



## Ruling masculinity and sexuality<sup>1</sup>

Kopano Ratele

### **Jacob Zuma and “a better life for all”**

It may well be that the High Court of South Africa will return a verdict of not guilty at the end of the corruption trial of ex-deputy president Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma due to take place towards the end of 2006.<sup>2</sup> Mr Zuma may yet reach the heights of South African political life, as he himself has suggested. Perhaps, too, he will prove to be the one to lead the country to the promised “better life for all”.

“A better life for all” is a slogan of the former national liberation movement and current ruling party in South Africa, the African National Congress, that at worst, is employed with ever more frequency during election periods, and at best, is meant to epitomise the centrality and seriousness of development in the party’s policies. In its manifesto for the first inclusive democratic national elections, the ANC maintained:

South Africa’s first democratic elections are about our common yearning for freedom, peace and a better life for all. They are about a past of oppression and despair and a future of hope and democracy (1994).

Ten years on, during the national elections in 2004, in his party presidential message, Thabo Mbeki said:

Our First Ten Years of Freedom have been ten years of growing unity in action; ten years of peace and stability; ten years of increasingly making resources in the hands of the state available to uplift disadvantaged South Africans; ten years of expanding opportunities to build a better life for all (2004).

And in a speech given at the congress of the National Union of Mineworkers, the ANC’s deputy-president, Zuma, asked:

Can we strengthen this alliance on the same principles that it was founded and ensure that it takes our struggle forward as we try to build a better life for all and to reverse the legacy of apartheid and of poverty? (2005).

Promises of “a better life for all” notwithstanding, should Zuma become president of the country, there is cause to suspect that he will be hard-put to inspire hope or confidence in many sections of the population of South Africa. This lack of faith in the possibility of a better life that might be brought to fruition by Zuma stems in part from the events of a second and notorious legal case. The 64-year-old man stood accused of raping a 31-year-old family friend and national liberation struggle comrade – who even during her grueling cross-examination referred to him as *umalume* [uncle]. The theatre around that particular case, including the intimidation of the plaintiff by the declared supporters of Zuma, suggests grounds for wariness (see Hlongwa and Msomi, 2006; Ndebele, 2006; Zulu and Msomi, 2006). About the public spectacle and theatrics that transfixed a nation, Njabulo Ndebele wrote:

At issue here are webs of social and political relationships that may bedevil professional conduct. It is how Zuma resolves such conflicting loyalties that may explain his apparent disregard for the broad public in his dramatic appearances before his supporters immediately after two recent court appearances on the rape charges. He just seems unaware of the rest of us. His single-minded focus is his political home: the ANC and the “broad alliance”.

...In this battle the rest of us are an anonymous mass, despite strong notions of public morality in this country. It is the force of this morality that has many of us wanting to see even faint signs of pain on the face of a public figure facing a charge of rape.

...The conflicting loyalties to family and to a constitutional public result in a psychological blind spot in which the public is invoked only to embarrass opponents, not because it is itself seen as aggrieved. The ability to see the public as aggrieved would almost certainly have resulted in different strategies and tactics. Instead, this blind spot, accentuated by the personal nightmare of his fall from grace, has distorted Zuma’s judgment (2006: 19).

The political drama around the case, and the aggressive tactics pursued by the defendant’s side and supporters in that case notwithstanding, there was no saying at any point that the High Court would acquit Zuma on this charge. Nevertheless, on Monday, 8 May 2006, Zuma was found not guilty by Judge Willem van der Merwe. South African criminal law and the acquittal of Zuma are not the main concerns of this article (for a discussion of these matters, see, for example, Govender, 2006). What is of concern is the public psychopolitical theatre, and what this tells us about sexualities, gender and, in particular, masculinities in contemporary South Africa.



A range of moments from the rape trial of Zuma point to the links between sexualities and a ruling masculinity. These moments include the fact that Zuma, who was at one time tasked with leading the anti-HIV and Aids campaign, knowingly had unprotected sex with a woman he knew to be HIV-positive; that he stated in court that he had sex even though no condoms were available because in his culture, a man could be accused of rape for leaving a woman sexually aroused; and that he testified that he had taken a shower after the incident because he believed this would reduce the risk of infection (see News24.com, 2006b).

However, given the import of the idea of “a better life for all”, and with the intention of thinking of development beyond political sloganeering and electioneering, at the same time as assessing the events that continue to take place around Zuma in particular and other African political leaders more generally, what is called for is considered reflection on the question of the use of politics for human betterment. I wish to look at this question of a better life for all as it relates to sexual and gender life. In this reflection, research from pro-feminist studies of men and masculinity will be drawn on, with the arguments informed by discourse analysis.



