

International Research Project on
Pedagogies of Gender & Sexuality
in Higher Education: South Africa

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Journal of Sexualities in the World of Universalities in Asia, Africa

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of Universalities in Asia, Africa
and Latin America*

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Because I am not dead yet

And I am still by the story:

And I am still a "pain"?

And I am still a "pain"?

And I am still a "pain"?

And I am still a "pain"?

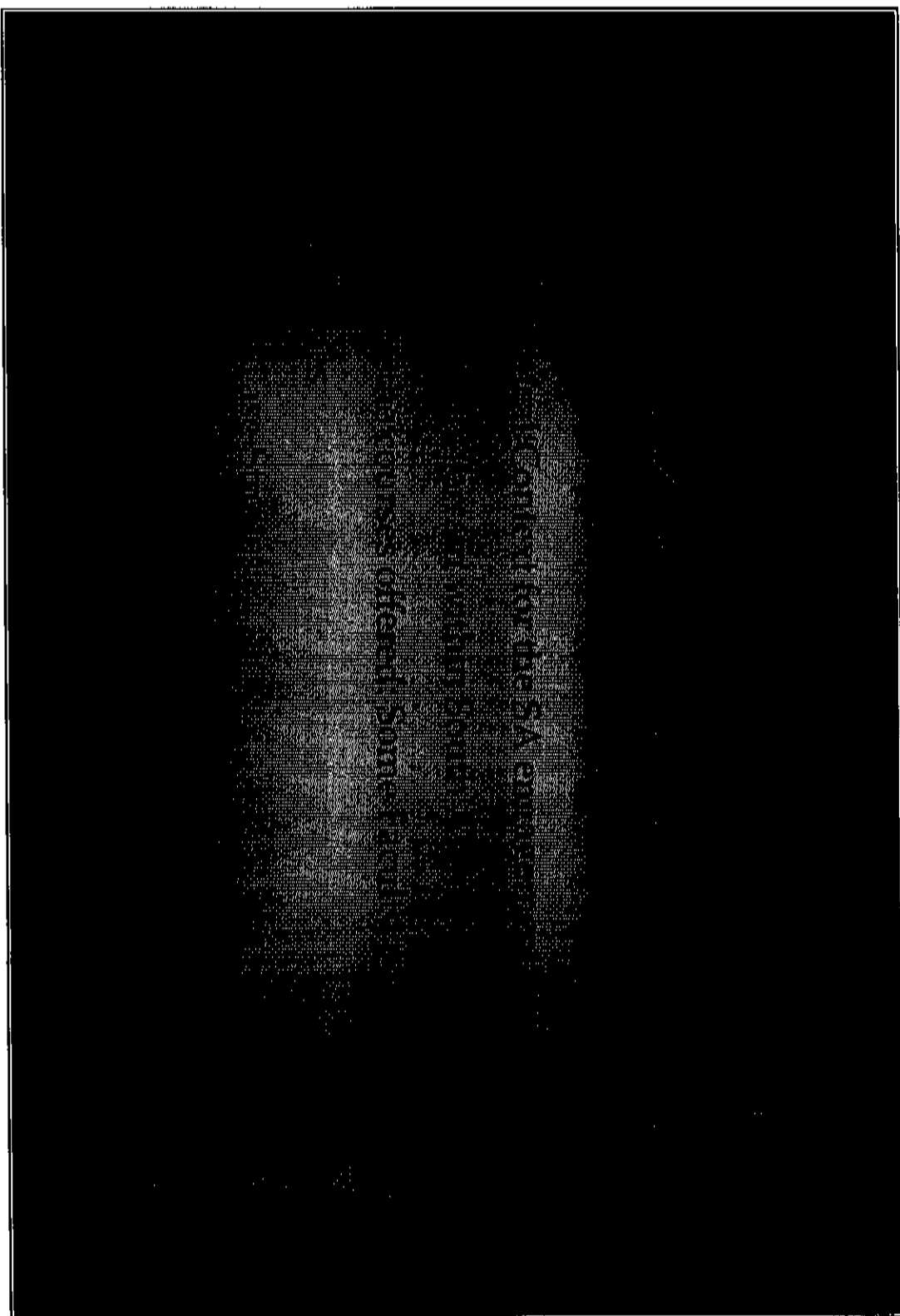
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Introduction

