

**2015**

**LUND UNIVERSITY**

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SIMV30 Spring Term



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## **BROADENING THE SCOPE OF POVERTY AND SEXUALITY**

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*Should Non-Conforming Sexuality be a Dimension of Development?*

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## **Cover Picture**

The image portrays an asylum seeker from Uganda. He covers his face to ensure anonymity for himself while he marches with the LGBTI Asylum Support Task Force during the Gay Pride in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 8 2013 (Newsweek, 2014).



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## **Minor Field Study**

This study has been carried out within the framework of the Minor Field Study (MFS) Scholarship Programme and the Travel Scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The MFS Scholarship Programme provides Swedish/Nordic university students with the opportunity to conduct fieldwork relevant for their Bachelor and/or Master thesis in low- and middle income countries, or more specifically in the countries included on the DAC list of ODA recipients.

Sida's main purpose with the Scholarships is to stimulate and increase the students' interest, knowledge and understanding of development issues. The MFS provide the students with practical experience of fieldwork in developing settings. A further aim of Sida is to strengthen the cooperation between Swedish university departments and institutes and organisations in these countries. The School of Social Work at Lund University is one of the departments that administer MFS Programme funds.

## Abstract

The existence and deepening of (global) poverty and inequality is at the core of development. However, the close connection between non-conforming sexuality and poverty is habitually overlooked. The study seeks to underpin that non-conforming sexuality should be a dimension of the social development paradigm. Thus, the study explores the connections between the public construct of homosexuality, experienced sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom in the case of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals in Kampala, Uganda. For this purpose, ten weeks exploratory fieldwork was conducted in Kampala from late January to early April 2015. The data collection included triangulation of eight weeks of participant observation and eleven qualitative semi-structured interviews with self-identified LGBT individuals. The findings were thematically analysed, and theorized with the capability approach. The study finds that the socio-structural poverties such as social ostracism from family, culture and religion are constitutive of LGBT individuals' lived experiences in Kampala. Furthermore, the study shows that LGBT individuals in Kampala are deprived of any free sexual agency to choose how to be, what to be and with whom to be publicly and privately. The study thus concludes, if the social development paradigm is to adhere to its own definition of development as freedom, it needs to stop overlooking the connection between non-conforming sexuality and poverty.

**Key words:** Uganda, sexuality, poverty, capability, LGBT, development

## Acknowledgements

A friend of mine at one point told me that writing a thesis is like “pushing an elephant through the needle hole”. Writing this thesis has indeed been like pushing an elephant, however the elephant would not have been pushed anywhere, let alone through the needle hole, without the collaboration, recognition and encouragement from a lot of different actors. Let me therefore extend my gratitude to the ones who made this thesis possible.

First, I want to thank the School of Social Work for granting me Sida’s Minor Field Study scholarship. Without the scholarship my fieldwork in Uganda would not have been conceivable. Second, I want to express my immense appreciation to SMUG, Spectrum, Icebreakers, and FARUG, and the people who agreed to be interviewed by me. Without you, there would be no study. Being neither a poet nor a sentimentalist, I cannot adequately put down into words what your commitment and trust mean to me. What I can say though is; *Aluta Continua!*

Third, I want to thank Mathias Provst, Stefanie Licht, Uzma Kazi, Elsa Silva, Christina Skjolding Hjelm, Madeleine Persson, Tanja Nimb, Edita Blazyte, K.C. Bindu, and Suresh M. Chavady for your peer-reviews, reflexive exercises, care packages, home-cooked meals, post cards and so forth. First and foremost, I want to thank you for your unwavering confidence in me and my work.



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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AHA	Anti-Homosexuality Act
AHB	Anti-Homosexuality Bill
CA	Capability Approach
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
FARUG	Freedom and Roam Uganda
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
SMUG	Sexual Minorities Uganda
ULII	Uganda Legal Information Institute
UN	United Nations
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

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## 1. Introduction

The study's starting point is the contention that sexuality and in particular non-conforming sexuality is a missing dimension of development. Even with the existence and deepening of (global) poverty and inequality at the core of development (Potter, 2014), the close connection between sexuality and poverty is habitually overlooked. Sexuality and poverty are connected as deprivation on the basis of sexuality "is in itself a dimension of poverty, producing a whole host of poverty-related outcomes, from social exclusion and physical insecurity to greater vulnerability to disease, hunger and death" (Runeborg, 2008:7). The inattention to this connection is underpinned by a lack of understanding the multidimensionality of both poverty and sexuality (Jolly, 2010a:12). In other words, to appreciate the profound connection between sexuality and poverty requires that poverty is not reduced to lowness of monetary income, and sexuality is not reduced to (hetero)sexual<sup>1</sup> acts.

