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6 Handing over the baton

Re-examining curricula on masculinities for Africa's Youth

Susan M. ***Kilonzo***

Abstract

This paper focuses on the responsibility of scholars in the fields of religion and theology to use their platforms to develop curricula on religion and masculinities that can educate future generations. Additionally, it interrogates how church teachings shape young boys' understanding and adoption of transformed masculinities. These two areas of focus—curricula development and church teachings—are intended to illustrate both theoretical and practical approaches. Literature in religious studies does not always demonstrate how young men and women benefit from the study of African masculinities. In churches, such training and sermons often target adults and couples, rather than youth. The key research question for this paper is: How do Christian churches and tertiary education curricula transmit knowledge of masculinities and build capacity for youth? Ezra Chitando has been instrumental in promoting scholarship on masculinities within marginalized groups, and this paper responds to his call by conducting a critical literature analysis. It explores how knowledge and understanding of masculinities are appropriated in churches and educational institutions. This chapter will exemplify ways in which these avenues can build the capacity of young men (and women) for embracing transformed masculinities and femininities.

Keywords: Chitando, Curricula, Mainstreaming, Masculinities, Masculinity Studies, Religious Studies, Youth

Introduction

In an email exchange with Prof. Masiiwa Gunda, a colleague and friend, while appreciating the progress of a handbook my colleagues and I were editing, he remarked that authors are "immortal." His exact words were: "...may you find satisfaction in knowing that this contribution will not go unnoticed, and you continue to lay claim to immortality. Writers do not

die!" The works of Ezra Chitando dominate the field of religious and theological studies on the continent and beyond and will continue to do so long after many of us have physically departed this world. His contributions to the fields of religion (and theology), health, development, and masculinities are particularly remarkable. All of us involved in this volume appreciate his influence as an impeccable, resilient, exemplary, and motivating academic force—one who is kind-hearted, rare, and humble enough to lead anyone who crosses his path into the world of training, conferences, research, writing, publishing, and consultancy.

I met Ezra (as he likes to be referred to) in 2007 at an African Study of Religions (ASR) conference in Gaborone, Botswana. Then, I was a young upcoming scholar, and the world of technology was not as vibrant as it is today. He was young then. Probably in his late thirties. Although Ezra had already made a name for himself in the academy, and in the field of religious studies, this did not deter him from "walking along" with a beginner. In fact, in the year that followed, 2008, Ezra edited a book volume on: *Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations,* where he encouraged me to contribute a chapter on *Women, Youth and Development in the Era of HIV and AIDS: Integrating Issues in the Curriculum* (Kilonzo, 2008). This was among my first key writings in the field of religion and health. In the year that followed, October 2009, he invited me to present a paper, at a training of trainers' workshop, on: *Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Kenyan Religious and Theological Education for Sustainable Development,* at Mukono, Uganda. In March 2010, at a convening in Cape Town, through Ezra's invitation, I presented a paper on: *The Challenge of HIV-Healing among the Youth in the Kenyan Context,* a workshop that ignited my passion in studies around and among young people. Later in July of the same year, I presented a paper on *Pastoral counselling for Children Orphaned through HIV and AIDS,* at a Church Leaders' workshop in Lome, Togo. Most of these conferences or workshops were funded by WCC, where Ezra was the consultant on the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA).

From the title of the presentations and publications above, a number of things are evident. They mainly center on health, women, children, adolescents or youth, curriculum review, and, theological as well as religious education. These are part of the many passions that I have observed in Ezra. He has a keen attention on vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities, and the evolution of religious and theological education in

African institutions. Further, his love for masculinity and femininity studies in the continent also attest to the passion towards vulnerabilities in the continent. In fact, in later years, Ezra was to ignite a love for masculinity studies which yielded our first co-authored article: *Towards a 'Proverbs 31 Man?' Pentecostalism and the Reconstruction of Masculinities in Kenya* (Chitando and Kilonzo, 2018). Later, we have co-edited and co-authored in many other areas including climate change, peacebuilding, as well as Church and political engagement - see Chitando & Kilonzo (2023), Kilonzo & Chitando (2023), Chitando, Conradie & Kilonzo (2022), and Kilonzo, Chitando & Tarusarira (2023).

