow from her neighbours, but goes to the shop and buys on credit if she has no cash. She believes that borrowing salt just gives people something to gossip about - "people will talk about that salt I borrowed". Likewise she says that she does not ask any of her neighbours for advice. When she has problems she just goes to the RC1 Chairman and asks him for help. In Ring 2 she lists Mama Beth, Mama Jacob, and Faith, but of those women only Faith ever really helps her. Mama Beth, she says, is untrustworthy, and Mama Jacob is unable to help very often because she is unwell. Faith, she says, is very helpful- but only when she is sober, which is not that frequently. In Ring 3 she lists the RC chairman, all the people at Kidomole, the people at Church, and the people that treat her at Mulago.

Kin- On the Kin side of her chart Sylvia has relatively few entries. In Ring 1 she lists six people: two aunts in Masaka; one aunt in Kabale; her sister and brother in Masaka. She also lists her classificatory "sister" in Kololo

- the woman she lived with when she first came to Kampala who was raised by Sylvia's grandmother. Sylvia lists no one in Ring 2. Ring 3 has two uncles - one who lives in Mbarara and one she has never seen who lives at Nyabusoze. Finally in Ring 4 she lists her aunt in Kabale and her aunt's two children; her aunt in Masaka and that aunt's four children; and another kinsperson. She said that there are many others as well. She has not been back to her home area (which she now identifies as Masaka) for two years. -

Absent children (figure 8) -

Sylvia's first born son was taken to his father's home village 23 years ago and she has not seen him since. He was raised in Kisoro by his father's relatives whom he now supports. The boy was originally taken from Sylvia when she and her husband separated in 1972. Initially he remained in his father's care, but when his aunt (his father's sister) came to visit, and found the father drunk and the baby neglected, she took the boy to live with her in Jinja. When Sylvia discovered that her son had been taken away, she went to Jinja to get him back. When she got there, however, she found that her sister-in-law was taking good care of the boy, and did not want to give him back. They discussed the matter and agreed that the child would stay there to get his education - with Sylvia paying for uniform and books, and the boy's aunt paying his fees. The next thing to happen was that the boy's grandmother wanted him back and, after asking many times in vain, finally went herself to get him. No one informed Sylvia or her husband what was going on. When

they were reunited, Sylvia and her husband went together to Jinja to collect their son - only to find that he was not there. The sister-in-law explained that the child's grandmother had him and that they could not get him back. Sylvia and her husband returned to Kampala. They heard nothing at all from his family, and a year later when he enquired about his mother he was told that she was dead - no one had informed them. Sylvia then demanded that her husband go and get their son from the village. He went but the other relatives refused to relinquish the boy because they said that he was supporting them. The husband returned to Kampala without their son. Sylvia sent him back. Again they refused, saying that the boy was too sick to travel. Sylvia's husband then returned, bringing another boy with him instead. She was furious, saying that she did not just want a boy, she wanted her own boy - her own son. She sent him back a third time, but by now he was quite ill. He never returned from his last trip to the village. He died and was buried there. Sylvia never saw her husband again, nor has she succeeded in getting her son back. She says that she has written many letters to him but she thinks that they are being intercepted. She says that if she had the money and someone to go with she would go for him. She wants to go herself this time. She has sent people before to look for him but they always come back empty handed.

Summary of relevant information-

In Kampala since around 1969/1970; In Kifumbira since 1983;"Married" since 1970/1971- town marriage.
Reputation - Maintains fragile semblance of "proper womanness".
Decided not to leave drunkard husband, stayed to "keep the marriage",

and seems to have gained the respect of neighbours through hard work and sexual abstinence following his death from AIDS.

Children born= 5(4 boys, 1 girl); still living = 3 boys, one son absent, fostering in one girl

- *All children born by Caesarean section

- *Sterilised in hospital after birth of last child

- *Attributes reproductive health problems to failure to observe appropriate rituals at first menstruation

Ideal number of children in town: 4 (2 boys/2 girls)

Ideal number of children in village: 6 (3 each)

3. Mama Beth -

Reproductive Life History

Mama Beth was born in 1943 or '44 in Lwebitakuli - Masaka, the ninth born of eleven children. Her parents had migrated there from Rwanda before having any children. Her father was a carpenter and her mother was cultivating the type of bananas used to make gin (*mwenge*). Her father also had cattle and was selling the milk and butter from it.

Mama Beth had her first menstruation at the age of 14 but kept quiet about it, never telling her mother or aunties. (She thinks this may be why she stopped menstruating and "producing" at an early age). Just before her wedding, her paternal aunt told her about sex.

When she was 15 years old she was married as the first wife to young a Munyarwanda man. She moved with him to Nakivale - Ankole. She says that when she married she was a virgin. He was a tailor and had his own sewing machine. They had cattle but did not sell the milk, using it only for home consumption. Mama Beth says that at this time she was not contributing financially to the household: "I was just eating". Within the first few months of her marriage Mama Beth became pregnant. Eight months into her pregnancy she left her husband and went back to her father's village:

"At that time I was still young, and did not want anyone on top of me [*meaning, that she did not like to be bossed around by her husband and in-laws*]. I was very pregnant and told him that I was going home to see my mother. My husband told me, 'You go! You can even take a year without coming back!' I said, 'no, let me add on even more years.' He thought I was joking! [*much laughter*]. My baby was born at home. The wife of my father's brother helped me deliver. When the boy had grown to be six years old his father came and took him. Now

he lives with me again, here in Kifumbira".

Mama Beth stayed at her father's place for three years, "just sitting, not seeing any man". She told us that when a woman ran away from her husband in those days she could not "just take up with another one straight away the way they do nowadays. You had to go to your parents and wait until another man came and asked to marry you." While at her father's place waiting she got a terrible skin rash - "even my eyes were swollen shut." No local treatments were successful. When she was around twenty years old she came to Kampala for treatment and has stayed ever since.

When Mama Beth moved to Kampala she initially lived with her sister at Katwe, but within four months she met a man and moved in with him. Mama Beth refers to him both as *muganze* ['boyfriend'] and *muame* ['husband']. He was a Munyarwanda who worked as a night security guard in town. Six months after moving in together they started quarrelling, and Mama Beth went home to her father's place to "cool off". After she had been gone for some time she heard that her man had become ill, and went back to Kampala to see him. He had gone to his home village, though, and later died. Because they had never been properly introduced (married) she was never told what the cause of death was. She says that she had always intended to go back to him, but it may have been difficult because shortly before he died she got pregnant with another man's child. This is Beth, the child by whose name Mama Beth is known

The following year, 1965/66 when she was twenty-one or two, Mama

Beth moved to Kawempe where some of her sisters were living. Through her sisters she met another man, also a Munyarwanda ("I cannot marry any other tribe"), who worked as a 'turn boy' on a lorry. "I made sure to introduce this one at my parents'", she says.

While living in Kawempe - from 1966 - 1989 - Mama Beth sold (but did not brew) *mwengi* (a Rwandan spirit made with green bananas). She had four children in those years, by two different men, and although she cannot remember the exact years the children were born, she does remember there were about three or four years between each child. All the children were born in Mulago. Mama Beth says although she has "never taken any pill or Kiganda medicine to stop producing," she stopped "early" and suddenly when she was around 41 years old. By the time her husband "left to fight the bush war" in 1985, she was no longer menstruating. She never bothered to go for treatment because people told her it was just the menopause. She has had many aches and pains in her abdomen, but has never sought treatment for them.

In 1984 or 1985 Mama Beth's husband left Kampala, and "went to the bush" to join the NRM guerillas. He never returned. Although she has never heard from him again she does not think he is dead, and still expects that he may show up one day. Nevertheless, she has no interest in getting another man: "Once he left I stopped there with men. Now I don't want any man."

In 1989 Mama Beth moved to Kamwokya and took up residence in her current house. She was working outside the Mukwano soap factory from

1989 - 1991, selling cooked food to the workers. It was hard work and no one was helping her. "I realised I was working for nothing and that is when I decided to start selling charcoal." Mama Beth now sells charcoal from her home, and has given a number of other women in the area advice about how to set themselves up in business. She is also an unofficial birth attendant, and has delivered at least two babies in the close neighbourhood cluster area.

Networks (Figure 4)-

Non-Kin- In Ring 1 Mama Beth lists three women from whom she can borrow salt (compare with Sylvia who says that she does not borrow salt at all). Mama Beth identified these three women as Mama Catherine, Mama Jacob, and Sylvia: they all visit each other and help each other when there are problems. In Ring 2 she lists a further three women who all live in Kamwokya. She says that they all visit each. Interestingly, when I asked who in these three rings she cooperates most with she named Sylvia. This is interesting primarily in light of the fact that Sylvia told me Mama Beth is untrustworthy and never helps her at all. In Ring 3 Mama Beth lists all the RC1s, the people at Kidomole where she buys food, and the people where she buys charcoal sacks. Finally in Ring 4 she says there are too many people to list because so many people pass by her place (her room faces directly onto the main thoroughfare), greet her and then move on the way.

Kin- Mama Beth has few living kin on her network. All the relatives

that would have been in Ring 1 and Ring 2 she says are dead, as are all those listed in Ring 3, but at least on this level she was able to identify individuals. Most of them she never knew, however, because they died or disappeared when the family left Rwanda. In Ring 4 she lists one sister (who lives in Toro) and two brothers. She does not visit them nor they her.

'Absent' Children (Figure 9) -

Mama Beth's first born child stayed with her for six years and then went to his father's relatives for his education. He has now returned to Kampala and is living with her again. Her second, third and fourth born children all have stayed with her throughout their lives. Her husband decided to take the fifth and sixth born to stay with their relatives in Masaka. Mama Beth goes to visit them but they do not come to Kampala. She said that she has maintained some influence in their lives. When their grandmother died they came to get Mama Beth to bring her for the burial.

Mama Beth explained that even when children are taken away as infants, when they grow up they always look for their mother. She insists that her two youngest would come to Kampala if they could, but are kept away from her by their relatives do not want them to come here because they will refuse to go back. Mama Beth said;

You know, when a child is with his mother he doesn't bother about food or school fees. As long as he is with his mother he feels okay. That is why children always come back if they can.

Summary of Relevant Information-

In Kampala since 1964/1965; In Kifumbira I since 1989; married once in around 1959/60; again in 1965/66; came to Kampala after failure of first marriage

Reputation- Mama Beth is also known as 'the Auntie of Kifumbira'. She much respected, and the women in the cluster use her as a general resource person. She delivers their babies, advises on starting businesses; maybe acts as a gatekeeper.

Children born- 6 (five boys, one girl), all living, by 4 different men.

*Attributes reproductive health problems to failure to observe proper rituals at first menstruation.

Ideal number of children for woman living in town - 4 (2 boys, 2 girls)

Ideal number of children for women living in the rural area - 15 (7 girls, 8 boys)

4. Mama Jacob/'Mary'-

Reproductive Life History

Mary, a Munyarwanda, was born in the early 'sixties in Masaka District. Her family was well off; both parents grew cash crops (including coffee) and her father kept cattle and sold the milk. Mary, the eighth born of eleven children, never had any formal education.

When Mary was around 10 or 11 she and her sisters were told that when their periods started they would see "blood", and they should use a special piece of cloth they were given. The cloth should then be given back to their mother who would keep it safely hidden until it was time to start childbearing. Mary got her first period at thirteen and followed the instructions.

During the following year a marriage was arranged for her. Shortly before the wedding took place Mary's paternal aunt took her aside and told her about sex. At fifteen Mary and the young man, also a Munyarwanda, were wed in the customary way. When asked if she had been pleased with the match Mary said "I had to marry him, but he was young enough and did not have other wives, so I could have done worse."

Mary was a virgin when she married, and this was considered to be an honour for her family, her paternal aunt in particular. At the wedding this aunt was given a cow, and tradition dictates that every time the bride gives birth, the aunt is obliged to give her an offspring of that cow to be held in trust for the child.

Mary's in-laws lived in the traditional way on a communal compound. Each son was given a hut, and these were arranged in a circle with the patriarch in the centre. Mary's father-in-law was a rich man with many cattle ("milk was like water in that compound"), and he supported the young couple while Mary's husband finished his education. Mary worked cooperatively with the other women tending the herd, cleaning the kraal and milking. Although she became fond of her sisters-in-law with whom she worked, Mary found this work dirty and demeaning.

When she was sixteen Mary had a baby boy. Sadly the baby died when he was eight months old, and no one ever knew what caused the death. A year or so later she had another child. When this child was two years old he too died. Again Mary says that she does not know the cause of death. She suspects, however, that he may have been neglected during long periods in the care of his grandmother while Mary worked in the kraal.

At around this time her husband finished school and started "moving up and down" [*i.e. going out and having sex with other women*]. This, in combination with the demeaning, dirty work and the loss of her two children, induced Mary to go home to her father's village. She did not stay there for long, however, because her father forced her to go back. She returned to her husband's village, but she was never again happy there. Soon after returning she was pregnant again and delivered her third child, a girl, at the local hospital. Her daughter survived, but by the time Mary was 21 her husband was planning to marry a second wife.

By this time the work was increasingly difficult, and Mary says she asked herself "what am I doing here, just working in this dirty place for nothing?" She fled again, and, leaving her three year old daughter behind, went to live with her sister in Kamwokya, Kampala. This caused a great deal of embarrassment to her father who was then forced to give the husband a cow to facilitate his forthcoming second marriage. Mary's marriage was later dissolved entirely when her father returned the rest of the cattle he had received for her bridewealth. The divorce will ultimately be confirmed at death when Mary is not buried in her ex- husband's village. Despite the divorce, however, Mary still goes back to visit the village from time to time, and maintains her close relationship with her former sisters-in-law. She also maintains contact with her daughter and has recently engaged in a dispute with her ex-husband over her daughter's education. Mary feels strongly that no matter what else may happen, she will always be the child's mother and retains rights in her daughter's upbringing.

Once in Kampala Mary only stayed with her sister for a few months before leaving due to the untoward advances of her sister's boyfriend. From Kamwokya she moved Bugolobi where she stayed with a friend. This friend taught Mary how to brew the local beer (*marua*), and they brewed and sold beer at weekends from the flat they lived in.

During this period Mary started a relationship with her friend's brother, a Mulango policeman. She refers to this man as her *mukwano*, 'friend'. When she was twenty-two they had a child together, a son, who was born at

Nsambya Hospital (a private Catholic hospital in Kampala). This man, Mary says, was "very tough", and although he was gone for four years "fighting in the bush" she so feared him that she did not have any other lovers during that time. Over the course of their relationship she went to his father's home in Lira (in northern Uganda) several times, and when she finally got tired of waiting for him she sent their son there to live and broke off the relationship.

After about two years Mary and her friend were forced to stop brewing. By this time Mary's sister had left her boyfriend and obtained her own accommodation in Kifumbira I zone, Kamwokya. She invited Mary to come back and stay with her. So Mary went back to Kamwokya and began brewing and selling *marua* in the main market area.

One of her customers soon became her lover. He was 24 years old and she 23 when they met, and they were together for three years before he died. While they were courting she referred to him as *muganziwe* (my boyfriend). During this first year back in Kamwokya, Mary and her boyfriend had a child together, a boy, who she delivered at Mulago Hospital (the main government hospital in Kampala).

When she was 26 Mary moved in with her 'boyfriend' or *muganzi* and he became *muame* ('husband') to her. Both of them had regular incomes, he as a hawker in the city centre, and she selling *waragi* (locally brewed gin) from home, and both contributed to the household finances. Before her husband died Mary delivered another child who died 18 months later, some months after her husband's death.

After the death of her husband and child, Mary stayed in the same house (one room without water or electricity, with mud walls and an old iron sheeting roof) and continued to sell *waragi*. She lived alone with her son until she started another relationship. At some point during this period, however, Mary conceived another baby girl (this was her seventh pregnancy) and delivered her at home with the help of a neighbouring friend. This baby died when she was eight months old***, the fourth child Mary lost.

Mary's fourth partner, a Mufumbira man several years her junior, was also a customer of hers. She refers to him as her *mukwano* ('friend'/'boyfriend'). This man has another family in his village, and although he bases himself at Mary's house when he is in town he makes no financial contribution to her household. She is unquestionably the head of her household, and depending on how she is feeling about him, she may or may not include him on a list of her household members. Mary's friend, an insalubrious character commonly regarded as a thief, is frequently in and out of prison. Mary usually bails him out after letting him cool his heels for a few days or a week.

Mary's eighth child, a daughter, was conceived with this man. Mary delivered at home, again with the neighbour's help, in mid-January this year (1994). In May 1994 Mary ended her relationship with the young thug having

Mary's vagueness in describing the timing of this pregnancy may be due to the fact that, according to local gossip, she had sexual intercourse with another man while her husband was still alive (though sick). The death of the infant is attributed to the jealousy of the husband and his post-mortem retribution. Some say that Mary's illness is also explained by these events.

decided that having no man is better than having such a difficult and unreliable one. She is currently living with her two children and a housegirl. She continues to sell *waragi* by the glass from her home. The gin is brewed in large quantities in the rural areas and brought to Kampala in jerry cans. Mary buys a number of 3 litre jerry cans each week at 5000/ each and, if she manages to sell it all she usually makes a profit of around 2,500/. But to make this much profit means selling the *waragi* at 500/ per glass. Other women in the same business who have a larger clientele buy their *waragi* in bulk and sell it at 300/ per glass. This kind of competition has been bad for business. She must now rely on her "regulars", but even they can be fickle.

Networks (Figure 5) -

On the whole Mary's network diagram looks different from Sylvia's or Mama Beth's. Her networks seem to be quite dispersed.

Non-Kin- In Ring 1 she lists three women that she can borrow salt from. All three of them are in the cluster, but she did not identify them by name. She also lists one man who lives in Mulago, her son Jacob's uncle. Mary included my research assistant Jane and myself in this ring, showing that she recognises our potential as new additions to her network. In Ring 2 she has put a large number of people who, she says, are friends but "do not give me any help or any thing." Some of them live in Bwaise, one in Entebbe, some in Bufumbira, and others in Masaka. In Ring 3 she has all the RC1 executive as well as people at a Catholic church she used to attend in Mulago. She did not

include anyone in Ring 4. In the problem triangle on the non-kin side she put people at the Catholic Church in Kamwokya. She would like to get help from them, but fears to ask because she suspects they think badly of her.

Kin- In Ring 1 she put some relatives that live in Masaka (her nephew, sister and the mother of her first husband); in Ring 2 she includes all her family members. She says that the children of her brothers and sisters visit her frequently. In Ring 3 she put her parents and grandparents all of whom are dead.

