

Sexuality Bibliography -- Part 1

Teaching and curricula on gender and women's studies in Africa have predominantly focused on issues of development and/or policy, as indicated by a recent and ongoing survey carried out by the African Gender Institute. At the same time, scholars, practitioners and policy makers recognise that there is a "gap" between policy and its implementation. What is surprising about this is not so much the existence of the "gap" but any expectation otherwise, given the lack of concerted attention paid to understanding the diverse and complex contexts in which policy is formulated and interpreted. It is now becoming clear that understanding the context requires paying attention to the conditions that give rise to particular meanings and interpretations of women and their lives. These meanings and interpretations are ones in which sexuality, culture and identity are deeply embedded.

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Introduction

Teaching and curricula on gender and women.s studies in Africa have predominantly focused on issues of development and/or policy, as indicated by a recent and ongoing survey carried out by the African Gender Institute. At the same time, scholars, practitioners and policy makers recognise that there is a "gap" between policy and its implementation. What is surprising about this is not so much the existence of the "gap" but any expectation otherwise, given the lack of concerted attention paid to understanding the diverse and complex contexts in which policy is formulated and interpreted. It is now becoming clear that understanding the context requires paying attention to the conditions that give rise to particular meanings and interpretations of women and their lives. These meanings and interpretations are ones in which sexuality, culture and identity are deeply embedded.

What are the interconnections between sexuality, culture and identity? And what makes sexuality strategic to strengthening gender and women's studies in Africa? Sexuality is an integral part of the experience of being human yet its visibility in academic discourse in Africa is relatively recent. Its strategic import in gender and women's studies teaching and curricula lies in the way it draws attention to the failure of analyses and interventions that rely solely on unitary levels of understanding of "*the way things are*". Such approaches are unable to address the ways in which social realities are embedded in multiple levels of complexity simultaneously. For example, this could mean addressing social issues - such as sexual violence perpetrated against women - simply at the level of "*the state*" or "*the family*", without considering the implications of the "*sexual*" at the level of emotionality, subjectivity and social relations (such as age, race, class, ethnicity, religion) or at other institutional levels, such as communities, religious bodies, customary authorities, educational institutions and so on.

More directly, a focus on sexuality connects intellectual and political agendas regarding bodies and the sexualised ways in which gendered bodies are differently treated in and beyond "*sexual*" arenas; emotional, sensual and psychological experiences of desire, pleasure, pain, intimacy, fulfilment and otherwise; the practices of sexual partners and how the "*il/legitimacy*" of gendered partners, practices and relationships gets defined by whom, from micro- (e.g. psychic) to macro- (e.g. state) levels; and the meanings and relations of giving and/or exchange, monetary or otherwise, within which sexual encounters are embedded. Sexuality is thus articulated with the ways in which gendered human beings become defined within particular, singular identities and the cultural frameworks that give meaning to such constructions at given historical moments.

A key historical period for understanding constructions of African sexuality is the colonial era. The need to distinguish between the historical conjuncture and its impact on people's subjectivities is critical since neither can be reduced to the other, yet the two are inter-related (see section 6). In a discussion of key theorists of colonial discourse analysis, Robert Young's *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (section 6) highlights ways in which colonialism involved not only military and economic activity but also permeated forms of knowledge as well as ambivalent protocols of fantasy and desire. The ambivalence of colonialism was constituted by its simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from the colonised.

This raises the question of how to understand "*bodies*" in the contemporary era, when the sources available are colonial. Yvette Abraham's PhD thesis on Sarah Bartman addresses questions such as these, drawing on the available historical sources as well as historical

imagination. Yaba Badoe's documentary *I Want Your Sex* examines the mythical character of colonial and imperial representations of sexuality, male and female, through a variety of visual sources. Her discussion of the documentary in *Feminist Africa 2* (see section 5b) explores questions surrounding the presentation and analysis of such material without its being sensationalised.

