“We Do Not Want This Sickness!”: Religion, Postcolonial Nationalism and Anti-Homosexuality Politics in Uganda

Thesis

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Abstract

Uganda made international headlines in October 2009, when Member of Parliament (MP) David Bahati proposed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. The bill would require the death penalty for certain acts of homosexuality. International pressure has made the bill’s passage unlikely, but the politics that went into producing it continue. This thesis examines these politics, asking how it is that homosexuality came to be conceived as such a grave threat as to require the death penalty. I analyze the statements and writings of various Ugandan anti-homosexual activists, including Pentecostal pastors and state leaders, tabloid exposés and the text of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Ugandans have come to understand homosexuality through American Christian Right, postcolonial nationalist, and local religious movement discourses. Together, these discourses make homosexuality a grave threat to and a neocolonial imposition upon the African heterosexual family, the laws of God, and the Ugandan nation. They come together to produce an imaginary multiscalar geography of homosexuality that precludes a homosexual national subject. I find that the bill consolidates and solidifies practices of policing, employed by a fundamentalist revival movement, already at play in Uganda. I suggest that the very dynamic that makes the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill unlikely, namely the structure of the international political economy in which the African state must answer to Western states before its own citizens, galvanized the writing of the bill in the first place.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ ii

Acknowledgment ........................................................................................................................ iii

Vita ........................................................................................................................................... iv

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... vi

List of Figures .......................................................................................................................... vii

Section I: A. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1

B. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill: an overview ................................................................. 4

C. Methodology ..................................................................................................................... 15

D. Queer African Studies ....................................................................................................... 18

E. Geographies of Evangelicalism ......................................................................................... 27

Section II: A. How Homosexuality Enters as Ugandan Public Enemy ....................... 33

B. Postcolonial Nationalism Takes Up Its Enemy .......................................................... 43

Section III: A. Introducing the Balokole .............................................................................. 51

B. The Balokole around the Anti-Homosexuality Bill ...................................................... 54

C. Exposés of Deviance ......................................................................................................... 60

Section IV: Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 78

Works Cited ............................................................................................................................. 82
List of Tables

Table 1. Publication of Ugandan Gay Exposés................................................................. 61
List of Figures

Figure 1. "Campaign to Live in Peace".............................................................. 37
Figure 2. “In God We Trust”................................................................. 58
Figure 3. “How to Fist”................................................................. 59
Figure 4. “Hang Them!”................................................................. 63
Figure 5. “Homos Get Chlamydia”......................................................... 66
Figure 6. “Monster, Terrorist, Fag”.......................................................... 73
Section I

A. Introduction

Uganda made international headlines in October 2009, when Member of Parliament (MP) David Bahati proposed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. The bill reorganizes, consolidates, and augments existing legislation that already makes homosexuality, discussed in terms of “carnal knowledge against the order of nature,” punishable by up to life in prison (Uganda Parliament, 1950, Sec. 140). It creates new categories of criminal practices associated with homosexuality, including the *aggravated homosexuality*, *attempt to commit homosexuality*, *aiding and abetting homosexuality*, *promotion of homosexuality*, and *failure to disclose offence*. These various categories of deviance and collusion are then hierarchized by what the sponsoring MPs see as the severity of these newly named crimes, which correspond to punishments ranging from three years of prison to the death penalty.

The rather ambiguous acts of “carnal knowledge against the order of nature” are felonies policed across the postcolonial world; this clause is a colonial legacy that the British first inserted into the Indian Penal Code in 1860 that has henceforth been used to prosecute a variety of acts (Human Rights Watch, 2008, 1). “Carnal knowledge against the order of nature” has been largely reduced to mean acts of anal sex, especially in the context of male homosexuality. The law has been maintained by many postcolonial states
since independence to distinguish a non-Western sexual ethic, contra to civil rights
movements of the past 40 years in Europe and North America that reframe
homosexuality from pathology to identity (see for instance, Alexander, 1994). In Uganda
in the late 1990s Parliament passed legislation that increased penalties on “carnal
knowledge against the order of nature” to life in prison. Its power was more symbolic
than legal; few in the 1990s were convicted of this crime, although many have been
detained on suspicions of homosexuality. In addition, it has made outreach to those
participating in non-normative sexual practices more difficult, and it reinforces what is
already a powerful taboo (Human Rights Watch, 2008, 53).

Despite the existence of Section 140, the backers of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill
consider it inadequate for dealing with what they see as a dangerous and increasingly
prevalent deviance. MP Bahati writes that current legislation provides no mechanisms for
dealing with a variety of new threats that are newly being posed by new technologies and
changing cultural attitudes. For instance, increasing access to internet technologies is
seen to facilitate the spread of pornographic materials, both from the West and within the
nation. These, he argues, weaken the morality of those who view them, particularly
vulnerable youth. This is all evidence, for Bahati, that sexual activists are attempting to
realize a Western homosexual agenda: to destroy the African heterosexual family,
traditional African values, monogamy and bring about worldwide sexual promiscuity:

The Bill further aims at providing a comprehensive and enhanced
legislation to protect the cherished culture of the people of Uganda, legal,
religious, and traditional family values of the people of Uganda against the
attempts of sexual rights activists seeking to impose their values of sexual promiscuity on the people of Uganda (Uganda Parliament, 2009).

The bill thus christens Uganda a heterosexual nation. The “cherished culture” of Uganda is a heterosexual one, where heterosexuality is upheld by legal, religious and traditional institutions. Those who do not uphold these heterosexual family values are demarcated from the proper, propitious Ugandan social body.

This thesis draws out the ways in which these institutions come together to violently reject homosexuality as incompatible with Ugandaness. While aversion toward homosexuality was initially the product of colonial intervention, as discussed before, it has in the last twenty years been taken up by both national and religious bodies to consolidate a Christian, anti-colonial, heterosexual identity through waging anti-homosexuality politics. I argue that homosexuality has come to be framed through imbricated discourses of the American Christian Right, postcolonial nationalism, and the Balokole, an Ugandan Anglican revival movement. Together, these produce an imaginary geography of homosexuality that leaves no room for a homosexual national subject. This geography necessitates the violent removal of homosexual bodies from the nation. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill is the culmination of this geography, and builds upon and consolidates practices and dynamics already in play in Uganda. In what follows of the introduction, I briefly lay out some of the values that the backers of the bill argue are being undermined. I then provide an overview of my methodology and a literature review, before moving into the core arguments of the thesis in Sections II and III.
B. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill: an overview

The text of the bill defines homosexuality in this way:

(1) A person commits the offence of homosexuality if- (a) he penetrates the anus or mouth of another person of the same sex with his penis or any other sexual contraption; (b) he or she uses any object or sexual contraption to penetrate or stimulate sexual organ of a person of the same sex; (e) he or she touches another person with the intention of committing the act of homosexuality (Uganda Parliament, 2009, cl.1).

Any of these acts are punishable by life in prison, which is nothing new insofar as homosexuality is already punishable by life in prison. This is the consolidation of existing legislation that Bahati refers to in the bill’s introductory memorandum. What is new is the legal definition of homosexuality, one so broad that it includes the intent to commit homosexuality (as if the juridical system would be able to prove beyond doubt such intent). What is more, the harshest penalty-- death by hanging-- pertains to the new legal category: aggravated homosexuality. Any homosexual act that includes children, rape, a disable person, or the transmission of HIV is considered so egregious and harmful, so sullying and manipulative of innocence and powerlessness, as to merit death. This highlights the bill’s main purpose: protecting not only the populations which are vulnerable to sexual deviancy, but to protect the nation itself from such pollution. Vulnerable groups are the sites of permeability for the nation: these are seen to be the
entry points that invading polluters use to gain entry into the nation to contaminate the entire social body. Homosexuality becomes not unlike the vector of HIV, affecting the most vulnerable and spreading quickly to everyone else.

Despite popular and near unanimous support in Parliament, the bill has, as of April 2011, been dropped by Parliament, due in no small part to pressure from donor countries. Sweden threatened to cut off aid, and Canada, the UK, the EU, and the USA all voiced official censure. In January, 2010, as international attention and pressure about the bill intensified, President Museveni advised Parliament to “go slow,” declaring the bill a matter of foreign affairs (*The New Vision*, 2010). A diplomatic cable from a US diplomat, recently released by Wikileaks, and published in the Spanish paper *El País*, shows that by the end of January, Museveni had promised Western governments that he would veto the bill should Parliament pass it (*El País*, 2011).

Nonetheless, certain provisions of the bill have been added to other bills with innocuous-sounding titles: the HIV/AIDS Prevention Bill, for instance, contains a provision that would criminalize the spread of HIV (*Uganda Parliament*, 2010, cl. 39-46). While homosexuality is not specifically named in this latter bill, the same clause is found in the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, so that any kind of transmission, be it hetero- or homosexual, is now criminal. It allows the state to test one’s HIV status upon merely being charged with transmitting HIV, representing a massive biopolitical intrusion.

Furthermore, organizing around the rehabilitation the Anti-Homosexuality Bill itself has also recently picked up pace. At a rally held in April, 2011 in support of the bill,
MP Bahati and Pastors Julius Oyet and Martin Ssempa (who organized the rally) demanded that the bill be passed. Pastor Ssempa is quoted as saying:

> We as religious leaders and civil society are distressed that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is being deliberately killed largely by the undemocratic threats of Western nations… These same nations who promote democracy don’t want our representatives to discuss laws to protect our children from the human trafficking of recruiting our children into homosexuality (Burroway, 2011).

The Speaker of Parliament and the head of the legal affairs committee are giving contradictory messages about whether the bill will be dropped outright, or taken up in the next session of parliament. This means that the future of the bill is unclear and not necessarily destined for withdrawal. At the same time, the promises made by Pres. Museveni to donor nations would indicate that even if the bill passes, he will not sign it into law.

That the Anti-Homosexuality Bill will likely not be passed into law does not make its proposal insignificant. The bill’s proposal merits analysis as a case of the vehemence and intensity with which anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda are waged. A massive political campaign has gone into producing, supporting, and defending the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Those politics do not simply die with the failure to pass the bill into law. This thesis looks at the social and political dynamics in play in Uganda that make it possible to consider homosexuality such a threat that its practitioners should be put to
death. It also examines the language with which homosexuality is constructed and identified within the social body.

Central to this investigation is an examination of the political mobilization around the bill that has been infused with and conducted through religious discourse. Many of the bill’s strongest supporters are leaders of religious groups, including those of the most popular faiths in Uganda: Christianity (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal) and Islam. For instance, the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), which represents the Church of Uganda (Anglican), the Orthodox Church of Uganda, the Uganda Supreme Muslim Council, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, issued a statement in which it denounced the Anti-Homosexuality Bill’s death penalty provision, but asserted:

1. The Bible, the Quran and other Holy Teachings treat homosexuality as a sin. Both the Bible and Qur’an are categorical in their objection to same sex relationships (Lev. 18:22; Surah Ash’shura 26:165-166). Homosexual acts are contrary to the natural divine law, and under no circumstance can be approved.

2. The IRCU Council of Presidents, therefore, condemns homosexuality as an undesirable evil that should not be allowed in our society (The New Vision, 2010b).

Here the primary objection to homosexuality is framed in terms of its transgression of divine law, both Muslim and Christian. Divine law is also the litmus test for natural law; in other words, homosexuality is not natural and is therefore sinful. Or perhaps it could
be said that homosexuality breaks divine law and is therefore unnatural. Not only are these two legal systems at play in condemning homosexuality, but a third legal terrain enters the picture: “homosexuality as an undesirable evil that should not be allowed in our society” (The New Vision, 2010b). Because divine law forbids it, so too must national law. This shifting between natural, religious, and national registers of norms is the primary interest of this thesis.

While the IRCU offers measured support for the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, other religious figures and organizations have come out in full-fledged support of the bill. Some religious figures, including Pentecostal Pastors Martin Ssempea and Julius Oyet, helped draft the original version of the bill, and continue to push for the bill’s passage. MP Bahati hired Oyet as a state agent in order to organize and effect the mobilization around the bill (Throckmorton, 2010). This dynamic of articulation between the state and religious movements, where a religious movement becomes an agent of the state, and where the religious movement makes demands on the state is a key process I examine in this thesis.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill also marks the entry of an ostensibly apolitical Pentecostal religious movement in Uganda— the Balokole— into an overtly political realm in which they actively seek to police sexual dissidence. The Balokole is an Anglican revival movement which rose in the 1930s to make the Anglican Church of Uganda more true to what it views as Biblical principles and to make the church, whose center of decision making used to be located in Canterbury, England, more accountable to Ugandans. Members have traditionally viewed wider Ugandan society in which they
live with scorn and have attempted to separate themselves from society’s sinful ways. They have therefore not been involved in Uganda’s political scene: they have not, for instance, been involved in resisting the dictatorial regimes—including Idi Amin and current Pres. Museveni, who has been in power since 1986. Anti-homosexuality politics marks a new chapter in the social organizing of the Balokole, as this is the first time they have made active claims on the state in order to effect their vision of reproduction, sexual purity, and transparency. They have entered into this terrain by adopting and articulating their values through discourses of the American Christian Right and ex-gay movements, legal discourses, and postcolonial nationalist discourses.