In this article, it is therefore not the rape trial of Zuma, or even his corruption trial, but rather a less publicised moment to which I would like to draw attention – in order to think about the interconnections between sexualities, masculine power, and the notion of “a better life”. It is at this moment that Zuma’s discursive political and psychological practices reveal themselves as unable to inspire confidence in some sections of South African society.<sup>3</sup>

### **“Wrong” sex, the Bill of Rights, and discursive political acts**

The moment of concern came in response to a question about oral sex put to Zuma as the then deputy-president of South Africa during a debate in the national parliament of South Africa. At issue was whether or not oral sex is “right”.

Zuma’s answer during a debate was that oral sex is wrong, unnatural. He also said it was a subject he was not prepared to talk about. Of some significance is the fact that at the time he uttered these words, Zuma was featuring in a national media campaign to encourage people to talk openly about sexuality as part of the larger project to stem the spread of HIV/Aids. His exact words were:

I can't answer on wrong things that people do that are unnatural. I can't talk about that.... I don't know really whether I should have an opinion on

some of the things ... because I don't understand what do they mean [sic]. We are talking about education about sex, not other things that are not sex. I wouldn't be able to have an opinion on that one (Maclennan, 2002; also see *Mail & Guardian* online 2002a, 2002b).

Forty years of discourse studies have taught us the productivity of discourse and the immanence of sexual and gender power in talk and text. To fully appreciate the impact of this particular utterance, Zuma's words should be juxtaposed against the Bill of Rights of South Africa. In contrast to Zuma's expressed sentiments, the Bill of Rights makes it very clear that the state may not unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone on the grounds of belief, culture, language, birth, gender, sex and sexual orientation. Why then was the second most powerful political actor in government contradicting the spirit, if not the letter, of a developing constitutional and human rights culture? While for some, a contradiction like this one was hardly surprising, and something we have come to expect from African politicians, for others it holds some instructive lessons, beyond crying out for vigorous challenge.



Zuma's Constitution-contradicting discursive move means, firstly, that serious contemplation of the meaning of "a better life" suggests that those concerned with development ought to simultaneously appreciate the need to strengthen human rights generally and sexual rights specifically. Secondly, the ANC's deputy-president's words suggest that there is a need to maintain vigilance on issues of sexual and gender equality, particularly when dealing with what are at first glance non-sexual matters – for instance, poverty, income-generation projects, displacement or famine. This latter political lesson derives also from nearly forty years of feminist thinking and activity around the politics of sex.

What the deputy-president of the country and chair of the South African National Aids Council did in the response under discussion was to constitute a psychology, politics and culture unsupportive of sexual practices other than those acceptable to what can be called a historically ruling masculinity. Research shows that the ruling masculinity in South Africa, as in other parts of the world, has as some of its constituent elements assertive heterosexuality, control of economic decisions within (and outside) the home, political authority, cultural ascendancy, and support for male promiscuity. This is reflected in the words of several of the subjects in Mankayi's study of male soldiers:

Daniel: [Men] want a lot of it. For a man sex ... generally [is about] the more, the better. If we had our own way, we'd just like to have sex with a woman. Then two or more nights later ... have sex with another woman.

Tulani: We go to girls having this mind and we tell our minds, if she can arrive here on the base, I will kiss her, have sex with her.

Mtobeli: You see a woman ... you start having feelings for a woman. Even if you know that you have your own partner ... I think it's something natural ... I think it's natural.

Jeff: She might have a great butt, she might have a great pair of breasts, but she's got it and you've noticed it ... compliment her. She's got it, why not ... if it attracts your eye, it's like a good painting, it's there, I mean, and if that feeling of yours become way stronger then, ja, it does (2005).

Similar connections between ruling masculinity and heterosexuality are revealed by my own study examining talk by professional men on the meanings they attach to their gendered and racial identities. For example, one of the men, Ricky, said:



And then, no, as to promiscuity, it's a no-no, see. You can't go on and be promiscuous, while saying you have a thing with me as a girl. But at the same time, me, I do accept that you must understand, if you do catch me, that I'm promiscuous, say no, it's a man's thing, see [translation from *is'camtho*, one of the hybrid street languages spoken in South Africa] (Ratele, 2001).