African women's sexuality has been constructed as transgressive (see section 8) in a number of ways, apart from those directly concerning representations of the body. Two of the most prominent of such modes are criminalisation and medicalisation. Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* illustrates how women's rebellion against the exploitation and brutalisation of their sexuality is criminalized whilst the criminality of men who abuse women's sexuality is allowed to continue with impunity. In the sphere of medicalisation, colonial campaigns against sexually transmitted diseases were predicated on a view of African women's sexuality as inherently pathological and regressive, as Megan Vaughan discusses in *Curing Their Ills*.

Although the interconnections of sexuality, culture and identity are implicit in this bibliography, sexuality is placed in the foreground here, not least because it has so far received the least attention. At the same time, existing work in this field points to the imperative of recognising that women's and men's relationships to sexuality require greater theorising. This is particularly so in Africa, where this relationship is increasingly recognised as having its own specificities, marked as it is by considerable fluidity and dynamism in the face of histories of authoritarian misrule. For those teaching in the area, one of the key questions here is that of definition. How has sexuality been defined, whether in the literature or in practice? Whilst teachers and students are often keen to arm themselves with definitions, it should be recognised that definitions are rarely obtained outside a framework of theorising. Differing perspectives are evident and epitomised in two recent viewpoints published in *Feminist Africa 2*, the first by Patricia MacFadden and the second, a response by Charmaine Pereira (see section 2a, under "*Texts*").

The bibliography does not treat "*theory*" and "*activism*" as partitioned from one another. This is done partly to destabilise the implied hierarchy set up by the dualism and partly because the conceptualisation inherent in theorising is treated as emanating (whether explicitly or otherwise) from the specific conditions, experiences and struggles of particular categories of women and men. The bibliography contains two key sections on thought and activism, the first by African women, the second comprising other bodies of thought and activism. The aim here is largely to encourage the development of more organic intertwining of thought and activism in African

teaching and research on sexuality, such that activism is supported in creating the discursive space for addressing feminist priorities and concerns, which in turn become the focus of more nuanced theoretical engagement.

Particular attention is paid to heterosexuality, given that this is the form of sexuality marking the sexual majority as well as being hegemonic. As such, heterosexuality requires critical interrogation. Sexuality is more often explicitly examined when addressing same-sex relations, identities and practices. However, the power relations that configure the compulsory character of heterosexuality, and that produce the resulting homophobia, cannot be understood solely within the confines of same-sex sexuality. Nor is it possible to understand how heterosexuality is normalised across diverse cultural contexts, without exploring heterosexuality directly and its articulations with politics and economies.

It is not assumed here that all same-sex relations, identities and practices are synonymous with such relations among groups overtly identifying as “*lesbian*” or “*gay*”. This is because the terms “*lesbian*” and “*gay*” have emerged in contexts that often differ markedly from those in which certain same-sex relations are found in Africa (such as, for example, Kendall’s “*Looking for Lesbians in Lesotho*” - section 8d; Dunbar Moodie’s chapter on “*Black Migrant Mine Labours and the Vicissitudes of Male Desire*” - section 6). At the same time, it is clear that many groups do actively use the terms “*lesbian*” and “*gay*”, as well as “*bisexual*” and “*transgender*” to identify themselves (see “*The Johannesburg Statement on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Human Rights*” - section 7b).

Given the restricted character of access to textual and other teaching resources for most scholars on the African continent, this bibliography is designed to map the intellectual and political terrain that has given form and substance to the diverse expressions of sexuality in Africa. As such, it is intended to facilitate the reader’s choice of resources likely to be most significant for teaching and learning about the central themes in a given course. Decisions about how to group the bibliographical material analytically have drawn on group discussions and debates among members of the Curriculum Working Group of the Feminist Studies Network (FSN); individual and group discussions with members of the African Gender Institute, the institutional host of the FSN; and my reading and analysis of the material available. I have also drawn on existing bibliographies addressing sexuality, such as Desiree Lewis’s *African Women’s Studies: 1980-2001 A Bibliography*, published by the African Gender Institute in 2002.