I take the introduction of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and its justifications as a point of departure for analyzing anti-homosexuality politics more broadly in Uganda. The politics around the bill have been in play in Uganda over the last decade, largely unnoticed by the international media and have culminated in the production of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. In this thesis, I trace a small part of this history and argue that the religious practices and values of the Balokole violently police sexual practice by invoking the homosexual as the enemy of the postcolonial nation; that is, the Balokole violently police sexual practice in an attempt to purify the nation, and to sculpt a new identity for Uganda as the sexual-moral ideal through signs of heterosexuality, nationalism, and the American Christian Right.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill was made possible by the current confluence of neoliberal governance and the configuration of global evangelical and charismatic Christianities. Peck and Tickell (2002) usefully distinguish between roll back and roll out
neoliberalism. Early scholarly work around neoliberalism focused on the ways in which welfare state structures were discredited and dismantled under neoliberal regimes of the 1980s. In the context of Uganda, we can understand how roll back neoliberalism came to drastically rearrange social relations through the rigid implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), beginning in the early 1980s. SAPs in Uganda and other parts of the postcolonial world provided short to long term loans from the IMF or World Bank but required a range of policies to ostensibly secure financial solvency and stability, including the dismantling of trade barriers, food subsidies, and social services. In this way, SAPs were the main vector through which international financial institutions, proxies of the US, coerced postcolonial states into neoliberalism. As in other parts of the world, the space from which state bureaucracy receded in the provision of social services was eagerly filled by NGOs, although the ability of these organizations to coordinate a coherent, thorough program of service provision across a network of NGO, private, and state actors remains incomplete.

In many cases this roll back has created spaces for religious groups to take significant roles in official governance. For instance, Amy Stambach (2009) has shown how religion and education became mutually encompassing in Uganda in the neoliberal policies of the World Bank and USAID. These organizations identified religious organizations as key providers of social services that had previously been the domain of the state, particularly education, a process accelerated after US President George W. Bush established the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (5). In this relationship, the nation-state came to protect and guarantee the right for religious groups
to govern alongside the nation-state, while religion underwrote the state’s moral authority.

This mutual encompassment of religious groups and the state should not, however be read as simply a result of a roll back of the state. Instead, it is also part of roll out neoliberalism, or the creation of an institutional infrastructure in order to stabilize what has become under roll back neoliberalism an increasingly chaotic social order. Indeed, as Peck and Tickell (2002) note, part of roll out neoliberalism has included an increasingly intrusive state even as it has ceded its role in the provision of social services (389). This has included shoring up state power in the realm of social policy via criminalization and incarceration to ensure the continued smooth flow of capital that is characteristic of a neoliberal world order. Another way of understanding the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is then to see it as a roll out mechanism of neoliberalism, in which state and religious groups become mutually encompassing.

The fact of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill’s being discarded speaks to the configuration of state power in sub-Saharan Africa more generally. The African state is oriented toward the outside world in order to maintain legitimacy and prop up the ruling regime (via foreign direct investment, foreign aid, military aid, etc.). The state is by far the most powerful economic actor in many African countries, because economic resources, all of which come through transactions with the outside world, must go through the state—what Frederic Cooper (2002) calls the gatekeeper state. There is little concern whether citizens themselves see their government’s rule as legitimate. Internal legitimacy, insofar as it exists, is maintained through an elaborate system of patronage, in
which those with access to the state, and therefore to economic power, pay off traditional leaders to maintain order (Mamdani, 1996). While I have noted that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is widely and wildly popular, the state has to answer to the Western world in order to maintain power. Part of the organization around the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is a reaction against this configuration of state power.

It is through this lens that we can understand how religious groups inspired by Balokole values have had such a heavy hand in the crafting of and organization around this law (as opposed to Parliamentarians, who have indeed taken up the law as a political project, but who have remained in the background for much of the crafting of the actual content) and how for a state whose sovereignty is undermined by global neoliberal practices, increasing criminal penalties on homosexuality functions as a technology of control, where state power is produced and reproduced (Alexander, 1994, 6).

Neoliberalism has ensured a space for these groups to operate in governmental capacities, while governmental surveillance has become more intense. As Joe Painter (2000) notes, state power is becoming ever more pervasive, not less, as we would assume under neoliberalism, as new objects of governance, in this case sexuality, are constructed and crafted, brought under surveillance, maintenance, and manipulation (362). The Anti-Homosexuality Bill has been made possible by roll back neoliberalism, and simultaneously reflects the deepening of state power as a piece of roll out institutionalization of neoliberal, dressed as anti-homosexuality, politics.

The second dynamic that gives rise to the current configuration of anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda is the rise of evangelical Christianity in the global
Evangelical groups like the one I examine in this paper are part of a macro-scale process in which the center of Christianity, if such a thing exists, has moved from the global North, to the South. Southern Christians far outnumber their counterparts in the North, and Jenkins (2002) argues that they often practice versions of Christianity that to Westerners seem conservative, especially around issues of gender and sexuality. For instance, he claims that African pastors have no problem preaching Biblical gender roles for women (199). Citing sociological research, he points out that younger religious movements and first or second-generation converts tend to practice more fundamentalist forms of a religion. Over the generations, religious groups diversify, so that more liberal interpretations of Biblical passages become viable. In 1900, Africa had 10 million Christians, which constituted 10 per cent of the continental population; by 2000, there were 360 million African Christians, making up 46 per cent of the continental population. This massive and rapid growth of Christianity means that a majority of African Christians are first-generation converts, and he explains these Christians’ extreme conservatism through this demographic trend (Jenkins, 2002). This in part explains the intensity with which these groups combat homosexuality—because a variety of Biblical passages have been interpreted to denounce homosexuality, and because these Southern Christian congregations follow a very strict interpretation of the Bible (Jenkins, 2007).

Many of the figures I examine in this paper have articulated Western Christianity as a failed project and see it as their task to reconvert and provide the moral example for the lost masses of the heathen West. Reconversion is the evangelical agenda that many Southern Christian groups have set for themselves: it sees the West as once a great center
of Christianity, but now fallen due to secularism (Jenkins, 2002, 205). Southern evangelical groups from places like Sao Paulo and Lagos are proselytizing in Western cities like London, New York, Paris, and Rome (ibid). The rise of Southern Christianity, then, is a demographic-sociological phenomenon. But we should heed the warnings of Hassett (2007) that the rise of Southern Christianity is not simply an agent-less product of demographic momentum, but has been produced by active evangelical agents who seek to realize various political agendas. These agendas may or may not align with each other, and so the forms of Christianities we see today are the product of negotiation and conflict rather than a unitary monolith or a demographic teleology.

In what follows of Section I, I present my methodology for the research. I then lay out two literatures—queer African studies and geographies of evangelicalism—which have not been in dialogue with each other, but which have much to say to each other, and together provide a useful frame for studying anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda. They both provide various ways of provincializing and decentering the West in analysis and show that modernity has been embraced and informs anti-homosexuality politics and religious movements. However, queer African studies have largely not addressed first, anti-homosexuality politics as an object of analysis, and second, how religious processes inform those politics. Geographies of evangelicalism have showed the rise of Pentecostal movements in the global South and how this move is a means of creating stability and cross-class, race, and ethnic solidarity in a world of growing inequality. But this literature has not addressed how sexuality is in play among these movements, how these
movements sometimes make claims upon the state, or how these movements also police social difference.

Bringing these two literatures together, I show in Section II how homosexuality comes to be taken up by Uganda’s postcolonial state as a national enemy, examining events where Christian Right discourses of homosexuality enter into circulation in Uganda. I then show how a postcolonial nationalist discourse is inserted into the construction of a deviant homosexual, so that the deviant homosexual is also a neocolonial agent. In Section III, I show how the Balokole have taken up the Christian Right and postcolonial nationalist discourses of homosexuality, and using their own values of sexual purity and transparency, construct homosexuality as a hidden evil. This move creates a complex, multi-scalar imaginary geography of homosexuality. This geography of homosexuality leaves no space for a homosexual national subject. This geography explains the fervor with which homosexuality is combated in Uganda. I then show how these constructions are diffuse across the social body by examining a series of tabloid exposés that locate individual homosexuals by naming them and locating their addresses. The thesis ends with a concluding section which argues for more dialogue between geographies of evangelicalism and queer African studies. It also suggests that the victory of stopping the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is more ambivalent than it first appears.

C. Methodology
This study analyzes texts from Ugandan newspaper editorials and the text of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill itself. I have used sources that I am able to access via internet: blogs of Ugandan pastors and gay activists, Ugandan major newspapers (The New Vision, the state-owned paper, and The Monitor, an independent paper) accessed online. The New Vision is an especially important source as it is widely accepted to reflect the official views of the Ugandan state. I also analyze the text of Anti-Homosexuality Bill, and video content made available through a Current TV documentary, Missionaries of Hate (2010).

I examine the scene in which Pastor Martin Ssempa screens gay pornography, paying attention to the audience, the images to which he points, the backdrop including the patriotic posters on the wall, and to the overall affective experience created.

I have relied upon two web logs—Box Turtle Bulletin (Burroway, 2010, 2011) and Warren Throckmorton (Throckmorton, 2011)—that provide the majority of the coverage on the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and which are widely cited by the mainstream media, as an index of the events surrounding the bill. The episodes I present in this paper were chosen because of the massive explosion of discourse around them; this not only made them ripe for analysis, but indicate them as important moments to consider. Throckmorton is a psychology professor at Grove City College, a Christian college in Pennsylvania and formerly supported the ex-gay movement. He is well connected with the Christian Right agents involved with and implicated in the bill, but has voiced harsh criticism, aligning himself with LGBT and liberal critics of the bill. The Box Turtle Bulletin is a LGBT political news web log. Jeff Sharlet, chief editor and writer for Harper’s, has written for Throckmorton’s blog and has submitted reports from Uganda.
where he interviewed key Ugandan players including Julius Oyet, Martin Ssempa, and David Bahati. I also used his reporting in the gay news magazine *The Advocate* (Sharlet, 2010) to document the interconnections between the Christian Right and Ugandan religious and leaders.

I also look at the work of religious scholar Kevin Ward (1991, 2002) for histories of the Balokole religious movement which has come to play a major role in anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda, and whose values I argue inform the ways in which those politics are waged in Uganda. I examine the report issued by Sexual Minorities of Uganda (SMUG, 2009) that documents the Anti-Homosexuality Conference that took place prior to the proposal of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Major Christian Right figures attended and presented at this conference, and it evidences the relationship and dialogue between the American Christian Right and religious and state leaders in Uganda, and the way that messages about the so-called dangers of homosexuality travel across space.

I have also looked at representations of homosexuality in Ugandan tabloids, including *The Red Pepper*, *The Campus Nail*, and *The Rolling Stone*. I found scanned images of exposés published in these tabloids on Warren Throckmorton and Box Turtle Bulletin web logs. These are important because they do not claim to represent the views of the Balokole or any sort of religious group, and yet they use the same language and concepts to represent homosexuality as a phenomenon intentionally hidden.

These sources provide a rich collection of speech practices of Ugandan pastors and state actors. They represent the most visible activity around the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. The combination of on-the-ground reporting from local reporters, editorials, and
publications on the one hand, and American reporting on these from a gay rights activist and someone who has been involved in the ex-gay movement (Throckmorton), provides for a multiple perspectives on the episodes I present. The often-sensationalistic representations of homosexuality are powerful and hegemonic in the context of Uganda. These texts merit scholarly attention because they build upon and help to shape hegemonic representations of homosexuality in Uganda. This thesis shows that this representation has severe, even lethal, material consequences for those who cannot belong to the nation.

D. Queer African Studies

Here I introduce queer African studies, which is vitally important to the study of anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda. It shows not only how sexual subjectivities are constituted across space, but also how resistance to homosexuality becomes informed by anti-colonial sentiment. Here I introduce transnational sexuality studies, and how the debate around the global gay paved the way for discussions of African sexuality. I also show how the postcolonial state has taken up colonialist discourses, and what that means for queer African studies.