'Absent' Children (Figure 10) -

Of her four living children, two live at the home of their respective fathers, and two live with her. Mary reckons that Grace, her first born, will visit more and more as she gets older. George, the son she had with the policeman from Lira, "will grow up annoyed because I do not visit him." Mary explained that in most cases as children grow up they want to find their mother and love her more because they have been mistreated by step-mothers. She said that she feels terrible about not seeing George. He is far away and it is very difficult to get there, but it weighs on her mind. *[As she spoke of this son in our interview she began to cry, saying "I feel so bad when I think of my son so far away.."]*.

Her first born, Grace, lives in Masaka and is looked after by her grandmother. Mary is free to visit anytime, and her daughter also comes to visit her. But because Grace has so much family on her father's side, Mary is

not entitled to access to any property through her: "Those things belong to Grace because she has relatives". If there were no relatives Mary would be able to bring her to Kampala with whatever property she had inherited. Mary makes considerable input into her daughter's life. She and her ex-husband together decided that Grace should live with her grandmother because Mary didn't want her to live with the husband's new wife who might have mistreated her. The grandmother welcomed the girl because she needed help. More recently Mary has fought - and won - for her daughter's right to continue in her education.

George is a different story. Mary decided to send him to his father when it was time for him to go to school. She did not have the money to pay his fees. Even though he was only small, she says. "that boy was too tough, like his father", and she was afraid that if he did not get a chance to go to school he would become *muyaye* (a thug). Her right to know anything about his life now is curtailed by the fact that, although she knew his relatives (even living with them for a year), she never took his father for introduction and so their union was not formally recognised. As a result Mary knows little about her son's life, and has no rights to property through him:

"All the children in that place eat together from one pot, so I don't even know who he stays with... As his mother I do not even get a coin. But anyway things are difficult up there. People have no property, nothing."

Mary last saw George in 1990 when he came to Kampala for the burial of her sister. But, like Mama Beth, Mary feels strongly that the bond between a mother and her children can resist this kind of separation:

"Munange [my God], Jessica! At the end of the day a woman is always the mother of her children. As long as she produced them! Even if she never sees them. Somehow the love is there."

Summary of Relevant Information-

In Kampala since around 1983; Kifumbira I since around 1988;
Married first in 1977, divorced in 1983, "married" in 1989, widowed
1992. [came to Kampala after end of rural marriage]
Reputation - not a "proper woman" but a good neighbour nevertheless.
Well liked.

Children born- 8; children living - 4; two absent children

girls) Ideal number of children for a woman living in town - 4 (2 boys, 2

boys) Ideal number of children for a woman living in village - 6 (4 girls, 2

5. Mama Rose

[Mama Rose is the case study participant I knew least well, and that is reflected in the relative lack of detail. Because her husband, an RC1, worked on the larger project as an interviewer I initially knew Mama Rose as Mrs. K. Later, as I got to know her and her children a bit better I began to think of her as Mama Rose. This case in particular, therefore, gave me insight into the functions of teknonymy in Kifumbira I].

Reproductive Life History-

Mama Rose, a Mufumbira, was born in 1969 in Busujju (southwestern Uganda) one of six siblings. Her parents had a coffee plantation and were also growing groundnuts, beans and maize both for selling and home consumption. She was educated up to Primary 5.

When she was 14 years old Mama Rose was told about menstruation by her sister, and was told to inform their mother when she saw blood. She did not begin to menstruate, however, until she was 16 years old.

When she was eighteen (1987), she moved to Nabasuba (a suburb of Kampala along the Entebbe Road) where she lived with a paternal aunt. and worked as a housegirl. All of the other household members were either at school or working. Her aunt's husband had a shop in town and went to Dubai periodically to buy stock. Her aunt worked in an office.

The following year Mama Rose went back to the village where she stayed for a short period with her older sister. It was while living there that she met James. She says that she and James had never seen each other before but when they met they "liked each other very much." In less than a month they had moved together to Kampala and were living in James' room in Kifumbira I (the dwelling they currently occupy).

Within the year she was pregnant, and delivered her baby girl, Rose, at Mulago Hospital. At the time James was working at Oweno Market selling *matooke*. But when Rose was born he started to work as a builder instead. When Rose was 4 months old, Mama Rose started selling charcoal and tomatoes from the area outside their house.

In around 1992, when she was 22 years old, she had her second baby girl, also born at Mulago. Within four months of this delivery, Mama Rose was pregnant again, but this time she miscarried. Her fourth pregnancy was in 1993, when she gave birth to a baby boy. Mama Rose and James both feel that they should now consider family planning. Mama Rose thinks she will go on the pill when she weans her last born. This will be the first time she has used any kind of family planning.

Networks (Figure 6) -

Non-Kin- In Ring 1 she lists the wife James' brother who lives in Kifumbira I. They visit and help each other out with child care and other day to day problems. Ring 2 includes a woman she can borrow salt from as well as the people who buy charcoal from her. In Ring 3 are the whole RC1 executive, people at the Kamwokya Catholic Church, people at the Kamwokya market, Kalerwe market and Kidomole market. Vendors she buys from at Kidomole also come and buy from her when they need charcoal. In this ring she also includes a near neighbour and the old man that lives opposite Mama Catherine. *[It is interesting that she does not list Mama Catherine on her*

diagram. Mama Catherine lives in the same house and is married to James' cousin-brother. There was a long-standing quarrel between the two women, however, which is discussed in Chapter 7. By October 1994 this dispute was resolved and the two women were spending quite a lot of time together. Mama Catherine had just spent two weeks nursing the whole of Mama Rose's family who all fell ill at the same time]

Kin- Mama Rose lists four kin that live within Kifumbira I - three are men, and one is a woman. All of these are relatives of her husband. She also lists her own niece who lives in Makindye (a Kampala suburb). In Ring 2 she lists five kin members, but does not give any more information about them. In Ring 3 are six ancestors, all dead, and one living uncle.

Mama Rose feels that it is better to have relatives as neighbours because family help each other. For clarification I asked if she thought relations between neighbours who are family and those who are not family are significantly different. She explained that the main difference is that when you are sick family will come to hospital and stay with you there, and take care of you. Friends just visit and then leave.

Summary of Relevant Information-

In Kampala since 1987; in Kifumbira since 1989. "Married" since 1988 (no introduction); came to Kampala a "married" woman.
Reputation - Low profile 'proper woman'.

Children born- 3, all living. One miscarriage. Has decided with

husband to start family planning upon weaning last born.

Ideal number of children for woman living in town = 4 (2 of each)

Ideal number of children for woman living in village = 6 (3 of each)

6. Ann/Mrs. B.-

Reproductive Life History-

Ann is a Muganda, born on 10 April, 1963 in Mawokota, the third born of eight children. Her father worked in a coffee factory to which he rode everyday on his motorcycle. He also produced coffee on his own plantation. Her mother cultivated maize, groundnuts and beans both for selling and home consumption.

Ann started school when she was seven years old, but her mother was always telling her to stay home and help her in the garden and with the younger children, so she did not attend regularly. She continued to go when she could until she was fourteen.

When she was twelve the family moved to Bukoma. For the first few years her father continued to ride his motorcycle to the factory, but soon thereafter opened his own butchery. The butchery was their main source of income, but Ann's mother and the children continued to cultivate food, now exclusively to eat at home. The children that were not kept home to cultivate were sent to school.

When Ann was fourteen years old she stopped going to school (she was in P6). In that year her mother explained menstruation to her, and told her that when she first sees the 'blood' she should tell her immediately. She began to menstruate that year. When she told her mother, she was kept in the house for three days. Her father bought her first pair of underpants. They cooked

mushrooms without salt which the whole family ate. Ann explained that "these customs let everyone know that now you are a grown girl". The only sexual education Ann had been given before her marriage was when her mother told her that if a man ever said he wanted to have sex with her she should bring him home immediately for "introduction".

When she was fifteen she met the man she was to marry. She told us that she used to see this boy in church and around the village but did not think of him as a potential husband until one day when they met along the road. On this occasion he told her that he fancied her and wanted to marry her, and asked her to wait for him until he finished his studies. He went away to Nairobi to school, but was gone for only two months. He returned early, she said, in order to marry her.

They had a 'proper' marriage: he was introduced formally to her family at a large and elaborate party paid for by his parents. They also had a wedding in the Catholic church. Ann said that her mother was determined that her daughter should have a proper marriage because she had never had one herself.

After the wedding they moved to the village of Kasaka where he had a job as a secondary school teacher. After four months, however, the school was closed because of the growing instability in the country. Late in 1978, therefore, they moved back to his parents home in Katiti and lived in the servants quarters there. For three months none of them were working, although Ann was helping her mother-in-law cultivate. It was after this period that Ann's husband got a job at the Uganda Commercial Bank and he moved to

Kampala. Ann remained behind in Katiti for three months. In 1979 (when she was sixteen years old), Ann went to join her husband in Kampala. He was living in one room in Kamwokya, Central Zone. Within the first year in Kampala, Ann had a baby boy, delivered at Mulago Hospital.

In 1980 they got a house and shop in Kamwokya, Kifumbira I zone (one room to live in, one room for the shop). Ann's husband continued to work at UCB while she worked in the shop selling sugar cane, onions, tomatoes, potatoes and banana leaves. During this year Ann got pregnant again, and again delivered a healthy boy at Mulago Hospital. During both her pregnancies Ann said that she attended "some" antenatal clinics at Mulago, but her main form of antenatal care was taking *amumbwa* (a combination of herbs suspended in clay) which was sent to her by her mother.

They stayed in that house and shop for ten years. During that period they built the business and their family. The shop grew and became successful. Ann also got a sewing machine and began to sew for extra income. They began to build their own house in another part of Kifumbira I. Five children were born during those years, all in Mulago Hospital. After the first two boys they had three girls in succession and one more boy in 1988 just before they moved again. Eventually they were forced to move before they had planned because the house/shop they were living in collapsed during some heavy rains.

In 1988/89, when Ann was 27 years old, they moved into their own home. They built their five-roomed house with bricks and plaster, and it has an

iron-sheeting roof. There is a separate building on the compound which is not yet finished. Their compound is completely surrounded by a high security wall made of bricks and a heavy iron gate with a chain and padlock.

In 1992 another baby girl was born at Mulago, giving Ann and her husband a seventh healthy child. Ann got a housegirl to help her at home, and stopped selling sugar cane. The following year they started raising chickens. They created a room for the day-old chicks within the main house where they are raised to adulthood and sold as broilers. Ann's husband provided the capital for the project but Ann and the children do the work of caring for the chicks and cleaning their pen. The money is pooled into the household pot, and Ann and her husband jointly decide how the money is divided each month. Ideally Ann would like to get some chickens of her own, the income from which she could spend freely without consulting her husband. She would like, for example, to be able to have some money of her own to send to her mother, or to keep by in case of emergencies. Recently, she said, she had no cash to buy her son a pair of shoes for school. She had to go to her good friend to ask for a loan. She finds the lack of cash available to her difficult, and asking for help, even from friends, humiliating. She said, "when people think that you are good (rich, 'proper') you cannot just go and ask them for money. They will say: 'hey! We thought she was rich, and here she comes begging us for money!'" Because of her status, in fact, there are very few people in the neighbourhood to whom she can go for help.

In January 1994 her oldest son went to boarding school. In late March

1994 Ann delivered her eighth child, a girl, at Rubaga Hospital, a private Catholic hospital in Kampala. She is no longer taking in sewing, but continues to raise and sell chickens (currently helping other women to set up similar businesses), and her husband continued to work at Uganda Commercial Bank until he was offered early retirement in August or September 1994. He accepted the 'golden handshake' offered and built a small shop outside their home from which they sell dry goods. They also had water piped into their compound, and sell it by the jerry can.

Networks (Figure 7)-

Ann's network diagrams differ from the other women mostly on the kin side, where she shows more support. She does also show more non-kin support, although she was less explicit about it than some of the other women.

Non-kin- In Ring 1 she lists 10 women, all of whom live in Kamwokya. She says that although she has never tried to borrow salt, if she ever did get to that point "they couldn't refuse". In Ring 2 she lists a further five women, all of whom she visits and vice versa. In Ring 3 she lists people at the Catholic Church and the RC1 executive.

Kin- In Ring 1 she lists four people. All of these are kin on her own side that live in the village. When she is in real difficulties they will come to town and help her.

In Ring 2 she lists seven people- three on her husband's side and four on her own side.

Ring 3 is the most extensive of all. She lists the grandparents on father's side (both dead) and on mothers side (both alive); three paternal aunts (all dead); 10 maternal uncles and four maternal aunts (all alive). In Ring 4, she says, "there are too many to count."

Summary of Relevant Information-

Came to Kampala 1979 (directly to Kamwokya); came to Kifumbira 1989/90; Proper marriage in 1978 (came to Kampala a married woman)

Reputation- Proper woman. Well respected but moves in different circles than the women in the cluster. High status aspirations.

Children born- 8 (four boys, four girls), would like to start family planning but husband only willing to try "natural" family planning. He was attending a seminar about it at the Church.

The ideal number of children in town: 7 (4 girls, 3 boys)

Ideal number of children in the village: 10 (6 girls, 4 boys)

1. This concept was explored with local women over the course of nine months fieldwork prior to the case study phase. Through informal interviews and more formalised group discussions, the women of Kamwokya, Kifumbira I Zone articulated the various aspects of the proper woman/housewife. The concept is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

2. The life history charts and *aides memoir* (see Appendix A) were designed by Prof. Sandra Wallman for the larger ODA project case studies. The same model was used for these cases (see Wallman & Others, forthcoming, Ch.6)

3. *Matooke*, a kind of green banana, is the staple food in this part of Uganda. The fruit is peeled with a knife (a tedious job leaving sticky black resin on the fingers) and then steamed in a special way for several hours before it is ready to eat. It is served with meat or vegetable stew as the main meal of the day.

4. Sylvia is well informed. An obstetrician/gynaecologist at Mulago Hospital, Dr. Frank Kaharusa, explained that in Uganda when a woman has had four operative deliveries tubal ligation is performed because there is an increased risk that subsequent pregnancies will result in pre-natal rupture of the uterus. He noted, however, that when the surgeon feels the uterus is in "good condition" (has healed well after previous surgeries) he or she may decide not to perform the tubal ligation. In any case, however, the patient is always informed of the procedure. Dr. Kaharusa pointed out that because many women fear divorce if their husbands learn that they have been sterilised they will claim they were never informed. Dr. Kaharusa also explained that "turning the uterus upside-down" is a literal translation of the term commonly used for tubal ligation in Western Uganda. The Luganda term, *okusale enseke*, literally means "cutting the tubes" [personal communication, 16/10/94].

PART III

Preamble

In Part III the main question of this thesis is addressed: what is the relationship between women's reproductive identity constructions and their responses to HIV/AIDS in one neighbourhood of Kampala. Part I reviewed four large bodies of research and scholarship in order to provide the necessary theoretical and historical background for this analysis.

The social and economic changes that accompanied Uganda's colonial experience had an important effect on the social identities of urban women. The colonial ethnographies reviewed in Part I focus on the outcomes of these changes rather than the changes themselves, and identify the city primarily as an 'escape route' not previously available to rural women¹. The early ethnographers identified certain patterns in the rural-urban migration of women, taking special interest in the prevalence of divorced and separated women among urban migrants. These writers speculate that women migrants may have been seeking refuge and opportunity in the ambiguity and anonymity of the city. Far from obtaining a blank slate on which to describe their own self-worth, however, single women migrants to town were *ipso facto* classified as prostitutes or "loose women". By virtue only of their presence in town, single women were criminalised and attempts were made to "repatriate" them to the rural areas. Many women nevertheless persevered, staying on to make up a "stable core" (Southall & Gutkind 1957) of urban inhabitants. Some women were able to establish legitimacy as *banakyeyombekedde*, maintaining their status as single women and obtaining economic prosperity. Many women, however, were compelled to make a living in the "shady fringes" (ibid) of the informal economy, engaged in illicit activities such as commercial sex work and brewing.

Marriage, one possible means of establishing respectability, was desirable but not easy to achieve. In town, formal marriage was the exception

rather than the rule, not least because urban women were considered unmarriageable by most urban men. Unions between men and women were therefore generally considered temporary, becoming more permanent with the birth of children, but usually remaining unsanctioned in the formal sense. "Marriage", even in this imperfect form, nevertheless seemed to become an important means by which women could derive legitimacy and respectability in the city.

The urban scene continued to change dramatically in the post-colonial years. Insecurities in the countryside drove increasing numbers of people into the city. The conurbation mushroomed in a haphazard fashion, and no municipal facilities were put into place to accommodate the growing population. At the same time the national economy was systematically dismantled to fund a twenty year procession of military dictatorships and their associated versions of civil war and genocide. Poverty, over-crowding and the environmental degradation that accompany these conditions began increasingly to characterise city life. Thus the physical nature of the city itself has an impact on the construction of feminine identities and the ways in which town women manage their lives. The neighbourhood became the locus of feminine activities, and within the neighbourhood the norms and values of respectability and good neighbourliness - transmitted through gossip and close knit networks - were underpinned by vicissitudes of proximity and need.

The historical development of stereotypes that negatively valued the morality of urban women, coupled with the physical resources and constraints of urban life, provide the setting for the construction of social and personal identities. In Chapter 4, personhood and sexuality were seen as coming together through motherhood and childbearing in reproductive identity.

Peace finally came to Uganda in 1986, although tragically followed by AIDS. Now, for the first time Ugandans are able to conceive of a future not riven by civil war, but for many this future is threatened darkly by the new pandemic. Today, despite a concerted effort by governmental, non-governmental and foreign intervention initiatives, the shadow of AIDS

continues to hover over Uganda. In addition to its many repercussions is the development of a new moral discourse framing local notions of appropriate sex, appropriate conjugality and appropriate childbearing.

This is the context within which the lives of the case study women and their neighbours must be understood. In Part II the six case studies presented give an indication of the contemporary situation. The reproductive histories of the six women, their reasons for migrating to Kampala and their individual locations within the moral community of the neighbourhood, provide fertile ground for the proceeding analysis. In Part III it is argued that it is possible to make sense of the meanings that shape the reproductive and sexual identities (and decisions) of women living in Kifumbira I, only by identifying the package of norms, values, ideals and expectations in relation to which these identities are constructed. This package, *The Proper Woman*, is deconstructed and analysed in Chapter 7. In Chapter 8 the inter-relationships between the proper woman, sex and childbearing are discussed. Finally, the Conclusion returns to the original question to look at the repercussions of these reproductive identity constructions on women's responses to AIDS. While the preconditions for Proper Womanhood and respectability may in part shape these responses, it is also suggested that AIDS may be having an effect on the moral and semantic climate within which these constructions are made meaningful (cf. Wallman 1988).