The bibliography is premised on the maxim that the relationship between practice and theory is critical, the principle being that theory needs to be grounded in concrete social realities in order for it to illuminate our understandings and inform strategies for social change in the direction of gender justice. As mentioned above, the bibliography refers early on to African women's thought and activism, indicating areas of focus as well as silence. The themes most often addressed include sexual violence, female genital mutilation, reproductive health and rights, and HIV/AIDS. Where considerably more work needs to be done is in the development of theory that is grounded in African contexts. Silence is greatest around the themes of eroticism and pleasure, and positive sexual identities.

The production of African knowledge that is feminist and reflexive in its orientation is privileged, at the same time as the bibliography draws from non-African sources, to the extent that these allow a strengthening of our own knowledge production. Since context and location are of critical significance, I distinguish between bodies of thought and activism that are grounded in different historical and geopolitical contexts: African feminisms, feminisms elsewhere in the global South, diasporic feminisms in the global North, Euro-American feminisms. The categories are intended to be heuristic, not definitive, and are substantiated in relation to sexuality, not across all bodies of scholarship. Distinctions between the categories are not based on any notion of primordial characteristics or essential differences but rather, on the differing sets of conditions shaping cultural, political and economic dimensions of power.

Although there may be considerable mobility amongst some scholars and activists between locations in Africa, the global North and the global South, the categories are nevertheless not coterminous. The heterogeneity of "*the global South*" is moreover, not intended to be erased in this use of the category. Rather, the aim is to further understanding of the various configurations of power within which sexuality is manifested, and the struggles surrounding these manifestations, in contexts that share histories of imperial domination. The first three of the categories used (Africa, the rest of the global South, diasporas in the global North) have often been lumped together under the rubric of "*postcolonial*". It is my view, however, that aggregating these different streams may be more likely to obscure our understanding of the specificities of African realities, and the commonalities across diverse contexts, than to clarify them.

The analytical bases for aggregation of material in this bibliography include, in addition to context and location (above), some bodies of thought that are thematically defined. These are: the political economy of sexuality, the corpus of work by Freud, post-structuralism, and queer theory.

These categories are not exhaustive of all the possibilities but reflect a critical selection of the available material, informed by an awareness of present concerns as well as significant gaps in contemporary work in Africa.

This bibliography is structured as follows. I begin with a section that problematises heterosexuality first, before addressing the various bodies of thought and activism referred to earlier. These sections are followed by a discussion of research methodologies. Next comes material that addresses various ways of understanding how sexualities may be constructed, including constructions across time and space - from pre-colonial and colonial eras to the present - to constructions based on culture, tradition and religion. Following this is a section on subjectivity, the unconscious and desire. The compulsory character of heterosexuality, or heteronormativity, is then foregrounded, as is its significance in constructions of masculinities as well as homophobia. The primacy of heteronormativity is also highlighted in references on transgressive sexualities, sexualities that in some way cross the accepted boundaries of what is considered "normal". The final section of the bibliography covers material on sexuality and pleasure.

The resources covered in this bibliography include texts, websites, films/videos and existing courses. The texts referred to, vary in the extent to which they address sexuality. Some focus directly on particular dimensions of sexuality; others treat aspects of sexuality in passing. To the extent that the texts illuminate the issues outlined above, they are included in the bibliography. Other resources that teachers or facilitators may consider compiling in their own contexts include television and radio programmes (particularly television soap operas), newspaper cuttings, women's life histories, organisational histories, and accounts of significant events.

Texts

Heterosexuality

The themes addressed here include virginity, sexual relations, marriage, reproduction, the relations between sexuality and gender, and among sexuality, gender and feminism. The role of race, empire, nation and gender in sexuality are also referred to.