The study of queer sexualities beyond a focus on the global North is a burgeoning interdisciplinary field. The literature initially concerned the question of how sexual subjectivities are constituted across national borders. Dennis Altman’s (1997) inaugural work on the diffusion of the global gay from the West to the rest remains a foundational text. Altman concerns himself with how and why people outside of the West identify
themselves with a global, read Western, gay culture. In historical terms, this marks a different way of identifying sexuality for non-Western locales: that is, homoerotic practices surely took place prior to the introduction of gayness, but there is no historical basis for identifying difference on the basis of sexual object choice (Altman, 1997, 421). His work has been rightly criticized for assuming that to be gay necessarily means to be Westernized (eg, Jackson, 2001; Oswin, 2006). Oswin (2006) takes issue with Altman’s assumption of unidirectional diffusion from the US to the rest, creating a universalism in which there is one Homosexuality against which pre-modern differences are measured. Instead, she advocates for an opening up of categories to allow for multiple modes of eroticism that sit alongside, not measured against, Western understandings thereof (Oswin, 2006, 782).

The debate on Altman’s global gay has been central to the study of African sexualities. Murray and Roscoe’s edited collection (1998) refutes the claim made by African state leaders that homosexuality is un-African, that it was imported by colonizers. Authors in this collection show how same-sex desire existed prior to colonial intervention, and that what the colonizers imported was Western homophobia that wiped out indigenous same-sex sexual practices. In searching for indigenous homosexualities, however, many of the authors here partake in a project of knowable authenticity and engage the same terms of the debate as state leaders who say that homosexuality is foreign to Africa (see, for example, Gaudio, 1998; Murray and Roscoe, 1998). In response to these claims, this collection seems to say “no, but homosexuality is here, and here, and here too.” This reaffirms a colonizing view from the West that seeks to re-
affirm one’s own identity in parts of the world where it had not previously existed. While these works are of great value in opening our eyes to a diversity of sexual practices, these practices are framed as homosexuality without reflexively engaging with all the conceptual work the word and identity *homosexuality* does and what it erases and obscures. More recent thinkers on African sexualities take issue with the essentialization of indigenous practices and find recourse to tradition restrictive of other possible identities (Hoad, 2007; Epprecht, 2008). These critiques have opened up a new field, queer African studies.

Queer studies in the West have largely focused on how sexuality is socially constructed and deployed in ways that are imbricated with power relations. Following Foucault (1978), sexuality is not an inherent, timeless biological fact, but rather emerged as an object of knowledge and intervention in the West out of psychiatric and sexological discourses in the 19th century. The categories and interventions of sexuality provided ways of organizing and demarcating particular acts so that power runs through these social relations, constituting disciplined, individualized subjects but also a larger social body, a population, that must be counted, managed, and reproduced. The primary categories of this analysis are a normalized heterosexuality and an abnormal homosexuality. Foucault’s genealogical approach to sexuality has been foundationally important to what would later become queer theory.

Queer theory has built on Foucault by looking at how bodies do not fit discretely into the neat binary categories of homo-/hetero-sexuality. That is, identities, desires, pleasures, and behaviors do not necessarily correlate to gender or sexual binaries. The
object of analysis in queer theory is then no longer binary sexuality, but rather multiple, contingent sexualities that underpin other systems of domination: race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and ability to name but a few. Queer is deployed by some researchers to name difference that resists hegemonic norms that privilege heterosexuality as naturally dominant (heteronormativity). In this formulation, queer is to heteronormativity, what homosexuality is to heterosexuality (Warner, 1999).

However, queer theory has overwhelmingly been concerned with Western subjects and often white male subjects at that. The empirical cases used are often located in urban places in North America or Europe, while African cases and materials, or those related to other parts of the global South, are overlooked or neglected (Epprecht, 2008, 14). Epprecht (2008) and Hoad’s (2007) pioneering works consider queer studies in the African context and help to address these significant lacuna in queer studies. Queer African studies do not take queer, sexuality, or Africa, for granted as stable categories of analysis. Rather, queer African studies interrogate the histories of these terms as they shift over space and time to produce new sexual geographies. Africa, for one, is a geographical accident, a relational term that is made to carry European imaginations of savagery, exoticism, and lasciviousness (Epprecht, 2008).

Naming is very important in this respect. Queer theory, with its roots in the Western Academy, cannot be unreflexively deployed in the context of Africa. For instance, same-sex intimate practices may be happening relatively invisibly, but those who practice them may not feel they are transgressing a heteronorm. In some cases, to name queer the practice of same-sex intimacy is neither analytically useful for the
researcher or desirable for the research subject (Epprecht, 2008, 14). This literature also rejects naming same-sex practices lesbian, gay or bi-sexual, or homosexual, for the same reasons. To name and categorize practices along the lines of Western knowledge, especially around a term as dense with meaning, power, and histories as sexuality, is to do epistemic violence to those who do not employ these terms in understanding themselves or those around them. Scholars of queer African studies then acknowledge and take caution to mitigate the potentially colonizing effects of sexuality, gay, lesbian, and queer discourses.

A central concern of this literature is on who deploys certain discourses and what the positionality (especially within the context of the global political economy) of those who articulate these discourses means. Heavily influenced by postcolonial studies, queer African studies takes specific interest in tracing how colonialist discourses of sexuality have been taken up by African postcolonial regimes, in particular the idea that same-sex practice is an un-African one was inherited from Western colonizing knowledge. These scholars are interested in these articulations less as proof of Africans’ homophobia, and more in the way that contingencies and marriages of convenience make this adoption politically advantageous. In the words of Epprecht (2008, 25), this reflects cultural intimacy, or the ways in which self-stereotyping (e.g. Africa is without homosexuals) are used to negotiate power relations.

In the case of heterosexual Africa, African leaders attempt to use a heterosexual identity to cement a respectable nationalist movement. Epprecht (2008) traces how Africa was constructed as a continent devoid of homosexuality, how same-sex practices in
Africa were covered up, ignored, and contested through colonialist and scientific discourses. He shows the work that a single, all-knowable African sexuality did: identifying African sexuality as permissive and savagely heterosexual, colonizers not only justified their violent projects abroad, they used African sexuality to define the antithesis of the proper White European sexuality, therefore disciplining European settlers and metropolitan populations. This shows how sexuality has been crafted along a circuitous imperial route in which the colony as a site of interaction between colonizer and colonized (Stoler, 1995, 7).

Hoad (2007) argues that sexuality, and therefore homosexuality, is itself a European import. He does not question the existence of same-sex intimacy, his preferred term, but rather, argues that the deployment of sexuality and homosexuality, by for instance, Western gay rights organizations, represents a potentially colonizing project, flattening difference into categories that have not historically been in circulation in these places. Geographers have entered this debate to contest the necessary equation of gay liberation discourse with colonialist projects. Oswin (2005) for instance agrees that Western LGBT liberationist discourses are problematic and might constitute another form of neocolonialism. Yet she disagrees with Hoad and Epprecht that African LGBT organizations that entertain connections to the West necessarily act as imperial agents. She views this opposition of African and Western sexualities as flawed because: 1) it denies diversity of Western queer cultures and presumes one monolithic Western queerness; 2) it assumes a category of authentic and knowable African sexualities; 3) in this configuration, the global only impacts the local, where abstract Western
queerness travels through global capitalism, destroying local African variability; and finally 4), this leaves us with no political options with which to move forward (579). Tucker (2010) agrees, but warns against a wholesale acceptance of egalitarian narratives that would be unable to account for the ways in which power relations privilege Western LGBT agendas over those of their African counterparts.

While there has been growing attention given to queer cultures in sub-Saharan Africa, there has been less analysis of the resistance against homosexuality and gay rights. Tucker (2009), an exception, argues that South African apartheid galvanized anti-homosexual politics among the African townships. He shows that these politics gain their strength by tying heteronormativity to wider anti-imperial, postcolonial struggles, which pits homosexuality as a form of colonialist intervention that seeks to sabotage black Africans. Here, the imposition of apartheid lays the foundation for future anti-homosexuality sentiment by creating bounded racial, spatialized categories, making the reproduction of each racial category of paramount importance for all of these communities. This meant anything undermining reproduction was marked as treacherous. The case of South Africa is not exceptional in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa represents for some Marxist scholars an exception to the rest of the continent because of the early and complete penetration of capital, Mamdani (1996) refutes this claim, arguing that South Africa is paradigmatic of colonialism because the technologies of social control and separation used to build the structures of apartheid are actually the logical extension of British colonial rule elsewhere on the continent (see Hoad, 2007, xv for a discussion of this debate). It follows that the forms of postcolonial anti-
homosexuality politics, removed from religious processes, takes similar form across the continent. It is this racialized spatialization that explains how homosexuality is conceived to come from the outside world.

Epprecht (2008) argues that the colonial construction of heterosexual Africa was maintained by nationalist movements to consolidate an identity of virile heterosexuality. In the words of M. Jacqui Alexander (1994), “it’s as if the colonial gaze still gazed” (14), meaning that even though the colonizers had left nominally, the performance of respectable masculinity and the sexual regulation to enforce it was maintained (13). Thus we find Section 140 of the Penal Code outlaws “carnal knowledge against the order of nature,” to which I referred earlier. Today, as the pathologization of African sexuality continues (see for instance, Caldwell et al, 1989), especially as anxiety over HIV/AIDS swells, African religious and state leaders have rallied behind this heterosexuality to represent authenticity, power, and purity. That this construction is founded on colonial discourses that provided the justification of European intervention is lost upon those African leaders who find it politically expedient to use them.

Where Epprecht (2008) looks at how scientific and academic discourses construct and provide the foundation for Africa as the heterosexual continent, Hoad (2007) examines the religious dimensions of anti-homosexuality politics. He argues that the postcolonial state has two seemingly contradictory tasks before it in an age of globalization (76): it must be the agent of modernity and progress so as to achieve economic growth, while serving as the arbiter of the traditional and authentic of precolonial times so as to inspire national solidarity. Christianity (and to a lesser extent
Islam), is often invoked as traditionally and authentically African to justify this treatment of homosexuals. Together, nationalist religious discourses position themselves as anti-imperialist in their stance on homosexuality. Homosexuality has been targeted as a colonial intervention, as another conspiracy by the West to undermine African social reproduction.

Queer African sexualities then provides invaluable conceptual tools for the case of anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda. While I am not specifically concerned here with how those who engage in same-sex practices and desires name and understand themselves, I am interested in how sexual difference is named by those who seek to limit sexual practice. I refer to these politics as anti-homosexuality politics, because this term is how those who are engaged in these politics articulate their position. While homosexuality is very much a Western construct, it is now being deployed by African politicians and religious leaders to locate a national and spiritual enemy. Furthermore, anti-homosexuality politics, while painted by certain Western LGBT organizations as barbaric and signs of backwardness, are not necessarily that. As Oswin (2010) shows, anti-sodomy laws in Singapore are very much part of a modernist agenda to develop a nation of nuclear families and are therefore not backwards at all. Efforts to be rid of homosexuality are very much modern. This will be developed more when I discuss the technologies of discipline and biopolitics culminating in and solidified by the Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

As can be seen, the relative dearth of research on sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa leaves many areas ripe for investigation. Indeed, in the way queer African studies has
been taken up in geography, backlash against visible, non-normative sexualities have been taken for granted rather than foregrounded as an object of analysis. I intervene in the queer African geographies to focus analytical attention on this resistance, which is named and aimed at homosexuality. Besides Hoad (2007), there is no work that addresses how religious beliefs and practices inform hostility toward same-sex practice. And yet religious groups now constitute the loudest voice speaking out against homosexuality in Uganda and other parts of Africa. I now turn to a literature, geographies of evangelicalism, in order to understand the religious dimensions that are at play in Uganda.

E. Geographies of Evangelicalism

The geographies of evangelicalism provide a framework for understanding Pentecostal movements, of which the Ugandan Balokole is one. Recent work in religious geographies has acknowledged the vast influence that Pentecostal and charismatic movements have had in transforming the world religious landscape in the last few decades (Lehmann, 1998, Sheringham, 2010). Pentecostalism is an umbrella term for a vast diversity of religious expressions, what Sheringham (2010) calls a bricolage of heterogeneous elements (1685) that are occurring across the globe. Its analytical value stems from its ability to designate a highly flexible set of beliefs and practices that can easily adapt to new cultural contexts by purporting to hold Universal truth, but also by accommodating pre-Pentecostal forms of religious and cultural expressions. This mixing of signs, in which the historical dimensions of religious practices and identities are erased
while new hybridized identities are claimed to access tradition and authenticity, facilitates the spread of Pentecostalism (Lehmann, 1998, 613). This allows Pentecostalism to follow the lines of interconnection created under globalization.

The common characteristics of Pentecostal practices and beliefs include a personal relationship with God that is not dependent on a hierarchical church structure. There is no governing body that decides official doctrine: instead, practitioners are invited to actively channel the word of God by, for instance, speaking in tongues. Sin is often conceived of as the result of demonic possession, so that exorcism is also common. Compared to other forms of Christianity, Pentecostal religious experience is very much embodied. Religious ceremonies include preaching, but also dancing and singing, which provide congregates the ability to feel and practice the divine as coursing through their bodies and producing affective religious moments (Holloway, 2011).