This chapter is based on the intersection of Ezra's passion for the evolution of religious and theological education in the younger generation, his work in masculinity studies, and our interactions within the academy. I focus on "Handing over the baton: Christian education on masculinities to Africa's youth." The words "handing over the baton" in this chapter is multilayered. The process of handholding, influential mentorship and exposure explained above, in a sense, speaks to the "handing over". Subsequently, the meaning of handing over the baton may require us to do what Ezra has been doing with us: mentoring upcoming scholars to master the ropes in the field. Further, the term is also used to refer to the process of knowledge transfer from the "immortality of authors, through authorship" – to borrow the words of my friend and colleague Prof. Gunda. In this sense, it is to say, at the moment in the academy, we need to re-examine the curricula of masculinities, not just in religious and theological studies, but other fields, since masculinities is an inter- trans- and multidisciplinary area. Special attention should be paid to the area of youth and masculinities and inbuild our observations on what we perceive to be of relevance for the present young generation. This will in many ways be important in the years to come, when the current young generation will be reviewing the curricula for the benefit of yet another generation to facilitate another process of passing over the baton. Beyond scholarship, are the spaces and institutions within our communities, and how education and training around masculinities is tailored and *passed on/handed over* to the youth. This may be through religious spaces or any other educational spaces in the community.

The chapter glosses over a few examples of what is offered in African institutions, in the area of youth and masculinities. It also reflects on existing literature on religious spaces and how content related to masculinities

is packaged for sermons or training. The first section of the chapter presents a theoretical overview of youth, religion, and masculinities in Africa; the second is on religious and theological curricula and masculinities with specific scrutiny and focus on youth; the final highlights how religious spaces, especially churches, handle training/teaching on issues around masculinities among the youth.

Masculinities, as Uchendu (2008) and Togarasei (2007) show, are society specific. The society accepts certain things as features associated with the male gender and expression of maleness, validating a sense of male, boy or men (Uchendu, 2008:3, Whitehead, 2003:4). In fact, Meischer and Lindsay (2003:4) explain that "… masculinity is, a cluster of norms, values and behavioural patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others," while Connell (2000:12) shows that "masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structures, prior to social interaction. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting." If this is the case, within the African context, and in the curricula of education, there is an avenue to mainstream these studies for a better understanding among the young generations. This is because, as the section below will show, one of the challenging confrontations facing the youth in the 21st Century is that of Information Technology.

Youth, Religion and Masculinities in Africa

Although scholarly arguments point towards malleability and fluidity of the term youth, depending on various factors including cultures, geographical regions, and economic stability of youthful population, the African Union categorize youth as persons between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five (AUC, 2006:11). In almost all African countries, this is the bulk of the population, and has in various ways been termed as a time-bomb, because they are energetic and mostly without matching workload to occupy them for positive productivity (Abbink, 2005). Abbink argues that although the youth in Africa face tremendous odds in the continent, they do not seem to have their future figured out, and subsequently, as Jaji (2020) shows, they have to depend on the older generation, especially politically stable adults.

It is also important to show that the present generation of youth are growing up in an interesting epoch – the era of technology. In this 4th wave of revolution, everything, for the young generation, seems to revolve around Information Technology (IT). In the recent past, there has been a lot of

focus on what this wave of revolution is doing in religious circles. The observable changes have even been catalyzed by the recent experiences of pandemics, and especially the COVID-19 period, where the "how, where, what and by whom" of religion and religious teachings largely moved to mainstream and social media (Sibanda, Muyambo and Chitando, 2022; Kilonzo and Omwalo, 2021; Parsitau, 2020). What does this era, therefore mean, in the context of youth and masculinities in the continent. It is true that most of what the youth garner now, is from social media. Statistics show how most of them own smartphones that enable them to access the Internet, and social media, whether they are in rural or urban areas. Further, as scholars have argued, the profound effect of coming together of the contemporary media technologies such as mobile phones, computers and the Internet in production of content for public consumption, has a decisive and simultaneous impact on the calibration of African public sphere and reconfiguring of audiences (Tsarwe and Chiumbu, 2023:1). This therefore implies that the youth, in the era they are growing up, only need access to gadgets and the Internet, and they grow wings to fly in whatever direction, good or bad. On the African continent, this has its own challenges, given that the structures provide limited opportunities for growth, and that development of the young people is stifled in many ways by the politics of nations, where gerontocratic politics assumes that it is the old generation that is, and should be wealthy (Jaji, 2020). It is this form of masculinity that the youth have been forced to believe is the norm. They have therefore, in the words of Jaji (2020:79):