Ayşe Altınay's (1a) chapter on virginity highlights not only the centrality of this aspect of heterosexuality in defining and controlling women's sexuality in Turkey, but also the way in which activism brings issues of sexuality to the surface. Tensions and contradictions around female

sexuality and sexual relations are explored in both Assitan Diallo's and Mumbi Machera's chapters (1b) in a recent collection edited by Signe Arnfred, *Rethinking Sexualities in Africa*. Prajapati Sah's article (1b) on the tensions he experiences in the expression of middle class male heterosexuality is also interesting, from a different perspective. The article by Kofi Awusabo-Asare et al. (1b) points to the erosion of women's traditional rights over their sexuality, as a result of deepening economic dependence on men, among the consequences being increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

Much of the material included under the sub-theme "*Sexual relations*". addresses the difficulties for women of negotiating sexual relations, and the underlying violence inherent in sexual relationships, in the South African context (see articles co-authored by Tammy Shefer and the work of Katherine Wood and Rachel Jewkes). The authors point to the significance of violence underlying heterosexual constructions of masculinity, and the sense in which many women accept unequal power relations in which violence is a normalised expression of sexual intimacy. Tammy Shefer and Don Foster's article on discourses of female heterosexuality highlights the lack of a positive discourse on women's sexual desires.

Kristin Mann's (1c) writing on marriage in colonial Lagos is a meticulously researched historical piece of work that affords an examination of shifts in the significance of marriage across gender and class, in the differing cultural contexts of metropole and colony. A number of authors address the politics of reproduction and its salience (see 1d), such as Ginsberg and Rayna Rapp's edited collection on *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, Marcia Inhorn's chapter on women's inabilities to conceive in contexts where female fertility is at a premium, and Lynn Thomas's work on the *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya*. The latter explores the vigorous defence of female excision in Kenya, by women and men alike, in the context of colonial attempts to prohibit the practice, anti-colonial protest and the development of nationalist politics. In other texts, the control of reproduction is manifested in differing contexts and treated from different perspectives. Musallam's exploration of the historical existence of practices of birth control in *Sex and Society in Islam: Birth Control Before the Nineteenth Century* may be set against the divergence between practice and principle in Renee Pittin's chapter on contemporary Nigeria.

The analytical categories of "*sexuality*" and "*gender*" (section 1e) and their imbrication may be traced in diverse contexts, from historical and geopolitical arenas such as "*18th- and 19th-century Egypt*" (Hatem) and "*the [contemporary] Arab world*" (AbuKhalil); to institutional contexts

(Morrell, on South African schools); and discursive arenas (Whitsitt - on romantic fiction, Schoepf - on AIDS and economic crisis). The interplay of race, empire, nation and gender (section 1f) in expressions of sexuality is poignantly conveyed in the pioneering work and tremendous expanse covered by *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region*.

A few analysts explore critically a range of interrelations between key concepts such as sexuality, gender and feminism (section 1g). Jane Bennett's article traces differing feminist emphases in African higher education, one strand comprising an intellectual challenge to the virtual absence of gender analysis in curricula and research, another pointing to the existence of sexual harassment and sexual violence as critical sources of injury to women on campus. Evelyn Accad's chapter on sexual politics in the Middle East is an evocative account of the conflicts and contradictions inherent in denials of the significance of sexuality in feminist as well as nationalist agendas.

In her examination of the relationship between gender, feminism and masculinity, Barriteau (section 1g) cautions against the notion that the gender subordination experienced by women can be automatically equated with the exclusionary practices intended to deny the masculinity of homosexual men. Silva (section 1g) challenges the ways in which men have appropriated women's bodies and experiences as objects of entertainment. She argues that women activist-poets, by "*writing*" the body, are not simply registering the significance of sexed bodies but effecting a political intervention and commitment to transforming masculinist structures of domination.