Politically, some Pentecostal congregations have veered toward liberation theology, which opposes itself to colonialist and capitalist structures of domination. Others embrace prosperity doctrine, in which one’s wealth is tied to the good deeds that brings one closer to God. This latter move indicates what William Connolly (2005) calls the capitalist-evangelical resonance machine, or the assemblage of shared spiritual dispositions toward the defense of neoliberal ideology (42). While seemingly contradictory, because of the flexibility of Pentecostal belief, some congregations practice both of these at once. Because of this vast diversity, the surface of which I hardly scratch here, geographers of religion have therefore warned against grouping all evangelical groups into a monolithic category (Sturm, 2008). Within Pentecostalism, for
instance, there is a wide range of practices and beliefs to which we should be careful to attend.

Boyle (2010) notes how Christianity more generally is an ambivalent assemblage of practices insofar as, on the one hand, it has the potential to justify colonizing projects, and to mystify and obscure the operations of global capitalism, but on the other, offer utopian hope and the inspiration for radical revolution. Boyle traces the Catholic Church’s history as both a colonialist agent, and as a postcolonial agent that manages to provincialize the West. This literature then dovetails nicely with scholarly debates within the queer African studies literature I outlined above, which seeks to decenter the ways we conceive of transnational flows (Oswin, 2006) of identities, practices, and subjectivities. Thus, there is neither one Christianity nor one Homosexuality that acts as a necessarily colonialist agent that flattens all other religious or erotic expressions, respectively.

Scholars of religion and globalization have noted how many urban poor in the global South have turned to Pentecostalism as a way to seek stability in a world marked by social and economic upheaval (Davis, 2004). Jean Comaroff (1985) has even argued that belonging to a Pentecostal movement in the global South is more radical than belonging to labor movements in Western Europe and the US at the beginning of industrial expansion because Pentecostal movements operate through an exilic identity, sanctifying the subaltern masses and refusing the subhuman realities of the Third World slum (259-63). That is, the urban world is seen to be “unjust, immoral, unreformable,” and is therefore rejected by congregates of many Pentecostal movements (Davis, 2004, 33), so that these movements do not turn to formal politics to achieve social change.
Instead, these movements provide the basic social and community services that the state can no longer, while adhering to a belief in premillennial dispensationalism: that is, suffering will continue until Christ’s second return, at which time those faithful will be saved.

While many of these religious movements offer alternative modes of inclusive world making, these movements are not inherently democratic: they may be open to the “most immiserated stratum of the impoverished classes”: women and children (Chestnut, 1997, 29), but only for those women who adhere to certain standards of moral sexual conduct. Indeed one of the groups I study below does represent an exilic identity insofar as it sees the world in which it operates to be irredeemably corrupt with sin. But while the world they envision to replace it may be radical, it by no means one that opens up the category of saved to anyone -- it is a world organized around stringent morality and heterosexual reproduction, framed in terms of postcolonial nationalism and Christian Right discourses of homosexuality and natural family. I will return to the Christian Right in a moment.

Geographers and other scholars tend to treat Pentecostalism as removed from the state. Either Pentecostals actively resist or attempt to escape from the state, as discussed by Chestnut (1997), Comaroff (1985), and Davis (2004), or Pentecostals move in to fill the gap left by the receded state under neoliberalism. For example, Mark Garmany (2010) details how Pentecostal movements produce governmentalized practices of self-discipline in everyday urban spaces in Brazil. These practices, he argues, are beyond the state (909), in that the state has receded from many parts of the urban world in Brazil, with religious
and criminal organizations taking the reigns of maintaining order. Thus, despite the
growing interest in Pentecostal movements, the geographies of evangelicalism literature I
discuss here fails to attend to how these religious movements interact with the state to
police social difference to realize that world. Furthermore, this literature has failed to
address the ways in which sexuality provides a point of organizational consolidation for
evangelical groups in the global South. This thesis intervenes in this literature to show
how the religious and state processes intertwine to police difference.

This conceptualization of Pentecostal movements as somehow beyond the state
lies in opposition to the ways in which American evangelicalism is treated by
geographers and other scholars, who note how the Christian Right in particular has a
powerful impact on the ways in which the US state and even the UN conduct geo- and
sexual politics (Buss and Herman, 2003). The Christian Right consists of a broad range of
American organizations that have tended to form coalitions, both domestic and
international, around an orthodox Christian vision in defense of a traditional nuclear
family formation, or the natural family. The Christian Right alliance opposes a perceived
global liberal agenda, in particular international feminism, secular humanism, and
increasingly a global gay agenda which is seen to abuse human rights discourse in order
to protect harmful acts.

The Christian Right is far from monolithic; indeed it is defined by conflict and
contingent relationships. Sturm (2008) argues that we need to provide a more precise
term when referring to groups that might otherwise belong to the Christian Right, that the
Christian Right in the US is made up of a variety of groups that may not necessarily agree
on many issues. While that is certainly true, and while the category *Christian Right* can be imprecise, in certain contexts it maintains analytic usefulness. Other scholars use the Christian Right as shorthand for a diverse set of actors who tend to share a belief in a divinely ordered, mutually constitutive set of relations within the family, nation, and church (Buss and Herman, 2003; Dittmer, 2008; Gerhardt, 2008; and Herman, 1997). The Christian Right takes upon itself the task of creating a bulwark against encroaching liberalism and the chaos it is imagined to bring (Buss and Herman, 2003, xix).

In what follows, I take the well elaborated connections of the Christian Right to the American state to bear on the connections of Pentecostal movements in Uganda to both the Christian Right, in the way that a discourse of homosexuality has been adopted by Ugandan religious and state leaders, and the connections between the Ugandan state and Pentecostal movements. In Section II, I begin by tracing how the current anti-homosexuality fervor epitomized and consolidated by the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is the result of historical processes that introduced homosexuality to public debate in Uganda, and how homosexuality becomes an object of nationalist distrust.
Section II

A. How Homosexuality Enters as Ugandan Public Enemy

I have mentioned a literature that shows how homosexuality as a sign of Western decadence was a colonial construction that was readily adopted at independence to consolidate an identity of respectable masculinity around nationalist movements (Alexander, 1994; Epprecht, 2008; Hoad, 1999, 2000, 2007). This marks the ambivalence of African attitudes toward the outside world. Mbembe (2002) argues that African nationalism is defined by its hatred and suspicion of the outside world, but also the will to recognition. This is therefore a two-pronged desire: the desire for the annihilation of the outside world, but also the will to become a subject entertaining agency among the Others of the world (252). On the one hand, the outside world is seen to be meddling in African affairs by trying to sabotage a natural African heterosexuality via homosexuality, on the other, the African state seeks recognition by assimilating to what Europeans deemed a respectable masculinity. Yet for most of the post-independence period, African heterosexuality was taken for granted rather than overtly challenged. It was not a source of anxiety for the African state, because Africa was the heterosexual continent. According to Epprecht (2008) and Hoad (2000) this is because a savage continent cannot
be host to homosexuality, which is a disease of arrested development only possible in the context of overdevelopment, hence its decadence. If this is so, then how did homosexuality become a national enemy?

There are particular moments when homosexuality enters public debate in Uganda, as evidenced by the appearance of editorials in major newspapers discussing the subject. Neville Hoad (2007) describes these as incitements to discourse (66). That is, because there is a provocation to create public discussions around homosexuality, whether domestic or foreign in origin, a struggle to create hegemonic meanings around homosexuality ensues, with often violent consequences. That struggle is largely discursive, and we see proliferation of discourse around homosexuality when these provocations occur. I examine some of these here.

The term “homosexuality” only appeared in the mainstream print media in the mid-1990s, as represented by the three major newspapers that predominate in Uganda. And the first reference by state and religious leaders began in 1998 with the uproar over the Anglican Lambeth conference in which homosexuality as an issue dividing the Communion began. The Lambeth conference is held every ten years in order to promote discussion and reconcile opposing views on issues that divide the Anglican Universal. In 1998, a rift between American and Canadian Anglican representatives and their African and Latin American counterparts grew over the issue of homosexuality. Shortly thereafter, President Museveni stated “When I was in America some time ago, I saw a rally of 300,000 homosexuals. If you have a rally of 30 homosexuals here, I would disperse it” (The Monitor, 1998). The next year, after a gay marriage is rumored to have
taken place in Kampala, President Museveni announced, "I have told the CID [Criminal Investigations Department] to look for homosexuals, lock them up, and charge them" (*The New Vision*, 1999). Human rights organizations reported that a rash of arrests took place, and many of those arrested were detained and tortured (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Another incitement to discourse was the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy members by the American Episcopal Church, part of the Anglican Universal, of which the Church of Uganda is part. In October, 2003, Gene Robinson was anointed by the US Episcopal Church. This act reconfigured the power structure of the Anglican Universal, splitting American Episcopal congregations along conservative and liberal lines. American conservative congregations aligned under the leadership of African primates in Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and the DRC who condemned the US Episcopal Church for this ordination. The Church of Uganda released a press statement in which Archbishop Luke Orombi lambasted the American and Canadian Episcopalian Churches for breaking the rules of God and the Anglican Union. So the issue of homosexuality and the incitement to discourse represented by the ordination of Gene Robinson in this instance not only created a domestic uproar in Uganda, it fundamentally reorganized the ways in which decision making in the Anglican Universal occurs, with the realignment of conservative congregations and African congregations forming a power block in opposition to more liberal diocese. In 2010, Archbishop Orombi went so far as to suggest that a schism between these two blocks would surely take place (Burroway, 2010).
Other moments have to do with the perceived success of Uganda’s queer community. Police raided the home of Ugandan LGBT rights activist Victor Mukasa based on accusations of lesbianism. Mukasa identifies as both lesbian and transgender, and began speaking out against the violence he faced in Uganda in the early 2000s. That court case, which Mukasa won on the grounds that his privacy was violated without warrant, lit an explosion of editorials in the press and a backlash from the likes of Ssempa, which included the creation of the Interfaith Rainbow Coalition Against Homosexuality (*The Monitor*, 2007). In August, 2007, Sexual Minorities of Uganda (SMUG) held the country’s first LGBT rights press conference (*The Monitor*, 2007). Under a banner on which was printed, “let us live in peace,” LGBT rights activists gave speeches asking for tolerance from Ugandan society, modeled largely on queer liberationist movements of the West. They wore masks to hide their identities, for fear of being targeted by the police or vigilante violence. Less than a week later, Interfaith Rainbow Coalition Against Homosexuality responded by organizing an antigay protest at a rugby grounds and delivered a document to Ugandan Minister of Ethics and Integrity James Nsaba Buturo for the government to take action. *(That the organization was named Interfaith Rainbow Coalition merits further investigation. Was this a reclaiming of the rainbow away from gay liberation, an ode to neoliberal multiculturalism?)* Organizers claimed, “Every civilization falls after it allows homosexuality.” Buturo, a born again Christian, and an avid protector of a heterosexually pure, moral nation, spoke at the event. Under his direction, Ugandan government ministers convened a special meeting to
toughen existing laws against homosexuals and lesbians days after the Rainbow Alliance
protests (ibid).

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 1.** The "Campaign to Live in Peace", SMUG activists wore masks at the press conference
(Ugandans Abroad, 2011).

Here we can see how a call for tolerance led to massive mobilization of anti-gay
protest, culminating in state action to stiffen penalties. The strategy of Ugandan gay
liberation relies in part on discourses that have historically been associated with the West,
and the United States in particular, as evidenced by the use of Western gay liberation
signs. Yet this strategy of visibility galvanized an organized resistance to the very rights
that those pursuing the strategy seek to gain. How is this resistance to homosexuality
reliant on tactics that have historically been associated with the West, but in this case, the
American Christian Right discourse? The rest of this section is devoted to exploring these connections.

