About this Publication:

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing emphasis in African scholarship and research on the importance of understanding sexuality and the issues around it, such as identity, sexual rights and sexuality, reproductive health and rights and gender and political democracy. Despite this, Africa has frequently been found by researchers to be predominantly hostile to any discussion of sexual and reproductive rights, conveying dismay at the notion of women's rights to reproductive freedom, disgusted objection to the idea that gay and lesbian people have civic and human rights and opposed to engagement with issues such as FGM (Kenya), virginity testing (South Africa), Shar’i’a interpretations of appropriate sexuality (Nigeria and Sudan), and legal relationships to homosexuality and intersexuality (South Africa). In 2004, the African Gender Institute ran a continental research project, *Mapping Sexualities*, among the objectives of which was the development of a research methodology suited to carrying out in-depth case studies of the dynamics of gender and contemporary sexual cultures in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. This book is the result of that research. The chapters cover broad-ranging issues and include questions about what it means to research topics that are unpopular or fraught with the sense of the taboo that underpins much work in sexualities and gender studies. Overall, the diverse pieces within the collection offer the opportunity to see qualitative research not as the ‘poor cousin’ of quantitative studies but as a zone which raises intellectual and political challenges. The book contains photographs by Zanele Muholi, renowned South African photographer of lesbian issues.

Contents Include:

**Chapter One: Jacketed Women:** Questions of African feminism, sexualities and the politics of qualitative research methodologies - *Jane Bennett (University of Cape Town) and Charmaine Pereira*

**Chapter Two: Challenging Research, Researching Challenges:** Feminism and Activism in Lesotho - *Karabo Mohlakoana (National University of Lesotho)*
Chapter Four: Developing principles for research on young women and abortion through an analysis of difficulties in current studies - Catriona McLeod (Rhodes University)

Chapter Five: Researching discourses on widow heritance: feminist questions about ‘talk’ as methodology - Awino Okech

Chapter Six: From respectable to questionable: Women’s narratives of marital relations and sexual restriction in widowhood in Harare, Zimbabwe - Rekopantswe Mate (University of Zimbabwe)

Chapter Seven: “They respect you more”: Meanings of Marriage for Four South African Lesbian Couples in Cape Town - Jessica Scott (University of Cape Town)

Chapter Eight: The politics of researching gender and sexuality in African contexts - Jane Bennett (University of Cape Town) Conclusion

Recommended for
Academics and students of gender studies, social anthropology, human rights and public health, and NGOs working in these sectors.

[1] Illicit sexual relations between a man and a woman, that is, any form of sexual relations between a man and a woman who are not married to one another (Arabic). Depending on marital status, the act may be considered as fornication (if a partner is unmarried) or adultery (if married). Rape is also considered to be zina under Maliki law, which is practised in northern Nigeria.

Of Interest and Benefit to:

Academics and students of gender studies, social anthropology, human rights and public health, and NGOs working in these sectors.