CHAPTER 7

The Proper Woman

In an effort to understand the ways in which the women of Kifumbira I are responding to HIV/AIDS, it was important to understand the meanings associated with womanhood and feminine identities. One way in which these meanings were elicited was by asking about the norms and ideals that circumscribe women's behaviour. In time, and through conversations, interviews and group discussions, the notion of the Proper Woman (*omukyala omutufu*) emerged. Although the perceived relevance of the ideal varied according to a woman's own circumstance, there was a significant degree of consistency in the definitions offered by individual women. The Proper Woman in this context may be usefully thought of as a 'dominant' symbol, as defined by Turner (1966), in so far as it (1) is a distillation of axiomatic norms and values; (2) unifies a number diverse meanings, connecting these with a few common themes; and (3) enables a "polarisation of meaning". This last point is important, because as a dominant symbol the Proper Woman touches people at an emotional/ affective level while at the same time having an important structural impact as "an arrangement of norms and values that guide and control persons as members of social groups and categories" (ibid:28). Depending on the situation the ideal can confirm self and status in a positive way and/or be used to define the limits of acceptability to effect the exclusion of others.

Omukyala Omutufu translates literally as 'the proper housewife': the Luganda word *mukyala* means wife, or married woman; *mutufu* means the 'proper'/'right'/'correct' one. Inherent in the term itself, therefore, is the primacy of marriage. The ethnographic literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates that the importance of marriage to women in Kampala is historically as well as culturally rooted. Being acknowledged as a "wife" is a prerequisite for acquiring status and legitimacy in Kifumbira I². This association with marital status gives *omukyala omutufu* a particular kind of prestige value. Although *omukyala omutufu* is a concept that is readily recognised, consistently defined and socially influential in Kifumbira, it is not a status that is available equally - even in principle - to all of the women living there. Nevertheless, *omukyala omutufu* plays an important part in the social life of Kifumbira's slum dwellers as an ideal norm (Bott 1971:194) and a dominant symbol (Turner 1966) of feminine virtue. In terms of the functioning of everyday life for the majority of the women in Kifumbira, though, the related notion of *empisa* is of much more direct relevance, and embodies much more accessible meanings.

Although *empisa* is a Luganda word that has no single English equivalent, it was consistently translated to me as "discipline"³ during discussions in the field. In time, however, it became apparent that *empisa* relates to a complex of meanings, its specific definition dependent on the context in which it is used. On the one hand *empisa* refers simply to conduct, or "manners". But there is another layer of meaning to the concept that relates

more specifically to morality and quality of character, that is to say, *personhood*. More specifically still, I submit that *empisa* can be thought of as a moral and ideational web connecting the various aspects of the 'proper woman', and bringing proper womanness into everyday relevance for the women of the slum⁴ area.

In this chapter both notions are discussed in some detail. *Omutufu* is regarded as an ideal norm, which carries with it both general applicability and certain kinds of status implications. *Empisa*, one facet of *omukyala omutufu*, is potentially accessible to everyone, and therefore has more general relevance, and is an important influence on life in the neighbourhood as a community. Both notions are found to be urban, as opposed to rural or 'traditional', constructs.

There is another level on which the concepts of *empisa* and *omukyala omutufu* operate. In this chapter it is suggested that these related notions provide the ingredients with which the women of Kifumbira I construct respectability and establish their rightful presence in the city. Moreover, the notions of *omukyala omutufu* and *empisa* describe the boundaries of the moral community and the moral self, and are, therefore, central to an understanding of the ways in which these women are responding to HIV/AIDS.

In the first part of the following section the notion of *omukyala omutufu* as an ideal norm is discussed. The analytical gaze is then focused more sharply as the proper woman is situated within the neighbourhood through a discussion of *empisa*. Finally the ways in which these notions

come together through marriage , and the meanings and values associated with motherhood are discussed.

7.1. Omukyala Omutufu-

"*Omukyala omutufu* is that one who is married, has children and looks after them very well. She looks after her home, welcomes visitors, and is well mannered" [has *empisa*].

"*Omukyala omutufu* is that one who is married, has children and is able to look after them."

"...Actually *omukyala omutufu* bears all the problems in a home."

When I seized upon the idea of asking the women of Kifumbira I about local notions of the Proper Woman, I was not aware that it was a central organising theme of their lives. Although I found that there was general consensus on what it meant to be *omukyala omutufu*, there was less unanimity on the extent to which the concept had relevance to everyday life. Generally speaking, married women (even those married informally) tend to regard proper womanness as important, and feel that it is a notion with direct relevance to their lives. Those women who are unmarried, divorced or widowed, on the other hand, tend to stress their belief that *omukyala omutufu* is status-linked, and therefore equally *unavailable* to all women of the slums. A number of women from this latter category met our enquiries about the proper woman with laughter and comments such as "How I should know? Am I *omukyala omutufu*?" These same women, despite their incredulity, however, were able

to answer the question, qualifying their answers by advising me to consult the old women "who know more about such things". It may have surprised (and amused) these "not so proper women" to learn that their answers corresponded neatly with those later given by the old-women-who-know-about-such-things. The point of this digression is simply to indicate the fact that *omukyala omutufu* is, by Bott's (1971:194) definition, an **ideal norm** in that it encodes "ideal behaviour that is not expected" from everyone equally. *Omukyala omutufu* is linked to the status and prestige associated with marriage, and is therefore technically only attributable to married women. This means that a great many of Kifumbira's women cannot be classified as *omutufu* (proper), and for them it remains an ideal belonging to the world outside the slum.

Empisa, although also linked to marriage in important ways, has a much more immediate relevance. As one woman told us, "a proper woman is a good neighbour, but a good neighbour is not necessarily a proper woman". In the day to day functioning of the neighbourhood it is sufficient if one has *empisa*. But for those who aspire to it, and this includes most women in Kifumbira, "marriage" gives a woman an extra measure of legitimacy, respectability and status, even within the slum area.

Generally speaking, *omukyala omutufu* is a married woman who lives with her husband and does not have any extra-marital love affairs. Ideally she should have children, although it was generally agreed that "it is God who decides about children", and so "barrenness" itself does not preclude proper womanness. A proper housewife has impeccable manners. She greets

neighbours and all passers-by. She graciously welcomes visitors into her home, and gives them tea and food if possible. She respects and cooperates with her husband and makes a special effort to get along with his family. If her husband has children from a previous relationship living in the house (as often happens), then the proper housewife must treat those children as her own. As one informant noted, "visitors should not be able to tell that this child does not belong to this woman." A proper woman would never wear tight or revealing clothing, nor should she spend excessive amounts of money or time "beautifying herself".

Finally, a proper woman should have some kind of income generating strategy ("she cannot be idle and expect that her husband will buy her each and every thing"). Ideally, however, this work should not detract her attention from the home. Many women, especially those with small children, try to generate income from home by, for example, selling charcoal, vegetables, cooked food or handicrafts, or taking in sewing. Brewing and/or selling alcoholic beverages is not so readily regarded as appropriate work for a proper woman; it is usually single, independent or older women (*banakyeyombekedde*) who engaged in brewing and selling alcohol.

This is the image of *omukyala omutufu* as it was conveyed by the women of Kifumbira I. It is a specifically urban construct, relevant to the particular historical and social background within which these women are constrained in the construction of respectability and reproductive identity (discussed below). Because marriage is the main value underpinning

omukyala omutufu, and because marriage in town is complex, it is explained in some detail below.

7.1.1. Marriage and (other) love relationships in Kifumbira I-

In a recent article, Caroline Bledsoe articulates the difficulties facing those trying to analyse urban marriage today by noting that "...we need to abandon the search for categorical precision and confront squarely the fact of ambiguous conjugal unions" (1990b:121).

She is proved right in the context of Kampala where the conventional categories of "single" "married" "divorced/separated" and "widowed" provide an inadequate range of options for defining marital status. In Kampala there is an alternative vocabulary which attempts to reframe the ambiguity and diversity of conjugal styles. The terms used to differentiate between types of sexual relationship are roughly glossed as "friend" (*mukwano*), "lover"/"sweetheart" (*muganzi*), and "husband" (*muame*). These terms do not obviate the ambiguity, however. On the contrary, they seem to confirm it.

Mukwano, simply the Luganda word for "friend", is ambiguous when used to refer to a relationship between a woman and a man. This ambiguity is not lost on those who use the term. If a woman or young girl refers to a male friend as *mukwano gwange*, my friend, it is not clear whether or to what extent there is a sexual connection. A young woman and her *mukwano* may go out on dates together. He might buy her inexpensive gifts, and they might have a *casual* sexual relationship, but neither partner sees the relationship as a

precursor to marriage. Young people may have more than one *mukwano* at a time. Informants agreed that any pregnancies resulting from this type of relationship would be unintended, and it is generally regarded as appropriate for condoms to be used during sex with one's *mukwano*.

Muganzi implies a slightly more serious commitment to the relationship, although that commitment is not always balanced equally between the partners. A woman does not usually live with her *muganzi*, but she may aspire to and so have his children in hopes that this may seal the union. A woman may call more than one man *muganzi wange* (my sweetheart) in principle, although in practice this is not usually the case. There is also some ambiguity surrounding this type of relationship. It is felt by some women that men see no distinction between *mukwano* and *muganzi*. Some of the older women in Kifumbira were dismayed by the fact that so many young women are "lured" into bearing children for men who are not serious about the relationship. It seems that men and women have very different kinds of expectations from sexual relationships, and this disjunction often leads to misunderstandings, quarrels, broken hearts, and even the transmission of disease⁵. Again, the extent to which pregnancies resulting from a *muganzi*-type relationship are considered appropriate varies somewhat according to the particular circumstances, as does the use of condoms. It would not be prudent for a woman trying to build a more stable relationship with her *muganzi* to insist on the use of condoms or any other contraception (cf. Bledsoe 1991) as the birth of children may encourage the man to accept

her as a wife.

When both partners are willing to make a longer term and more exclusive commitment to their relationship they usually move in together. A man that has made such a commitment to a woman and demonstrates a willingness to "look after" her, financially and emotionally, is called *muame*, husband. Ideally *muame* would have been formally introduced to the woman's family and a series of gifts and feasts be made on both sides to seal the union. Most young couples do not have the necessary financial means for this, however, and many people live together as husband and wife for many years before a formal introduction is made. Recall from Chapter 6, for example, that Mama Catherine and her husband have not been "introduced", but because he often accompanies her to her father's home for weddings and funerals, he is known to her family and is recognised as the father of her children. Thus this couple, like many others, are recognised as husband and wife by the community in which they live despite the lack of ritual and legality⁶.

Although in practice cohabitation is the main requirement for a relationship to be considered a marriage by the community, some of the older women maintained that a relationship can only be a marriage if there is some kind of ritual, and if the union is recognised in the customary way. Unrecognised partnerships are said to be *kakwundo kakubye eddirisa* which is translated both as "bat knocks on the window marriage" and "open and you enter marriage". As Mama Beth, the Auntie of Kifumbira, explained,

"The type of marriage we have these days is *kakwundo kakubye eddirisa*. These days boys convince girls: 'first you come and cook for me, then we shall look into the matter later'. This *kakwundo kakubye eddirisa*! The girl passes behind the house and enters quietly. The so-called bridegroom will get one of his friends and say 'my friend, come and we will have a bottle of beer'. This is not marriage. You are only a proper couple if you introduce yourselves to the parents ... even then you still have a debt for a church wedding! "

The measure of an urban marriage today is a demonstrated commitment to a long-term, permanent relationship. Condoms are not used within marital relationships, and "marriage" demands sexual fidelity, especially on the part of the wife. Men are assumed to have sexual liaisons outside of marriage, although the ideal of male sexual fidelity is has gained greater currency due to the anti-AIDS campaigns. Marriage gives women respectability not least because they have to defer to their husbands' authority, and so are constrained in their behaviour relative to single women living alone of whom may be said that "what she likes is what she does" (*kyayagara kyeyekolera*), and "she is free to do what she likes" (*wabembe okukola kyayagala*). Her behaviour is expected to be unpredictable and probably immoral, and is assumed to include trying to steal other women's husbands. The single status of such a woman, and her capricious behaviour, is supposed to be either a cause or consequence of her lack of that essential moral quality known as *empisa*, discussed in section 7.2 below.

7.2 Empisa in the Community: Good Neighbours/Bad Neighbours and the Proper Woman

"A proper woman cooperates well with her neighbours and all the villagers"

"A proper woman does not spend her time gossiping about her neighbours"

Empisa is the other key ingredient of the Proper Woman. The ways in which *empisa* operates within the neighbourhood setting and in the construction of personal and social networks are discussed in this section, as are the ways in which *empisa* is expressed in marriage and sexual relations.

The relationship between women's social networks and the transmission, perpetuation and negotiation of normative information, discussed in Chapter 3 (3.1), is directly relevant here. In Kifumbira I, *empisa* and *omukyala omutufu* are the standards by which neighbourhood women enter the moral community and become included in close-knit networks of exchange and mutual assistance. Through neighbourhood gossip reputations may be made or ruined, and those who fail to meet the moral standard for group membership - *empisa* - by be excluded or even expelled.

Empisa is not only applicable to women. Anyone who behaves in a reserved, respectful and sensible way may be said to have *empisa*. *Empisa* is taught to children by their parents, and if one comes from a "good" family one will have *empisa* as an adult. Children that misbehave, act disrespectfully, or look dirty and unkempt reflect badly on their parents, their mother in particular. But mothers living in the slum areas of town complain that from

the time their children can walk they are playing with, and are being influenced by, other children in the area - many of whom come from "bad" families. It is impossible to isolate one's child and protect them from these bad influences, and some mothers fear that their own good example may not be enough to instill *empisa* in their children. In general, the "immorality of city life" is perceived to be both cause and consequence of the lack of *empisa*, and to the difficulty of raising one's children well in town.

The cramped nature of living conditions adds to that difficulty. Amidst much laughter during a group discussion, participants explained the root of the problem:

- "Most problems here in town originate from many people staying in one house. There might be a house with six rooms and therefore six renters. Something surprising or shaming can happen! Maybe one of the six will decide to bring a school girl home during the day and they lock themselves in the house. You cannot see what is happening but you can hear them uttering obscene words, words which you yourself cannot let past your mouth ... Our children learn bad manners because even if you try to teach them *empisa* the neighbours will spoil them. And what makes things worse is the fact that our rooms are small. The whole family is squeezed in the room and when the parents are playing sex in the bed the kids can hear everything. This spoils kids! The situation is not good."

- "It is hard because of these small rooms we sleep in! A man may come home when he is drunk and he starts pulling your arm..."

- "But for you (the woman) you try to keep the respect by telling the man that children are there listening, and ask 'aren't you ashamed?' But when you have *empisa* you have to wait until the kids are asleep."

- "You might think the kids are asleep when they are actually awake. A kid can be naughty in a way that he/she sleeps at first and wakes up when you are in the process. When the kid hears you he/she becomes eager to know what is taking place!"

Thus it is important, if difficult, for *empisa* to be a part of the home environment, and it is largely the woman's responsibility to see that it is. *Empisa* also operates at the level of the neighbourhood. Maintaining good relations with one's neighbours is considered to be one of the keys to urban survival, and *empisa* is a central part of this.

Empisa is most obviously demonstrated in the neighbourhood by the rituals surrounding greeting. The importance of greeting as a social and moral behaviour is recognised by most communities (eg. Malinowski 1945; La Fontaine, ed [various] 1972; Riesman 1977; Goody 1972; Baxter 1990) and Kifumbira I presents no exception. By executing the appropriate greetings the women acknowledge their mutual participation in the moral community. By withholding greeting a woman is showing that she rejects the community and the others in it. The women would often complain that to get the short distance from home to the shop and back could take up to an hour because of having to stop and greet everyone along the way. Behind this "complaint", however, is a statement of belonging and of proper womanness.

Those who do not greet properly are considered suspicious, difficult and troublesome, and are cut off from inter-neighbourhood exchanges and networks. This was illustrated graphically by one such woman whose child was severely malnourished. When asked why no one in the neighbourhood was giving her any help, her immediate neighbour, Mama Catherine, explained that no one wants to help a person who spends her time making quarrels and disturbing the peace. "She is always accusing us of stealing her

things. [In fact] she is the one who steals. We just leave her alone." Such a person is known as *mutamuzi*, a trouble-maker. Several informants noted that if you are *mutamuzi* people in the neighbourhood do not care about you, and this is vividly demonstrated when someone dies. If you are *mutamuzi* and you have lost someone, "they [the people in the neighbourhood] will just leave you alone with the dead body. And even when you die no one mourns for you". These particular points must have special resonance today with so many mourning, so many being mourned⁷.

The tensions created in the neighbourhood by someone who lacks *empisa* can result in witchcraft accusations. Again, and interestingly, the "bad neighbour" is the one levelling the accusations against others or another in the area. Making such an accusation merely confirms that person's lack of *empisa*. Only those who are envious and isolated would deliberately bring a quarrel with neighbours through such accusations. Mama Beth explained this:

"If you stay around here long enough you will notice two things: there are some women who cooperate with their neighbours. These are *muliranwa gwenkolagana naye*, "good neighbours". There are also those people who just stay in their houses and do not even greet those who live around. They stay separate and keep to their own things. These ones don't cooperate. They make quarrels and get suspicious and jealous of everyone. They can even accuse their neighbours of witchcraft. For example a woman who never greets may see you stop a moment outside her door. If her child should happen to fall sick the next day she can even accuse you of harming her child."

7.2.1. The Case of Namakula: A Woman Accused of Witchcraft

In fact such occurrences are not uncommon in Kifumbira I, and a number of incidents occurred during the field work period. One such incident involved an informant named Namakula.

Namakula is an old woman by Ugandan standards. Forty years ago she left an unhappy and childless marriage in the village, and came to Kampala to make her living. In time she acquired enough capital brewing and selling *tonto*⁸ to build her own house where she still lives. Today Namakula has a number of young women working for her and although she complains of her poverty, and has few comforts, she is in fact an extremely shrewd business woman with many other kinds of resources. Although Namakula is not *omukyala omutufu*, she is *nakyeyombekedde* [a woman of independent economic means, see Chapter 2 (2.2)], and is generally well liked and respected by her neighbours.

Towards the end of 1993 a neighbour accused Namakula (who is barren) of jealousy, and of "charming" (bewitching) her children, making them seriously ill. This woman, herself unpopular, was well known for disturbing the peace between the neighbours in the area. The general reaction in the neighbourhood was that the accuser herself was probably jealous of Namakula, and was "causing trouble for nothing". In order to officially safeguard her reputation and restore the peace Namakula requested that the case be heard and adjudicated by the RC court. The RCs agreed, but the hearing was delayed due to the national elections. The accuser persisted in her allegations, and became increasingly unpopular as she continued to make life unpleasant in the neighbourhood by constantly quarrelling and bickering with Namakula's friends and customers as well as Namakula herself. By the time the case was to come to trial, the accuser had become so reviled that she had been forced to move away.