Virginity

- Altinay, A. 2000 "*Talking and Writing Our Sexuality: Feminist Activism on Virginity and Virginity Tests in Turkey*", in P. Ilkkaracan (ed.) *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies* Istanbul: Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR)/Kadın İnsan Hakları Projesi (KIHP)
- Cloudsley, A. 1984 *Women of Omdurman: Life, Love and the Cult of Virginity* London: Ethnographica
- Djalmy, A. 2003 "*Premarital Female Sexuality in Morocco*", *Al-Raida*, 20, 99: 75-83.

Sexual Relations

- Ankomah, A. "Sex, Love, Money and AIDS: The Dynamics of Premarital Sexual Relationships in Ghana", *Sexualities*, 2, 3: 291-308.
- Awusabo-Asare, K., Anarfi, J. and Agyeman, D. 1993 "Women's Control Over Their Sexuality and the Spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS in Ghana", *Health Transition Review*, 3, Supplementary Issue, 69-83.
- Davis, P. 2000 "On the Sexuality of "Town Women. in Kampala", *Africa Today*, 47, 3/4: 28-60.
- Diallo, A. 2004 "Paradoxes of Female Sexuality in Mali: On the Practices of 'Magnonmaka' and 'Bolokoli-kela'", in S. Arnfred (ed.) *Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa Uppsala*: Nordic Africa Institute.
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- Shefer, T., Strebel, A. and Foster, D. 2000 "So Women Have to Submit to That .. Discourses of Power and Violence in Students. Talk on Heterosexual Negotiation" *South African Journal of Psychology*, 30, 2: 11-19.
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- Wood, K. and Jewkes, R. 1997 "Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion: Everyday Love in a South African Township", *Gender and Development*, 5, 2: 41-46.
- Wood, K. and Jewkes, R. 1998 "Love is a Dangerous Thing: Micro-dynamics of Violence in Sexual Relationships of Young People in Umtata" *Medical Research Council of South Africa*, Tygerberg

Marriage

- Adeokun, L. 1983 "*Marital Sexuality and Birth Spacing Among the Yoruba*", in C. Opong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa* London: Allen and Unwin
- Mann, K. 1985 *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Murray, C. 1994 "*Is Polygamy Wrong?*" *Agenda*, 22, 37-41.
- Owomoyela, O. 2002 *Culture and Customs of Zimbabwe* London: Greenwood Press
- Roberts, P. 1987. "*The State and the Regulation of Marriage: Sefwi Wiawso (Ghana) 1900-40*", in H. Afshar (ed.) *Women, State and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia* London: Macmillan Press
- Vellenga, D. 1983. "*Who is a Wife: Legal Expressions of Heterosexual Conflicts in Ghana*", in C. Opong (ed) *Female and Male in West Africa* London: Allen and Unwin

Reproduction

- Corea, G. 1985 *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs* London: The Women.s Press
- Feldman-Savelsburg 1994 "*Plundered Kitchens and Empty Wombs: Fear of Infertility in the Cameroonian Grassfields*", *Social Science and Medicine*, 39, 4: 463-474.
- Garenne, M., Tollman, S., Kahn, K., Collins, T. and Ngwenya, S. 2001 "*Understanding Marital and Premarital Fertility in Rural South Africa*", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 2: 277-290.
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Sexuality and Gender

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- Early, E. 1993 *Baladi Women of Cairo: Playing with an Egg and a Stone Boulder*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers
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- Kassam, M. 1996 "*Some Aspects of Women.s Voices from Northern Nigeria*", *African Languages and Cultures*, 9, 2.
- Kilbride, P., Suda, C. and Njeru, E. 2001 *Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood* London: Bergin and Harvey
- Kumsa, M. 2002 "*Negotiating Intimacies in a Globalised Space: Identity and Cohesion in Young Oromo Refugee Women*", *Journal of Women and Social Work*, 17, 4: 471-496.
- Morrell, R. 1998 "*Gender and Education: The Place of Masculinity in South African Schools*", *South African Journal of Education*, 18,4: 218-225.
- Schoepf, B. 1997 "*AIDS, Gender and Sexuality During Africa.s Economic Crisis*", in G. Mikell (ed.) *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in sub-Saharan Africa Philadelphia*: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Whitsitt, N. 2003 "*Islamic-Hausa Feminism Meets Northern Nigerian Romance: The Cautious Rebellion of Bilkisu Funtuwa*", *African Studies Review*, 46, 1: 137-153.
- Zinanga, E. 1996 "*Sexuality and the Heterosexual Form*", *Safere: Southern African Feminist Review, Sexuality, Identity and Change*, 2, 1: 3-6.