> ...been co-opted into political spaces through incentives and coercion. They submit to older men in politics, sustaining a gerontocratic system that marginalizes them from political spaces and leadership positions... those that perform a masculinity challenge to this political norm by labeling the old politicians as lacking wisdom, foresight and relevance, encourage a counteraction that pits the young against the old.

Although Jaji (2020) discusses this kind of masculinity relations between the youth and the old in the perspective of politics, it is a trend that seems to apply in every sphere of life. Such is demeaning to the youth, and they, therefore, must invent ways of breaking the barriers. One of the tools that the youth have then resorted to is Information Technology, and through social media, they are able not just to know what they want without the help of older generations, but to break geographical barriers and apply

their masculinities and femininities in ways that are either useful or harmful to them and society.[1]

In a book entitled *Dying to be men: youth masculinities and social exclusion*, Baker (2005:9-14) provides several reasons why it is important to focus on men. His arguments centre around "first time everything" – penetrative sex, intimate relationships, first jobs, earning, crossing into adulthood, taking on complex and demanding roles, becoming aware of realities of life, among other "firsts". These "firsts" require some form of help and guidance, and as such, the need to deconstruct ways in which hegemonic masculinities in most African communities have handled such issues. African societies have predetermined characteristics of what constitutes a man, and thus masculinities. These are associated with aggressiveness, intelligence, assertiveness, and power (Uchendu, 2008:4). However, these characteristics seem to be transforming, since masculinity, like other related concepts, is not static. Togarasei (2012:150) captures how hegemonic masculinity has been transforming by noting that:

> Like culture, hegemonic masculinity is not static. It is dynamic as it is affected by cultural changes in society. This can clearly be exemplified in the African context where, prior to the coming of the missionaries and the imperialists, traditional African masculinity was defined by specific behaviour patterns that underwent a major revolution with the coming of Western civilisation. Independence and, in particular, globalisation have also changed the definition of a real man. In our globalised world, hegemonic masculinity is affected not only by the changing local culture but also by the changing global culture.

Subsequently, an understanding of the histories and specificities of these forms of masculinities may help in the deconstruction of the same if African cultures are to operate within a healthy masculinity and femininity environment. One of the ways in which such histories can be discovered is by ensuring that educational programmes take into account a proper representation of masculinities studies.

[1] See the discussion by Kilonzo 2023 - on ways in which the youth use social media to engage in global terrorism and other harmful activities, but also how this medium has been used to help them rethink their actions.

Youth, Educational Programmes and Masculinities

The youth is a population that is mainly in school, dependent, and/or seeking employment opportunities. AU (2006:9) identifies the various needs of these youth as education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and youth participating in decision-making, challenge of HIV & AIDS high rates of infection, in need of ICT skills, Inter-generational dialogue gaps, among many others. While most of these factors focus on health and economics, the religious/spiritual and cultural perspectives that breed gaps between men and women, girls and boys, and in the context of family differences in parental responsibilities are hardly mentioned. In fact, what most of the policy documents do not tell us is what the problem is, with the structures in Africa, that do not provide a basis for the youth to prosper in a wide range of areas. Further, what is not discussed is how the political structures alienate and divisively create typologies of the population – men and women, youth (young men and young women), the poor and the rich, educated, and uneducated, et cetera, and how these influence ways in which development in various sectors, function. On the latter - education- the need for universality is blanketed, and hardly is there aggregational reporting of what is taught to who, by who, for what purpose, and to what end. Around this question is the field of masculinity and femininity studies.