Women who have *empisa* cooperate with their neighbours (*enkolagana nowomulirano*), greet properly and welcome visitors into their homes. They avoid quarrels when possible, and make an effort to stay "cool" when conflict

is unavoidable. As one informant put it:

"A woman fails utterly to be a proper woman when she does not have *empisa* and quarrels all the time with others. It is the way one behaves that makes her a proper woman..."

7.2.2. The Case of Aunt Meg: Kifumbira's Improper Woman

Among the women encountered in the field who are not-so-proper women, there is one who stands out as a woman who "failed utterly" to be proper women. This woman, Aunt Meg, is a *nakyeyombekedde* who has been living in Kamwokya for many years. She has never married, and has no children, although she was fostering a young nephew at the time of field work. Aunt Meg owns the house she lives in, and collects rent from six tenants. She sells *waragi* [locally brewed gin] from home, and is often found sharing a drink with one of her customers. She was the only Ugandan woman in Kamwokya I ever saw smoke. In reference to Aunt Meg people often said "*talina empisa*" ("she does not have *empisa*"). She is well known in the area for being *mutamuzi* [a trouble maker] and a drunkard. She has made herself particularly unpopular by not allowing children to play near her veranda, and by shouting obscenities at those children that dare venture too near.

Aunt Meg's unpopularity finally came to head in late September 1994 when one of her tenants asked if he could build a bathroom (i.e. ablution space) on her land. She refused his request. A few days later Aunt Meg became ill, and accused her tenant of charming her. The accusation brought on a loud row during which, according to Aunt Meg, the neighbour's wife threatened to beat her up. Following this incident Aunt Meg went to seek help from the local RCs, but they were unsympathetic and nothing more was done. Aunt Meg's unpopularity had reached the point that the neighbours had been to see the Chairman about having her expelled from Kifumbira I. A few weeks later, however, Aunt Meg once again appeared at the home of the local RC1 women's secretary claiming that she had been badly beaten the night

before by the wife of the neighbour who wanted to build a bathroom. The story as Aunt Meg told it went as follows: That night she had gone out with her torch to have a bath in the bathroom shared by all the people living in her house. When she opened the curtain-door of the bathroom her torch light fell upon her neighbour's wife who, already bathing there, was stark naked. The neighbour's wife then started to scream and accused Aunt Meg of deliberately shaming her by exposing her in that way. The two women began to quarrel, and the neighbour's wife made good her earlier promise to beat Aunt Meg, by hitting her repeatedly with a large stick.

Aunt Meg incurred some minor injuries to her arms and stomach, and wanted to go to the police to bring charges against the neighbour. To do this she required a letter from the RC executive to take with her to the police.

The RC chairman was again unsympathetic. The husband of the woman who beat Aunt Meg was paying for the wounds to be treated, and as far as the Chairman was concerned that was adequate compensation. But Aunt Meg insisted on a letter. The RC1 Women's Secretary also tried to dissuade Aunt Meg from going to the police by explaining to her that the police would not help her unless she had money. It was likely that the neighbours would be able to give the police a pay-off to get them to stop the investigation. In the end the RCs reluctantly gave the letter, but I left Kampala before the case was resolved.

7.2.3. Transactions in salt-

There are other, less dramatic, ways in which neighbourhood relations are influenced by *empisa* and good neighbourliness. One of the most subtle yet telling of them is revealed in relations surrounding borrowing and lending. In Kifumbira's slum area, where no one is financially secure, it is generally

understood that there will be times when even the most efficient household manager will come up short. At such times women who are on good terms with their neighbours are in a position to borrow a bit of money from a fairly close friend. When this happens, a good neighbour will repay the debt as soon as possible and in full. If, on the other hand, a woman needs to borrow salt, commonly regarded as being both vital and difficult to manage, she should be able to borrow salt from any of her near neighbours. The inability to borrow salt from one's neighbours is a sign of poor neighbourhood relations. It is also an oft-used metaphor to express bad neighbourhood relations in general, as in "she cannot even borrow salt from us". Similarly, one informant told us that although she was quarrelling with one of her near neighbours, "as long as I don't have to borrow salt from her I am not bothered what she thinks".

Outside of the slum area salt borrowing seems to be indicative of status. Those women who are *omukyala omutufu* (married, relatively well-off financially) do not, in general, borrow salt. Ann, who is one such woman, insisted that if she borrowed salt it could be used against her later. A jealous neighbour from whom she borrowed could start to gossip, saying "you know, that woman thinks she is so expensive [sic], but she's not so rich! She even had to borrow salt from me!" Although Ann did say that "if I asked, my neighbour could not refuse", she insisted that if a proper woman comes up short, she would rather get salt on credit from the shop. As a last resort, Ann said, "I would rather eat my soup without salt" than to borrow from a neighbour or a friend living far away.

Ironically it is easier for someone like Ann - an *omukyala omutufu* - to borrow cash from a good friend than to borrow a handful of salt from a neighbour, as no one would consider it strange or inappropriate to have to travel to borrow money. A woman of the slum area, on the other hand, may never have to go without salt or the loan of a bit of cash as long as she maintains healthy relations with all of her near neighbours.

Greeting and trying to maintain harmonious relations with ones neighbours are indications of *empisa*, and demonstrate good neighbourliness. They do not in and of themselves, however, indicate *proper womanness*: recall the comment "a proper woman is a good neighbour, but a good neighbour is not always a proper woman", a principle nicely demonstrated in salt transactions. In order to be both a proper woman and a good neighbour one needs to be "married". This issue was discussed during an argument between an older and a younger woman:

Younger woman "...supposing I never married but a man comes and finds me in my house and I produce children with him. Can't I look after my children like any other mother although they don't have a proper father there to look after them?"

Older woman " A rebel woman is not counted as a proper woman. *She is doing her own things.* She is not counted at all."

Marriage, while not guaranteeing a woman *empisa*, is in some ways a prerequisite. A woman living alone has no restraint; she "does her own things". She can go out drinking and meet men - including other women's husbands. People will wonder why she is alone, and will assume it is because

no man wants her -and no man wants a woman without *empisa*. The argument is circular, and many women get trapped in it's spiral (see Chapter 8). Today even young widows - of whom there are increasing numbers - are suspect. These women are all the more reviled because their partners are assumed to have died of AIDS, and therefore their identity is not only suspect but spoiled. Sylvia was one such woman. As was shown in her case study (pages 157 - 166), Sylvia worked hard to establish herself as a proper woman since her husband's death, and was finally able to establish a reputation as a celibate Catholic woman who only worked to give her children food and a roof over their heads. It was, however, a fragile status, and she laboured on to maintain it.

7.3 Kinship networks: "a good neighbour is better than a relative"

Kinship relations for townspeople in Africa are complicated. Relatives who remain in the rural areas have high expectations of their urban kin, and expect regular remittances of cash and other goods. In many cases townspeople are expected to provide housing and care for young relatives who come to Kampala to go to school, or for those coming to get medical treatment or deliver babies at one of Kampala's hospitals. Many urban residents are unable to meet these kinds of expectations, and are forced to sever ties with their rural kin. Others struggle to varying degrees to maintain the connections despite the hardships imposed.

Not all urban residents, however, are distanced from their kin. There is

a second generation of adults, born and raised in town, now having families of their own. Thus there are increasingly three generations of the same family living in urban areas, and it is not uncommon to find older women caring for their grandchildren while their daughters or sons go out to work. Some more recent migrants either moved to town as families, or came to live together once in town, and so live in clusters (cf. Southall 1961a:31-45). In Kamwokya, although there is considerable variation in the extent to which people have kinsfolk living nearby and who include those kin in their personal networks, localised family networks are not uncommon. The Ethnographic Survey conducted by the ODA project (see Preface) found that in contrast to more recent arrivals, people who have lived in Kamwokya longer than five years tend to have relatives (in addition to household members) living in Kamwokya. When they are present, these relatives represent an important resource for help in times of crisis. Those with no close relatives living in Kamwokya either rely more on friends, or report that they have no one to turn to when they find themselves in difficulties.

In Kifumbira I, however, there is variation in the degree to which people consider it advantageous to have kin nearby. Some of the people I spoke with felt that one of the benefits of urban living is the relative freedom that accompanies the absence of kin. For women this has several layers. For young, married or co-habiting women the absence of *affinal* kin is viewed as a particular advantage, as the youngest sister/daughter-in-law is often exploited to a greater degree than other women in the family. Mama Catherine

explained that if a woman is living near her in-laws they can come to her house any time and demand food, tea or money, and that as a daughter- or sister-in-law a woman is obliged to give them whatever they ask for, even if this leaves her own family wanting. This can cause the young wife to feel bitterness towards her in-laws, resulting in disturbed relations and, potentially, the family's disapproval of her as a spouse for their son. If the relatives live far away in the rural areas, however, the young wife can take advantage of their occasional visits to lavish them with hospitality, proving her worth as a wife and her merit as a proper woman. Mama Catherine believes wholeheartedly in the Luganda proverb, "a good neighbour is better than a relative", and she stressed that this is especially so.

Another reason given by the women of Kifumbira for preferring to live at a distance from kin, was the fact that for many, town life offers a kind of anonymity unavailable in the rural areas. They implied that because kinsfolk know one's history, having them living nearby can seriously curtail one's efforts to renegotiate a reputation. Family are also more likely to meddle in one's affairs than unrelated neighbours, and so can make it difficult for one to achieve success.

Two of the six case study women, Mama Catherine and Mama Rose, are related by marriage; their husbands are "cousin-brothers", or first cousins. They are very near neighbours, living in different rooms of the same house (see Map 4, house #3). Another cousin-brother to their husbands lives nearby with his wife and children.

Mama Catherine and Mama Rose have very different feelings about kin residing nearby. While Mama Catherine feels strongly that it is better to have non-relatives as neighbours, Mama Rose has the opposite opinion. Friends, she said, can only help you up to a point, and then they go back to their own families. Kin, on the other hand, must stay by your side and help you through thick and thin. For Mama Rose this is especially important in times of sickness. Friends will come to visit you in hospital whereas family will stay with you and bring you food and tea. The difference between the perceptions of Mama Catherine and Mama Rose may be due to the fact that, although they are roughly the same age, and "married" their husbands in the same year, Mama Rose's husband is much the elder of the two, and this may give his wife seniority over Mama Catherine. *This seniority may mean that* Mama Rose is entitled to expect - and ask for - relatively more help and support from nearby kin. Indeed as the junior sister-in-law Mama Catherine would be the first one called upon to provide such help. In this respect, near-living kin is more of a resource for Mama Rose, and something of a liability for her junior sister-in-law, Mama Catherine.

The case of Mama Catherine and Mama Rose is particularly revealing in relation to the ways in which *empisa* functions in the neighbourhood. During the case study period, the relationship between the two women was clearly strained. Mama Catherine told us that there was no one in the neighbourhood she could rely on for help, and that in principle women should not trust any neighbours, kin or non-kin. Mama Rose was more generous in

her estimation of the value of kin, but I was less well acquainted with her, and may have been getting an idealised version of her feelings. In any case the relationship between the two women was much improved when I went back to the field six months later:

Mama Catherine said:

"I was not cooperating with Mama Rose before. Each of us sold our own charcoal. If one of us wasn't around when a customer came, we would not help by selling our sister's charcoal for her. The customer would go and maybe not come again. We were selfish, each keeping to our own things. Now things are different. If I am not there when a customer comes, Mama Rose will sell for me and give me the money later. The problems between us were being caused by another sister-in-law who moved secretly between us telling stories and spreading rumours about what we were saying behind each other's backs. That sister-in-law was *mutamuzi*. Now that she has gone back to the village and left us in peace we help each other again. Now when I go to the market I can even come home to find she has bathed my kids, and I see them playing nicely with her children."

During the intervening six month period Mama Rose's household had all fallen ill. Mama Catherine had worked round the clock to take care of them, but did not complain, saying instead that it was her duty to do it, and she did it gladly (see Chapter 6, page 185, above). Interestingly, however, despite the improved relations between Mama Catherine and her in-law/neighbour Mama Rose, a new feud had started between Mama Catherine and the wife the other cousin-brother living nearby. I was not able, in the limited time, to uncover the history of this latest neighbour-kin rift in Mama Catherine's life.

7.4 Gossip and the Proper women

In Kifumbira I, gossip mongering, or *lugambo* as it is known, is considered a past-time of the idle. A person with *empisa* should not engage in *lugambo*, and those that do are considered as undisciplined. Yet, as Mama Jacob put it,

"the slums are full of *lugambo*. Even *bakyala batufu* [proper women] can gossip. These married women can come and see if you are eating, what you are eating, and talk about you to others. Slums are like that. A woman with a husband can gossip and put you down just as much - even more! - than a woman who has many men. In the slums everyone is on the same level."

The data from Kifumbira I resounds with previous work, discussed in Chapter 3, by Epstein (1969a & b), Parkin (1969), and most cogently, Bohman (1984). The neighbourhood cluster in which fieldwork was concentrated can be thought of as a kind of "gossip set", although it should be stressed that this is an analytical designation, and would not be how the women themselves would describe their relationship. The women of the cluster described their group as those women, living in close proximity, who cooperate with each other. Those in the immediate area who do not cooperate are *mutamuzi*, and are excluded from group membership and all its potential benefits. In extreme cases (such as Aunt Meg, above), these people may be evicted altogether. Newcomers to the area may eventually be admitted to the group if they demonstrate their willingness and ability to cooperate in the appropriate fashion. One woman who moved to the area at roughly the same time as field work began had, by the time I left the field 18 months later,

begun to be accepted by the group. After interviewing this woman late in the field work process my research assistant said, "you know, Mama Helen is a good woman. It is too bad we have missed [interviewing] her".

Of course, even within the cluster relations were not always harmonious. There were periodic feuds and conflicts which generally centred around someone being accused of not cooperating. Although generally speaking the women helped each other out, one woman, Sylvia, felt isolated and alone. During what was, in effect, a closed gossip session between Sylvia, Jane and myself, Sylvia confided that

"I can think of no one that I can go to in this neighbourhood for help. The only person that I talk to or get help from is my 'sister' in Kololo [see Chapter 6, p. 160]. These neighbours... yes I visit with them, I see them around, but I wouldn't ask them for help or even borrow salt from them. When I was down there (in Kololo) I had many friends to help me, but here there is no one. Faith [a woman living just outside of the cluster area] sometimes helps me, when she is not too drunk, but the others don't bother. When I am sick I do not even know if anyone will come and sweep the house. These women of Kifumbira ... even if they see that the food I am cooking here on my verandah has no water they just let it burn⁹. Mama Beth? I help her, but she does not help me. Okay, she is cheerful and I can laugh with her but she is a bad women. For example one day I had to go to Mulago outpatient's clinic and left the children to watch the food. The children added too much water. Mama Jacob could see there was too much water there but because of [the pain in] her legs she could not go and help the children. Mama Beth just did nothing. Anyway she is a jealous woman. She is so jealous that she even prevents her children from seeing their own father - even though he could help them - because she is jealous of the love they might have for him..."¹⁰

A week after this discussion misfortune befell Mama Beth's household. Sylvia told us of the events:

Mama Beth had a sister who had separated from her husband and taken their child with her when she left him. Some months prior to the incident in question the sister died, but the child was not sent to his father as tradition dictates. In fact neither Mama Beth nor this man had been informed of the woman's death until after the funeral. The brother in law was furious that he had not been informed, and demanded that his child be returned to him. He came repeatedly to Mama Beth's house, asking "why did you bury my wife without even telling me?" He would not believe that Mama Beth did not know about the death either. On this occasion he came and repeated the same questions, and after a brief quarrel he touched each of Mama Beth's three children (who are all adults), and left. As soon as he was gone, all the children got fever, pain in their legs and could not talk. Mama Beth raised an alarm, calling all the neighbours to come and see her children. By the time the neighbours came they found all four of them lying on the floor "silent as the dead". The brother-in-law, who was not yet very far away, began to run. He was caught a few minutes later, but denied any wrong doing. The police were brought in but the case was closed due to lack of proof. That night a *musawo Muganda* (traditional healer) was brought in to treat Mama Beth and her children, but there was little change, and Mama Beth's oldest son came to look after them. In the morning, Sylvia came and brought fresh juice and fruit for everyone. When she went inside she found all four of them raging incoherently. Sylvia said she held each person, and gave him or her the juice, and finally they calmed down and started talking, telling her what had happened. When she heard the whole story, Sylvia ran to a friend's place and got a herb often used in traditional remedies for bewitching because of its strong smell. She crushed the herb into water and told Mama Beth and her family to bathe in it. Sylvia then gave everyone a cup of strong sweet tea. Soon they were all able to walk again. Sylvia cooked them some food which they ate hungrily, and they were declared cured.

Sylvia concluded the story by reiterating her point that the people of the slums have to cooperate with each other. Those who do not cooperate, she explained, "will find themselves dead". She explained that the only reason she helped Mama Beth was because she (Sylvia) was raised in a good family and has *empisa*. Sylvia's grandfather once told her to always help those in need

because you never know when you will be in need yourself.

7.5 Summary and Conclusion

Understanding the related ideas of *omukyala omutufu* and *empisa* reveals much about the ways in which Kifumbira women strive to organise their lives. Although *omukyala omutufu* is an ideal to which most of these women can only aspire, *empisa* is a means by which the ordinary women of the slum can attain membership to the moral community, and thereby gain access to important resources and an improved quality of life. The proper woman ideal derives some of its power from the physical and moral framework of the city, and is informed by Kampala's historical development. While it may seem to refer to rural, traditional or conservative values, therefore, *omukyala omutufu* has taken on a particularly urban flavour. *Empisa* is one important aspect of proper womanness to which the women of the slum have access. Marriage, a more elusive but in many ways very flexible notion, is the other facet of proper womanness that is important in the city.

It was suggested in section 7.1 above that *omukyala omutufu*, in addition to being an ideal norm, can also be fruitfully thought of as a dominant symbol. The notion embodies the primary, or axiomatic ideals, values and norms, and condenses these into one powerful idea. But most important, perhaps, is the fact that *omukyala omutufu* can be used on various levels to define belonging. On the one hand a woman may be included, if she, like "us" is *omukyala omutufu*. On the other hand, a woman could be excluded on the

basis that she is *omukyala omutufu* but "we" (i.e. the women of the slum) are not (cf. Turner 1966:22-27). The disjunction between the stated ideal and the way people actually behave in reference to it lends it a certain kind of power: the symbol/ideal can frame relations either way. *Empisa* is important as the means by which belonging and respectability can be effected despite the unattainability - for women in the slum - of true proper womanness.