Race/Empire/Nation/Gender

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- Daymond, M., Driver, D., Meintjes, S., Molema, L., Musengezi, C., Orford, M. and Rasebotsa, N. 2003 "Introduction", in Daymond, M. et al., (eds.) *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region, The Women Writing Africa Project, Volume 1* New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York
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Sexuality, Gender and Feminism

- Accad, E. 2000 "Sexuality and Sexual Politics: Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Women in the Middle East", in P. Ilkkaracan (ed.) *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies Istanbul: Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR)/Kadmin Insan Haklari Projesi (KIHP)* [Also in C. Mohanty, A. Russo and L. Torres (eds.) 1991 *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* Bloomington: Indiana University Press]
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African women's thought and activism

In their attention to the experiences of diverse categories of African women in relation to sexuality, African women advocates and scholars have focused their energies upon specific areas of thought and activism. The sub-themes address constructs and meanings impinging on sexuality, women's insertion in sexual economies, reproductive health and rights, genital mutilation, gender based violence and sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, disability, religion, and sexual rights. The fact that only one article could be found on sexuality and disability (Majiet, section 2g) is perhaps as much an indication of an area that is under-researched as it is a sign that not all the work that has been carried out is always accessible to researchers.

In her analysis of Cameroonian women writers' fiction, Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi (section 2a) engages with issues such as the dilemma of exchange and control in sexuality. In Zanga Tsogo's fiction, this concerns the exchange of women's sexual services for relative economic security, and men's control over women's labour as well as their wombs. Calixthe Beyala's fiction is explored for its articulation of a sexual politics that does not necessarily define womanhood in relation to motherhood, and that explores intricate linkages between subjectivity and sexuality. *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, a novel by Nawal el Saadawi (section 2a), addresses the question of what it means to be a woman in Egyptian society, and the personal resistance of the female protagonist to hegemonic understandings of gender and sexuality.

Mumbi Machera's (section 2a) chapter on female sexuality argues that the construction of female sexuality is influenced by the meanings attached to the female genitalia, which are often derogated yet simultaneously viewed as powerful. The nuances of language and power in relation to the naming of female genitalia are explored by Makhososana Xaba (section 2a). She identifies four categories of naming: terms implying male sexual gratification and possession; vulgar and derogatory terms; euphemistic or "little girl" terms; and vague or "polite" terms.

Jane Bennett (section 2a) points to concrete experiences of struggle and advocacy that have given rise to concepts such as "reproductive rights" and "sexual rights". In specific contexts, African activists addressing sexual rights by challenging homophobia are often also addressing reproductive rights, in efforts to criminalise marital rape, ensure young people's access to condoms in the context of HIV/AIDS, and the like. This is made possible by a theoretical understanding of gender as a force that links relations to labour, performance, authority as well as sexuality.

The tensions between sexual fear, occasioned by the realities of rape and numerous other forms of sexual abuse for many African women, and the notion of sexual freedom as an ideal, have been addressed in a variety of ways. Patricia MacFadden (section 2a) puts forward the viewpoint that the notions of “pleasure” and “choice” are rarely recognised as being among the most contentious aspects of female sexuality. The fear of sexual pleasure is directly linked to the construction of women.s sexuality as “filthy”, arising as it does out of the recognition of an intimate relationship between sexuality and power. Moreover, the non-recognition of pleasure as fundamental to women.s rights has led to debates and activism around sexuality, reproduction and rights being confined to “safe” zones within culturally sanctioned understandings of women.s roles and bodies.