There is evidence that points towards how the youth are marginalized in state policies and at the same time have weak legal positioning. Subsequently, they, especially young men, are over-represented in insurgent movements and criminal activities. This may be a resultant effect of not just the earlier mentioned challenges, but also what Alcinda Honwana (2012) describes as hurdles of "waithood." Honwana (2012:3) shows the predicament of the youth who are "in waithood" (more on this term, also see Dhillon and Yousef, 2009). Honwana writes:

> After they leave school with few skills they [youth] are unable to obtain work and become independent—to build, buy, or rent a house for themselves, support their relatives, get married, establish families, and gain social recognition as adults. These attributes of adulthood are becoming increasingly unattainable by the majority of young people in Africa. They are forced to live in a liminal, neither-here-nor-there state; they are no longer children who require care, yet they are not yet considered mature social adults.

In the context of African cultures, this speaks to the need to achieve certain statuses, and if we speak to masculinities within African communities, this does not go unnoticed among the youth. This is tied to inequalities and dependencies that result from age differences. Age acts as a social distinction and power marker (Abbink, 2005:11-2), yet gender aspects are also a contributory factor, especially in economies that are still struggling to ensure equality and equity. What do these challenges, therefore, imply in an education system? What is the current focus of most curricula in diverse countries in Africa? How can the current focus help us engage in productive discussions in the area of masculinities as we forge a way forward for handing over the baton to the next generations? How can we help the youth to move forth and not fall back into a bleak future of a generation without hope, skills, and ability to mentor others?

The educational programmes, in most institutions especially tertiary levels, target the needs flagged by countries for economic growth. In fact, in the recent past, most institutions in Africa are in a move towards curriculum review that has seen shedding off, of most Arts and Humanities courses in favor of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). In Kenya for instance, the Ministry of Education has been rallying around to consolidate education under certain specific subjects that are in favor of economic, and not social growth. Lately, the endeavor has been to encourage learners to move towards pure and applied sciences, and probably the humanities, with Arts receiving least attention. Students qualifying to pursue Bachelor of Arts (BA) in public universities in Kenya and probably other universities in other African countries, either change or try to change their courses from BA to Bachelor of Science (BSc.) or Bachelor of Education (BEd). This is a common practice, as certain programs are not considered marketable. As a result, introducing courses that address social issues, such as masculinities and femininities, becomes challenging. The common approach has been to integrate these topics into larger programs and courses, such as religious studies, gender studies, and other sociological disciplines. This chapter will provide examples of how this is done and demonstrate how these topics are structured. Additionally, it will explore how these concepts and their content are presented in religious spaces, such as churches. Although the field of masculinities (and femininities) has received quite a lot of attention in the recent past (Togarasei, 2007; Chitando, 2020; and Chitando, Chirongoma & Nyakudya, 2023), seemingly, there are few (if any) courses that specifically focus on these important fields and concepts, especially given that they

are still evolving. As a socially constructed and fluid term, the study of masculinities (and femininities) should be given a lot more attention. This is especially so because those still in tertiary levels are youth. They need to benefit from the changing dynamics of these concepts and applicability of the same in their communities.

The histories and contexts of the notion of masculinity in the continent remains relevant, especially if the younger generations are to understand the transformation of the field. Uchendu (2008) for instance shows the need to dig into history and show how roles of men and women in ancient Africa continues to define the kind of masculinities that exist to date. Through the present patriarchal and matriarchal societies, the current generations can walk back to the past and decode the present happenings through historical retrospection. For instance, Uchendu (2008:5) shows that the focus on invention of building, writing, and record keeping of ancient Egypt was by boys and men, suggesting that the history of the country was (and still is to a great extent) male-dominated in many spheres of public life. In other countries, before the advent of colonialism, women led in many fronts, including trade (Kilonzo and Akallah, 2020). These histories remain relevant if there is to be a progressive deconstruction of negative masculinities. Although current curricula in gender studies may carry some aspects of these histories, it may be necessary to have purely masculinity and femininity studies within the curricula that does not just gloss over, but provide in-depth understanding of the fields, which may help shape future generations.