The next two chapters focus analysis more sharply on the ways in which *empisa* affects reproductive and sexual decisions and behaviour, and how the presence of AIDS in their lives is generating both new dilemmas for and, potentially, new avenues of negotiation in the construction of reproductive identity and feminine selves.

1. Feminist scholars working in southern Africa have begun to deconstruct this colonial social history and examine what impacts it has had on the moral and economic framework of the countries in question. Jeater (1993) and Schmidt (1992) identify the impetus for the out-migration of women in the articulation between the indigenous patrilineal/patriarchal social structure and colonial policies in Zimbabwe. Schmidt, for example, argues that colonial rule resulted in a transformation of patriarchal authority, and that the new forms of patriarchal control that emerged enhanced the capitalist economic development of the colonial project. Underlying this general process of change were changes in the gender division of labour, whereby the work load of women was intensified at the same time that the conventional means by which women were able to acquire status and authority were being undermined. It was these processes, Schmidt argues, that underlay the rebellion of rural women, impelling them to run away to seek new lives in the growing conurbations. The need of the African elders to regain control over the sexuality and labour of the runaway women combined with the sexual anxieties of the Europeans in the cities, and an unlikely alliance between the two forces of governance developed. Although the attempts made to regain control over the deserting women were not ultimately successful, one outcome was the emergence of a moral discourse that condemned urban women as sexually dangerous, inherently immoral, and unworthy of respect (Jeater 1993). Unfortunately similarly gender sensitive social histories have not yet been made of Uganda, but it seems plausible to speculate that similar processes may have underlain the rural - urban migration of women there. Particular echoes of a latent moral economy are certainly present in postcolonial Kampala, and this is explored in some detail elsewhere (Ogden 1996).

2. It should be noted that throughout this thesis when I refer to "the women of Kifumbira" I am referring to a very specific population. I can only be sure that my comments apply to them, although I feel fairly confident that many of these issues are generalisable to similar populations elsewhere in Kampala. I stress that in Kampala there is no singular category of "woman". These comments about the Proper Woman may not apply in the same way to the many elite and sub-elite women living in the capital, although the concept is present in the normative scheme of their lives. In addition, the Proper Woman notion will apply differently in relation to age and status, and these issues will be touched upon in analysis.

3. I am indebted to Dr. Jessica Jitta, director of the Child Health & Development Centre, Makerere University, who initially informed me that "discipline" is too narrow a definition of the term. Her comments led me to re-think *empisa* considerably. "Discipline" is but one aspect of *empisa*, which has much more general, context specific, application. I have also seen reference made to *empisa* meaning the rough equivalent of "custom" as *Empisa wa Baganda*, or 'The Customs of the Baganda'.

4. The use of the word "slum" in the text is conscious. It is the word respondents used to describe the especially densely settled and poorly maintained parts of Kamwokya II. The women I spoke to in the Kifumbira I neighbourhood described their own area as a slum and it is as an emic category that the word is used in this text - not as an etic, or especially pejorative, description.

5. For this point I am indebted to Dr. Esther Aceng, a paediatrician at Mulago Hospital, who is currently working on large vertical transmission of HIV project, funded by Case-Western Reserve University, Ohio. In discussing people's responses to HIV/AIDS in Kampala, Dr. Aceng made the point that a central obstacle to "behaviour change" seems to be the fact that there is this disjunction between men and women in terms of what they want, need and expect from sexual liaisons. This is compounded by the fact that very little negotiation seems to go between couples prior to sex. Dr. Aceng seemed to be suggesting that these kinds of gender differences are often overlooked, and yet they appear to present especially significant obstacles to positive change. This point has been recently taken up by Van der Straten et al (1995) in Kigali, Rwanda - see Chapter 5, section 5.2, and Conclusion below).

6. Although this means that the relationship is recognised as legitimate while both parties are alive, the legitimacy does not always persist after death. These issues have become increasingly complicated by the escalating numbers of AIDS deaths. The lack of formal legality of so many marriages has meant that many widows are left destitute by their husbands' family. Upon a man's death the family of the deceased come into his home and take everything away from the widow - including her children. If the house she lives in belonged to her husband she may well be thrown out. Thus at a time when a widow may be facing her own immanent illness and death she is left with no means of support, nor even a roof over her head. Laws are beginning to change in order to protect these women and ensure their rights to their husbands' property, but the process is slow and is leaving many behind. FIDA, a women's legal support agency, advises women of their rights under the existing laws, and is campaigning for all couples, regardless of their legal status, to make out wills as a matter of course. The tragic irony is that many fear taking this step, feeling that it will encourage fate to make them sick.

7. When there is a death in the household, the family members cleanse the body and lay it out for presentation, burning some evergreen boughs for both medicinal/magical purposes and to cover the smell of death. Coins are sometimes placed on the closed eyes of the deceased, and neighbours come in to view the body and give emotional and moral support to the mourning family members. All the furniture is removed from the house and mats are placed on the floor for the assembling women to sit on. Outside the house the men gather, collect any money contributions towards burial costs, and burn a large log which is meant to be kept burning until the body is taken away for burial. If the person is not being taken to the rural areas for burial there is usually a large feast, and all the mourners are given a plate of food. One funeral we attended was for a woman who had died while living in London. Her mother, a prominent Mufumbira woman, mourned formally for over a week. People said she was taking it especially hard because she had never had a chance to see the body and to bury it properly. However it is done, the rituals surrounding death and burial are extremely important in Kampala, and seemingly no less so for the increasing number and frequency of funerals. Being isolated at this time of difficulty is harsh, but predictable, punishment for being a difficult neighbour.

8. *Tonto* is an alcoholic beverage, favoured by the Baganda, made from fermented pineapples. In Kamwokya II it is referred to as pineapple wine, although in the literature it appears as pineapple beer (eg. Southall & Gutkind 1957).

9. Sylvia sells cooked food at the candlelight market, *Kidomole*, in the evenings, and so her days are taken up with buying, preparing and cooking large pots of potatoes or beans and *posho* which she cooks on wood and charcoal fires on her veranda. This entails heavy work which includes collecting firewood, buying, carrying and peeling great mounds of small Irish or sweet potatoes and green bananas (*matooke*), and stirring huge pots of *posho* (maize meal pap) over the hot and precarious fire. Sylvia often tries to enlist the help of her two sons and niece, but they are unreliable helpers, and Sylvia says that as her boys get bigger she cannot ask them to help her for fear that they will beat her up.

10. This last comment is an attempt to further discredit Mama Beth. The claim that Mama Beth is so jealous that she would jeopardise the potential advancement of her own children is a strong indictment of her character, and a clear accusation that she lacks *empisa*.

CHAPTER 8

Sex, childbearing and the Proper Woman

8.1 Empisa and Sex: restraint, respect and responsibility -

Many East African cultures regard sex as a healthy part of adult life, to be enjoyed equally by both women and men (Chapter 4). But that is not to say that sex is unambiguously "good" or "proper". Likewise, although childbearing, or "producing", is good, there also situations in which "producing" is considered inappropriate. "Bad" procreation and "bad" sex go hand in hand, and both result from a lack of *empisa*. "Bad" procreation (barrenness; too many or too few children; having children at the wrong time; improperly spaced pregnancies), generally shows a lack of sexual restraint. It is often regarded as evidence that one has engaged in inappropriate sex, and that prudent restraint, *empisa*, has not been exercised. Such a person, lacking *empisa*, is not a proper woman/man. As Ann once remarked, "it looks like you don't respect yourself".

In central Uganda, children were traditionally kept ignorant about sex so that they would not become sexually active "too soon". Pre-adolescent children were told, if they asked, that babies were born by being vomited out of the mother's stomach. Sex education occurred in stages, the first being when young girls were sent out to stretch their labia minora; the second being when a bride was instructed by her *ssenga* on the eve of her wedding (see Chapter 4).

As in most cities, the world over, in Kifumbira I there is much talk amongst the older women about the moral decline of the young. It is generally felt that young people in town "these days" learn too much too soon about sex, and are becoming sexually active at too early an age. It is said with some dismay that girls of twelve and thirteen are having sex with boys in discos and video halls. Many mothers say that they would like to be able to send their children to the village for sex education and for their children to learn *empisa* from their aunties. They fear that the lack of *empisa* in young people today bodes badly for the future, and that their daughters will not get husbands. As one informant, Grace, explained:

"Nowadays you can't find girls with *empisa* because they just get men from drinking places. Schooling has led to this loss of *empisa*. Young people get sex education in P6! Then at home they see their parents sleeping together. They put two and two together and they are anxious to try... We used to lie to girls to protect their virtue. Today they know more than their parents and this is not good. There is no one to teach them *empisa*. Mothers should send their daughters to the village to learn *empisa* from the *ssenga*, and to make the proper rituals when she has her first menstruation. This is why our women are barren and producing badly... This is why there are no marriages today."

Empisa is still considered a means by which a young woman can attract a good man, and secure a proper marriage. As one group discussant noted:

"When a girl is well behaved, the relatives of a boy will convince him to marry her. They will tell him: 'that girl looks well behaved, if you marry her she will make a happy family. You will not regret it! Marry her!' He might tell his relatives that he has no money to do whatever is required, but his relatives will give him the money, and the pastor can make everything a success."

But the women are in agreement that such a situation is the exception

rather than the rule. The following exchange took place during a group discussion:

- "These girls who marry when they are still young beshame us. You look at them and you really wonder how they were brought up. You find such a girl when she is married, in control of everything. What she wants is what she does. What she says is final. She cannot even kneel before her husband and ask forgiveness¹, what she does is bark at him. She even tells her husband, 'Eh! are you the first person to sleep with me? You think I don't have other men or can't get another one? I can because I am still young. I will meet another man if you don't like me.' Can you imagine such a girl?"

- "These days a girl just escapes from home without asking herself what she is doing. Sometimes she can stay with a man for only one month and then she leaves. When she comes back home such a girl will find it a problem to stay there."

- "People like us who are women leaders are in problems because such girls have many problems in this village. After misbehaving like that, the husband will no longer be interested."

- [Facilitator] "Didn't he get her from a specific place?"

- "A specific place?! He got her from discos! Just from nowhere!"

Unmarried women are also thought to lack *empisa*, and are therefore assumed to be sexually promiscuous. It is widely believed that women who live on their own have many different partners, and that their main concern is to get money and clothes and to beautify themselves. Mama Beth uses strong words about such women:

"Beautiful women are lazy and think that men will just love them for their beauty alone. Once they are in a man's house they just sit with a mirror. The man may come in and say 'Madame, I need my tea', and that woman will just tell him 'Ah, you go and get it yourself'. One day he will just say, 'Ah, Madame, you must leave this house.' Then she will go and find another man. This is the way our women behave."

Ann was of the opinion that this is a kind of prostitution. She explained that while some women become *bamalaaya* because of their nature ("for example Batoro women who are oversexed"), and some may be unsatisfied by their

husbands, most single women just want money to beautify themselves, and have many partners in order to do it.

Having *empisa* means that one is able to show a degree of restraint, responsibility and maturity in sexual matters. Although this should come from one's upbringing, marriage plays an important role. Women who live alone are presumed to lack *empisa* because their lifestyles are unrestrained by the exigencies of marriage.

8.2 Empisa, Marriage and the Proper Woman-

"You hiss and you quarrel to provoke my temper
so that if I blow up you have an excuse to divorce me
But all such provocations are in vain, husband.
They do not affect me, for I came set on marriage

You better revise your thinking about the treatment you are giving me.
Right here, husband, I vow that I am completely indifferent.
For I came set on marriage and nothing will move me.
Even your unfaithfulness doesn't give me any concern
neither does your disrespect bother me in any way"

-*Najjya Iwa Bufumbo* (I Came Set on Marriage)
Song by A. Amida, in *Kisekka* 1973 p.90.

The relative flexibility of conjugality in Kampala was discussed in Chapter 7. Men and women who live together as "husband" and "wife" have made a commitment to each other, but the strength and terms of this commitment varies. As the term "a bat knocking on the window marriage"

implies, these town unions are considered by some as temporary and somewhat haphazard. *Empisa* is an important feature in a woman's ability to attract a mate. In this section it is shown that Kifumbira wives use - or are encouraged to use - *empisa* to maintain their marriages, to bring about behaviour change in their husbands when necessary, and to gain self-esteem.

As the song quoted above suggests, underlying women's approach to marriage is the assumption that men do not have *empisa*. Women explain that a man might take a "wife" and then get bored and want to get another one. In order to justify this action a man may antagonise his wife into quarrelling with him. He might accuse her of "going out" for sex and of not keeping house properly - in short, of not being *omukyala omutufu*. In the meantime he might have already started with a new girlfriend. A woman's best defense in this situation is to arm herself with *empisa*. As Mama Beth explained,

"at all times a wife must be cool. Even when her husband abuses and mistreats her. She should show him through her example the proper way to behave, otherwise they cannot go forward in their marriage."

The expectation is that if the wife is successful in this strategy her husband will ask himself 'why do I abuse my wife?' and in time he will stop, enabling the couple to negotiate and build a better marriage. If the husband does not change his ways the wife is justified in leaving him, propriety intact. If, however, the wife allows herself to be drawn into the quarrel, or if she does not look after the home and children well, then it is felt that she is not serious about the marriage and is "just doing her own things". Mama Beth said that

such people will "die alone" because no one would keep them as a spouse.

I was told repeatedly that "cooperation makes a marriage". In the ideal marriage the husband and wife mutually manage the household affairs, discussing problems and sharing responsibilities. Some men, however,

- "are dictators whose word is final. Such a man will never listen to his wife and what the wife does is try to avoid him as much as possible because the husband is tough."

- "Should I tell you my friends? Such a man will be having another woman outside the home who you do not know. With such a man you can't have a happy family and you can't be a proper housewife because the husband will always be rude!"

Similarly, Ann remarked that in a proper marriage a husband "will hear the wife's voice". But, she adds,

"the main thing is to cooperate. If the husband has refused your request you don't do it. To keep your marriage on good terms you hear what your husband tells you. If you don't he can just leave you to do your own things...A proper woman must have a man. No matter how he treats you, you must keep the respect and preserve the marriage."

Margaret and Jane, both RC I women's secretaries, explained that when women come to seek advice about how to handle a difficult husband, they are advised to be patient and to try to keep the marriage together. Margaret explained that her advice is:

"Please, you stay there and don't quarrel. Give him what he needs and be quick in your work at home. He will be shamed. He will come back".

Although it is tempting to be sceptical about the possibility for success with such a strategy, an example did arise during field work.

Mama Catherine was discussing an illness episode during which she was taken critically ill with a searing headache. Although she was eventually hospitalised, she was only cured when she took a herbal remedy sent to her by her father. This case is relevant because early in her illness there were rumours that her husband had taken an outside girlfriend. According to the gossip, the outside woman was "charming" Mama Catherine, making her ill. It was also said that Taata Catherine [her husband] was being charmed with a love charm, to lure him away from his ailing wife. Mama Catherine insists that she ignored this gossip. She knew her husband was having an affair, but refused to be party to gossip about witchcraft. She continued to behave in the normal way, and did not accuse her husband or complain about his affair. One day, however, Taata Catherine was having a cup of tea prepared by the outside woman. Upon finding that the tea tasted peculiar, Taata Catherine was afraid that he was indeed being charmed. He left her immediately and never returned. He has not to this day taken another outside lover. Mama Catherine was praised by the other women for her behaviour. She showed that she had *empisa*, and that she was of strong character, and in the end she got her man back.

In the case study material there were a number of occasions cited where the woman and her man "got misunderstandings" with various results. When Sylvia heard rumours of her husband's philandering she made an effort to ignore them, and "just minded my own business". When she was finally fed up and threatened to leave him, she was talked out of it by the RCs who urged her to "keep the marriage", and she did so. After "getting misunderstandings" with her second husband, Mama Beth, on the other hand,

left in order to "cool off ", but made it clear that she had intended to go back to him eventually.

It should be evident that *empisa* is considered a key ingredient in a stable and successful marriage. From one point of view *empisa* could be seen as a means of suppressing women's needs. Rather than giving voice to their mistreatment and proactively changing their situation (as some in Euro-American feminists might expect them to do), women in this context are admonished to show inner strength, character and dignity through *empisa*. Their capacity to elicit change is defined by their relative success in being a "proper woman", and it is through this that they acquire the respect of their spouse and of the community.

The importance of marriage to women in Kifumbira I should by now be evident. It was once suggested to me by Mama Catherine that AIDS is making women even more anxious to get, and keep, husbands. Whether in response to their own fears of contracting HIV, their need to resist the rejuvenated stigmatisation of single women as carriers of HIV, or both, the marriage imperative seems to be stronger than ever, and *empisa* continues to play an important role in the marriage enterprise.

8.2.1. Childbearing -

In Kifumbira I childbearing, or "producing" as it is known there, plays an essential role in constructions of womanhood. It is also a feature of a secure marriage. In fact, the centrality of motherhood is manifest on many levels and

in many dimensions of a woman's life (cf. Chapter 4). The main three discussed in this section are: 1) the importance of motherhood to the construction the self as 'woman'; 2) the importance of childbearing for security; 3) the prestige, social esteem and respect motherhood confers upon a woman if her children are born within marriage.

Like many taken-for-granted social values, it was easiest to discuss issues surrounding motherhood and childbearing laterally, that is by reference to it's opposite - barrenness². The importance of childbearing was most vividly evoked when discussion focused on the inability to conceive and/or bear children. This section also takes further note of the fact that childbearing is not unambiguously appropriate (see section 8.1 above), and raises the point that the situations when childbearing may threaten, rather than confirm, self and future are becoming increasingly frequent in the presence of AIDS.

There is a vast Luganda terminology for matters related to childbearing and dysfunctions associated with it. This in itself indicates the social importance of procreation. For example, the term denoting a barren woman - that is a woman who has never conceived - is *omukazi omugumba*, or simply, *mugumba*. Of a woman who "produces slowly", or has only a few children spaced many years apart, it may be said that *ekizaala gumba* - she produces like a barren person. If a woman has **ever** conceived - even if only once, and even if the child subsequently died (before or after birth), she is not *mugumba*. Such a woman may instead be referred to as *kufisa*. There are two types of *kufisa* (sub-fertility or secondary infertility) - one is believed to derive from

syphilis, and the other is the result of a failure to observe the required rituals at first menstruation. It is said that to be *kufisa*, or even *ekizaala gumba* is far preferable to being *mugumba*. Although these women have no or few living children they have at least experienced pregnancy, and so "know how it feels to be a woman". There is a Luganda proverb describing the fact that "barren" women lack some essence of womanhood: *Amabeere kiruvu n'omugumba agamera* translates roughly as "breasts are like a moustache - even a barren one develops them". According to Kisekka (1973), and my informants who confirmed her interpretation, this saying highlights the fact that in the same way that a moustache is a symbol of manhood but growing one does not itself make one a man, breasts are an outward sign of femininity, but having breasts alone does not make one a woman. To be a woman one has to have "produced".