In the Anti-Homosexuality Bill’s introductory memorandum, MP David Bahati insists that sexual activists are attempting to realize a Western homosexual agenda: to destroy the African heterosexual family and traditional African values, in order to bring about worldwide sexual promiscuity. Tying homosexuality to pedophilia, he cites increasing evidence that homosexuals attempt to recruit vulnerable Ugandan youth into the movement by using, procuring, and disseminating pornographic materials that weaken morality, or by providing them with money and trendy technology:

This Bill aims at strengthening the nation’s capacity to deal with emerging internal and external threats to the traditional heterosexual family. This legislation further recognizes the fact that same sex attraction is not an innate and immutable characteristic… There is also need to protect the children and youths of Uganda who are made vulnerable to sexual abuse and deviation as a result of cultural changes, uncensored information technologies, parentless child developmental settings and increasing attempts by homosexuals to raise children in homosexual relationships through adoption, foster care, or otherwise. (Uganda Parliament, 2009, 1.1-3.5)

Here homosexuality is constructed as mutable, as pedophilia, as a lack of morality and as a diseased physical, mental and spiritual lack that can be prevented and/or healed by proper parenting and strong moral conditioning. To say that homosexuality is mutable is
an attempt to make it less legitimate and to draw it as a harmful act. The act of homosexuality, rather than the gay person becomes the object of condemnation. This strategy can be summarized in the oft-uttered “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” This strategy avoids discussion of homosexuality as a civil or human right, and makes the act of homosexuality comparable to other sins. As Solomon Male, a Pentecostal colleague of Martin Ssempa put it at a rally in support of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in November, 2010:

> If every people were to claim rights by birth, then thieves would deserve far greater rights than homosexuals if they claimed having been born that way (thieves). Foremost, every person right from infancy has committed petty thieving of sugar, sauce, bread and other foods, money, pencils and fruits, etc, and if it is not for tough laws to punish thieves worldwide, virtually all of us would continue stealing. But then it would be wrong to conclude that because as far back as we can each remember we committed thefts, people (we) are born thieves, and it is therefore the right of every thief to live a thief and stealing everywhere he/she goes (NCAHSAU, 2010).

This characterization is consistent with American Christian Right constructions of homosexuality (Herman, 1998, 69, 78). Conservative Christians in the 1950s began discussing homosexuality in magazines like *Christianity Today* as a diseased mental state in which one attempts to recruit vulnerable youth (Herman, 1998, 33), inheriting nineteenth century scientific-sexological understandings and working alongside
McCarthyist national security discourses which collapsed Communist treachery into homosexuality. How do we account for the continuity of this discourse across geographic time-space? It is surely not happenstance that this discourse reappears in Uganda at this particular moment.

Journalist Jeff Sharlet argues that American evangelical Christian Right leaders provided the catalyst for the bill: that catalyst includes financial incentive, and intellectual resources, especially a Christian Right social scientific discourse that constructs homosexuality as a mutable disease (Sharlet, 2010; Ward, 2002, 106). The most blatant and literal exchange between American Christian Right and Uganda government and religious leaders was the Anti-Homosexuality Conference in March 2009, a month before the bill was written, and months before David Bahati proposed it as a private member’s bill. Three Christian Right leaders attended the conference upon invitation by Steven Langa of Uganda’s Family Life Network. The seminar focused on the so-called homosexual agenda, the causes of homosexuality, and the appropriate ways that a family, a community, or a nation could respond to that agenda (SMUG, 2009). Forty-two MPs, religious leaders, law enforcement agents, and teachers attended the three-day event. The ex-gay movement featured prominently in its discussion. Don Schmierer of Exodus International lectured about proper parenting techniques to prevent homosexuality; he insisted that a strong family environment that enforces natural gender roles and morality is the key to producing healthy heterosexual offspring.

The conference saw the continued deployment of a professionalized Christian Right discourse around “natural family values” with recourse to social scientific research
(Buss and Herman, 2003, 140). This way of discussing homosexuality is not overtly relying on Biblical interpretations, but rather justifies opposition to feminist and queer rights movements by recourse to social scientific discourse which pathologizes non-nuclear family forms. For instance, homosexuality is not wrong just because it breaks Biblical prohibitions, but also and especially because homosexuals are more like to get STIs, and therefore live shorter lives, suffer from depression, and lead otherwise unproductive lives. This move sanitizes Christian Right discourse and makes it possible to bridge different illiberal and neoliberal political agendas across religious difference.

Stephen Langa, head of Uganda’s Family Life Network, kicked off the conference by claiming that the family in Uganda is under attack, citing the statistic that homosexuality is growing rampant in the schools. He explained that the family and “moral sexual constitution” are “the foundation of human society” (SMUG, 2009). Langa’s American counterpart Scott Lively continued this theme. He presented himself as an expert scholar on the gay agenda, citing the many publications he has produced on the subject. Those include *How to Recruit-Proof Your Child* and more notoriously, *The Pink Swastika*, which blames Nazism and the Holocaust on hyper-masculine gay men in Germany, whose lack of sexual morality explains their ability to commit genocide (SMUG, 2009). The recourse to “research” and publication is a move that marks the ostensible secularization of Christian right discourse, a strategy of stealth that hides its overtly religious and political message (Buss and Herman, 2003, xiv).

That conference also is part of an ongoing relationship between American conservatives and Ugandan African religious leaders. American evangelicals began
investing massive amounts of missionary and financial resources in Uganda in the late 1980s, even though the country was already largely Christian. The media landscape became dominated by American Christian channels and programs. Uganda’s best-seller book list consistently includes those authored by American ministers, including Joyce Meyer and Rick Warren. These two, like many popular American pastors, maintain offices in Kampala. When they go to give sermons in Uganda, they fill Mandela National Stadium, the national football stadium, which can seat more than 45,000 people (Gifford, 1998, 42). At conventions, like the Anti-Homosexuality Conference, pastors leave behind free resources, like books and study guides for Ugandan pastors to use for their congregations. Messages designed to address the struggle against homosexuality and gay rights in the US are being transmitted to Ugandan Christians through these various media.

This is not to say that the American Christian Right is brainwashing Ugandans, coercing or co-opting Ugandans into an agenda they would not have supported otherwise. To make that argument would be to ignore the active role many African pastors and politicians have assumed in organizing around anti-homosexuality politics. At the same time, we must acknowledge that the reiteration of Christian Right knowledge of homosexuality makes the truth they purport to tell more real for those Ugandans who encounter them on a regular basis. The interesting part of the interaction between the Christian Right and Ugandan religious leaders is the way in which Ugandans appropriate and transform Christian Right discourses of homosexuality to their particular political agendas. It is my argument that the Christian Right discourse of homosexuality is
deployed as another expression of distrust of the outside world. In the next sub-section, I will examine just how that process plays out.

**B. Postcolonial Nationalism takes up its enemy**

I have shown so far that US Christian Right discourses of homosexuality circulate and operate in Uganda. Now I want to show how a postcolonial, racializing message has been intertwined with American conservative Christianity’s construction of homosexuality. First, homosexuality is portrayed in Uganda (and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa) as the “White Disease” that threatens social reproduction. Second, it is not just homosexuals who have power over global institutions, as in the case in Christian Right discourses, but *European and American* homosexuals. While seemingly minor, by tying homosexuality to Western identities, a postcolonial message is embedded in what might otherwise be mistaken as the articulation of Christian Right discourse. That is, homosexuality comes to signify a (neo)colonialist intrusion into African social life, and Ugandans, by rejecting homosexuality, are rejecting neocolonialism. The form that this postcolonial message takes is very much reliant on the idea of a bounded nation, with struggles over the definitions on who belongs and who does not. (It follows some of the same strategies that postcolonial nationalist movements used to fight for independence. Nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa has largely failed to deliver on its promise at independence to liberate Africans from structures of inequality. While colonialism has
officially ended, the nation state in Africa continues to employ some of the same machinery as the colonial state. It is curious then that again nationalism is used to fight this perceived colonialism, given its past failures.)

The Minister of Ethics and Integrity Nsaba Buturo has said the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is necessary because of the vast power the homosexual agenda wields over global institutions. For instance, when it was discovered that a UNICEF sex education manual for students in secondary school discussed issues of safe same-sex practices, Buturo called it a “disaster,” and ordered the manuals to be destroyed (*The New Vision*, 2009). He said that institutions like the UN and the US government, funded by George Soros, were agents of the gay agenda. This is again consistent with Christian Right constructions of the gay agenda in which homosexuals seek to infiltrate and gain control of world institutions to effect the destruction of the family (Buss and Herman, 2003, 122). Here though, the dangers that were originally been constructed by the Christian Right are used as a proxy for a postcolonial anxiety over outside influence.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill also responds to other concerns that inhere in Christian Right discourses of homosexuality, but again, this is tied to a postcolonial nationalist program of marking Uganda as the sexual exception. The bill outlaws the promotion of homosexuality (*Uganda Parliament, 2009, cl. 13*): the possession or dissemination of pornography (which is said to weaken one’s moral constitution); funding homosexuality; and sex education outreach. Here we see the anxiety over the vast influence the homosexual lobby is thought to have. The bill also nullifies Uganda’s participation in organizations, conventions, and treaties that contradict its management of
homosexuality (Uganda Parliament, 2009, cl. 18), indicating that Uganda will not be subject to homosexual-run institutions. Using Christian Right discourses, these two chapters of the bill in particular attempt to reify Ugandan physical boundaries by marking the Ugandan nation as a sexual exception: no longer is Uganda the site of “dangerous sex” that marks the antithesis of and thereby defines a proper, white European sexuality (a process which Epprecht, 2008 shows justified colonial and neocolonial interventions). As Hoad (2000) suggests,

Anti-imperialist attacks on homosexuality can be seen as refusals to carry the imputation of primitiveness, and to counter-project the racist charge of retardation and/or degeneration onto its Western source, by scapegoating the West’s own sexual deviants or what these attacks perceive as their local proxies. (51)

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill would officially overturn that traditional hierarchy of sexual “best practices” so that Uganda is the moral ideal. Ugandans now uphold heterosexual monogamy while the West, on the other hand, where homosexuality has taken over and where it is imagined to have originated, is the site of moral degeneration. That moral degeneration is imagined to take many forms. One is the perceived waning of Christian influence in the West. This explains how it is possible that homosexuality is acceptable to Western churches, which are seen to have given into the homosexual agenda thanks to both weakening morality on the part of the church and the power of the gay agenda. It locates the failure of Western Christianity in the trends of secularization
and liberalization. As Ssempa writes in an editorial in the state-owned *New Vision* on the occasion of the National Martyr’s Day:

Churches who have sold out to the new homosexual lifestyle are dying as can be seen in the most northern hemisphere in Canada and England. Yet churches that have stood firm against Mwanga are thriving (Ssempa, 2005).

Ssempa uses Mwanga as metaphor for the homosexual agenda. He invokes the name of the late 19th century Buganda king who executed his newly converted Christian pages who would no longer submit to his homosexual demands. Martyr’s Day has, over the last ten years, been transformed into a collective, nationalist expression of hate and distrust toward homosexuality. Prior to that, Ward (2002) argues that the significance of this holiday was questioning which is more important: faith or nation. Based on ethnographic and archive research, he shows how the national imaginary has shifted from painting Kabaka Mwanga as a heroic resistor of colonialism, and the pages as treacherous agents who submitted to the colonizers’ will by not obeying Mwanga, to now seeing Mwanga as an immoral sodomite, with the pages’ heroically upholding the Christian morality of the Ugandan nation against him (90). This shift has coincided with the public debate around homosexuality in Uganda and has contributed to consolidating Uganda’s identity as a heterosexual, Christian, and morally upright nation (see Hoad, 2007; Ward, 2002). Editorials like Ssempa’s help effect this cementing of Martyr’s Day as a celebration of Uganda’s heterosexuality.
The infection that is homosexuality, defined by both tolerance thereof, the acts themselves, and the gay agenda, not only causes the death of nations, but rather effects the death of nations and civilizations by causing the decay of the moral foundations that are produced and reproduced in the Church. Liberal congregations, which Ssempa uses to define Western Christianity, are failing their divine mandate because they have allowed for homosexuality to be tolerated. And because of this weakened morality, these churches fail to attract people to Christianity. In the absence of a Church that instills values, the nation begins to atrophy. What is needed is a strong Church that will not yield to the gay agenda. The key to Christianity’s success in Uganda, and therefore the nation of Uganda, is its firm stance against homosexuality.

Born-again Ugandan President Museveni continued on this theme at last year’s Martyr’s Day celebrations:

The church in Africa is very strong and has been at the fore in fighting homosexuality and moral decadence. We must look for modern ways of instilling discipline in society. The Europeans are finished and if we follow their Western culture, we shall be headed for Sodom and Gomorrah" (The Monitor, 2010).

Museveni’s move builds on Ssempa’s, and he now ties Africa’s exceptional adherence to God’s word to distinguish it from the fallen West. Building on colonialist discourses, he rejects homosexuality as unnatural, as a sign of decadence and overdevelopment. This would seem to be a rejection of modernity—decadence, made possible by modern modes of technology and capital accumulation makes a population more vulnerable to
homosexuality. But then, he explicitly calls for modern means of discipline, embracing the ways in which the modern can instill discipline on the social body, to prevent the further spread of homosexuality, to sanitize and purify the nation.