- Parallel sets of research interests have galvanized thinking on the African context within circles of researchers and practitioners concerned with the meanings of "gender activism" on the continent
- The first set involves intensive engagement with issues of sexuality (policy and programme work: material conditions of women's oppression; political representation; access to resources (land, education, and reproductive healthcare).
- In respect of gender-based violence issues such as the body and sexuality emerged but rarely explored as research questions in their own right. But this is changing.
- Now: (1) exploration of broad-based policy and advocacy work on HIV/Aids prevention; (2) recognition that sexuality, culture and identity organize the possibilities of "policy uptake" with different localized contexts; (3) growing interest in notions of sexual citizenship within emerging democracies.
- The second set involves feminist interest in the location and significance of higher education institutions across the continent (issues of globalization, academic freedom, access, citizenship and nationalism). Key to the discourse here: feminist epistemology is central to successful university environments (and the importance of academic/activist networking). The ACF is a key player here is strengthening teaching and scholarship with an African-based Feminist Studies Network

Education is three-

- Patriarchal nature of institutional norms within African (and indeed, global) HE systems (such as curricula approaches to the body, identities, sexualities) and their disciplinary relevance.

How such issues have been challenged by feminists, and how such challenges have approached issues of pedagogy is a key motivation.

- While such HE systems produce a "professional citizenship", they also construct gendered norms of sexuality, a "compulsory heterosexuality". How is it possible to "teach gender and sexuality" in such environments?

- How are "sexualities and gender" taught from within dedicated GWS sites and what alliances (if any) exist between GWS and other disciplinary/departmental areas?

South African Research Project

Four main components

1. **A data-base of information (baseline data on HE sites within departments, faculties, institutions) at which issues of gender and sexuality are addressed (courses, modules, resources).**
2. **Four autobiographically-based, narrative explorations of pedagogies (developed by experienced GWS academics through a workshop process; used as case-studies to research meaning of pedagogies with the current SA HE context).**
3. **A small national workshop on pedagogies and sexualities within the SA HE context that will draw on experiences of academics who work in the area.**
4. **Production of a research report on Pedagogies of Gender and Sexuality in Higher Education in South Africa by the Principal researchers.**

Overview: Activities and dates
Period: April 2006 – October 2006

Phase two: <i>development of autobiographical case-studies of sexuality/gender faculty</i>	March/April: SA Principal Researchers met, presented proposal to three different universities, in KZN; participants in case-studies selected and contracted; workshop facilitator contracted	Completed as planned; with need to discuss relocation of Professor Reddy from University of KwaZulu/Natal to the Human Sciences Research Council
	May: writing case-study workshop – 3 days	Evaluated as very successful by all participants; workshop transcripts transcribed as resources
	May – July: ongoing contact between case-study authors; resources collated, disseminated	
	September: case-studies to be complete	4 case-studies complete Workshop for development of case-studies into book planned for 2007
Phase three: national workshop	July/August: planning of national workshop, to bring faculty engaged through Phase One together; invitations sent; programme developed	Completed, although some key faculty are not able to attend (Charles Ngywenya, from Law Faculty of University of Free State; Mary Mwaka from Public Health, University of Pretoria)
	September: workshop held in Cape Town	Workshop held; report written, disseminated
	Oct/Nov Report drafted, discussed, presented for feedback	Integration of all phases' work into report for Puebla Workshop

Framework for the SAHRC draws on four 'houses'

1. Biomedical models of sexuality contribute to dominate analyses (body, mapping notions of "sex" into norms of "gender" which predict/predict particular sexual and reproductive behaviours as norms and pathologize others).
2. Within the African contexts, legacies of colonialism remain operative (African bodies as "marked" by race and sexual otherness; the stereotype of sexual abuse as "the worst in the world"; that our relationship to poverty is wrapped into analyses of sexual and reproductive ignorance).
3. Feminist foregrounding of sexualities as key to the exploration of the reproduction of patriarchal and neo-capitalist interest in "womanhood" and "manhood" in a heteronormative way. How can we find analyses which can trace "sexualities" away from "gender" without losing a feminist commitment to the transformation of gendered injustice?
4. The meaning of rights, as articulated by international movements and instruments seeking to leverage space for sexual, reproductive and cultural agency.