The justification for development's missing engagement with aspects of sexuality beyond health has long been sexuality's relegation to the *private* sphere (Armas, 2008; Jolly, 2010b; Lind, 2010). However, sexuality is greatly constructed in the *public* sphere through discourse, legal codes, family policy, the media and alike (Oleksy, 2009:4). While the narrow comprehension of poverty and sexuality, and the dichotomisation of the private and public sphere constitute barriers for sexuality as a dimension in development in general, people with non-conforming sexualities face an additional barrier. That is to suggest, development is inherently heteronormative in its narratives, policies, and practices which means that "heterosexuality is normalized, naturalized, and privileged in societies of the global South, in the international development field, and in colonial and post/neocolonial narratives of the so-called Third World or global South" (Lind, 2010:7). Thus, people with non-conforming sexualities living in poverty are rendered invisible in development. In an attempt to counter this invisibility the study focuses on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) individuals' lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and their understandings of freedom in Kampala, Uganda.

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<sup>1</sup> Whenever brackets like these are inserted, it is to indicate the duality of the concept in itself and the meaning of it.

## 1.1. Points of Departure: An interdisciplinary Perspective

The study is written from an interdisciplinary perspective combining development studies and social work. While relative consensus exists that development is preoccupied with poverty and social work with social (in)justice, the definitions, measures and interventions of development (see e.g. Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Jönsson, Jerneck & Arvidson, 2012; Potter, 2014; Sumner & Tribe, 2008; Willis, 2005) and social work (see e.g. Kokkinn, 2005; Meeuwisse, Swärd & Sunesson, 2007; Payne, 2006; Posborg, Nørrelykke & Antczak, 2011) remain highly debated.

Nevertheless, the explicit intellectual connection between development and social work has recently been made in the social development paradigm (Midgley, 1995; 2003). The emerging paradigm offers a broadened understanding of poverty to include economic and also social dimensions by incorporating an emphasis on social (in)justice. In other words, social adequacy is promoted as the means and end of development (Lombard & Twikirize, 2014:318), thus providing social work with a platform to consolidate its mandate as an international profession committed to “affirming citizenship-based welfare entitlements and tackling structural inequalities” (Dominelli, 2012:51).

Although, the paradigm offers a welcome dialogue between development and social work, non-conforming sexuality risks being a missing dimension of it too. In order to underscore that non-conforming sexuality is relevant as a dimension in the social development paradigm, the study therefore uses the paradigm’s own conceptualization of poverty as capability inadequacy and development as freedom to explore LGBT individuals’ lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom in Kampala, Uganda.

## 1.2. Why Uganda?

Anti-sodomy and/or anti-homosexuality<sup>2</sup> laws are in place in 67 countries worldwide with death penalty in ten of these countries (Amnesty International, 2014). Uganda is one of the countries that has increasingly deepened poverty and inequality on the basis of homosexuality in the past five years (ibid.). The country thus presents a suitable context to explore the overlooked connections between poverty and non-conforming sexuality.

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<sup>2</sup> Sodomy refers to anal and/or oral sex between people, while homosexuality is the romantic and/or sexual attraction and/or behaviour between people of the same sex.

Notwithstanding colonial anti-sodomy laws<sup>3</sup> and the complete explicit prohibition of same-sex marriage in 2005 (Mujuzi, 2009), Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB) of 2009 proposed an expansion of the existing sanctions to include death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality"<sup>4</sup> and life imprisonment for "the offence of homosexuality"<sup>5</sup> (Bahati, 2009:5–6). With its AHB Uganda is the first country in Africa to simultaneously broaden criminal penalties for those who engage in same-sex *acts*, those who *identify* as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI), and those in civil society who in any way *aid, abet or promote* LGBTI individuals (Kretz, 2013). Hence, the AHB not only sanctioned legal criminalisation but also prompted social ostracisation of LGBTI individuals in Uganda.