This tension highlights the contradictory missions of the postcolonial nation-state: on the one hand, it is the upholder of the traditional culture: it must create a sense of national belonging by constructing a history that ties together a nation. Christianity is often invoked in this context, as it is here by President Museveni, as traditionally African. At the same time, the nation-state is supposed to be the harbinger of modernity, of economic development. The nation state, in seeking to strike a balance between modernity and tradition, in negotiating the complicated nature of modernity between perversion and prosperity, leaves no room for a gay national subject. A homosexual simply does not belong (Hoad, 1999, 566). The example of Europe invoked by Museveni indicates that Uganda and Africa cannot choose the path of the modern taken by Europeans, because these nations are dying. (Perhaps he has white population decline in mind.) Instead, Museveni stakes out a different mode of the modern.

MP David Bahati, who first proposed the bill, develops this theme by arguing that Africa has its own postcolonial mission civilisatrice for America:

America, she is great today because of her spiritual background… that is what has made America a superpower. But she is crumbling at the edges — and waiting for Africa to save her. God has a way of using the weak. (Interview with Bahati cited in Sharlet, 2010).
Bahati sees the US as a waning superpower and that superpower was founded on the strict moral ideals that Ugandans are now attempting to enshrine. The loss of that status is concomitant with the rise of immorality in the US, exemplified by the growing concessions that are seen to be given to the gay agenda. He is marking Uganda as the moral exception, but only by reinforcing a historicizing narrative in which the imperialism of the US during the Cold War is not seen as such because it is supposedly realizing God’s work. Now that the US has lost its moral position, as evidenced by its wholesale acceptance of gay rights, it is Africa’s job to save her. To those interested in liberating Africans from the system of neocolonialism that ensures their place at the bottom of the international division of labor, the idea that Africa’s Biblical role as a set of weak states and people is to bring the imperialist US back to Christian righteousness would be disappointing to say the least.

Bahati could have been simply humoring his audience, Jeff Sharlet, a white American male. And yet, that is exactly the deal made by the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Between its radical anti-Western, anti-colonial messages, he is also seeking recognition from the West. Uganda would be offering itself as an example to discipline the West back into the moral ideal. Indeed, as scholar, activist, and Anglican Priest Kapya Kaoma (2009) points out, conservative Christians in the US now rely on the image of African Pastors abhorring the West for its sinful ways to legitimize their positions on women’s rights and homosexuality (3)—it is they, not their elitist liberal counterparts, who stand on the right side of history, with the weak and disenfranchised. The use of Christian Right discourse, then, while allowing an anti-colonial politics to occur, might prevent a
more radical re-appraisal of Uganda’s position in the global political economy by focusing the battle against imperialism only on extinguishing sexual difference.

Other clauses (15-17) of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill seeks to deal with this problem of the outside by extending the sovereignty of the Ugandan state outside the territorial confines of Uganda, projecting the boundaries of Ugandan state authority onto the bodies of its citizens abroad. Those Ugandans practicing homosexuality abroad, as defined in the bill, are subject to extradition: even in the liberal West, where they might feel free from the governing gaze, homosexual Ugandans remain subject to their home state’s legal apparatus.

In Section II, I have traced how homosexuality has become an object of public discussion in Uganda through incitements to discourse, which include the perceived successes of the gay agenda domestically and internationally, as well as the dissemination of Christian Right discourses of homosexuality. Nationalists have taken up this construction, transforming homosexuality into an embodiment of Western neocolonialism. Homosexuality is used to provincialize the West against a new moral, spiritual, and sexual exception: Uganda. In Section III, I show how this postcolonial nationalist discourse is taken up by the Balokole movement, who create a new geography of homosexuality, making the exposing and eradication of homosexuality all the more urgent.
Section III

A. Introducing the Balokole

In Section III, I present a particular Ugandan evangelical revival movement to see how it has taken up the Christian Right and nationalist discourses examined in Section II. I trace how the values of this movement—reproduction, sexual purity, and perhaps more uniquely, sexual transparency—interface with the discourses of homosexuality encountered so far to create a unique, multiscalar geography of homosexuality. Again, this includes locating homosexuality outside of the social body, which consolidates a heterosexual and Christian national identity. But this geography of homosexuality shifts from the scale of the body, to that of the bedroom, then to the community, and finally to the nation. I follow the spectacular articulation of Balokole values by a Balokole pastor who works to expose homosexuality in order to prevent it. I then look at how this geography of homosexuality is articulated in an otherwise secular press. The spaces of homosexuality - nationalist, Christian Right, and Balokole- that produce this geography, structure public debate in Uganda, and leave no room for a homosexual national subject, who sullies an otherwise pure, Christian, and heterosexual nation. It is through this geography that we can understand the vehemence with which homosexuality is fought in Uganda.
First, I want to provide a brief introduction to the Balokole movement and its values by engaging histories written by Anglican scholar Kevin Ward (1991, 2002). The Balokole — Balokole is Luganda for “Saved ones” or “the Chosen” — movement is an Anglican revival movement that has mushroomed on three occasions in Uganda when dissatisfaction with the Church fomented reform, most recently in the 1990s. In line with contemporary trends in which Pentecostalism constitutes the most rapidly growing denomination of Christianity and indirectly influences mainline churches (Jenkins, 2002), the latest revival is very much intertwined with Pentecostal religious practice: charismatic preaching, dancing, singing, speaking in tongues. Members conceive of sin, in its most dangerous forms, as the result of demonic possession and locate it in the body. While a considerable portion of youth today identify as “Balokole,” the movement’s greatest influence has been its transformation of what it means to be Christian for everyone in Uganda: it has set the standard of morality across all denominations (Ward, 2002, 103).

The Balokole has rallied around anti-Western and anti-colonial messages since the movement began, which has made the movement tremendously popular. The colonial government saw them as potentially subversive, capable of mobilizing massive numbers of colonized subjects around an anti-colonial, anti-hierarchical message (Ward, 1991, 88). The first revival in the 1930s sought to radically reform the hierarchical and Western-centric structure of the Anglican Church, and the hypocrisy of some Western clergy. The early movement took aim at the system of obukulu (Luganda for elders), which was the hierarchical structure that privileged elder clergy to demand obedience to their authority, regardless of how the rest of the congregation felt about the issue at hand.
(Ward, 1991, 87). To remedy that hypocrisy, and with an understanding of sin as deep-seated and rampant throughout the entire social body, the Balokole have historically promoted the confession of all sin, including sexual transgressions, to fellow congregates. The confession of sin as a way of preventing its future practice by removing it from the body is an important technology that has been employed in the more recent fight against homosexuality.

The Balokole movement insists on rigid moral standards that are not to be compromised; among these is monogamous marriage (this puts it at odds with the governing board of the Church of Uganda, and with charismatic churches that have turned a blind eye to polygamous marriages, so long as they are marriages.) All sexual encounters outside of that relationship should be confessed: to make the demon speak is to begin to exorcise it from the body. Confessions of sexual transgression or desire are lurid to the point of pornographic and include the confession of both physical intercourse and even lustful thoughts toward individuals to whom one is not married. The Balokole teachings emphasize Matt 5:28: "every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (cited in Ward, 1991, 131).

This has meant that the Balokole seek to limit opportunities for temptation to occur in the first place. It also means that the Balokole have a history of vigilantly policing transgressions of what they see as their God-given norms. For instance, in the 1930s, a small group of Balokole at an Anglican college identified themselves in opposition to the rest of the student body, antagonizing their classmates and accusing them of sinful ways (Ward 1991, 91). This is what Davis (2004) calls an exilic identity,
so that being Balokole means rejecting the world around the self as fundamentally unjust. Originally, the Balokole eschewed political engagement with the state, preferring to emphasize the power of confession and social norms maintained within the group to effect the morality they envisioned (Ward, 2002, 104). My engagement with the geographies of global evangelicalism literature is then aimed at showing how a radical movement that embraces an exilic identity can enter into the political realm and make claims on the state to police social (in this case sexual) difference. This should temper the views of some scholars who see these Pentecostal movements representing a radical form of resistance to global capitalism (e.g., Comaroff, 1985).

B. The Balokole around the Anti-Homosexuality Bill

So far I have laid out the religious values and practices of the Balokole. Here I trace how these values are practiced today in relation to anti-homosexuality politics. Ugandan Pastor Martin Ssempa plays an important role in both the Balokole movement and the anti-homosexuality agenda in Uganda. In the early 2000s Ssempa rose to prominence in part by taking advantage of almost US $40,000 (Blumenthal, 2009) made available for faith-based initiatives by Bush’s President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief initiative, which eventually gutted funding for many AIDS programs that did not promote abstinence. Ssempa’s message was exactly what the PEPFAR initiative was designed to fund: Ssempa put an African face on a Bush agenda that valorized heteronormative monogamous marriage as the only way to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS.
A former break-dancer and extremely charismatic, Ssempa began preaching to Makerere university youth about the importance of abstinence and marriage at his weekly poolside ministry on campus. Makerere is the largest public university in Uganda, located outside of central Kampala and home to over 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. Ssempa’s choice to focus on university students speaks to the vulnerability and anxiety over this group of people’s sexuality and morality. This social event, part of his Makerere Community Church, was offered as an alternative to debaucherous university parties. The logic is to prevent a situation in which temptation takes place. That is a theme that plays an important role in the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. In the case of abstinence, which is itself premised on heteronormative and hierarchical understandings of monogamous matrimony as the ultimate goal of amorous relationships, Ssempa oversaw the public, ceremonial burning of condoms that had previously been provided to university students free of charge (Epstein, 2005). No temptation, no sin.

Some of the most spectacular events in support of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill are values practiced and articulated by this influential Balokole movement. First is the moral standard to reproduce: Ssempa has repeatedly undermined the idea that homosexuality should be protected as a human right on the grounds of privacy by arguing that in Africa, the family is paramount (Ssempa, 2009). This maneuver reproduces an authentic Ugandaness and Africaness that is Christian and heterosexual but also alludes to Christian Right discourses of the natural family. In a letter to Western critics and LGBT sympathizers, he explained:
For us in Africa, dying without giving birth to a child when it was in your power to produce is a curse. It is a betrayal of the ancestors because we the living are the link to the descendants. That in a sense why homosexuality is deemed as a curse and an abomination. Even before Christianity, our culture abhors anything that does not produce life (McEwen, 2010).

Because homosexual practice does not reproduce national lineage, it is in danger of aborting Uganda’s and perhaps Africa’s future. This is a betrayal of one’s kin, one’s nation, one’s God. That is what Ssempe means when he argues: “Homosexuality breaks three laws: the laws of God, the laws of nature and the laws of Uganda” (cited in Black, 2007).

Ssempe also uses the Balokole’s value of transparency around sexual practice to argue against granting homosexuality legal status. Against those who call for homosexuality to be protected as a private act of consent between two adults, Ssempe argues, those acts most dangerous and destructive to society take place in private, comparing homosexuality to corruption (Ssempe, 2010). That understanding of sin, as something that largely takes place behind closed doors, as cloaked in darkness, preventable only by exposing it to the light of the public’s attention, is what inspired another of Ssempe’s controversial acts.

In March, 2010, at a rally in support for the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, he screened stills of gay pornography in which two men participated in acts of fisting and rimming. The BBC reported that the crowd erupted in disgust, and several adults left the room during the most graphic scenes. Ssempe was criticized for the screening, especially by Western Christian leaders (BBC, 2010). He released a statement in which he justified the
decision, insisting the lawmakers in the room needed to know “exactly what they are dealing with in legislation” (Ssempa, 2010). He also cited Ephesians 5.10-11 this way: ‘Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.’ He added:

We have a mandate as a group of believers… to bring the light on these shameful deeds of darkness. Many who are now complaining and distorting what happened are simply bothered that we now know their deviant secrets.

So here we have a God-given mandate, in the words of Ssempa, to protect one’s nation, one’s kin, one’s body from homosexuality by exposing its practice. Again, this practice is intentionally shrouded in darkness, kept away from the public’s (God’s?) view. But the believers whom Ssempa refers to here have not just a responsibility to believe in God and follow his rules; rather, God and the nation become one here. The experience Ssempa is channeling for the audience directs affective attachment to both. It is no wonder that behind Ssempa hangs a poster on which is displayed the Ugandan flag, over which is written “In God We Trust, For God and My Country” (Current TV, 2010), collapsing Christian morality, citizenship and heterosexuality into a single divine imperative. What happens when the nation and God become one, even if only for a moment? What authoritarian and violent impulses become naturalized and sanctified?

In part this obsession with exposing deviance is regulatory and calculated. Like the panopticon, a situation in which the subject understands that her every movement is subject to surveillance, that she is utterly visible and yet unable to see the surveyor,
ensures that power operates automatically and efficiently (Foucault, 1977, 198). In other words, subjects come to govern themselves beyond the state apparatus, governance becomes a practice of the self.