There are also beliefs and corresponding terminology about "bad" childbearing. A woman who has many closely spaced pregnancies may be told *oyosera ng'embwa*, or "you produce like a dog". Local wisdom has it that there should be a two year interval between births - reflecting the tradition of post-partum sexual abstention and the minimum requirement for breast feeding. Nevertheless, it is said that *nzaala mbi ekira obugumba*, or "bad procreation is better than barrenness". One woman explained that it is even better - from the point of view of womanhood - to give birth to sick or differently formed children than to "produce nothing at all". She gave as an example a local woman who had been pregnant eight times. Only one of those

pregnancies resulted in a live birth, and even that child died after one week. Although her situation was generally perceived as tragic (it was said that this woman was being "charmed" by a jealous brother of her husband), her condition was considered preferable to being *mugumba*, for at least she "knows what it is like to produce". She has received "the gift of motherhood that a barren woman can never have."

In the case studies both Mama Beth and Sylvia mentioned their belief that their reproductive health problems were a result of the fact that the proper rituals were not conducted at their first menstruation. In fact great importance is attached to these events. Even if the rituals are properly observed a woman's reproductive health can be jeopardised further in at least two ways: if an enemy obtains access to the first cloth and uses it in witchcraft against her; or if her mother happens to die before removing the cloth from its hiding place and destroying it. If the former situation occurs then a woman may be infertile, or she may lose her babies to miscarriages or stillbirths. In the latter case a woman is likely to be infertile, for as long as the cloth stays hidden the woman is unable to conceive.

Barrenness can be imposed in other ways as well. For example if a woman's paternal aunts are not recognised properly at their niece's wedding by gifts from the groom, then they can curse the marriage, rendering it infertile until they are given the proper recognition. Should the offended aunt or aunts die before they are appeased then the curse is liable never to be lifted, at least not without the intervention of a traditional healer specialising in such

problems. Jealousy is also cited as reason for rendering another person infertile or sub-fertile. In one case that came to my attention a man's wife was bewitched by his own brother who was jealous of his entrepreneurial success in town. In this tragic case the wife conceived eight times, each time losing the baby in the last weeks of pregnancy.

This is the first level at which the importance of childbearing can be analyzed - its place as an essence of womanhood, as a central feature in the construction of female selves. As one woman put it:

"...even the title is enough. The title *Mama* makes a woman so happy. Even a man feels so happy to be called *Taata*. That happiness comes from all the good things a child does for its parents".

Children should also provide a sense of security for the future. For women this security is two-fold. On the one hand they hope and expect that their children will take care of them in their old age. As one informant put it:

"...a woman who does not produce children will not have the benefit of assistance in her old age when she can no longer support herself."

Mary, who has four living children by four different fathers, explained that, while her situation may not be considered ideal, it does have certain advantages. Each child, she explained, will take on certain characteristics of its father. One may be shrewd in business, while another may be a good farmer, and so on. Thus each child will be able to provide for its mother, Mary, in a different way. The only exception was her last born, the daughter she had with her most recent lover, a younger man with no particular

prospects. "This one" Mary explained laughing and jostling the baby in her arms, "will just sell *waragi* like her mother."

Childbearing also provides security of a different order by stabilising a marriage. Many women feel that a man is unlikely to marry you unless you demonstrate your ability to bear children for his lineage. As one participant in a group discussion noted,

"...You produce also to sustain the existence of the clan. When a woman does not produce, the husband's clan cannot grow. You may be dropped for that one who can contribute."

Similarly, if a woman bears only children of one sex she may fear that her husband will send her away and get another woman. Mama Catherine, for example, had spoken during her pregnancy about getting some form of family planning so that she could stop producing after this, her third child was born. Even her husband had discussed this issue, explaining that he felt three children was enough in these difficult times. When the child was born a girl, however - their third daughter - both decided they would have to postpone "planning" in order to keep trying for a boy. Their decision was made against the backdrop of a rumour that was in currency at the time. It was said that a woman living elsewhere in the village had born ten girls before her husband finally took another wife. No one blamed him for this (except those who had learned genetics in school), as he had obviously given his wife a good chance to produce well.

The legitimacy conferred onto a union by the birth of children has an extension in the way in which the woman is treated by the husband's family in

the case of his death. Only by bearing children for the lineage does a woman have a chance of obtaining any inheritance. One informant told the following story to illustrate the point:

"A mother is respected a lot. For example, if a man is married to two women one of them might be barren. He can love the barren one so much, even more than the mother. Time may come, though, when the husband dies. At that time the barren wife can be chased away [by his relatives] because she has no child. She might not even get any of his property, yet the co-wife and her children do. So you see the mother would be highly respected more than the barren one, yet their husband loved the barren one more..."

Thus in the absence of formal ceremony, the birth of children sanctions urban marriages and ascribes a woman with a more secure position vis a vis her affines. This has taken on new resonance in the era of AIDS, and may be one compelling reason to continue childbearing even when one or both partners are infected with HIV. Because of the increasing numbers of deaths that individual families suffer, however, it may not be an effective strategy for much longer. There was a case in Kifumbira I, for example, where the wife of a local official who was widely thought to be dying of AIDS, got pregnant and had a baby. People whispered that despite the birth of the child she was unlikely to inherit. She had only been with the official for a short time so it was assumed that his grown sons (by another marriage) would inherit all her husband's property upon his death. It was said that without the child her life after her husband's death would have been much simpler, for alone she could survive on little, maybe even move to the country to live out her days. It was agreed that the child would make survival more difficult, and that they would

both "know hunger". Although this was just speculation, it was gossip founded in the observation of many such cases.

The third level at which the significance of childbearing to women's lives becomes apparent is the status, respect and prestige conferred upon mothers who are also wives. Motherhood within marriage gives one entrance into the community of adult women - closed in many ways to barren women and to single mothers. During a discussion one woman made the following observation:

"When a woman does not produce she gets no respect. Even when mothers come together, such a woman is not accepted among them, because they will say that she will have nothing to contribute in their discussions. They might even ask her to leave."

This statement was confirmed when a young woman named Fatima was asked to comment on her experience of single motherhood:

"Single mothers do not get much respect, especially when they are not employed. Your parents feel that you have not honoured them. The community fears and despises you. You can only get support from others in your own situation. As a single mother you are not accorded full status as an adult woman, and men just approach you as if you are a prostitute. You also get chided by other women. Although you are a parent it is as though you do not know how to do things properly in the home. For example, if some neighbours are cooking communally for someone's funeral, they will make a point of not asking you to join. You are made to feel that because you don't have a husband you cannot cook nicely. They say that when you don't have a man you can just do what you like. They also fear that you will take their husbands..."

Thus, while any childbearing makes one a 'woman', it does not in every case make one a Proper Woman, as the following exchange makes plain:

[Facilitator] "Supposing a woman is doing some business and she is able to look after her kids: must she be married?"

- "Yes, because a proper woman is a married woman."

[Facilitator] "In which category would you put an unmarried mother?"

- "That one is also under the category of Woman, but not under proper woman because she alone is looking after her children. Even people will be talking about her saying: That woman, you see! Eh! She manages her children!" *[implying that she does so in an improper way, by 'doing her own things', probably with other people's husbands]*.

- "My friends, don't talk about it loudly!"

- "There are women who behave as though they have been bewitched to produce. Such a woman doesn't mind looking after her children alone. She doesn't beseech *[for support from the father of her children]*. Because she doesn't beseech it makes men produce children with her and let her suffer with the children. That makes people lose respect."

Likewise, the women of Kifumbira I explained some of the circumstances under which a pregnancy would cause a woman to feel shame:

- "If she had a husband she would not feel ashamed but if she didn't she would be ashamed because all the time she would be thinking how people are going to react to her condition, and would wonder who is responsible for the pregnancy."

- "If I were a married woman and I were pregnant then why would I feel ashamed? But if I were temporary I would feel so ashamed to be pregnant. There would not be an owner *[for the child]*."

- "When one is young, that is when one feels the most shame. That is why the majority of young girls get abortions. Some give birth to children but strangle them and dump them at rubbish pits because they belong to nobody."

- "Such girls have had relationships with various boys and fail to decide who is responsible for the pregnancy...."

- "Even an old woman can feel ashamed. Even if she has a husband, people would wonder why she is still producing..."

Thus "bad" procreation is evidence that someone does not have *empisa* and cannot, therefore, be considered a proper woman, even if she is married.

Pregnancy at the wrong time or under the wrong circumstances can be the source of shame, fear, even stigma, for a woman [see Conclusion]. Mary, for example, kept her latest pregnancy a secret, finally telling Jane and myself late in the last trimester that she would be going to the village to deliver "because people will laugh" at her in town. The reason for her shame was that her husband had died one year before. Her pregnancy, therefore, was a sign that she had either started sleeping with another man before her husband died or very soon thereafter. Her failure to observe the appropriate period of abstinence following the death of her husband would indicate that she lacks *empisa*. Inappropriate sex, therefore, can lead to inappropriate pregnancy and all of its associated dilemmas.

Three points have thus far emerged: 1) The status of mother confers a certain stability to a union; 2) Motherhood within marriage also grants membership to the community of mothers, the core of the *moral* community, that sets the normative tone of the neighbourhood, thus perpetuating the ideal of proper womanness, the exclusion of single mothers and the pressure felt by all women to "marry"; 3) The limits of appropriate sex and childbearing, set by *empisa*, are likewise upheld by the moral community. While, strictly speaking, the women of the cluster may not be expected to be *bakyala batufu*, it is nevertheless essential that they have *empisa* in order to be regarded as good neighbours, and thereby gain admission to the moral community. This

indicates that the boundaries of the moral community are negotiable, but as the cases of Sylvia, Mary, and Aunt Meg show, there are real limits to this flexibility.

8.3 Reproductive Identity in Kifumbira

Reproductive identity "faces two ways" (cf. Strathern 1981b:178). On the one hand it faces outward: the public face of a woman's reproductive identity is constituted through relationships and networks established as a member of the moral community - the neighbourhood women. A woman's reproductive identity is constructed in the statuses of mother and wife, and the relationships and resources she derives access to on account of those statuses. It is through this cultural construction of her reproductive identity that other aspects of a woman's personhood are generated, such as her place in the community as a fully adult woman, and later as a grandmother and an ancestor.

Reproductive identity also faces inwards, and childbearing is important to women on a more existential level, enabling the mother to "know what is to be a Woman." Even "bad" reproduction, or childbearing without *empisa* (outside of moral boundaries), can satisfy this more inward facing dimension of reproductive identity - that one for which "even the name Mama is enough". Even if all of a woman's children die, even if they are taken away from her, "so long as she produced them", she is the mother. At this level of the self a woman can confirm her personhood to herself. Far from being a pre-determined, essential or decontextualised "innerness", this facet of

reproductive identity is meaningful precisely because it is a culturally informed, negotiable product of lived experience. This inward facing aspect of reproductive identity can be damaged or threatened by culturally explicit means, as when a woman's reproductive health is threatened by witchcraft or failure to carry out the rituals of first menstruation. It is therefore a product of culture, but it is experienced as intensely personal. It is in the dialectic inter-relation of the personal and social aspects of womanhood that the reproductive identity of an individual woman is generated and the meanings inscribed are negotiated.

The Proper Woman, *omukyala omutufu*, will have met the ideal in both aspects of her reproductive identity: Ann, who observed all the necessary fertility rituals as a child, has borne eight healthy children within a properly sanctioned marriage. She and her husband have steady financial income, and they aspire to middle- class status. She entered the urban system a married woman, and has not had to battle against stigma in order to define her place in the city. Because her home is physically separate from other homes, she does not have to constantly demonstrate *empisa*: it is granted to her by virtue of her social status. Her ability to form networks and obtain access to support is not immediately contingent upon being regarded as 'good neighbour' - her networks extend beyond the confines of her living space. In effect Ann is the archetypal *omukyala omutufu*.

The cluster women, on the other hand, face particular kinds of obstacles to proper womanhood. Mama Catherine and Mama Rose have come

some way towards the security of this status. They are married women who have consistently and appropriately borne their husbands' children. They also have *empisa* in terms of good neighbourliness. They are engaged in proper income generation, as well. For them, *empisa* is an important part of their status, and they have a particular kind of moral stake in maintaining the status quo.

Mama Beth, the "auntie of Kifumbira", has achieved status of another kind. Her age and tenure in the neighbourhood lend her a special degree of legitimacy. She is a widow, beyond childbearing age, who does not represent a sexual threat to the younger women living there. In fact she has made emphatically and publicly clear that she is no longer interested in men. She narrated her reproductive life history without embarrassment or apology despite the fact that she has children fathered by four different men. Her central location in the cluster places her in a key position, and she is at any given moment aware of the goings on in the neighbourhood. As a kind of a moral gatekeeper, Mama Beth has very little to worry about in terms of her position as a neighbourhood member.

The situation is very different for younger, unmarried or widowed women in the cluster, like Mary and Sylvia. These women must actively and consistently demonstrate *empisa*, or at least the version of *empisa* implied by good neighbourliness. Their behaviour must be above reproach, and consistently so due to the intensely exposed nature of their physical environment. But the power of the normative framework - and the pressure to

conform to it - is more strongly felt by these women as well. Networks are tight, close knit, and based primarily in the immediate neighbourhood area. Exclusion from gossip-set membership here can mean suffering, not just from the stigma of a woman without *empisa* or a bad neighbour, but it can also mean isolation in times of crisis like sickness, or indeed, death.

Through *empisa* and good neighbourliness Mary and Sylvia are able to obtain access to neighbourhood membership. But their status is precarious. Sylvia feels she must constantly prove herself worthy of membership, and often feels excluded, even outcast. Mary was pushed to the brink of leaving town to have her baby for fear of the shame and reprisals she might have to suffer by remaining³. Both of these women entered the city as single women in search of something better for themselves. Mary came after the break up of her rural marriage; Sylvia came to find work. Both are mothers and have borne a number of children, although not without their share of tragedy. At the existential level their womanhood is not in doubt (although the extent to which Sylvia's sterilisation affects this is not knowable). But their socially constructed reproductive identities are less well established, and indeed, are problematic for them. But it is here that their success at negotiating the meanings of *empisa* is central: there is potential, through the renegotiation of *empisa*, to redraw the boundaries of the moral community to include particular women. It is here, in the ambiguous interstices between the theory and praxis of social life that an unmarried woman can carve out her place in the city.

8.4 Summary-

This chapter has considered those aspects of women's experience that feature most centrally in their constructions of reproductive identity. Sex, marriage and childbearing, all key aspects of women's lives which are central to these constructions of self, are all, also, to some extent circumscribed by *empisa*, an important social value that frames appropriate behaviour and appropriate responses to the behaviour of others. "Bad" sex - sex without *empisa* (i.e. restraint, responsibility or respect) - leads inevitably to "bad" procreation. This in turn can lead to the disapproval of the community, and to the spoiling of identity. Sex and childbearing that occur within the constraints of *empisa* are "good", and are important means by which women can approach the ideal of *omukyala omutufu*. *Empisa*, however, can be demonstrated in other ways, as was shown in Chapter 7. In the context of the slum *empisa* can be expressed as good neighbourliness, thereby giving these women a second chance to construct positive self and social esteem - to renegotiate the basis of their status in the neighbourhood, to justify their membership to the moral community, and legitimate their presence in the city.

AIDS has added a new dimension, and a new dilemma. Sex and childbearing that may once have been considered appropriate may, *post facto*, be condemned as selfish and irresponsible. A woman who becomes pregnant within a relationship that is touched by AIDS will be considered to lack *empisa* - she does not have the restraint and self-respect necessary to forgo sex or to forgo the status of motherhood. The concluding chapter explores further

the meanings of *empisa* in relation to AIDS, and the implications of this disease for the reproductive identities of Kifumbira women.

1. In Uganda it is customary to kneel down when greeting, asking for a favour, serving food, etc. to someone you respect. Young people - boys as well as girls - should always greet or address their elders in this posture. While it is rare for grown men to kneel in greeting, adult women often do as an exaggerated show of respect. Sometimes it is done in an abbreviated form, as a kind of curtsy, if one is greeting along the road and cannot stop to chat. Generally wives are expected to greet and serve food to their husbands this way. The elite women I knew in Kampala did not kneel, but one woman I spoke to told me that, while she would be glad to kneel before a man that she respected, she had yet to find one who deserved it.

2. In principle I object to the use of the word "barren" in describing childless women. The image evoked is of a featureless and empty person. The implication behind the term is that a woman's productivity, and her worth, is based solely on her capacity to bear children. Essentialising women in this way is something that we must avoid in analysis for it simply does not reflect reality. However, the term is in general usage in Kampala. When asked why she uses the expression one childless informant explained that, although she works hard and generally enjoys her life, she feels "hollow and dry" because she will never know what it is to really be a woman. It is in this spirit that the word is used here - as a meaning derived through subjective experience.

3. In a recent letter from Jane I learned that there has been a dispute between Sylvia and Mary. Apparently Sylvia was spreading the rumour that Mary has AIDS, and was keeping Mary's customers away. Mary called Jane in to arbitrate, and the matter was settled formally. This is indication that Sylvia's status in the neighbourhood is slipping seriously - recall from Chapter 7 that the accuser in this context is more suspect than the accused, and is generally considered to be a bad neighbour. It remains to be seen whether Sylvia is able to restore her reputation, or is eventually forced to move.

CONCLUSION

The Presence of AIDS in their Lives: sex, lies and HIV

I. Preamble

This Conclusion completes the triangulation of ideas and data presented by identifying why it is essential to contextualise sexual and reproductive identity in order to design effective interventions against AIDS.

The thesis has demonstrated that women in Kampala have had a long struggle for respectability (Chapter 2). Within the double standards and double binds of urban life, though, women have developed a particular kind of localism within which the norms and values of femininity, good neighbourliness, motherhood and Proper Womanhood are generated and communicated (Chapter 3). The foundations of women's constructions of self and identity are predicated on, and dialectically related to, marriage and motherhood. These, in turn, are important preconditions for belonging, and engagement in the moral community. Sex (for pleasure, partnership and procreation -Wallman 1990), is also, therefore, and importantly, sex for personhood (Chapter 4). AIDS, a fatal disease which is acquired during sex, therefore jeopardises women's chances to become Women. If sex is a precondition for self, what can a woman be expected to do when sex becomes potentially fatal? The currently available options are riddled with problems. The sexual and reproductive decision-making process is not straightforward, and it should not be assumed that women are at all times in control of these processes or that they are at no time in control of them. At a fundamental

level sexual semantics may be complicated by the fact that women and men have different motivations for having sex, and different expectations of the sexual relationship (Chapter 5).