In a recent study on masculinity focusing on boys from several high schools around the Western Cape, similar thinking was evident. Firstly, in response to the question "What is a man?", some of the boys answered that a man is "always considered ... the head of the household while women are subordinate to men. Therefore a woman is not allowed to [be equal to] her husband when it comes to household decision-making." In regard to the question of sexuality, a boy said "the problem with abstinence is that you might go crazy, if you are a man" (Ratele et al, in press). From discussion on gay and lesbian identities in that study, it was also clear that "a real man" does not behave in ways that are "unmanly" and does not have sex with another man. As a boy in one group said, "like some gays you can't even tell that they're gay ... among themselves they don't parade around with it. I don't mind if they're like that, but I mean if they walk around going like 'hello doll' and that little kiss thingy..." [he doesn't need to finish his idea]. Another boy at a different school, in reference to men looking after children, said "when you look after a child, you also have to put on an apron which makes you look like a *moffie*"<sup>4</sup> (Ratele et al, in press).

Because of his political power, however, Zuma was doing more than merely telling us the truth about his psyche and own self. Because of his cultural

authority (inferred from his positioning as an older, well-off Zulu man with authority), he was doing more than simply articulating a certain political discourse. Because of his social position, he also drew a bold line between South African citizens who view him as the embodiment of the true masculine, and others whose practices do not fit that which he suggests are “naturally” right.

Over and above his claims on the truth of social (as opposed to self-) identity, beyond his culture-authorising articulation, and past his boundary-drawing game, Zuma chose to speak against the rights of equality, privacy and sexual orientation contained in the Constitution he had sworn to uphold. Equally baffling, he also effectively discouraged open discussion of “these other things that are not sex”. This was baffling because Zuma and other political and social celebrities, as key actors in a national campaign to curb the spread of HIV/Aids, were supposed to encourage open talk of sexuality. Yet here he decided to go against one of the strategies thought to be most important in the campaign.

What this speech act demonstrates, therefore, is that even when legal and constitutional battles have been won, there is a real risk of residual aversion (even prospects of backlash) to the rights of sexual minorities on the part of those charged with guarding those rights. When Zuma said he “can’t answer on wrong things that people do that are unnatural”, as a powerfully positioned figure within government, he compromised the sexual choices and happiness of individual men and women and subjects of the state which he serves, and which has declared its duty to protect certain basic rights.

Furthermore, if, in a place such as South Africa, where the rights to equality and sexual orientation are part of the foundational law, a politician demonstrates that we cannot trust even those entrusted with defending these rights, then society must be defended (see Foucault, 2003). However, it is not the “people who do wrong things ... that are unnatural” against whom society must be defended. Newly democratic societies are in need of defence from those who have more power – those who might believe “they are above or outside of the law”. Thus, one way to defend society is for policies and projects that speak of “a better life” to give due consideration to the right to a better sexual and gender life in addition to a better economic life.

Given this discursive move by Zuma, it is of interest that he was at one point married to four women. But the fact of Zuma’s polygamous status is pointed out here to illuminate the connections and contradictions among sexualities, sexual rights, development and masculinities.



Zuma’s marital history is common knowledge. And it should be made clear that South African law permits polygamous marriages – embodied in the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, No. 120 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998). During the same year that this the legislation was enacted, the South African Demographic and Health Survey (1998) reported that between one in six and one in five married women aged between 30 and 49 years were married to a man with more than one wife (see Table 1). This Act might be considered progressive, given the culturally racist legal history of South Africa, as it gives some legal standing to African women in particular.

Table 1: Percentage of married women in a polygamous union in South Africa, by age and selected background characteristics<sup>5</sup>



	Ages						
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	All ages
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	6,7	10,7	11,9	8,5	8,4	8,7	9,6
Non-urban	12,5	10,5	19,8	15,8	24,0	8,3	16,8
<b>Education</b>							
No education	*	(23,1)	25,3	29,1	32,1	18,9	26,3
Sub A – Std 3	(17,3)	15,2	27,9	17,1	16,2	20,4	19,1
Std 4 – Std 5	11,2	7,8	11,5	15,0	18,8	11,2	13,1
Std 6 – Std 9	10,4	13,1	14,8	6,9	8,1	9,5	10,9
Std 10	3,2	5,9	9,2	3,3	7,2	(0,0)	5,8
Higher	*	1,3	1,8	2,6	4,3	(1,7)	2,2
<b>Population group</b>							
African	10,7	12,9	20,1	14,8	19,3	17,5	16,3
African urban	7,8	14,3	18,4	12,4	12,1	14,6	14,0
African non-urban	13,0	11,5	21,9	17,2	27,8	20,0	18,5
Coloured	(2,6)	7,7	5,3	3,3	4,0	1,4	4,5
White	*	2,9	0,8	1,2	0,7	2,3	1,7
Asian	*	(0,0)	0,0	5,6	(6,8)	(2,5)	3,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>12.5</b>