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 2. At his gay porn screening, Ssempa sits in front of a poster on which the Ugandan and American flags are posted (still captured from Current TV, 2010)

What Martin Ssempa articulates above is that the most effective way for society to eradicate homosexuality is to expose its practice, to make its practitioners aware that they cannot hide their sin behind closed doors because he is showing society what it is that “they” do. Temptation is severely circumscribed by an ever-present but unknowable gaze.
Judith Butler (1990) notes how the body becomes synechdochal for the larger social system, so that unregulated or unsanctioned permeability becomes a source of danger and pollution. Homosexuality, a construction of which in part had been introduced by the Christian Right, is one such act from the vantage point of hegemonic order in Uganda. It undermines the integrity of the individual and social body because it opens unauthorized parts of the body up to erotic signification (180) and threatens to undermine social reproduction. During Ssempa’s screening, he focused attention to this very improper object. He showed images of men copulating and frequently reiterated how the anus is—in his words-- abused during gay male sex. He even demonstrated how fisting takes place with his arms (see figure below).

Figure 3 Ssempa reveals the mechanics of fisting (still taken from Current TV, 2010).
He moves from this to say that “homosexuality is sick, and therefore deviant. We do not want it!” Not only does the figure of the homosexual refuse to participate in reproducing national lineage by eschewing the responsibility to produce children, he or she also undermines the sign system that nationalist movements have worked to create around an African sexuality that is thoroughly heterosexual and which is used to underwrite the respectable masculinity with which African postcolonial states address and seek recognition from the rest of the world. Because the male body becomes permeable in certain homosexual practices, as obsessed over by the likes of Martin Ssempa, who fixates on the anus as the site of that transgressive permeability, the entire social body is put at risk. That is, the anxiety over the permeability of the male body is then scaled up to national boundaries. Where permeability is regulated along lines of hegemonic heterosexuality, homosexuals become savage, polluting invaders. Thus it is that homosexuality is explained by locating it outside of the social body, in this case among wealthy, white European and American organizers in whose countries the social degeneration is imagined to have originated.

C. Exposés of Deviance

This drive to expose deviance and sin is often editorialized in Uganda’s press. A writer for the government-owned *The New Vision* argued in 2005:

The police should visit the holes mentioned in the press [bars and other hang outs where gays and lesbians are known to congregate], spy on the
perverts, arrest and prosecute them. Relevant government departments must outlaw or restrict websites, magazines, newspapers and television channels promoting immorality - including homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, etc (*The New Vision*, 2005).

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<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tr>
<td>Red Pepper</td>
<td>8/8/06</td>
<td>“GAY SHOCK!”</td>
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<td>Red Pepper</td>
<td>9/7/06</td>
<td>“JINJA COPS HUNT FOR GAYS.”</td>
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<td>9/24/10</td>
<td>“This Gay Monster Raped School Boys”</td>
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<td>10/1/10</td>
<td>“Hang Them, They are All Bar Our Kowe! Pictures of Uganda’s 100 Homos Leak.”</td>
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<td>The Onion</td>
<td>10/31/10</td>
<td>“Fr. Tony has turned me into his sodomy toy: Boy confesses being sodomized by priest, names partners in homo sex.”</td>
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<td>More Homos’ Faces Exposed</td>
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<td>Campus Nail</td>
<td>11/18/10</td>
<td>Homosexuals Recruit 1000 Makerere Students</td>
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**Table 1 Publication of Ugandan Gay Exposés**

Here I want to analyze the text of a series of Ugandan tabloid exposés that build on the idea of hidden homosexuality articulated here (see table above). Where Martin Ssempa sought to expose the deviant sexual acts of homosexuals in order to prove its pathology to lawmakers and the public, certain Ugandan tabloid journalists have taken up...
Balokole articulations of postcolonial geography of homosexuality, and have gone about locating homosexuality among individuals in order to expose deviance, discipline individuals, and manage the Ugandan population in order to maintain its purity.

Tabloid exposés have become a veritable genre of their own in Uganda, proliferating in numerous tabloids that now participate in outing homosexuals. In lurid detail, journalists “uncover” the deviant sexual practices and preferences of men and women in Uganda, their names, addresses, and workplaces. The toll on the individuals exposed has ranged from termination from employment, to eviction from residence, to physical violence, and even to the recent murder of a Ugandan gay rights activist, David Kato, on January 26, 2011. Kato’s address, workplace and photo was published in The Rolling Stone in October 2010, three months before his death, under the headline “Hang Them; They are After Our Kids!!!! Pictures of Uganda’s 100 Homos Leak.” (see Figure 4, The Rolling Stone, 2010a).

The first exposé Gay Shock! was published by The Red Pepper on August 8, 2006. The Red Pepper maintained a monopoly of sorts on publishing this kind of exposé until 2010, when three other publications began publishing gay exposés: The Rolling Stone (no relation to the American publication), The Onion (also no relation to the satiric American publication), and The Campus Nail. These latter publications coincided with the peak of media attention around the Anti-Homosexuality Bill.
The tabloids partake in sensationalistic journalism, in which the circumstances of the story in question are exaggerated or simply made up in order to stimulate interest. Like Ssempe, the papers use lurid descriptions of the sexual practices of those it exposes in order to ridicule, humiliate, and elicit desire, disgust and shock from their audience. This makes homosexuality all the more deplorable because the papers not only succeed in exposing the nefarious political agenda of homosexuality (recruitment, seduction, sabotage) but also the more personal practices that define the most basic acts of homosexuality. If these mundane practices of “steamy sex” the tabloids imagine are disgusting, deplorable, ridiculous, then there is no basis for the protection of those who perform these acts.
For instance, the first published exposé was headlined “Gay Shock!” (*The Red Pepper*, 2006), in which the editors explain that the individuals and their practices that are about to be revealed are scandalous. Many of the articles state explicit warnings like this one:

> If you are faint of heart, please stop here because the dossier we are unleashing today leaves no stone unturned. It narrates the gays network and hook members to their group, what their parties look like, favourite hang out joints plus how they shaft. You will be shocked! (*The Red Pepper*, 2007)

Here the reader is interpolated as being unaware of how these kinds of sexual practices occur. That the reader might be familiar with some of these acts, whether homosexual or not, is not provided as a possibility. The sexual acts themselves are also mystified here, made to be foreign and unimaginable to the reader. “It narrates… how they shaft,” as if these exotic acts required a how-to manual to be able to understand. Indeed, the UNESCO safe sex guides I referred to earlier were accused of teaching these acts to innocent youth and therefore were destroyed. But the exposing of deviance through detailed description of sexual acts by the tabloids is not seen to corrupt youth; it is simply educating the public, not promoting it.

This underlines a tension in the act of exposing: while the authors of these articulations about homosexuality attempt to portray the acts in ways that vilify their practitioners and make the acts appear unappealing, the authors at once make a gay subjectivity more widely available by disseminating the ways these practices take place.
These too are incitements to discourse: proliferating public debate around and struggling to control the meaning of homosexuality. Even though Ssempa and others repeatedly articulate the ex-gay (and queer) ontology of homosexuality as doing, not being, as acts, not identity, they and the anti-homosexuality political machine in Uganda are instantiating homosexuality as an identity associated with these deviant acts. It may become an appealing avenue for the very young people it fears to be vulnerable, as this identity is consistently tied to wealth and consumerism.

Indeed, despite the negative representations of homosexuality their endless proliferation also operate by producing desire among those who produce and consume these representations. This underscores how an erotics of fear is at play in these practices: the desire for or fascination with that which is condemned or consigned to the realm of darkness and demonology. Bivins (2008) uses this term to describe how evangelical religious movements become drawn to precisely what they seek to drive away. The very things which threaten to undermine the purity of the self, which must be expunged, are absorbed into the very cultures and symbol systems they are said to oppose. They are written into these expressions of evangelicalism and without these Others, there could be no self. Again, the articulation of a homosexual Other in Uganda helps to consolidate a coherent Christian, heterosexual Ugandan subject that, while defined in opposition to the homosexual, is in fact written through that which it is meant to reject.

Homosexuality is represented in the tabloids, as by Martin Ssempa and the American Christian Right, as a physical and mental disease. Several of the articles
contain photographs of genitalia affected by sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as Chlamydia. One article claims:

Research on sexual relationships between members of the same sex expose gays, lesbians and bisexuals to extreme risks of sexually transmitted disease (STDs), physical injuries, mental disorders and even shortened life span (The Campus Nail, 2010).

Figure 5 The Campus Nail (2010) published renderings of STI symptoms claimed to be more prevalent among homosexuals
It goes on to explain:

A doctor in Colorado USA shows that homosexuality is more dangerous than smoking which is believed to be one of the leading killers in the world (*The Campus Nail*, 2010).

The doctor cited here is likely Paul Cameron, a discredited American psychologist who published about the dangerous effects of homosexuality in the 1980s. This statement, in which homosexuality is more harmful to one’s health than smoking, is likely less powerful in Uganda where smoking has not been stigmatized the way it has in the US (where a massive public health campaign has successfully transformed much of its public into a smoke-free zone.) Nonetheless, the claim brings homosexuality as a somatic. This is again consistent with the professionalization of anti-homosexuality politics, as Dr. Cameron is widely cited among Christian Right materials about homosexuality in order to prove its pathological nature. This highlights how these discourses are very much in circulation in Uganda, due to the influence and the dissemination of Christian Right and their materials in Uganda that I discussed earlier.

There is, then, remarkable similarity in the way in which Pastor Ssempa exposes the most intimate and sensational homosexual practices (which are used to generalize about all homosexual practice) and the ways in which the tabloids represent these acts. The geography of homosexuality as produced by the imbricated discourses of postcolonial nationalism, Christian Right, and the Balokole, is in circulation through these tabloids. Again, this is multiscalar. Homosexuality as a set of personal acts located
in the body is defined as a set of practices that needs to be exposed, and in exposing them, the exposcer is fighting the harmful act or sin, making its practice known and therefore limiting its spread within the social body. That is what is made clear by the following mission statement published by *The Red Pepper*:

> To rid our motherland of the deadly vice, we are committed to exposing all the lesbos in the city. Send us more names the name and occupation of the lesbin [sic] in your neighbourhood and we shall shame her (2006c).

As when Martin Ssempa represents it, homosexuality in its full exposed form is imagined to be intentionally hidden from the public. It is seen to be ugly, dirty, and repulsive. While the wealthy homosexual “tycoons” who fund the vice in Uganda present themselves with signs of bourgeois respectability—many of those exposed are represented as possessing luxuries like Mercedes Benz, extravagant homes, and other designer goods-- the tabloids and Ssempa are exposing their true form: sexual deviancy. Both Ssempa and the tabloid editors depict their mission as one of public education. In part, this is to be effected by shaming those who are exposed. As the editors of *The Red Pepper* put it, “We are shocked and we hope by publishing this list, our brothers will confess and go back to the right path” (2006a).

Classed concerns are very much in play in these tabloids, as in the way Balokole and state leaders portray them: still drawing on Christian Right discourses of a sinister, sophisticated gay agenda movement that seeks to infiltrate powerful institutions, and recruit youth to reproduce the movement, in order to effect that agenda. In the first exposé published by *The Red Pepper*, the editors write:
They [homosexuals] are high profile people in our nation that include lawyers, pastors, doctors, bankers, students in posh schools and even priests, can you imagine? … To show the nation how shocked we are and how fast the terrible vice of sodomy is eating up our society, we have decided to unleash an exclusive list of men who enjoy taking on fellow men from the rear... Total disaster… here are some of the big shots that practice it and are spreading the vice to innocent young boys. (The Red Pepper, 2006).

They then proceed to list 45 alleged homosexuals, many of whom are described as being rich and powerful, working in waged labor (an important distinction in country in which most workers participate in informal labor) in elite, Western occupations like medicine, banking, accounting, telecommunications. The wealth of these powerful homosexuals signified by their display of designer consumer goods from the West, their posh addresses in the suburbs that locate them away from the spaces in which the urban masses live everyday life, marks homosexuals as a powerful group whose lifestyles, apart from the deviant sin of homosexuality, most Ugandans could not imagine.

There are also several students listed. Students are intensely fraught figures in these accounts, because they mark the threshold between adulthood and the realization of development on the one hand, and youth, innocence, and purity on the other. Their youth makes their loss to the homosexual movement grievable - these are the youth of Uganda, supposed to inherit the nation and the responsibility to reproduce it. This loss makes the homosexual movement that recruited them all the more powerful and sinister, since the
transmission of the responsibility to the next generation is aborted at the moment it is meant to begin. For instance, in describing “a very small and tall man of Asian origin” who “owns one of the most expensive pads in a city suburb” and who “drives a posh Mercedes Benz,” the editors lament his corruption of the “company of young boys, especially campusers [Makerere University students]” he keeps (The Red Pepper, 2009, 3).