and Political Contexts of A Government with respect to

- Failure of the State to implement its ARV programme in the face of HIV/Aids

- The validity of the Termination of Pregnancy Act

- Changing legislation on Marriage

- Outlawing of surrogate motherhood as a paid contractual arrangement

- Processes of the Sexual Offences Bill

- Attempts to change legislation on Trafficking

- Attempts to subject the media to pre-publication government censorship

- 54 000 secondary school girls “dropped out” in 2005 due to pregnancy

The Curricula Terrain with the African Process

- Website searches of 17 universities in SA
- Between 2003-2005 the HE sector has undergone significant restructuring to reverse apartheid planning that segregated educational opportunities
- Pre-1994 there were 36 HE institutions. In 2006 this has been reduced to 22 through mergers and incorporations
- Searches began as a scanning process using words such as 'sex', 'sexuality', 'gender', 'masculinity' and 'femininity' for courses. 'Gender' generated the most results (interestingly 'sex' and 'sexuality' often resulted in no findings on websites).
- Courses recorded for our purposes were those that had: (1) explicit references to 'gender' and/or 'sexuality' in titles or course outlines; (2) references to topics related to sexuality such as HIV/Aids transmission, or teenage pregnancy)

Gender Curriculum Framework South African Process

- Searches also resulted in making contacts via email with course conveners and/or lecturers for further information about: (1) course; (2) teaching and research; (3) further leads to other teachers/researchers within their universities.
- 17 Universities were identified (courses and lists detailed in Full Research Report but is still under development as we speak)
- Courses reflect (1) focuses on gender and/or sexuality (in title and course outline); (2) sections that take a gendered analysis of a broader topic; (3) focus on sexuality but without any discussion of gender (e.g. reproductive health courses that do not integrate a gendered perspective of sexuality).
- Disaggregation by Faculties/Research Units that offer a route into discussion of disciplinary based approaches to issues of sexuality and gender (Law, Health Sciences, Education, Education, Humanities & Social Sciences (Notably Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Religious Studies, Politics, Social Work, Development and Population Studies, Gender Studies); Arts (notably Film and Media Studies, Art History, Languages and Literatures (notably in Classics and languages such as Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa were not identified here).

The Curricula Terrain within African Analysis

- LAW (gender and sexuality integrated into the law curricula in constitutional, private/public, criminal law and criminology and criminal justice; sexuality is integrated into some law courses in relation to human rights, especially sexual and reproductive rights)
- In the broad categories of LAW we observe the potential for integration of gendered and sexual theorizing but it is not clear whether such topics include a critical gendered analysis or whether sexualities forms part of the teaching at all.

- ❖ Family law (marriage, divorce and custody)
- ❖ Legal Status of Women (differential treatment of law on basis of gender)
- ❖ Victimology (study of crime victims)
- ❖ Causation (what causes people to commit crimes)
- ❖ Human Rights (Sexual and reproductive rights, and rights of children)
- ❖ Criminal activity and Violence (domestic violence, sexual offences, assault & rape, child abuse)
- ❖ Adolescent/youth crimes (treatment of young offenders)
- ❖ Feminist criminology
- ❖ Legislation (analyses and application of legislation)

- HEALTH SCIENCES (taught under Nursing, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Urology, Public Health and Family and Community Health)
- Biomedical model is a dominant paradigm (sexuality taught as reproduction in isolation to teaching of gender as power relations, gender as access to medical resources, gendered analysis of health management systems, gender and epidemiology)
- Where some degree programmes merge courses across disciplines (e.g. community health, sociology of health) with medical courses a more holistic approach is evident that includes a gendered analysis (such as Nursing programmes at the University of the Western Cape)
- Obstetrics and gynaecology (teach mainly female sexualities related to reproductive and sexual health, maternal and child health, risks associated with pregnancy and contraception. Gender is assumed in such courses but not mentioned in course outlines, mainly in: primary health care and the social context of disease)
- Family and Community Health courses include analysis of gender and/or sexuality in relation to health and well being, HIV/Aids and sexual violence; gender inequalities in health care, health policy development, and gender in relation to infectious diseases such as TB, STIs and HIV/Aids.
- Notable absence was lack of teaching on abortion.

• **HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES** (gender clearly integrated in curricula of several disciplines)

• 6 out of the 17 Universities have Gender Studies departments where gender and sexualities courses integrate a gendered analysis into teachings:

- ❖ University of Cape Town (African Gender Institute)
- ❖ University of the Western Cape (Women and Gender Studies)
- ❖ University of South Africa (Institute for Gender Studies)
- ❖ University of Pretoria (Institute for Women and Gender Studies)
- ❖ University of Venda (Centre for Gender Studies)
- ❖ University of KwaZulu-Natal (Centre for Gender Studies)

• Courses offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels teach feminist theory and feminist research methods

Other central focus areas of courses offered in gender studies programs are: the social construction of gender (masculinities and femininities) and sexualities, the effects of global economic programs on gender relations (which relates to gender and development), the social roles of men and women, African feminisms and post-colonialism, and gay, lesbian, inter-sexed and trans-gendered studies.