It is simply baffling that all masculinity and femininity studies are lumped under gender programmes. A quick Internet search shows that there are virtually no curricula or programmes that exists, especially in African institutions that are purely focused on masculinity and femininity studies. Even those that are available from institutions abroad, aspects of masculinity and femininity studies are either given one topic, or are ignored, and may find mention as the course delivery progresses. I came across a PhD program in Gender Studies offered online by an international institution. The program appears to be research-focused, with no coursework requirements. It welcomes research proposals in areas such as critical gender and development, critical mental health, feminist political theory, gender and culture, gender and development, gender and reproduction, gender and sexuality in comparative literature, gender and sexuality in writing and media, gender, sexuality and religion, intersectionality studies, queer ecologies, queer theoretical approaches to the study of religion, queer theory,

and sex work politics and policies, among other topics. Notably, there is no focus on masculinity. This suggests either a lack of awareness or an assumption that masculinity is implicitly addressed within these fields.

This trend mirrors that observed in gender programs and courses at African institutions, at least based on what is available online. A sample of Master's and PhD programs from a renowned public university in East Africa includes the following courses for the MA program: Concepts in Gender Analysis; Integrating Women & Gender Mainstreaming; Gender, Social Change and Sustainable Human Development; Social Science Research Methods; Theoretical Approaches in Gender Discourse; Education and Training of Women; Media, Literary Works and Gender; Gender Violence and Conflict Resolution; Gender and Employment; Gender Issues in Agrarian Development; Religion and Gender; Gender and Law; Democracy, Political Participation & Gender; Gender, Language and Socialization; Changing Gender Roles and Relations; Gender and Poverty Reduction Strategies; Gender and Reproductive Health; Gender and Technology Transfer; Gender Issues in Cross-Cultural Studies; Gender and Urban Development; Gender & Global Communication Networks; and Gender & Natural Resources Management. The program also includes a Research Project.

The PhD programme from the same university had the following content: Theoretical Discourses in Gender Studies, Advanced Research Methods in Gender Studies, Data Analysis in Gender & Development Seminar, Gender Analysis in Practice Seminar, Gender in Development Practice, Contemporary Issues in Gender & Development Studies, Research Proposal Development Seminar, Scientific Writing and Publication Seminar. So given such content, and with the advancement in the study of masculinities (and femininities) in Africa, and across the globe, when is in-depth content in the area taught? There seemingly is no place for it in the existing curricula.

The field of masculinities (and femininities) extends beyond the social sciences into various other disciplines. In the natural sciences, biology is a notable example. In applied sciences, such as agriculture, engineering, medicine, and epidemiology, this field is also crucial. In the social sciences, masculinities are prominent across nearly all subjects and pro-

grams, including sociology, religious and theological studies, conflict resolution, and political science.[2] Hopkins (2006) demonstrates that research on the geographies of masculinities addresses a broad range of concerns related to men's everyday lives, masculine identities, and gendered performances. Consequently, masculinity studies appear as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field. It is therefore essential to acknowledge the field's significance and relevance across these disciplines. Structuring curricula to reflect this field and its interconnections with other disciplines is both logical and beneficial.

The chapter shows why it is important to focus on the youth and emphasizes the relevance of their "first" experiences. This implies that the curricula should not just start when the boys (and girls in the case of femininities) are men. As boys mature into men, they require handholding. To illustrate this point, I borrow the discussions by Jaji (2020:80), who juxtaposes what she sees in the Zimbabwean present politics to what existed in traditional society. She notes that, masculinity as an acquired rather than intrinsic trait, in Zimbabwe, for communities that did not circumcise boys and girls, was learned through training in spaces called *dare* in shona language.[3] Here, unlike in the current political system, hierarchy had a patriarchal and reciprocal logic based on a *quid pro quo* relationship, which seemed to be socially and culturally sustainable. Passing on the baton was important if positive masculinity had to make sense in cultural social relations. Perhaps the curriculum for masculinity (and femininity) should be introduced at the secondary school level. This is important because it is during this stage that boys and girls are still in their adolescent years. By doing so, the transition and content development will be more logical as students' progress to tertiary education.

