





Editorial

The subject of sexuality has been an area of concern for social science for many decades. It raises many interesting and probing questions. In Africa, there is much debate across the continent which has led in some cases to the passage of legislation to regulate specific expressions of sex and sexuality. While a few countries exhibit a fair degree of flexibility and tolerance, the majority of them have remained on a different plane in dealing with topics on sex and sexuality. The current issue of *The African Anthropologist* attempts to refocus on sex and sexuality. Several papers which discuss this topic are presented in this issue.

In his paper, 'Eating a ripe banana with its skin on: Health education campaigns against sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in Mbozi District, Tanzania, 1980-2010', Musa Sadock explores the health education campaigns against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), including HIV/ AIDS in Mbozi district, Tanzania, from 1980 to 2010. He argues that the failure of the campaigns to prevent the spread of these diseases is in part due to the fact that the campaigns are foreign to the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which they were undertaken. Nonetheless, the campaigns have led to an increase of public awareness of STDs and shifts in sexual behaviour.

Ocholla and her colleagues delve into the topic of LGBT in the context of Kenya. Their paper is a collection of 'stories from the Kenyan LGB communities'. They argue that LGBT stories are unpopular since they are considered 'uncomfortable territory'. This paper covers stories of people in same-sex relationships against a backdrop of homophobia in Kenya. Homophobia is more common in older than younger individuals. People in same-sex relations go through difficult phases in their lives as they struggle to find acceptance and fulfilment. They have to challenge, explicitly or implicitly, the sexual hegemonies within the wider society, breaking away from either a heterosexual existence or finding a more balanced harmonious existence, where they could allow themselves to question and explore their sexualities, in relationships of their choice.

Historically, women have always been subjugated and oppressed by men in most cultures. In Nigeria, for example, this situation is due to the inequality in gender relations between men and women. Muoghalu's paper on rape and women's sexual health examines how patriarchy



interlocks with gender relations and inequality to deny many raped women justice. A feminist theory is used to explain rape, the societal reaction to rape and the health outcomes for the victims. The author concludes that many health problems suffered by women in Nigeria are a result of rape. The topic on reproductive health receives further attention from Akinyemi and colleagues. Nowhere is this subject more critical than in among the poor urban dwellers. Urban slum dwellers in Ibadan and Kaduna, Nigeria, aspire to have small families and healthy sexual and reproductive lives. However, they are constrained by religious and socio-cultural factors.

Finally, Odhiambo and colleagues examine the 'politics and economics of body image and sexuality in Africa'. In particular the paper asks and attempts to respond to the following questions: What happens with women or men who defy constructs of body image and sexuality? How does society adjust to individuals they consider deviant in its already defined and constructed political arena? In answering these questions the authors expose the 'lived realities' of persons who fail to conform to the expectations of the society, namely sexual and gender minorities. The paper presents some voices of those who have redefined body image politics and economics.

Together, the papers in this Volume should serve to keep the debate of sex and sexuality alive. We hope that they will invigorate research into the area of sex and sexuality as currently defined.

Editors