Through the case studies the basic propositions made about reproductive identity, constructions of self and belonging in the city were explored. These principles are expressed through the dominant symbol of the Proper Woman and the related and interconnected notion of *empisa*. The centrality of the twinned imperatives of marriage and motherhood are borne out in this data. Although childbearing is an essential aspect of womanhood, it is not universally appropriate. There are strong ideas about "bad" sex and "bad" childbearing. One consequence of AIDS is that there are more and more situations in which childbearing might qualify as "bad", and the potential opportunities for "good" childbearing (and therefore "good" womanhood) are becoming fewer.

In bringing this triangulation to closure, the Conclusion focuses rather more narrowly on AIDS in the community: the interventions currently available, the community's perceptions of those interventions, and people's perceptions of the prevalence of the disease in their community. This chapter also explores the impacts of AIDS on the stigmatisation of single women, the influence of AIDS on marriage and marital relationships, and the implications of AIDS for women's reproductive identity constructions. It is proposed that interventions should take account of the whole context of women's lives, and identify those areas of their lives over which women do have control. With

this general principle in mind, it is suggested that *empisa* should be considered as an important resource which might be integrated into intervention initiatives.

II. The Presence of AIDS

In Chapter 1 it was noted that the current overall prevalence of HIV amongst antenatal mothers in Kampala in 1993 was around 30%, and this figure is considered to be a rough proxy for prevalence rates among the sexually active population of the city as a whole. What this very high prevalence means in real life experience is that virtually everyone living in Kampala has had a loved one or family member die of AIDS.

The women I spoke to in Kifumbira I do not seem to lack information about AIDS. They know that the HIV virus is transmitted through sexual intercourse with an infected person. Most know too that the virus can be transmitted to a foetus by an infected mother. Many also know that not all children born to HIV+ mothers are infected. Most women are aware that a degree of risk accompanies unprotected intercourse. As Mary once noted:

"No one can confidently say the spread of AIDS has reduced...Maybe you are safe if the man has had no previous partners. Otherwise as long as you are a couple [*are sexually active*] one partner will definitely bring the disease. You can't claim that a person can protect him/herself. The two protect each other by abstaining from sex outside their relationship."

Thanks largely to the government's relatively rapid and candid response early on in the epidemic, Uganda has had an active and well-resourced AIDS education and intervention campaign to which Mary's well-informed remarks bear testimony. Over the years Ugandans have learned that

to avoid infection and/or transmission they should "Love Carefully" and "Stick to one partner" by "Zero Grazing". In addition to The National AIDS Control Programme, in Uganda there is an organisation known as TASO (The AIDS Support Organisation) which provides counselling, education and training to people with AIDS and those that care for them. The AIDS Information Centre provides free testing, and has a "post-test club" that provides a supportive and constructive environment for those needing counselling after their test, whether the result is positive or negative. The "post-test club" also provides basic medical care for the treatment of HIV-related opportunistic infections. Even more close to home, the Kamwokya Catholic Church has set up a comprehensive programme for people with AIDS that includes home care, food relief, a free clinic for AIDS affected people, a school for "AIDS orphans", and an organisation called Youth Alive that delivers a strong and consistent message to young people in Kamwokya and throughout the East African region about avoiding AIDS through "behaviour change", a euphemism for sexual abstinence.

Unstructured interviews were carried out with staff members at both TASO and the AIDS Information Centre, partly to determine the extent to which women were counselled about reproductive decisions when receiving a positive - or a negative¹ - HIV test result. A Public Relations officer at TASO called 'Mabel' explained that most of the women who go to TASO for counselling are young, unmarried women. Clients are not counselled against having children, but are given "the basis for making informed decisions" about

childbearing. TASO counsellors stress that HIV has implications for the health of mothers and their unborn children (women are told that there is a 50% chance that a child born to an HIV+ woman will be infected²); that the physical strains of pregnancy on the mother can hasten the onset of AIDS, and many women miscarry as a result³; the birth of children to people with AIDS has implications for government (and extended family) resources which must cope with and find suitable homes for the orphans thereby produced. Mabel also explained that "a good number" of young, single, HIV+ women who become pregnant resort to abortion, and because abortion is illegal in Uganda, this has serious repercussions in terms of morbidity and mortality. But Mabel stressed the important social and economic dimensions of reproductive decisions, and noted that "these do not go away" when a positive test result is given. On the contrary, because so many of these young women depend, at least to some extent, on their partners' resources for their own survival, a woman is likely to find it extremely difficult to a) discuss her sero-status with her partner or partners, the fear being that he/they could cut her off financially (or throw her out if they are living together) thus leaving the young woman, in Mabel's words, "positive, pregnant and alone"; and b) the subsequent problem that the woman will therefore (or anyway) be expected to continue childbearing for him in hopes that it will make the partnership more secure.

The situation is somewhat different for married women. While in principle - if not in regular practice- a single woman might come in for testing before having a baby, ⁴ a married woman would not. This, according to

Mabel, is partly because married women feel that they “should” be exempt from AIDS (because they “should” be Proper Women), and partly because they feel that having a test is equal either to admitting that their husbands are "going out" for sex, or that they themselves have extramarital lovers. Either would place the security of the marriage in jeopardy. Therefore, while many (most?) married women know they may be vulnerable to infection (either through their own or their husband's behaviour), and many suspect that they are - or could be - seropositive, they are afraid to take any action, because the consequence of that action could be the end of their marriage. Instead they depend on chance and hope for the best. "Women are easy to reach, but difficult to empower", says Mabel.

In the face of these kinds of obstacles, one of TASO's objectives is to reduce the stigmatisation of the disease through "community initiatives" which seek to debunk pervasive myths, and encourage more people to come forward for testing. The stigma of the disease comes both from the fact that it is incurable, and from the way in which it is generally believed to be acquired - through "bad" or inappropriate sex⁵.

The issue of stigma is central to people's responses to the presence of AIDS in their lives - whether it affects them directly, or in more general ways. The mere fact that AIDS exists and is present in the environment exposes certain groups of people to a new kind of stigmatisation and its associated social consequences. In Goffman's (1970) terms, AIDS is both an "abomination of the body" and a "blemish of individual character" creating

what can be called the "spoiled identity" of the stigmatised person.

III. Perceptions of AIDS prevalence in Kifumbira I

James⁶ comments about the effect AIDS is having on the population of Kifumbira speak to the kind of stigma that is present:

"In the old days most of the people living in Kifumbira were Bafumbira men who came to town to work as hawkers in the city centre, but there were also quite a few single women living here. In the 1980s there were about 42 women living just here [*in the cluster area*]. All of them were unmarried and lived 6 or 7 to a house. But each house had only one bed. During the day the girls would just hang about outside their houses, and at night, if they got offers, they went off with different men. By 1986/87 more than half of these girls had died of AIDS. The rest moved away. So do not be deceived that men have riskier behaviour than women. Men and women in Uganda are equal in having unsafe sex and sex outside of marriage. Men are not more to blame than women for having multiple partners. In fact this is why AIDS is so bad here. The disease is spread like this: Women who work in town may be married, but they often also have boyfriends at their work who they have sex with. These boyfriends have other girlfriends also, and maybe wives, too, and these other women in turn have their other men, who also have other women etc. So you see? Are you surprised AIDS is spreading?

... This type of behaviour goes on in the rural areas too, especially when husbands have to leave the village to work. The man may get a new woman where he is, and wife that is left behind gets another man to keep her company. Maybe people begin to worry about AIDS and so go for younger partners. This is why we have "sugar daddies" and "sugar mummies". Sugar Daddies are those who sit in their cars outside of schools and lure the young girls with money and presents. The girls go with them because there is so much pressure to put on well [*wear nice, fashionable clothes*]. This got to be such a problem that some schools had to bring police to impose fines on the men, and the numbers went down. Sugar Mummies are women in their 'thirties who have their own houses and their own businesses, but are unmarried or separated [*banakyeyombekedde*]. These women get young lovers, men in their late teens, whom they look after and give money and presents in return for companionship and sex. So this is how young people come to be corrupted and infected with AIDS.

There are also some prostitutes - women who use sex as an income generating activity. And there are some people in Uganda,

those from the West Nile especially, who are born wanting sex. It is natural to them to have many partners, and they crave sex all the time. So this is why we have so much AIDS. People need to learn to change their behaviour. This is the only thing that will save us.

Most men in Kifumbira I stay with their wives [*i.e. do not "go out" for sex*] - the ones that they have chosen to marry and to stay with. They want to work with those wives to raise their families and prepare for their future. There are 360 single men in Kifumbira I who have wives in the villages, but most of these do not have women here in town. They just work - mostly as hawkers in the city centre - and go home to the villages every couple of months with some money to see their wives and children. This is how people of Uganda need to change. They need to stay with their spouse and plan their future together..."

One of the major obstacles to behaviour change is the fact that all diseases are now associated with AIDS. This has a number of repercussions, one of which is that people are stigmatised unnecessarily. As James noted:

"One of the bad things about having so much AIDS around is that, although people die of other things, whatever one dies of people assume it is AIDS. Take for example one of the people with so many sexual partners. If that person dies, then his spouse begins to worry and worry that she has AIDS. Her "outside" partner hears about the death, and he too begins to worry. All this worrying can make you thin, and the people see that this man is becoming thin and think that he too must have AIDS. Maybe all that worry makes him get sick, and he dies - maybe it is AIDS, maybe not, but everyone says "AIDS". Then the women sees that both men have died of AIDS, and so she stops worrying [*she knows her status*] and begins to eat. She becomes fat (some people even take pig's tablets to put on weight) and soon people forget that her husband and boyfriend died. They see that she is fat and healthy and so she goes on having sex. And places like TASO can make it worse. It is good the way they treat people and help them to stay healthy, but what happens is that people come out looking so well that people forget that they have AIDS. People can say "hey, I thought so and so was positive, but now they are okay. Maybe being positive is not so bad. Why should I change my behaviour?"

Similarly the RC1 Chairman said

"once anyone is sick everyone says it is AIDS. If anyone becomes thin, it is AIDS. Men will have sex with plump girls because they think they are healthy, but will run away from the thin ones because they think they have AIDS. If a child

becomes sick people think that the mother has AIDS. Some people are committing suicide if they think they have it, but they may not have AIDS at all!"

Betty, an old woman living in Kifumbira I whose daughter is dying of AIDS, told me that some infected people do not just want to kill themselves, but become keen to "take other people with them" when they die, a sentiment which gave rise to the proverb *sifa bwomu*, "I will not die alone" . Others, says Grace, another older woman, just become depressed and "drink themselves to death".

IV. Perceptions of Interventions: problems with prophylaxes-

In Chapter 5 some of the problems with condom use were discussed. In Kifumbira condoms are regarded with a great deal of suspicion, and can only be used for sex outside of "marriage". It is notable in this regard that none of the case study women had *ever* used any form of modern contraception. All six of these women reported that they would reject the use of condoms with their main partner. Besides the primary draw back, that condom use precludes the chance of conception, condoms have become synonymous with promiscuity and sexual misconduct and symbolise the polluted identity of one partner, or the presumed pollution of the other. Suggesting that one's main partner use condoms is tantamount to admission or suspicion of "outside" sex - both of which seriously jeopardize whatever semblance of conjugal harmony and trust there may be in the union.

AIDS has given rise to a significant condom mythology. The general

moral behind the condom myths is that both the condom and the man who wears it are likely to be hiding something. Many people believe that a man who knows he is HIV+, bent on murder, will secretly puncture the condom with a needle. The woman then has sex thinking that she is safe. Meanwhile the virus has "seeped" through the hole and infected the woman. Equally, condoms can burst during sex - especially the condoms available cheaply around town - because these have been sent from Europe past their expiry date. There are also conspiracy myths that the developed countries of the West are trying to destroy African people by sending them condoms impregnated with HIV. Other arguments against the condom include: "When you eat a sweet in its plastic do you taste the sweetness?" and "Sex with a condom is like taking a shower with your clothes on: there is no point and no satisfaction."

Another problem with the condom is the fact that its use is controlled only by men:

Margaret (an RC1 official) and I were sitting outside her house discussing family planning. She was telling me that most women are afraid of the side effects of the available methods, but are more afraid that their husbands would be displeased if they tried to "plan". I asked about the possibility of condoms. Margaret explained that "it is extremely difficult for a woman to put a condom on a man". An older gentleman passing by over-heard our conversation and interjected that he would never allow his wife to "put a condom on" him, but that he might be willing to use condoms with "outside" lovers. Jane, who was also present, told him that wives need to be protected from the diseases their husbands bring home from outside sex. The man objected loudly,

insisting that women are as guilty of outside sex as their husbands. He said that if a man keeps condoms around for use in outside affairs, his wife might find them and start a quarrel. Jane maintained that this proved her point, and in order to solve the problem the man should use condoms at home also, and then the wife would not be suspicious...

Recent research in Kampala, Masaka and Kabarole districts

(Rwabukwali & Kirumira 1990) indicates that one in four Ugandan men consider themselves to be "condom users", and that the most important factors associated with condom use are: urban living (men living in Kampala were found to be three times more likely to be condom users than men in Kabarole); education beyond primary level; being under 30 years of age; and having an income of over Ush 6,000/ per month. The researchers found that the level of "inter-spouse communication" is directly proportional to the level of education attained and the degree of urbanisation. Although urban-living and educated couples report discussing general family affairs more often than other respondents, however, there seemed to be evidence that their ease of communication decreased as the specificity of issues discussed increased, especially when those issues were related to sex.

Celibacy, the only other recommended prophylaxis, is simply not considered to be an option by married women of any age, or by the majority of unmarried women in their childbearing years. Important exceptions are widows and those divorced or separated women who have completed childbearing and renounced sex. Mama Beth, for example, made much of the fact that she was "finished with men". One woman who worked at the

Kamwokya Catholic Church AIDS programme had gained some notoriety for having become celibate despite the fact that she was not a nun. She is single, however, and has already born a number of children. While her choice is not one that would be taken by most women in Kamwokya, part of the Church's argument for this radical kind of behaviour change was that it may be easier for a women to take a stand and adopt total celibacy (with the moral force of the Catholic Church behind her) than for her to enforce condom use in her partner (s).

A group of women in Kifumbira I were asked if they would use a prophylactic vaginal cream that would not be immediately apparent to their partners, and that would "kill" the HIV. The women unanimously agreed that it would be preferable to the condom, and were enthusiastic about the idea. As Mama Catherine put it:

"...one can't afford to refuse that 'medicine' because one can't abstain from sex - for example a young woman can't. And even if a woman wants to protect herself [*with a condom*] her husband can refuse. We could use that 'medicine' more than a condom".

The women were then asked how they would feel about this cream if it was also contraceptive, and would kill sperm. Predictably the response was qualified:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Mama Catherine: | -It would be good "medicine" and we would appreciate it because of AIDS, but when it comes to destroying sperms, then that is bad. |
| Mama Johnny: | -That medicine should be for people who have stopped producing but it wouldn't be good for young girls because they won't do without producing children. |

V. AIDS and the Stigmatisation of Single Women-

Part of the power of *empisa*, and of the proper woman ideal, is derived from the history of women's involvement in urban life and the stereotypic characterisation of urban women as morally deficient. AIDS has introduced a new dimension to this context. While the anti-AIDS discourse seems to underscore and give added legitimacy to the notion and practice of *empisa*, the fear of AIDS itself raises new issues for sexual and marital relationships; familiar suspicions and fears have taken on new resonance. In this section the stigmatisation of single women, specifically in relation to HIV/AIDS is discussed.

People involved in multiple partner relationships are not unaware of the risks involved. They could be said to respond in at least two ways. On the one hand are those who might quote the following proverbs - recounted to me in a group discussion in Kifumbira - to account for their behaviour:

"Rather than delay on the way, let me delay at Mulago"

"Was I born to be made into furniture?"

"Did AIDS come to kill trees?"

This can be thought of the 'live fast and die young' school; those who feel that "if I die I die. We all have to die of something", and therefore do not consider adopting any changes in their behaviour patterns. Into this category many informants placed those women who raise income specifically for the purchase of nice clothes and petroleum jellies for their hair and skin through concurrent relationships with a number of men. According to Ann, for

example, "such women do not care if they live or die, they only want the money to beautify themselves."

On the other extreme are the single women who, aware of the risks involved in having many partners, will make efforts to get a husband. For such women getting a husband is important because it is perceived as safer, but also because she will then not be "left alone in death". Such a woman might also try to get pregnant - as a means of securing a relationship, but also so that she will have someone to be remembered by after her death.

Another important impact AIDS has had on the urban context is that its presence seems to have given renewed vigour to the stigmatisation of single women. Urban unmarried women continue to be reviled for all the reasons discussed in previous chapters, with the added dimension that they are now implicated in the transmission of AIDS. As Mabel at TASO noted, single women are often suspected of seducing other women's husbands, and infecting them in the process. This was Sylvia's interpretation of her husband's infection with HIV. She was able to point to a woman in a photograph and declare "this is the one who has killed us" - a young, single woman who also died of AIDS. This may mean that more women will want to try and find men who they may come to know as *muame*, or husband. An important adjunct to this is that such women, although they may have reason to suspect they are already infected, may be less able to negotiate with their partners for the use of condoms during sex because they will be attempting to establish the possibility that the relationship is more than casual, and may even be hoping to

get pregnant (cf. Bledsoe 1990c).

In the same moment that the reproductive health of single women in Kampala maybe under threat, these women are compelled, by the multiple stigma associated with their persons, to engage in behaviour that puts them, their partners and their children at even greater risk. Married women are also threatened by AIDS, but the issues are different because the semantic field in which sexual intercourse takes place is so different.

VI. AIDS and Marriage-

Married women confront AIDS from a different perspective, and this is reflected in their responses to it. As indicated in previous chapters, the ideal for marriage is that a proper woman - *omukyala omutufu* - has only one sexual partner, her husband. Thus for a married woman to voice her anxieties about AIDS is to admit infidelity - either on her part or on the part of her husband. Either way she loses in the identity stakes: if she is having affairs she is *ipso facto* not a proper woman; if her husband is "going out" for sex, it likewise reflects badly on her, and she is assumed to be lacking in *empisa*. As Betty explained,

"If she says that her husband is going out for sex, even that shows that she lacks *empisa*. Before asking what is wrong with her that her husband must go out for sex, people will ask why she is discussing these matters publicly."