(Source: South African Demographic and Health Survey, 1998)

Until not too long ago, the practice of polygamy was treated as inferior to white heterosexual marriage and governed by administrative laws exclusively formulated for blacks.<sup>6</sup> Anyone whose marital and sexual practices were formerly marginalised under apartheid law, and nevertheless presents oral sex as “unnatural” thus reveals a striking insensitivity to those whose present sexual practices are

marginalised. At the same time, even though polygamous marriages are now equal to other forms of legal marriages, it can be argued that they are potentially inimical to the freedoms and advancement of women, as well as presenting a challenge to gender equity. It should also be noted that Article 6 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa encourages "monogamy ... as the preferred form of marriage" (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2003). However, where polygamy exists, the Protocol seeks to promote and protect the rights of women, and calls for both women and men to be regarded as equal partners in marriage. The Protocol is silent on alternative non-heterosexual lives and relationships, as is the African Charter.

Here, then, is another lesson: irrespective of the cultural status of a practice, when looking at a traditional practice (such as polygamy), development thinkers and critical citizens must strive to relate it to increasing choices. It is no coincidence that polygamy most often occurs in rural, under-developed areas, and that it usually takes place between a socially powerful man and women who have very little social power. The majority of women in polygamous unions in South Africa, for instance, have little or no education and are between the ages of 40 and 44 (an age when their opportunities to improve their status are decreasing). It must be added that education, including sexuality, gender and human rights education, remains one of the major arenas of intervention for the empowerment of girls and women, just as it is important for national development; yet this is the arena where economic chances and the available choices regarding one's body are starkly limited.



### **The organisation of sexual life and the role of ruling masculinity**

Having deployed masculinity to explain Zuma's discursive practice, it is important to make some remarks about this concept, especially the idea of *ruling* masculinity. Once again, I wish to demonstrate how ruling masculinity is linked to sexuality and to human and sexual rights. A ruling masculinity is powerfully capable of organising ideas on sexuality and human rights. The same association holds between masculinity and development: the notion of masculinity can and does shape ideas on development.

Masculinity has achieved an enviable standing among social scientific concepts, indeed attaining disciplinary status. Even among those who do not directly study men and masculinity, the construct has been deployed in attempts to explain varied conditions, characterisations and conventions: from social and



family relations in rural spaces to urban life, risk-taking and mining, and from violence and national liberation struggles to international politics and culture (see, for example, Ouzgane and Morrell, 2005; Reid and Walker, 2005). In brief, masculinity has reconfigured judgements on relations within the world of men, the world between men and women and children, and the world per se.

This fetishising of the concept of masculinity has its downside, however. In particular, one notes the lack of precision in use and loose conception by many of those who employ it. It is therefore useful to indicate that there are different – and not necessarily helpful – understandings of the idea and place of masculinity in analysing social, political and economic worlds (for example, Meintjies, 1991; Clare, 2000; Dobson, 2002). It should be noted that it is not only masculinist thinking on gender relations that is troubled by lack of clear definitions of masculinity. Development scholars and practitioners also need to concern themselves with the definitional aspects of the concept – as indeed scholars of masculinity have done for some time.



One outcome of the debate on the concept of masculinity and its utility is the importance that some thinkers have accorded to talking about men's social and material practices and relations – “what men do or think or feel” (Hearn, 1996: 214). Ruling masculinity indicates a design of practices, relations, and supportive cognitive and affective discourses that seek to have us believe in the naturalness of men's power over women, other men, and children.

Another outcome of the debate is a preference for using masculinities in the plural rather than the singular form. In tandem with this thinking is the contention that masculinity is not one single thing; that there are a variety of masculinities, a position persuaded by the fact that masculinities intersect with and co-produce one another in relation to poverty, wealth and inequality, with ethnicity and sexualities, with race, space in a country, and location on the globe. I am thus distinguishing between what might be called sympathetic and critical conceptions of masculinity.