In a response to this piece, Charmaine Pereira (section 2a) points out that MacFadden erases significant complexities and contradictions in African women.s lives, making claims that rest on problematic assumptions. Pereira argues that there is a need to understand how sexual pleasure and sexual power are understood by diverse categories of women and men, just as there is a need to understand changing constructions of sexuality and the relations between sexuality and economic, political and social arenas. Taken together, these two essays offer an accessible introduction for students and interested others, to a range of conceptual and political issues regarding sexuality in African women.s lives.

Sexual economies in Africa have been addressed in literature on sex work and prostitution (see Amina Mama, section 2b) and more recently, in work on trafficking in women. Much of the literature on sex work, as Mama points out, focuses on the women involved, rather than the organisation of the trade or the connections between the trade, militarisation and international tourism. In contrast, recent work such as Patience Elabor-Idemudia.s (section 2b) examination of the trafficking of women from southern states in Nigeria to Europe and the USA, locates trafficking in the profound changes caused by poverty, wars, increasing debt burdens coupled with structural adjustment, and unequal global trade patterns. The displacement and destruction of ties at family and community levels, as well as increasing global inequalities, have given rise to a situation where women have become increasingly used as items for export and exploitation in a global market.

Grace Osakue and others (section 2c) map the state of reproductive health in diverse communities in Nigeria, as part of a transnational project carried out by the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG). They focus in particular on Nigerian

women's understandings of what constitutes reproductive rights, highlighting differences on the basis of age, religion, urban/rural location, and ethnicity. Another example of transnational collaboration is that between the Centre for Reproductive Rights and the Association des Juristes Maliennes (section 2c), in the latter's work on pregnancy and childbirth in Mali.

Nkoli Ezumah (section 2c) explores the perceptions, norms, attitudes and practices underlying sexuality and gender relations in South Eastern Nigeria, and the implications for women's reproductive health and rights. She concludes that the social constructions of sexuality and gender relations in the South East are major deterrents to women's attainment of reproductive health and rights. South African women's efforts to regulate their fertility over the last 150 years are charted by Helen Bradford (section 2c), against the backdrop of patriarchal controls over female fertility and sexuality. Today, South African women's lives and deaths continue to fall beyond the scope of legal and righteous norms as defined by those who neither bear nor raise children, and abortion remains a site of struggle. Also in the South African context, Vanessa-Lynn Neophytou (section 2i) recounts the denial of reproductive rights experienced by lesbian mothers, women who have been constructed as "beyond" reproduction and whose identities as mothers have to be asserted in the face of overly sexualised depictions of their womanhood as "unnatural".

Considerable attention has been paid to the theme of genital mutilation, by several authors, predominantly in Sudan, Somalia, and Egypt, but also in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Early accounts focused on the traumatic experiences of the girls and women undergoing genital mutilation and the consequences of the different practices deployed (Abdalla, El Dareer - section 2d). Other perspectives evident at the time, and since then, include autobiographical accounts (e.g. Dairie, section 2d), political analyses linking genital mutilation with power and violence (e.g. Abdel and Asma, Ahmadu, AAWORD - section 2d), discussion of responses and strategies for change (e.g. Abusharaf, Assaad, Dorkenoo, Giorgis, Koso-Thomas - section 2d), including specific themes such as the debate around medicalisation (Mandara, section 2d). Yet other studies have examined prevalence (Ebomoyi, section 2d) and the processes of continuity and change in practices of genital mutilation (Badri, Gwako - section 2d).