AIDS widows are to some extent stigmatised for these reasons. The presence of AIDS in a marriage is clear and irrefutable evidence that it is not a

proper marriage, and this stigma may also affect the widow's access to inheritance. Sylvia, for example, was held accountable for her husband's death by his relatives. She has said that for this reason she is no longer welcome in his village despite the fact that she bore him children, and in fact has given them full custody of her son. Although it is customary for a woman to be buried in her husband's village (and this is seen as the final proof that the marriage was properly sanctioned), Sylvia has said that she does not know where she will be buried, and this is source of some anxiety. The final resting place of a woman is eternal testimony to her relative success at proper womanness.⁷

These factors alone make negotiation for condom use very difficult for married women. Significantly, a woman's best chance to put pressure on an errant husband, or to be regarded as his rightful widow, is to demonstrate that she does have *empisa* and has done everything in her power to encourage proper behaviour in her husband, a point to which we shall return.

A second factor affecting the response of married women to AIDS is the fact that they are expected to bear children, and to be engaged in continuous childbearing throughout their reproductive lives. Yet even this age-old imperative has taken on new meanings in the presence of AIDS.

It has been demonstrated, without special consideration of the impact of AIDS, that childbearing is a central part of a woman's life in this setting: it is crucial to her reproductive identity and her existential self. Childbearing also gives a woman real political advantages *vis à vis* her affinal kin, neighbours and indeed her own consanguineal kin. AIDS at once buttresses

and confounds the appropriateness of childbearing in these personal and political realms. On one hand, the increased likelihood that the father of one's children may die early from AIDS has made women all the more anxious to bear children in order not to be left alone and without resources. Likewise the fact that both women and men may be confronting their mortality while still reproductively active, may underscore the desire to leave something of oneself behind by having children. From this point of view, having children provides women (and men) with a better quality of life as well as, it is suggested, a better quality of death. Nevertheless, childbearing at the wrong times and under the wrong circumstances can cause these strategies to backfire miserably as Mary's case and the case of the RC1 official's wife showed.

VII. "Producing" spoiled Identities? Childbearing and womanhood in the time of AIDS-

In Chapter 8 some of the circumstances under which pregnancy is considered inappropriate for an adult woman were presented, without reference to AIDS. Under the circumstances highlighted, the birth of a child would cause a reproductive identity crisis of sorts for the mother, and her status in the neighbourhood might thereby be diminished.

AIDS introduces new dimensions to the issue of inappropriate pregnancy. Firstly, producing a child too soon after a husband's death from AIDS is cause for shame. There were two instances when this affected Mary, the first being when her newborn daughter died eight months after her

husband's death. In that case some people believed the spirit of Mary's husband caused the child's death because angered by her infidelity (infidelity which may have given him AIDS, but which in any case made her pregnant), . Alternatively, some felt that Mary might herself have caused her husband to die out of her desire for the other man. Following the death of that child Mary herself became ill, and has been ill ever since. Her condition is attributed by some to the same spiritual causes that may have killed her baby and/or husband (see Wallman & Others, forthcoming, Chapter 7). Mary's second pregnancy following her husband's death was also shameful, this time because it showed that she had failed to observe the proper mourning period, and therefore lacked *empisa*. As Ann said,

"A woman should wait about three years after the death of her husband before getting another man. Getting a man sooner, it looks like you do not respect yourself. People might even say that you killed your husband in order to be with the new one. This is our tradition, but in the days before AIDS people died when they were old. Today things are different, and it is difficult for young widows, but it looks better if they wait."

Thus, while young widows facing uncertain futures seek security in new relationships, and bear children to seal those relationships, they can be seen as lacking *empisa* by the community at large, and this can count against them in other ways. Important segments of the community have come to regard this behaviour as irresponsible and foolish. Older women, themselves beyond childbearing, and some of the more educated or sub-elite women, shake their heads and click their tongues in dismay at the lack of *empisa* these women have. They wonder what could motivate a woman to continue to

"produce" knowing she is producing children destined to die, or worse, be orphaned.

The second way in which AIDS has made pregnancy and childbearing a more ambiguous process was demonstrated in the case of the RC1 official's wife. In this case, the pregnancy was shameful/inappropriate because the woman's husband was widely believed to be dying from AIDS. The general feeling in the neighbourhood was that this pregnancy was irresponsible, because the child was almost certainly going to be orphaned⁸ early in its life, and its mother left bereft of means by which to care for it.

Mama Beth (who is an unofficial mid-wife/birth attendant for the women living in the area) was unequivocal about her feelings in the matter:

"This morning a woman died whose child died last week! I do not understand why these women continue to produce, well knowing they are infected. Once they become pregnant they get sicker and sicker, and only produce children that themselves will die. They just do it out of ignorance. They want to have a baby to leave something behind when they die, but don't they see that the baby also dies? [JO: *"Sometimes the baby is not infected..."*] The baby always dies! Listen. The baby in the womb, what does it eat? Can such a baby be well? [JO: *"But the scientists say that there is a chance the baby will be okay."*]. Nurses that tell these women such things are being irresponsible. They are causing the virus to be spread, causing these women to produce. [JO: *"They give them a 30% chance that the baby will not be infected."*]. No, I cannot agree because I know what I have seen with my eyes. Fathers, mothers and babies: they all die. This is what happens, so why tell people otherwise?"

Grace, another older woman living in the neighbourhood had similar feelings about the irresponsibility of HIV positive women and men conceiving children:

"Nowadays I don't know what is going on. What are all these HIV positive women thinking when they decide to get another baby? Years ago people were not sick the way they are now... Today women are in problems. If they listened to the old people they could be okay but they refuse."

Childbearing is no longer the best way to achieve respectability in Kifumbira I. The presence of AIDS makes even this most fundamental aspect of women's lives problematic, and its repercussions are felt throughout the domains of women's identity. It has been shown that as individuals women are responding to this situation in a variety of ways, and that response will depend to some degree on whether or not the woman is "married", single or "temporary". Regardless of her marital status, however, one or the other interpretation of the concept of *empisa* is implicated.

VIII. *Empisa* as Intervention: some preliminary thoughts

Allegory of an AIDS death due to loss of *empisa* (as told by Jane) -

There was a woman, I think she lived in Kamwokya somewhere. After her husband died of AIDS this woman decided that she would not remarry or go with any man so that she would stay healthy longer and not spread the infection. She was very beautiful and many men came to her door begging and beseeching her to marry them or to go play sex. She just refused each and every one. She stayed healthy for many years. Then one day a man came and said, 'but Madame, we are all infected somehow. Lets stay together and at least be happy for the few days we have left'. She finally agreed to be with him, and very soon thereafter became sick and died. This is why I believe that having sex when you are infected makes you die sooner.

Empisa is a key cultural value in this part of Kampala. I suggest that it operates on various levels in respect of AIDS. Firstly it functions as a means

by which women can fight the stigma associated with them as being people in one way or another associated with AIDS. Through *empisa* widows can also improve their position in pressing claims on their husbands' property, including child custody rights. A woman with *empisa* also has the support of her community when a loved one dies, and is not forced to deal with public ostracism in her grief. If she herself should die, a woman who lived according to the principles of *empisa* is mourned by many, and her body is properly buried.⁹ Within marriage, *empisa* should function as a restraint on one's own behaviour, and consequently, on the behaviour of one's spouse. *Empisa* appeals to ideas about "good sex" which leads to "producing well", an extremely important outcome indeed.

Empisa is not, however, an unambiguously useful notion in relation to AIDS. Because it is a central feature of the dominant discourse, those who may be seen to lack *empisa* - who behave counter to the normative framework - are stigmatised, even ostracised. An anti-AIDS discourse that incorporated *empisa* would not address imbalances in the status quo or challenge the disadvantaging of the weak. Interventions using *empisa* discourse would take an indirect approach, offering no physical protection. Finally, the changes that could be elicited this way would be gradual, and many feel that the best interventions are immediate interventions.

There are, however, aspects of the *empisa* notion that may be useful in designing interventions against AIDS if introduced appropriately. Unlike the Proper Woman, a dominant symbol and an ideal norm that is important but

unattainable by most of the women in the neighbourhood, *empisa* belongs to them. Whereas women perceive that the currently available prophylaxes are not practicable and that men control the sexual arena, *empisa* is something that women can control. *Empisa* is also a means of influencing the behaviour of others. Not only does a woman impart *empisa* to her children, but she may also be effective in imparting it to her husband. *Empisa* is agency, and the possibility is that making women aware of this might have the effect of notching up their capacity and enabling them to locate the self-esteem necessary to be more actively participant in sexual negotiation. It is a positive value associated more with women than men, and it can be wielded with some effect. The extent to which the women themselves recognise *empisa* as a resource - or a potential resource - is not clear. Should they come to do so, however, it could have an effect on their perceptions of their own capacity to control the course of this epidemic.¹⁰

Secondly, *empisa* is a locally significant social value, and therefore its use in intervention will precipitate a kind of *organic* change. Interventions generating from already important social norms may have the added positive effect of community ownership which may on the one hand enhance acceptability, and on the other boost community capacity¹¹. If *empisa* is negotiable to the extent that, for example, Mary and Sylvia are able to achieve acceptance in the community, then it seems worthwhile to pursue its potential on a wider scale.

The argument for this approach has been elegantly made by Wallman

(1995:4 - 5), taking inspiration from the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Brown was an eighteenth century English gardener who changed landscapes by using existing structures to their best advantage in generating new ones. He approached a landscape positively - that is by looking for the existing capabilities in it. Thus Wallman notes, "Similarly in anthropology we must ask: What is the capacity of this social system, this community, this person to manage in normal circumstances, and to adapt when circumstances change?" (ibid).

Of course the interface between existing values and social change has long been recognised by anthropologists. Malinowski himself recognised that no culture is static, but that "contact" was going to lead to social change of an especially rapid nature. He felt that anthropology was particularly well equipped to deal with understanding the direction of these changes (Malinowski 1945), and the work of the colonial era anthropologists bore this out. As Southall noted in his classic *Introductory*,

"The connection between norms of conduct and patterns of social relationships is extremely intimate and becomes a crucial question in the study of social change" (1961a:14).

By now it seems tautological to suggest that behaviour change will involve some engagement with existing values/structures/institutions. Norms, and the behaviour that is directed by those norms, are in constant interaction. In order to direct change in one, change must also be possible in the other. Perhaps if change is effected, not "around the margins" of a "core of orthodox norms", as Southall suggests (ibid:14), but within that core, the process may feel less

"experimental and disreputable" (ibid), and therefore be more immediately adaptable. In any case it seems imperative that anthropology reassert its principles in this era of AIDS, for it is only by understanding the logic of the norms and behaviour in a community that an effective "hook" for intervention can be established. I propose that such a hook will have to be a central theme around which norms of sexual and reproductive identity are formulated because these are precisely those areas most directly threatened by the disease. We need to step-up efforts to proactively engage our discipline's tools to enable the people with whom we work to recognise their own capabilities for generating positive change, and if necessary to facilitate the process.

1. Both 'Mabel' at TASO and Frank Rwekikomo, branch manager of the AIDS Information Centre, stressed the fact that receiving a negative test result was almost as difficult as receiving a positive one. The person who comes in for a test obviously suspects that he/she has been exposed to the HIV. When they get a negative result they remain worried about the ambiguities in being negative. Many feel that the test was not right; others then begin to worry obsessively about how they can possibly manage to remain negative and continue to have a normal life. As Mabel said, "If one is diagnosed HIV+ that is it. It is a life-long diagnosis and it will never change." One can then begin to formulate reactions to it, feelings about it, and take certain specific decisions. A negative result, however, is infinitely more ambiguous, in some ways extremely frightening, and entails a different kind of counselling.

2. According to Dr. Lawrence Marum of the Case Western Reserve/ Makerere University vertical transmission project based at Mulago Hospital, the figure is closer to 40%; that is roughly 60% of all children born to HIV positive mothers in Kampala are NOT infected with the HIV. Although all children born to infected mothers carry the HIV antibodies and therefore will test positive at birth, by about 9 - 12 months, non-infected infants lose their HIV antibodies (serorevert), and will test negative for the virus (Dr. Marum, 1994, personal communication; see also Tindyebwa, Marum, Ndugwa et al. 1994).

3. While this seems intuitively sensible, it does not correspond to the findings of some ongoing research. According to the Case-Western Reserve University/ Makerere University project mentioned in note 2 above, if one took a random selection of HIV+ pregnant women in Kampala, the majority would be healthy: no ARC (AIDS Related Complex), no AIDS, no wasting (Mmiro, Marum, Nakabito et al 1994). It is not yet known if a similar sample of non-pregnant women in the population would give a similar healthy percentage, and although Dr. Marum speculates that women with

advanced HIV disease may be less likely to conceive, the hormonal effects of HIV on fertility are not yet well understood (personal communication 1994; cf. Gregson & Zhuwau 1994).

4. According to Frank Rwekikomo (AIC, Kampala), young couples are increasingly coming in for AIDS tests prior to marriage. This is particularly so, he said, amongst Muslims arranging second or third marriages, and testing is becoming a pre-condition of the final consent to a match.

5. The belief that inappropriate sexual behaviour can result in one or both parties acquiring a disease is common in many African traditional disease aetiologies. Among the Baganda there is a disease known as *amakiro* that is acquired as a result of having adulterous intercourse during pregnancy or lactation, and which can lead to barrenness. A similar condition is known amongst the Luo. Among the Tswana of Botswana inappropriate sex during pregnancy can lead to the infection of the unborn child with a potentially fatal disease (Anderson & Staugard 1988). These diseases are generally not thought to be pathogenetic, but caused by spiritual forces angered by the breach of proper conduct and custom. This seems to be no less true in town. Mary's chronic illness, for example, is thought by some to have been caused by the fact that she had sexual relations without observing the appropriate period of mourning for her deceased husband.

6. James is a member of the RC1 executive and has therefore attended a number of AIDS seminars, specifically provided for RCs by the Catholic Church and the governmental AIDS Control Programme. He also worked for the ODA project as an interviewer, and so was aware of my research interests overall.

7. The way a woman is buried is also important. If a woman fails to produce children during her life she may not be buried at her husband's home, but this depends on the individual circumstance. According to Grace, an older Muganda woman, wherever she is buried, a barren woman is buried as if she was a child - the body is carried "behind the house" to its grave rather than "in front of the house" as an adult person.

The overall prevalence of AIDS deaths has generated a new measure for proper womanhood: If you were a proper woman in life many people make the effort to come and view your body and take it for burial. Proper women will also be given relatively more support when a loved one dies. As Mama Catherine put it - "If she is a trouble maker and a bad neighbour, she will just be left alone with the body. No one will bother to come."

8. In Uganda a child is considered to be an orphan when it loses one or both of its parents.

9. Mary, for example, conveyed the story of her neighbour (a woman with whom she had a long standing feud) who died recently of AIDS. This woman was a renowned trouble-maker. When she died no one claimed her body from Mulago. Her kin refused to take her, claiming that it was the responsibility of her boyfriend to bury the body.

The boyfriend argued that he had not married her so why should he bury her? The body lay unclaimed for three days before the boyfriend, fearing reprisals from her spirit, took her for burial. Mary said that such cases were not uncommon, and the rumour is that if the dispute lasts longer than three days the body is put in a mass grave until it is claimed

and exhumed. Quite understandably this is considered to be a horrific fate, but it may be an increasingly common one as families are burdened by the deaths of kin and the costs of burying them.

10. Studies addressing the relationship between personal control over health and positive health outcomes include: Steptoe 1989; Wallston, Wallston et al 1987; Wallston & Wallston 1978; and Strecher, DeVellis et al 1986.

11. For some empirical examples see the IHCAR / Hull / IAS working paper series on Community Capacity to Prevent, Manage and Survive HIV/AIDS. Working papers are available at all three institutions.

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APPENDIX A: Aide Memoire for Reproductive Life Histories

I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Date of Birth and Age of respondent

Where born

Where living at each age

II. LIVING SITUATION AT EACH AGE INTERVAL

-Who living with in the household? Who else?

III. OCCUPATION/ ECONOMIC ACTIVITY/ FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

When and where at school

What were you yourself doing to earn a living?

-income generating strategies or jobs (i.e., making mats, selling vegetables or charcoal, etc)

-Place of work/operation

-Was it REGULAR or OCCASIONAL

Who else contributed to the household living (financially)?

[Also: When you were a child what did your parents do to make a living?]

****WHO WORKED, WHAT DID THEY DO, DID THEY DO IT REGULARLY OR OCCASIONALLY**

IV. SEXUAL PARTNERSHIPS (boyfriends, husbands...)

- Indicate all partners in each interval (5 year period)

- Was he "introduced" to your family?

- Did you have a child/children with him?

- For each, type of partnership (i.e., short term or long term, 'marriage', occasional or regular? resident?) [PROBE]

- What would that partnership be called in you language?

V. REPRODUCTIVE EVENTS -

All pregnancies, when and where

-First Pregnancy = live birth? Still living? [age when died]

-Subsequent pregnancies = live birth? Still living? [age when died]

Did you get any ante-natal care? (Kiganda or at clinic/hospital)

****FOR EACH PREGNANCY**

Have you ever practised family planning (before or between pregnancies)?

-what method

APPENDIX B: Aide Memoire for Network Diagrams

Kin and non-kin sides:

Of the people mentioned, who do you visit?

Do you visit them regularly or occasionally?
When was the last time you visited them?

Who could you turn to for help in times of crisis?

Who could you turn to for emotional support?

Non-Kin Only-

1. In Kamwokya

Who do you visit? Where does he/she/they stay?
Roughly how often do you visit?

Who visits you? Where do they live?
Roughly how often?

2. In the neighbourhood, who do you cooperate with for specific things/tasks?
Which things/tasks?
Who could/do you borrow salt from?

Kin Only -

1. If you have kin in Kamwokya:

Where do they live?
Who are they (i.e. their relation to you)
How often do you visit each other?
What kinds of support do they give you?
What kinds of support do you give them?

****In general, how are relations between family and neighbours different?
**** Is it easier or more difficult for you if your near neighbours include family? Why?

APPENDIX C: Absent Children

Do you have children living elsewhere?

How old are they?

What was your relationship with their father?

Where do they live?

Do you worry about them?

How often do you see them/ when was the last time you saw them?

If the children are residing with their father (s), do you have:

1. visiting rights? Can/do they visit you?
 2. other rights/i.e. inheritance
 3. how much say do you have in, eg. their up-bringing, schooling etc.
- How can you press for these things to be done the way you see fit?

Will the nature of your relationship/ the frequency of your visits with them change when, for example, they get married?

Whose decision was it for the children to go and live with their father(s)?

Do you feel it was the right decision?

IS ONE ALWAYS THE MOTHER OF ONE'S CHILDREN, EVEN IF THEY LIVE ELSEWHERE AND ARE RAISED BY ANOTHER WOMAN?