Prompted by such loose deployment of masculinity as an explanatory framework, as well as some insightful criticisms of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) recently revisited the latter. In the same way that ruling masculinity is employed here, these authors stress that hegemonic masculinity is intended to convey something more than simply a focus on men's biologies. Hegemonic masculinity is not an identity, not a set of role expectations, and not only about practices. Masculinities in general and dominant ones specifically, are fundamentally about discursive material

power, as well as resistance practices that shape relations men have in and to the world. These relations cover those arrangements men and women have to institutions, structures, laws and policies over and above males' relations to their own bodies, bodies of other males, and female bodies.

## Ruling heterosexual masculinity's relation to "a better life" in post-apartheid South Africa

The itinerary of a man's practices and the idea of heterosexual masculinity might overlap one another at a particular moment, but more often than not, they tend to veer away from each other. Males are usually in pursuit of, or negotiating with or for a minority, trying to radically change the ruling masculinity.

Men are not naturally heterosexual and "masculine". This is supported on the one hand by the fact that there are (for the purpose of pleasure, among other reasons) men who dress up in women's clothes, men who enjoy sex with men, men who have sex with men and women, women whose sexual preference is for women, and women who have sex with both women and men.

In addition, this observation is strengthened by the fact that Zuma is neither the only African government incumbent, nor politician in the world whose discursive or material practices around sexual life deserve close attention. This points to the continuing dominance of a certain configuration of being sexual – *being a woman or being a man*.

Heterosexual masculinity is not only about what a male says or does about sex, but equally about the techniques of power. And so politicians in Nigeria, Latvia, Poland, Uganda, the United States, Zimbabwe, China and India, as some of many examples (see Human Rights Watch, 2004, 2005a, 2005b and Jessica Horn's article in this issue), have either inveighed against "unnatural vices" (Epprecht, 1998), or have gone along with discrimination against sexualities and sexual relations other than heterosexual ones. In these cases, the fist of the ruling heterosexual masculinity emerges to crush those men and women whose practices are regarded as queer.

For example, in 2005, the Latvian president, Vaira Vike-Freiberga signed into law a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. In Africa, the presidents of Uganda, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Nigeria have not only made homophobic pronouncements, they have pursued homophobic policies. A constitutional amendment (stating that "marriage is lawful only if entered into between a man and a woman," and that "it is unlawful for same-sex couples to marry") was approved by the Ugandan



parliament, with the law proscribing same-sex marriage signed by President Yoweri Museveni – who has pronounced against homosexuality on several occasions. Since 1990, the maximum penalty in Uganda for the offence of “carnal knowledge against the order of nature” has been life imprisonment, with a maximum of seven years’ imprisonment for “attempts” at homosexual activity (see Human Rights Watch, July 12, 2005).

It needs to be spelled out that even in these cases of sexual discrimination, where a form of masculinity, supported by political power, aggressively reasserts its ascendancy over other forms, the undeniable fact is that gay masculinities exist, as do women who do not desire men sexually. It is the challenge posed by this reality that convulses rulers (ruling masculinities?) into a rage. This, contradictorily, is an indication of the resistance practices in different locales that subsequently shape the relations that (ruling?) men (those with more power) have with other men, with women, and with the social and material world.



### **National, social and cultural development: sexual war zones**

Queer women’s and men’s rights and sexual desire were imperilled by Zuma’s utterance in Parliament,<sup>7</sup> just as many women and men are failed by the notion of “a better life for all” if this philosophy remains deaf and blind to the significance of sexuality, and sexual rights in particular, to their personal freedom, development and happiness. Hence, as needful of attention as the practices of powerful figures, are the omissions to be found in governmental, regional and continental development policies (as much as in their languages as their aims). Whereas a framework such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (2001) has as one of its objectives accelerating the empowerment of women and thus reducing poverty, the lack of attention to sexuality is disturbing, especially where scholarship and activism in the arena of sexuality has shown that it implicates and is implicated in politics, economics and society (Tamale, 2006). Surely this reticence and blindness is as intolerable and dangerous as the trafficking in girls and women, female genital cutting, sexual slavery, the use of rape as weapon of war, and forced pregnancy and marriage that continue apace throughout the continent (and indeed the globe): crimes and violations that go to the heart of the social, economic and political power of men over children and women. Surely it must be clear that gender and sexually-based violence is an outrage against the rights to the bodily integrity and life of women and sexual minorities, just as it violates and denies choice and desire (Jolly and Cornwall, 2004). Considerations of sexual rights

cannot be divorced from the struggles around equality, justice and democracy (see, for instance, Petchesky, 2001). A development policy that remains quiet on the subject of sexual rights is likely to compromise its stated aims – including those of eradicating poverty, creating sustainable growth, and fully and beneficially integrating into the global economy.