The relevance of Uganda as the chosen context for the study might puzzle some as the AHB was revoked by the Ugandan Constitutional Court in August 2014 only a few months after it was signed into law, the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), in February 2014. However, the AHB serves as an enduring catalyst for extensive disregard and deterioration of LGBTI rights and pro-LGBTI attitudes in Uganda (Kretz, 2013). Arguably, the main repercussion is that the increasing international recognition of LGBTI individuals as citizens eligible to the same formal and informal entitlements and responsibilities as their heterosexual counterparts (Richardson, 2004:392–393) does not prevail in Uganda. Thus, LGBTI individuals in Uganda are rendered secondary citizens at best, and at worst not citizens at all. In other words, the AHB has not only sanctioned but also consolidated social injustice for LGBTI individuals in Uganda in the form of unequal, or non-existing, economic, political, and social entitlements and opportunities (NASW, n.d.).

### 1.3. Research Purpose and Questions

At the onset of the study three barriers to non-conforming sexuality becoming a dimension of development were identified. These are development's (1) narrow

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<sup>3</sup> Sections 145, 146 and 148 in the Uganda Penal Code Act of 1950 (Uganda Legal Information Institute, n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Aggravated homosexuality covers same-sex acts with people under the age of 18 years or people who have a disability. It also applied when the 'offender' is HIV positive or a guardian and/or authority of the person with whom he/she has same-sex (Bahati, 2009:6).

<sup>5</sup> The offence of homosexuality includes "(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; (c) her or she touches another person with the *intention* of committing the act of homosexuality (my emphasis)" (ibid.:5).

comprehension of poverty and sexuality; (2) dichotomisation of the public and private sphere; and (3) entrenched heteronormativity. Conversely, the study argues that these three barriers are unjustifiable from a social development perspective. Moreover, the study argues that, if the social development paradigm stays confined within these barriers, the many connections between poverty and non-conforming sexuality are obscured, leaving social injustice on the basis of sexuality overlooked and unaddressed. Thus, the study's overarching purpose is to underpin that non-heteronormative sexuality should be a dimension of the social development paradigm. This is done through an empirical exploration of the connections between the public construct of homosexuality, experienced sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom in the case of LGBT individuals in Kampala, Uganda. For this purpose, three operational questions are explored:

- 1. What sexuality-based deprivations are constitutive of LGBT individuals lived experiences in Kampala?*
- 2. How does the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda play into LGBT individuals' experiences of living within these sexuality-based deprivations in Kampala?*
- 3. How do LGBT individuals understand freedom from their experienced sexuality-based deprivations?*

The questions are answered through data collected during a case study of LGBT individuals' lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom conducted from late January to early April 2015 in Kampala, Uganda. The data collection includes triangulation of participant observation and qualitative semi-structured interviews with eleven self-identified LGBT individuals located in Kampala. The thematic data analysis is based on themes identified in the interview transcripts, and the themes are theorized with the capability approach.

#### **1.4. A Note on Terminology**

The study alternates between the abbreviation *LGBTI* and *LGBT*. The first refers to the general LGBTI community in Uganda as the collection of individuals and organisations that either identify as, support and/or work for the inclusion of LGBTI individuals to 'mainstream' society. The latter refers to the study's participants and informants.

*Sexuality-based deprivations* refer to the material and non-material denials or lacks people experience on the basis of their sexuality. *Freedom* refers to the access, control and socially grounded choices people have to be and do what they value. The idea of sexuality-based deprivations and freedom are elaborated later in the study (see chapter 4). The *public sphere* refers as much to the discursive space in which individuals and groups discuss matters of mutual interest, and reach value judgments of what is morally right and wrong in their society, as the practical space of publicly owned streets, pathways, civic buildings and facilities that individuals and groups have to move within. Conversely, the *private sphere* is the part of societal life in which an individual has, varying degrees, of self-determination unimpeded by the actors in the public sphere such as the state.

## 1.5. Delimitations

The study is geographically limited to LGBT individuals in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. This demarcation is not based on the assumption that LGBTI individuals do not reside in other parts of the country or that their understandings and experiences are not equally important. Rather, with the majority of the population and known LGBTI organisations located in Kampala, the logical inference is that the best part of LGBTI individuals must live in Kampala. Moreover, the study's gatekeeper, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), is also to be found in Kampala.

SMUG is a not-for-profit umbrella organisation that monitors, coordinates, and supports its member organisations in their efforts to emancipate LGBTI individuals in Uganda. The state-ostracized homophobia in Uganda means SMUG has difficulties getting officially registered and necessitates extensive security measures such as an undisclosed address. Thus, to avoid compromising SMUG's confidentiality, there are no elaborative descriptions of the personnel or the concrete settings for the data collection. This should, however, not have any implication for the trustworthiness of the study as formal informants were not sampled from SMUG, and the elaboration of the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda amply illustrates the setting of the data collection.