In the current generation, the loss of traditional structures, and the meaning they had in communities, begs the question of how presently, young people who are socially excluded negotiate alternative versions of masculinities and femininities. We then worry about: What is included in the curricula? What do studies/literature show? And how does the era of technology influence young people's engagement in the area. Although the chapter might not provide sufficient answers to these questions, our goal as scholars is to find ways in which we can balance these different aspects

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2 See discussions by Baker, 2005; and on the involvement of men and women in peacebuilding, see (Kilonzo, 2021).

3 See also (Togarasei, 2007:152).

as we think of befitting curricula for the current generation of youth, and ways in which we can use the available tools and technologies to pass on the baton in appropriate ways. Young men need to understand, through the education system, ways in which they can acquire independence outside of the traditional system that continues to wear out from the effects of globalization (Chitando, 2020; Lindsay, 2003; Gilmore, 1990). In programmes like political science a course on masculinities and politics would for instance generate examples in the continent on how young men have prospered in politics, using case studies from different countries, thus debunking the notion that it is only the "aged" who have the right to vie for elected positions. Similarly, in Commerce and Business studies, a course on femininities would help young women benefit from an exploration of how young upcoming entrepreneurs are breaking the glass ceiling to make a name for themselves, debunking the notion that only a certain cadre of men and women can be successful entrepreneurs. In Migration and Transnational studies, masculinities have been shown to be a significant field, and experience, for men whose identities are being reconfigured in new territories, and therefore must find ways of fitting within new workspaces, communities and families. Some individuals face the difficulty and challenge of witnessing their women become breadwinners, which challenges traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity (Chitando, 2020; Kulkarni, 2019). This situation forces men to negotiate new forms of masculinity (Pasura and Christou, 2018; Igonya and Moyer, 2013) and addresses how HIV infections transform family dynamics (Chitando, 2007; van Klinken, 2011). Additionally, the transformation of masculinities in the context of secularization is another area where curricula need to focus. The "Whole Man" ethos as perceived in the YMCA, as Wignall (2016:302) shows,

> ...has been watered down, partly in response to a wider secularisation of social life in Europe and America, and partly due to the YMCA's original ecumenical goals of outreach and engagement. In this context, for the modern YMCA the Whole Man has morphed into more-generic forms of holistic development, losing its Christian foundation and becoming a transferable set of skills, habits, attri- butes, and virtues encapsulated in their Mind, Body, Spirit motto.

How can these transitions, transformations, and development of the field of masculinities be conceived by the youth in Africa, if not through comprehensive curricula that speaks to the field.

In the field of Religion and Theology, there is considerable scope for programs or courses specifically focused on religion and masculinities (Chitando, 2013; Chitando and Kilonzo, 2010; Chitando, 2023). For example, within the study of African religions, numerous contributions have highlighted that there is still much to learn about masculinities. This area could be one of the most promising for developing religious courses or programs on masculinities. Recently, a publication edited by Chitando, Chirongoma, & Nyakudya (2023) explored the concept of "Chihera" in Zimbabwe, aiming to deepen our understanding of the resilience and strength of women in Zimbabwe and Africa more broadly. In the introductory chapter, Chitando, Chirongoma, & Nyakudya (2023:2) explain that "chihera embodies the idea of African women's emancipation in African idiom, unsettling those who seek to maintain gender oppression." Although this chapter focuses on women rather than masculinity studies, it illustrates the potential for learning and teaching about masculinities if appropriate programs and courses are developed. Many such concepts and idioms remain unexplored and are not taught to young people, either within formal school curricula or informal settings like religious spaces. The section below provides examples of how religious teachings and programs address the topic of masculinities.

Religious Spaces and Masculinity Education

The Pew Research Centre (2018) shows that younger adults tend to be less religious than older adults. This implies that they may not attend services regularly as the older adults. Although this is a general observation, there might be variances across the continents. The Pew Research Centre (2018) shows that in Africa, 17 out of the 21 countries surveyed showed that there is not much significant difference between older and younger adults in terms of relevance/importance of religion in their lives. This is an indication that in some parts of the world, youth may take religion seriously. Other studies have shown that, in order for the youth to find attraction in attending church services and training, these have to be specially packaged and attention given to things that attract their attention, such as camps, sports, technology, among others (Bottingnole, 1984; Kilonzo & Omwalo, 2021).