The theme of eradicating violence against women and within that, sexual violence, has been prominent, as evident from December Green's (section 2e) review of African women's responses to gender violence across the continent. A tremendous amount of work has been carried out in South Africa, including discussions of sexual and other forms of gender based violence in the

context of women's health (Goosen and Klugman, section 2e), hearing the views of women activists who provide services and support to survivors of rape (Hansson, section 2e), and unravelling the ways in which narratives about rape reveal how the abuse is legitimised and perpetuated in social relations (Moffett, section 2e). Katherine Wood and Rachel Jewkes (section 2e) explore Xhosa township youths' discussions of their experiences of engaging in violence, particularly assault and coercive sex, against their sexual partners. The authors examine connections between such violence and the understandings of masculinity that prevail among the young men.

Working across the Southern African region, Jane Bennett (section 2e) brings together a wide range of resources and strategies aimed at preventing sexual violence and sexual harassment in higher educational institutions. Whilst contributing to the broader goal of democratising social relations and institutions, the aim is also to use context-specific strategies in order to change the institutional cultures that support sexual harassment and sexual violence. In the Nigerian context, Charmaine Pereira (section 2e) explores concepts such as power, responsibility and authority, with a view to understanding how these are intertwined with issues of agency and ethics in gendered institutional practices. The convergence within sexual harassment and gender based violence, of disparate discourses of violence, relationships of exchange and notions of acceptable relations between authority figures and students are also outlined.

In Ghana, the first comprehensive study of violence against women (Appiah and Cusack, section 2e) was carried out in 1999. Seeking to establish the prevalence of violence, its various forms, contexts, reactions by women and the rest of society, and barriers to effective responses, the study was carried out with several non-governmental organisations. The process included sensitising the NGOs on issues concerning violence against women and building their capacity to conduct the research.

The terrible threat posed to African societies by HIV/AIDS, where transmission is predominantly heterosexual and affects far more girls and women than men, has prompted much work on various facets of the phenomenon. Christine Obbo (section 2f) maps a range of cultural ideologies - the perspectives of elite men, of women, and of male and female youth - that need to be understood in order to devise effective strategies for reducing HIV transmission. Discussions on sex, HIV and condoms, she states, are necessary in order to use culture as a tool to negotiate societal survival, whilst simultaneously exposing class and gender-based indifference to that survival. Catherine Campbell (section 2f) addresses the question of how large numbers of black

men working in South African gold mines become HIV positive, by analysing the work and living context shaping their sexual appetites. Recently, campaigns against the spread of AIDS in Africa have begun to target men. Janet Bujra (section 2f) explores the theoretical and practical implications of this shift. Key features of the debate include the ways in which masculinity is defined and theorised, how the enactment of masculinity might increase the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the options for change.

Ayesha Imam (section 2h) discusses a number of Muslim discourses that have implications for sexuality, prefacing her argument with a discussion of the various essentialisms and confluences plaguing the study of Muslim people and their societies. The discourses she examines include divorce, seclusion and access to education. Her analysis highlights the variations among Muslim discourses of sexuality, not only across communities but also over time. Nakanyike Musisi (section 2h) examines the missionary and colonial education in Uganda that offered girls an education predicated on an ideology of domesticity for women. Such education was constructed in order that women might become better wives, mothers and guardians of the family and household, entrenching women in a domestic role that was separate from and subordinate to men.

The meanings attributed to sexual rights, as interpreted by the diverse actors developing the Beijing Programme for Action and those within the Southern African Development Community, are explored by Barbara Klugman (section 2i). In the African context, the lack of sexual rights is understood to be a consequence of poverty as well as gender inequality, particularly in sexual relationships. This is distinct from claims to sexual rights, in the European context, specifically in relation to sexual orientation. Zanele Hlatshwayo and Barbara Klugman (section 2i) point out that the failure to observe women and adolescent girls' sexual rights has rendered them overly susceptible to sexual violence and HIV infection. An enabling environment, argues Gupta (section 2i), would give women and adolescent girls the power to make choices and maximise their sexual rights.

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