Another delimitation concerns the study's terminology of LGBT(I). On the one hand, the study argues for the harmfulness of hegemonic (heteronormative) accounts of the global South by the global North. On the other hand, the study uses abbreviations to categorize the informants that have been constructed in the global North in a time and space different from the one explored in Uganda. However, at the moment of writing

there is no other consensual way of referring to people with non-conforming sexualities in Uganda, besides degenerative ones, and the LGBTI community itself uses the LGBTI abbreviation<sup>6</sup>. The conceptualization therefore has to do, for now.

Finally, to refer only to the public construct of homosexuality negates other non-conforming gender and sexual identifications. However, the construction of sexuality inherent in the AHB/AHA only includes the heterosexual and homosexual binary. As such, there is no differentiation between sexual and gender orientation. Thus, it is beyond the scope of this study to adequately address the convergences and divergences between sexuality-based deprivations and gender-related poverties.

## 1.6. Disposition

The study proceeds in six chapters. *Chapter 2* locates the study's contribution within the existing literature on the connection between sexuality and poverty within and outside the context of Uganda. *Chapter 3* outlines the ways in which the study has methodologically pursued, produced and presented knowledge to answer the research questions in a trustworthy manner. *Chapter 4* elaborates the study's theoretical framework from the intellectual heritage of the social development paradigm to the operationalisation of the capability approach in relation to the study's focus on sexuality. *Chapter 5* sets the scene for the analysis through an overview of the political battles, economic structures, religious ideologies and social rules that underpin the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda. *Chapter 6* interprets the analytical themes established under chapter 3 with the conceptual framework from chapter 4 and chapter 5. *Chapter 7* concludes the study and provides recommendations for further research.

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<sup>6</sup> This was discussed in an informal interview with the documentation and research manager at SMUG. He expressed a wish to establish a terminology that more appropriately captures the way in which people with non-conforming sexualities in Uganda actually identify with their sexuality. However, the discussion of which alternatives there might be is outside the study's scope.

## 2. Previous Research

To investigate the sexuality-based deprivations experienced by LGBT individuals in Kampala, Uganda, necessitates a review of the knowledge already produced by previous studies regarding the topic. In the process of reviewing literature, it turned out that studies on the connection between sexuality and poverty in Uganda are very limited. The scope of the literature review was therefore broadened, and the second part of the chapter looks at studies outside the context of Uganda. In the backdrop of the review, the chapter concludes with the study's primary scientific contribution.

### 2.1. Within Uganda

The studies that do exist on the connection between poverty and sexuality in the context of Uganda primarily focus on sexuality in relation to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and/or sexual behaviour. Not only do these studies mainly focus on heterosexuality, poverty is also primarily defined in economic terms. For example, one study investigates the connection between poverty and risky sexual behaviour through an examination of the effect of wealth status on age at sexual debut and condom use (Madise, Zulu & Ciera, 2007). The study finds that economic poverty often influences the transmission of HIV by making especially females have an early sexual debut, diminishing the chances of condom use, and prohibiting access to services (*ibid.*). Another study similarly shows that many adolescents living with HIV grow up in HIV-affected families in poverty (Loos et al., 2013). Hence, economic poverty seems to lead to and reproduce poor sexual health and risky sexual behaviour.

Knowledge about the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity does not seem to surpass the influence of poverty. Rather, studies indicate that poverty plays a key role in influencing sexual choices and behaviours among many girls, women and adolescents in Uganda (Hulton, Cullen & Khalokho, 2000; Jones & Norton, 2007). For example, poverty in the form of either lowness of income or food insecurity appears to make transactional sexual relationships common, especially for young women in rural areas (Jones & Norton, 2007; Miller et al., 2011; Råssjö, Mirembe & Darj, 2006). This indicates that there is a connection between economic poverty, sexual health, sexual behaviour and location. Another study shows that although peer pressure is the main barrier for adolescents to adopt preventive behaviour in relation to HIV, poverty likewise constitutes a significant

barrier (Bakeera-Kitaka et al., 2008). Despite the narrow comprehension of poverty and sexuality in these studies, they do confirm that poverty indisputably plays into sexual health and sexual (risk) behaviour and vice-versa. However, studies concerned with sexuality and poverty in the context of Uganda largely investigate the connection between heterosexuality, sexual health, sexual behaviour and economic poverty with LGBTI individuals being virtually absent from these studies.