The examples of sexual discrimination referred to earlier further illustrate the way that the development of nations or cultures is imagined, arranged and regulated. Part of the regulating imagination is the need to “protect” the nation or culture from “wrongdoers”, “abnormalities” and “perversion”. However, it is clear that nations, societies and cultures are continually contested and contesting – just as sexual conduct and relations are not “natural” entities, so masculinities and sexual identities and rights are fields of power. A point that needs to be emphasised is how sexuality is a site of this imagination and contestation, the ground whereon a nation or culture fashions and reforms itself, develops or stunts the whole or parts of the whole, moves forward or regresses.

Worded differently, if the former deputy-president of South Africa had spoken only for himself, if he was merely constituting a psycho-moral self and universe against which he, as a private citizen, opposed others whose practices he has a right to believe are immoral and unnatural, there would be less of a problem. But it must now be obvious, from his case and other such instances around the world, that there is a seething struggle going on. Difference, and dissidence from ruling masculinity, can be literally deadly. Recent news stories from South Africa, such as the battering and murder of 19-year-old Zoliswa Nkonyana by a mob of males for the “crime” of being a lesbian, attest to the intensity and seriousness of this struggle (Huisman, 2006; see also Orford, in this issue). More significantly, it must now be keenly appreciated that around the world there is a heterosexual masculine culture, which encourages violence, and which is centrally embedded in national and state arrangements of power. All these cases are to be read as striking associations of sexuality and masculinity on one side (often riddled with paradox), and nation, society or culture on the other side. It must also be noted that there is a mutually formative configuration between these various elements.

Thus, when an individual occupies a privileged political and social position, his or her speech acts have a denunciatory capacity that works to inhibit the rights and choices of those against whom the words are directed. These “othered” people in this particular case include those who have non-coital sex, including lesbians and young people trying to avoid pregnancy and sexually



transmitted infections. But they extend to cover those who do not always prefer heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse (a preference which is being presumed and naturalised here), including bisexuals, gays and transgender persons.

Ruling men with political, economic, social or cultural power who publically repudiate oral and other “wrong” sexual practices silence other men and women with less political voice, less education, and less cultural and economic power. In societies and cultures where women and men are unequal, the sexual rights, choices, desires and pleasure of women and marginal men are likely to be curtailed by the words of such powerful men.

## Conclusion



This article has shown that the events around Zuma are symptomatic and instructive of how the idea of “a better life” is deeply troubled by sexual politics, gendered power and cultural hegemonies. Following Charmaine Pereira’s recent contribution on *zina* in *Feminist Africa* 5 (2005), this article has tried to show that power both defines and shields the transgressions of those who wield authority in society, sexuality being as much a matter of political and religious sanction as it is a private affair. The events around Zuma have here been held up for scrutiny to reveal that “a good life” holds different meanings for African women as opposed to men, for queers as opposed to non-queers, for *iziduna* (headmen) as opposed to commoners, and for “100% Zulu-boys”<sup>8</sup> (see, for example, Moya, 2006) as opposed to less than fully-fledged Zulu-boys and Zulu-girls.

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## Footnotes

- 1 A version of this paper was first presented on 6 April 2006 at the International Workshop on Sexuality, Sexual Rights and Development organised by the Expert Group on Development Issues of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has been reworked and presented here with their kind permission.
- 2 In September 2006, the judge threw the Zuma corruption case out of court, ruling that the prosecution had not proved it had grounds to proceed.
- 3 Charmaine Pereira's argument concerning how power relations and status shield the sexual improprieties of the powerful is applicable here (*Feminist Africa* 5).



- 4 A slang South African term used to indicate an effete, usually homosexual man.
- 5 There were too few cases (73) of married women in the 15–19 age-group to show these separately. Parentheses indicate that a figure is based on 25–49 respondents. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 respondents and has been suppressed.
- 6 I wish to thank Raymond Suttner for clarifying this point for me, as well as for reading and commenting on the article. I also wish to thank Helen Moffett and the anonymous reviewers who commented on the article.
- 7 It is not only those whose sexual desires were formerly marginalised under apartheid law that were imperilled; oral sex is part of the sexual repertoire of many heterosexuals. It is also sometimes the only form of intimate sexual contact possible for disabled people, whether gay or straight.
- 8 This slogan appeared on T-shirts worn by Zuma supporters at his rape trial.



### **Kopano Ratele**

is a professor at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. He teaches in Women's and Gender Studies and the Department of Psychology.