The Bible and other religious texts have been extensively used in training on masculinity and femininity within religious contexts. These texts are interpreted and applied to illustrate various situations and contexts related

to these concepts. For example, Chitando & Kilonzo (2018) reversed Proverbs 31:10-31, which describes a virtuous woman who is hardworking and dedicated to providing for and caring for her family, into "Proverbs 31 man." Their aim was to highlight how Pentecostal preachers in Kenya portray a hardworking man. They argue that, in Pentecostal churches, where male religious leaders are esteemed as "big men" and treated with great respect, male followers are similarly tasked with the responsibility of caring for their families. Chitando & Kilonzo (2018:67) explain,

> ...masculinity, based on this model, constitutes both a promise and a threat. On the side of promise, the young Pentecostal man seeks to overcome the so-called "crisis of masculinity," namely, men falling behind women in academic, family and other endeavours in life. To this extent, therefore, men are mobilised to strive to achieve in the various pursuits of life. Pentecostal preachers seek to move men out of their comfort zones and to become the heads that certain interpretations of the Bible uphold.

This pushes men towards hegemonic masculinities where they are trained to take charge, be leaders in their echelons, and providers for their families. This, as Chitando & Kilonzo (2018) show, reaffirm the model of man as the "breadwinner". They argue that the "Proverbs 31 man" pushes a man to be hard working, and like his partner, the Proverbs 31 woman, the "Proverbs 31 man" is exceedingly industrious. He is not limited by the diminishing economic opportunities, because he is a child of God. The young men are therefore challenged to adopt more life-giving masculinities, thereby re-inventing the narrative of Proverbs 31 woman, to centre on Proverbs 31 man, while emphasizing transformative masculinities.[4]

In similar accounts, in a book edited by Chitando & Nyambura (2013), the authors provide short write-ups that explore the many facets and roles of men in both public and private spheres through various biblical texts. These brief accounts draw from Bible stories, excerpts, and experiences. For example, Chitando (2013) describes Zacchaeus as "although short, not a short-sighted man," while Chitando, Klagba, & Lusey (2013) discuss "Joseph: A man who challenged popular interpretations of masculinity." Zengele (2013) presents a text on "Jesus who dealt justly with women." These narratives, which are common not only in churches but also in other religious spaces, including faith-based organizations, can serve as

[4] For more on transformative masculinities see van Klinken 2012.

educational tools in deconstructing toxic masculinities in churches and community group meetings.

Wignall (2016) studies the Gambian youth through the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) in which he depicts the leader of the association as an astute male leader, who does not want to show any weaknesses to the young men, thus setting an example of an "African male leader," devoid of fear. He implies a *machoman* character that some community organization may wish youth to develop in order to face the challenges ahead. Wignall (2016:293) exemplifies the need for Faith Based Organizations in training youth on masculinities. He notes:

> Starting in nineteenth-century London as a series of prayer groups for young men, the YMCA grew in tandem with a late nineteenth-century Evangelical revival that focused on a disciplining of young men's leisure time and activities. Part of this movement was known as 'Muscular Christianity', and encouraged men to holistically self-transform their bodies, minds, and spirits. At the YMCA, this became a model of ideal masculinity known as 'The Whole Man', embodied by YMCA leaders and enshrined in their 'red triangle' emblem that is still used today.

Wignal's work therefore argues that studies on NGOs and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and masculinities can contribute to the important discussions on "waithood" (Honwana, 2012) and the difficulties that presently face young men in attaining adulthood. Wignall (2016) shows the importance of the involvement of these organizations in the lives of the youth as they grapple with adapting to new avenues and opportunities that allow them transit towards taking up new roles in their contexts. Such opportunities allow for access to aid funds and formation of new networks that help towards the empowerment of these young people. This then means a need to re-examine masculinity studies and training from the perspective of dynamics of institutions and unions; and not just personality of individuals or families (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 2004:153), since these organizations seem to have a say in how the notion of masculinity is transformed. This finds emphasis in some Pentecostal sermons as the section below shows.