● Focus on South African gendered identities in relation to social problems: inequality, violence, poverty and HIV/Aids.

● Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) is a discipline offered at Universities (Limpopo and North West) where the curriculum addresses: HIV/Aids in rural communities, women in rural societies, gender, justice and the environment, issues in gender and development, and the intersection of culture, gender, science and technology.

Pedagogies within the
 courses offered. Some
 Faculty perspectives and
 overarching themes
 (engagement with Faculty
 voices created through
 different methods: (1)
 conventional semi-opened
 interviews with 20 people in
 different
 disciplines/universities based
 on pre-designed interview
 schedule; (2) discussion with
 16 people in a two-day
 national workshop; (3) 4 ± 10
 000 word autobiographical
 reflections)

Creasing

to age with grace

inspections/procedures make me

heuristic is opening up academic

narrative in theorizing fared?

and more showing in

bring both tension and

and grace they

with violence and peace

inside the body of me?

Yaba, Giddy...

at the

November 2006: a

connections

quality

Where do you teach, what do you teach?

I teach at the University of Pretoria. I teach one course in reproductive health to medical doctors who come from all over the country as part of a Public Health course. It is not a compulsory course in the medical model.

How do you teach? Do you take them to the brothel and the sex shops? Do you take them to the gay holes and sex shops. I don't take them to the brothel and the sex shops. I try to create experience for them. I try to create experience for them to gay pride, and students can't seem to be part of the programme. I don't teach them to be part of the programme.

canons of authority preside

approaches

- The complexity of "teaching sexualities and gender" (prevalence of HIV/Aids; culture as a term through which to negotiate the right to speak; national political debates concerning policy and treatment)
- Where faculty were taking the politics of gender seriously, this was usually because they were self-identified feminists (also located in personal and professional relationship to political activism around issues of reproductive health rights, gender-based violence, rights of lesbian and gay people, access to political and educational space for women)
- 3 of the 6 Faculty in Health Sciences approach teaching sexualities from a biomedical model (anatomical and biochemical construction of the body)
- 16 of the 19 complained about a teaching "overload"
- Radical differences to approach to sexualities based on discipline (biomedical *versus* social constructivist split evident).

CATIONS OF ANNUAL PRESENTATION ANTHROPOLOGICAL CENTER

- Social Anthropologists (approach through theories of networking and the symbolic salience of body-fluidities).
- Cultural critics spoke about identities as a primary lens.
- Sociologists focus on intersections between class construction, transaction, labour, and human migration.
- One Law professor approached sexuality through international frameworks on human rights, and national debates on customary and constitutional law (through debates, for example, on marriage and inheritance laws).
- Differing relationships to 'Northern/Western' and to 'African and South African' debates within curricula design. Some draw on indigenous research (such as material developed through NGOs) and contextualized within continental debates. Majority demand engagement and location within Northern/Western literature on sexualities.

- Most university curricula dominated by American, European and (occasionally) Australian texts.

In only 5 cases faculty indicated that there was a priority to "introduce students to writing from South Africa, or from Southern Africa, about these issues. I think it's crucial for students to read this material, to show them that the authorities can emerge from here"

- Most interviewees were explicit about teaching sexualities connecting this priority to national context and the daily challenges: HIV/Aids (deaths in families, orphans, access to ARVs, difficulties of sexual pleasure and experimentation in a climate where HIV transmission is high); the profile of fundamentalist and conservative scripts for femininity and masculinity; gender-based violence, diversity on campus (varying cultural beliefs, values and histories); homophobia and racism.

*...geographical case studies
in context, identity, discipline and
ethics of pedagogies and the*

• Four lecturers participated in this methodological approach. Participants met in May (process workshop), production of autobiographies (July/August)

• Professor Relebohile Moletsane (Deputy Dean in Graduate Studies, Education Faculty, University of KwaZulu-Natal)

• Professor Vasu Reddy (Human Sciences Research Council based in cultural studies, gender and linguistics)

• Professor Kopano Ratele (Psychology, University of the Western Cape)

• Professor Jane Bennett (African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town)

ments in the workshop are recorded in the workshop transcripts of the project.