That this tycoon with an appetite for Ugandan youth is also Asian is dense with meaning in the context of Uganda. Here again, homosexuality is located on the outside of the proper Ugandan social body. But more than that, there is a great deal of distrust and resentment between black Ugandans and Asian Ugandans. Uganda is home to a large minority of Indians, many of whom own businesses in Kampala. Classed and raced anxieties over the power and wealth of certain racial groups are played out through these tabloid representations of homosexuality.

A recent article in The Campus Nail warns that as unemployment and poverty among university students increases, so too does the vice of homosexuality. The reporter explains that many university students have no choice but to turn to recruiting their fellow students into the movement for money. One recruiter earned a “whopping” UG shs 800,000 (around $350 US) (The Campus Nail, 2010, 2). But the paper notes that there is no limit to the wealth one may earn from recruiting:

Gay recruits can earn more depending on the numbers they recruit per month. It is said a head count is done and the bigger the number, the more
the money and hence the stronger the gay community (The Campus Nail, 2010, 2).

Here, the crises of capitalist production and uneven development, in particular, the configuration of informal labor markets in which stable employment is increasingly rare, is seen to provide a breeding ground, as it were, for homosexual recruitment. And because the funding for homosexuality comes from the West, imagined to be a place of unlimited consumption and wealth, a young person can earn a limitless amount of income from participating in this recruitment process.

At the scales of the global and national, homosexuality as an international, colonialist conspiracy, the tabloid representations are also consistent with nationalist and Balokole constructions of homosexuality as coming from and being propagated by the Western world. The tabloids depict homosexual groups in Uganda as being primarily dependent on foreign organizations. One of the exposed homosexuals, whom I discussed before, is said to work for an international NGO whose explicit aim is the recruitment of vulnerable Ugandan youth into the homosexuality movement (The Campus Nail, 2010, 2). The funding structure of homosexuality is seen to be centered in the West. Here, the West seeks to disrupt natural African heterosexual reproduction. This is seen as another attempt to sabotage African social life so that homosexuality itself becomes a form of neocolonialism.

The form this neocolonialism takes is not just the recruitment of Ugandan youth into the movement. The tabloids have more recently used the terrorist attacks that took place in Kampala in July 2010 as proof that the homosexual movement is becoming more
violent in its demands for legal reprieve. The Somali Islamist militia Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks, as a response to the participation of Ugandan troops in an African Union-led mission in Somalia. Nonetheless, in an article headlined “Homosexual Generals Plotted Kampala Terror Attacks,” *The Rolling Stone* (2010b) reported that the attacks may well have been carried out by Al Shabaab, but that it was certainly funded by homosexuals who were frustrated with the growing tide of anti-homosexuality in Uganda:

By mercilessly bombing Kampala some homosexuals were expressing their dissatisfaction with government for not respecting their rights. They also intended to assure government that they are capable of causing insecurity in Uganda once they are not recognized in society… It was agreed that Uganda be punished for delaying the recognition of homosexuals in the country. The homosexuals also gave huge sacks of money to Al-Shabaab to seriously penalize government with attacks for masterminding the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill (*The Rolling Stone*, 2010b).
Figure 6. The Rolling Stone (2010b) accuses homosexuals of terrorism

Here homosexuality and Islam are collapsed into each other, so that neither a Muslim nor a homosexual can be trusted, because both are colluding to overthrow the Christian nation of Uganda. This highlights the historical tensions that have existed between Muslims and Christians in Uganda, ones that have been growing as waves of Muslim Somali refugees are relocated to Uganda, but one that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in
Uganda has assuaged to a certain extent, as evidenced by the strong support for the bill articulated by the Muslim leaders.

If homosexuals are as two-faced as theses tabloids and Ssempa suggest—again displaying signs of Western decadence cum bourgeois respectability in order to hide their devious acts that take place in the bedroom---it is not too far of a stretch to imagine them capable of funding terrorism. These suicide bombing withstanding, terrorism may be exactly the project that homosexuals have undertaken in Uganda, according to these sources: the homosexual agenda, as I have repeatedly discussed, is seen to seek the destruction of Uganda’s “marriage-based society.” Collusion with a known enemy of the Ugandan state is the logical next step for a homosexual movement invested in this destructive project. That collusion is pay back for not only refusing to recognize homosexuality as a right, but also because the success of the anti-homosexuality movement marks Uganda as a pure nation vis-à-vis the rest of the world. And because homosexuals, as I have argued, cannot be postcolonial national subjects, because they are always imagined to have come from elsewhere, or having been infected by foreignness, homosexuals are de facto terrorists. Neither the terrorist nor the homosexual can belong: both seek the demise of the postcolonial nation-state. It should be noted that the terrorist has emerged as the primary threat to the Western nation, while the homosexual has emerged as the primary repository of nationalist anxiety in Uganda, and perhaps other parts of the postcolonial world, at the same time.

As Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai (2002) argue, the figure of the terrorist is developed as the object of US national security discourses by drawing on previous discourses of the
monster and the queer, that is by sexualizing and pathologizing the terrorist, and by making the terrorist confess, thus producing knowledge about the national enemy. The figure of the monster, terrorist, fag also acts as a pedagogical tool to produce a normalized, docile patriot subject, who learns how to properly live his life by not transgressing the norms that uphold heteronormative nationalism. That this pedagogical discourse of terrorism is also going global, designating certain practices and their practitioners as terrorists, adds another layer of complexity to the discourses of postcolonial nationalism, Christian Right, and the Balokole that produce the imaginary geography of homosexuality.

The reader is interpolated in these pieces as a fellow nationalist-patriot, who is responsible for reporting other homosexuals they know to the paper:

Police is [sic] now hunting for [blacked out name of alleged homosexual] like a gold coin and appeals for public cooperation to nab him before he pollutes the population (The Red Pepper, 2006b).

[In order to expose all lesbians,] Send us the name and occupation of the lesbin [sic] in your neighbourhood and we shall shame her (The Red Pepper, 2006c).

In the first quotation, the reader is enrolled in the project of exposing a particular individual deviant homosexual as a responsibility of citizenship. This is an urgent task: if the homosexual is not caught quickly, he will surely continue spreading this disease. The reader is asked to collude with the state in order to effect this program of incarceration
and biopolitical purification. In the second, the reader is asked to expose individuals that are not yet known, but whom the reader is tasked with finding. Here, the reader is enrolled in a project of discipline: the editors will publish all the photos of the lesbians they receive in order to shame and deter them from committing this act in the future.

This latter is a technology of governance that is adopted in the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, in this context, given juridical mandate. Anyone who knows a homosexual is expected to report him or her to the authorities:

Failure to disclose the offence. A person in authority, who being aware of the commission of any offence under this Act, omits to report the offence to the relevant authorities within twenty-four hours of having first had that knowledge, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty currency points or imprisonment not exceeding three years (Uganda Parliament, 2009, cl. 14).

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill then draws on these previous tabloid practices to enroll the social body into self-surveillance, to make citizens of Uganda open their eyes to the sinful practices of homosexuality that are taking place around them, and that the likes of the tabloids and Martin Ssempa are exposing. This time, however, the failure to report the acts is so serious, the duty of responsible citizenship so great, that it becomes criminal to not report one’s family member, congregate, student, etc.

This genre of tabloid expose is significant for several reasons. First, it shows that Balokole values of exposing deviance are practiced not just by the Balokole movement itself. This is consistent with Kevin Ward’s (2002) assertion that the Balokole sets the
standard of morality for many Ugandans who do not identify as Balokole. It is also consistent with current research in religious geographies that shows that religious institutions and practices have significant effect not only on those who practice them, but on the entire social body. Second, it shows that the imaginary geography of homosexuality produced by the Balokole has become a common, if not dominant, representation of homosexuality in Uganda: these tabloid representation, like the Balokole, draw on Christian Right constructions of homosexuality as a mental disease, protected and promoted by a gay agenda, of nationalist discourses which construct homosexuality as a colonial imposition, and finally the Balokole spatialization of homosexuality as hidden and in need of exposing. This geography is now in circulation through churches and the Ugandan press. Furthermore, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is not entirely new. It builds upon and solidifies practices that have been in crafting for the last decade as homosexuality as an object of governance was brought more and more under the postcolonial state’s gaze: for instance, enrolling the social body in surveillance of homosexuality as the tabloids have done.
Section IV: Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda are an expression of nationalist distrust of the outside world. Anti-gay organizers appropriate an enemy constructed by the American Christian Right, transform it into an enemy of the postcolonial nation, and then seek to locate and destroy its influence in the social body. The homosexual is seen to embody foreignness, thus he is always located outside the social body by accusing the West of imposing it on Africa, and/or accusing Africans who practice homosexuality as having been penetrated by, and therefore contaminated with, European- or American-ness. Having forfeited their claims to belonging, gay Africans are therefore no longer African. This has also allowed postcolonial nationalist movements to provincialize the West and reclaim African sexuality as the exception. This move symbolically overturns the sexual hierarchy that has structured relations between Africa and the West, so that the West’s sexual failures (homosexuality) provide justification for Uganda and other African states to intervene (whether they have the political-economic clout to do so is another story).

I have also argued that Balokole values are used to police (by exposing) homosexual practices, which deviate from Balokole norms of reproduction, the naturalized family, sexual purity, and transparency. The Balokole bring together nationalist and Christian Right discourses that construct homosexuality as a colonial
imposition, an illness, and a sophisticated agenda, creating a geography of homosexuality in which homosexuality is hidden and must be exposed to prevent its spread. Many scholars have shown how religious movements in the South provide the urban masses modes of inclusive world making and the means of stability amid chaos (Comaroff, 1985; Davis, 2004; Sheringham, 2010). I show that these movements are in some cases actively political, not only fulfilling the spiritual and material needs of their congregates, but in the case of the Balokole, violently excluding those it constructs as enemies. Geographies of religion should therefore examine how and why Pentecostal religious movements of the South enter into the overtly political realm and how they interact with the state to create disciplinary structures.

This analysis of anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda shows the relevance and value of bringing geographies of evangelicalism into dialogue with queer African studies. These literatures share the task of analyzing the ways in which the West is and should be decentered and provincialized to achieve a progressive anticolonial politics (Boyle, 2010; Oswin, 2006), rather than the extremely violent, restrictive ones we see at play in anti-homosexuality politics. I have sought to fill the gaps left by these two literatures by bringing them together: queer African studies show how the postcolonial state interacts with queerness to produce nationalist anxieties over its existence (without theorizing the role of religious movements in this process), while the geographies of evangelicalism literature provides a useful framework for understanding how Pentecostal movements sometimes enter into governance (without acknowledging how the state interacts with these processes). Together, we can see that religious movements like the Balokole
intertwine with the state, working through discourses of the Christian Right and
postcolonial nationalism, to enter the realm of governance.

Furthermore, this serves as a call for more research, on the part of both literatures,
into the relationships cultivated by the Christian Right with Christians of the global
South. As Kaoma (2009) shows, conservative congregations provide financial benefits to
those African congregations who toe the line on social issues like homosexuality and
women’s rights. I have been cautious not to overemphasize the influence of the Christian
Right, showing only how it has inserted its discourses of homosexuality into public
debate in Uganda, and, what I find to be most significant, the ways in which these
constructions are elaborated and transformed for local use. This shows how flexible
religious messages can be purporting to hold universal truths while being claimed as
traditional and authentic in whatever contexts they enter (Lehmann, 1998). But future
research, particularly with access to subjects on the ground in Uganda, might delve more
into this relationship which is structured by a neocolonial hierarchy on the one hand, and
the growing clout of African Christian leaders’ to voice Africans’ concerns within global
Christianity on the other.

The fear of and violence toward homosexuality in Africa might be seen as a proxy
war for cleansing oneself of the Other, the Other who has historically subjugated
Africans. As Mbembe (2002) puts it:

The course of African history is said to be determined by the combined
action of a diabolical couple formed by an enemy—or tormentor—and a
victim. In this closed universe, in which “making history” consists of
annihilating one’s enemies, politics is conceived of as a sacrificial process (252).

It is ironic that the very forces that make the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill unlikely—namely the structure of the international political economy in which African states must answer to their debtors/lenders/neocolonizers, not to the will of their own citizens—are themselves implicated in the fomenting of anti-homosexuality politics in the first place. The failure of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill to pass will only reinforce the perception that the colonialist gay agenda is gaining more and more power, preventing Ugandans from deciding their own laws. This will be an ambivalent victory indeed, especially for those who, as named homosexuals, will be seen to be protected by the West in Uganda. What is at stake in anti-homosexuality politics in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa is a “dream of a world without Others,” a dream of a world without difference, a dream of a sexually homogeneous world that would not threaten to determine Africa’s future, or undermine its ability to survive.
Works Cited


86