While centering on sermons by Dr. Joshua Banda, a prominent preacher in the North Mead Assembly of God (NAOG), van Klinken highlights that this Pentecostal church uses the mission statement "Men of Truth" as a political tool in the area of masculinities. This is in an effort to effect change in the various engagements of men, not just in the family but also

the nation (2016:130). van Klinken argues that with such a mission, the Pentecostal discourse on masculinity is not only about men's domestic and intimate roles but also their public contributions. He uses the sermons to analyze gender dimensions of Pentecostalism, and through a series of teachings titled "Fatherhood in the 21st Century", van Klinken exemplifies the usefulness of narratives, delivered through a "performative path," in setting people into motion (van Klinken 2016:135; Tomlison 2014:6 as cited by van Klinken). The preacher, using this approach, in a sermon on the position of Adam, encourages men to "break from the past" to build a better future... a future marked by a second liberated Adam, not the first, who is sinful (van Klinken 2016:143-144). The point to be made here, in the context of teachings/training on masculinities, within religious spaces is that, if sermons can be used to build positive masculinities, that enable young men to move away from hegemonic masculinities, there is much more to learn, and cross-fertilize within the religious spaces and formal academic programmes that are devoid of such texts. In such teachings, close attention should also be paid to the youth, especially those who are in "waithood", and may not be married, or those yet to establish themselves as young adults.

To strengthen the work of religious leaders, in the recent past, quite a number of tools have been developed not just in the area of masculinities but also on issues that affect masculinities. The INERELA+ SAVE tool kit, a tool for training trainers, is designed for religious leaders to engage their communities to help those living with or are affected by HIV & AIDS. This tool kit has been in use for a while and was recently (2022) revised to take into account the advancing arguments and contexts, such as Information Technology, and, pandemics.[5] Others include Religious Leaders Toolkit on Adolescent, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (ASRHR).[6] and Interfaith Brief on SRHR.[7] All these resources are rarely considered when structuring training curricula in tertiary institutions, despite being rich with experiences. The need for cross-fertilization of ideas and the use of existing resources cannot be overstated.

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5 See https://inerela.org/save-toolkit/, accessed 15 July 2023.

6 See https://inerela.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Religious-Leaders-Toolkit-ASRHR.pdf, accessed 15 July 2023.

7 See https://fp2030.org/sites/default/files/Our-Work/Advocacy-cso/Interfaith-Brief-Sexual-Reproductiv-Health-Rights.pdf, accessed 15 July 2023.

Conclusion
Towards a comprehensive Masculinity (and Femininity) Curricula

This chapter concludes that Masculinity studies is without doubt a multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary field. This is evident in the latest editorial works. Examples are seen in the wide range of topics in edited volumes that take a global perspective. For instance, an edited volume by Kulkarni (2019) on "Global Masculinities" explores a wide range of topics, including: violence against women, gender identities at work, conflict prevention, social norms, social structure and law, male initiation rites and culture of politics, interpersonal neurobiology and gender based violence, faith and gender-based violence, involving men in sharing of contraceptive burden, role of men in childbirth, promoting new forms of fatherhood, migrating men and gender roles exchange, men's healthcare and gender equity, among other topics. This is just one volume which exemplifies the multi-disciplinarity of masculinities studies, and which forces us to move beyond boxing the study of masculinities and femininities under gender studies as it has been the norm in many institutions.

There is an urgent need to structure comprehensive masculinity curricula, in the different fields. The tailoring of such curricula as already noted should separate these studies from the already existing programs such as Gender, Sociology, Political Science, Geography, and the rest, and pay attention to either stand-alone programs on masculinity, or independent courses on the same. In this way, it would be easy to link the content of the courses with other fields to show the interconnectedness between or among the fields, without losing the gist of the course. If this is not done, we will never get to fully appreciate the field of masculinity (and femininity) studies in African institutions, and elsewhere.

In religious and community spaces, like churches and community organizations, it would help to offer training and capacity building services on masculinities that are particular to boys and young men. The blanket cover of masculinities, and especially what is thought to be transformational trainings offered to adult men, may not benefit the younger generations. Leaders in these spaces should therefore be deliberate in structuring their training sessions or sermons. Such an approach will help pass on the right content to the youth while ensuring a transformed generation.

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