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1917

K: For me it is gendered. It's also sexual

V: We're all human beings – and we're all teachers. As teachers we're also sexual beings, and we've turned on by some students but we've also managed our levels of awareness of this. We know where our boundaries are and we know where our boundaries aren't.

R: I feel that's a very good point. I think

ents in the workshop are representative transients of the process. Confid-

How important is location? What about place in respect of teaching?

J): Location is so powerful in structuring both the possibility of an ongoing

professional life, now one begins to drink poison, the more one is by violation for what one has learned and for what one can do. It is a punishment to

officers, he said, "are not going to be a learner, is to learn to be a learner."

of reading, or experiences that naturally come from reading and have power/don't have power (and

V: How one works hard in the / *active*,
as opposed to what / *work* / *work*

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- Data generated from 40 000 word document of autobiographies generated considerable 'data'. Autobiographies provided platform for design of National Workshop (out of which arose key questions for NW); for example: How was sexuality learnt? What did you learn? When? How? Does gender matter?
- More extensive 'discourse analysis' is required: links between theories of sexualities education, contextual influences, identities, pedagogic practices
- Faculty approaches suggest: how sexualities and genders were 'learnt' outside the context of the university.

• Data from Students (113)

• 113 Total returned

- Data collected from students in 4 select courses (G/W/S, Public Health, Social Anthropology and Organizational Psychology). Method: emailed questionnaire (113 questionnaires returned)
- Focused on student backgrounds as young South Africans in complex contexts; their engagement in informal sites of sexuality and gender education
- Analysis focused on (1) student responses to individual courses; and (2) as a global group of SA students (there are limitations to this methodology)
- Analysis focused on data to determine broad profile; assessment of impact of course on their gendered/sexual realities; students' representations of their gender and sexuality knowledge; influences on students; student opinion on incorporation of genders/sexualities in curricula.
- Positive evaluations of courses evident BUT NOT: an evaluation about relevance to their own personal engagement with sexualities
- 3 Pilot interviews with University administrators conducted. More work is needed here nationally (but the 3 felt national context implied that sexuality should be mainstreamed in curricula at all levels and universities had a role to play here; policy engagement; transformative relationships amongst staff/students; social responsiveness in support of research programmes)

Curricular Collisions and

Forward

- Diverse courses which take gender and sexualities seriously on South African university campuses.
- Overwhelming location in the Humanities and in the Health Sciences, and in neither sphere do they constitute a primary focus of curricular emphasis for students.
- With the exception of material presented in Obstetrics/Gynaecology, Nursing and Community Medicine, material on reproduction is not a core part of the curriculum, and is presented within a bio-medical model.
- A strong emphasis on HIV as "sexual risk" does help to develop another angle to the need for "sexualities education," but again, this is not generally approached as a non-medicalized area.
- Major areas of university education in which issues of gender or sexualities do not arise as curricular concerns.
- There are sites of both research and advocacy education around sexualities and gender on most of the campuses surveyed. These are rarely within the mainstream of the university, and this remains an area for more investigation to build a rich picture of what universities are engaged with.
- The national context structures powerful dilemmas for both faculty and students. Faculty perspectives on gender and sexualities teaching indicate that while such teaching does indeed offer a route into potentially transformative learning for students, this route is compromised by the general academic environment, and more seriously, by the intransigence of the idea that "academic theory/writing" is fundamentally separable from "ways of living your life."

- Even in disciplines committed to the presence of "the body" (though diverse, even contradictory, routes), the role of the university as a route into "professionalization" triumphs – or challenges – efforts to radicalize consciousness at every level.

- Individual faculty are often dedicated to interacting with these challenges, and do so with more or less political courage and theoretical clarity. The impact of this dedication may well be felt at the level of a single course; it is unlikely to translate into a more widespread influence.

- Student feedback on courses, based in different disciplines, suggests that these courses do introduce them to intellectual ideas they find valuable, but it is not clear

- (a) how this impact should be understood in the context of students' overall engagement with informal sexualities and gender education offered on the campus and beyond

- (b) whether positive feedback on a course can translate into sustainable education where the environment is largely inhospitable to this (but not entirely)

- (c) whether intellectual value translates into practical relevance for students, who are thoroughly embedded in a complex nexus of "gender and sexualities education" beyond the university, and through the informal – but intensive – projects of heterosexuality, femininity and masculinity, organized within it

- Autobiographical work on sexuality and pedagogies suggests that there is immense growth potential here to develop theorizations based on experience and context (combined with empirical and statistical data gathering and analysis)