The studies that do explicitly concern LGBTI individuals in Uganda almost exclusively focus on the AHB and/or AHA. For example, during the drafting of the AHB, Hollander (2009:221–222) predicted that the AHB would cause the LGBTI community to be excommunicated by the church; neglected, evicted or disowned by the family; expelled from school; discriminated in the labour market; denied social services, and even killed. In the aftermath of the AHA, SMUG (2014:1)<sup>7</sup> summarises the situation for the LGBTIs in Uganda in the following way: “The passing of AHA (Anti-Homosexuality Act) has given permission to a culture of extreme and violent homophobia whereby both state and non-state actors are free to persecute Uganda’s LGBTI people with impunity.” SMUG’s report also shows that in four months (20<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 – 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2014) after the immediate passing of the AHA, there were 162 reported incidences of persecution against LGBTI people, covering a continuum of direct violence, kidnapping and torture, intimidations, blackmailing, family rejection and loss of property, home and income (ibid.:2). Another study finds that the AHA to have had notably negative impacts on the HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for LGBTI persons (Semugoma, Beyrer & Baral, 2012).

Moving beyond the direct implications for LGBTI individuals, another study shows that the promotion of freedom for the LGBTI community is hampered by the interplay of three factors: first, the legal criminalisation makes it difficult for LGBTI groups and activists to organize and advocate; second, the inaccessibility of the country limits the possibility for international support; and third, the mobility of LGBTIs is restricted domestically and internationally (Kretz, 2013:208).

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<sup>7</sup> The study recognises that SMUG’s report does not constitute an academic peer-reviewed source, however with local knowledge of the situation, the report was still deemed relevant. Moreover, the researcher read the report before this study was decided upon, and before SMUG became the study’s gatekeeper. As such, the inclusion of the report is not a result of collaborating with SMUG.

Despite the AHB and AHA's apparent negative implications on the well-being of LGBTI individuals in Uganda, studies concerned with the AHB/AHA in Uganda have not emphasised LGBTI individuals' lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations as much as the reasons behind the systematic and systemic homophobia fuelling the AHB/AHA. These studies are outlined further later in the study (see chapter 5). Nonetheless, the few studies that do exist, somewhat addressing the focus of this study, indicate that while sexuality-based deprivations experienced by LGBTI individuals in Uganda are material, they are profoundly social too.

## **2.2. Outside Uganda**

To substantiate the claim that the comprehension of poverty needs to be expanded from merely economic to also social, and that the understanding of sexuality needs to transcend an exclusively heteronormative conceptualisation, studies concerned with the link between non-conforming sexuality-based deprivations outside the context of Uganda were reviewed. These studies suggest that the approaches to the investigation of poverty and sexuality inherent in the aforementioned studies in Uganda are inadequate in mapping the connection between the two.

In line with the broadened social understanding of poverty inherent in the social development paradigm, previous studies confirm that the sexuality-based deprivations LGBTI individuals experience globally are not only material or related to sexual health and behaviour but also largely socio-structural. For example, a study shows that in Botswana the experiences for lesbian, gay and transgender individuals include varying degrees of distress due to social isolation, criminalization, and unaddressed health care (Ehlers, Zuyderduin & Oosthuizen, 2001), while another study shows that gay men in Nigeria frequently experience aggression, alienation, verbal abuse, physical abuse, rape, and psychological abuse (Sekoni, Ayoola & Somefun, 2015).

Moreover, the sexuality-based deprivations do not only consist of manifest violations experienced by LGBTI individuals, but also involve the fear of violations within LGBTI individuals. For example, a study situated in Latin America shows that lesbians are often silent about their sexual preferences due to fear of employment loss, a silence that has consequences for their mental, physical and sexual health (Sardá, 2008).

Studies suggest that one of the common justifications used for the systematic and regular violations against LGBTI individuals is the safeguarding of public moral and

order. For example, Cakmak (2013) shows that while transgender people living in Turkey are frequently violated in one way or another through arbitrary detentions, evictions, fines, and police brutality, these violations are conducted and condoned not only by private individuals but also by the state. The Turkish state uses the notion that transgender constitute a threat to the, unclearly defined, public moral and order of Turkey to forego its basic responsibility to ensure the health and wellbeing of its citizens (ibid.). Another study shows that administrators of child welfare services and staff's attitudes to the physical (un)safety of transgender youth in their foster care group homes in New York City were characterised by deliberate indifference (Love, 2014). These studies confirm that the connection between poverty and sexuality is largely determined by the way in which sexuality is constructed and approached in a given setting.

As mentioned in the introduction and as demonstrated by Cakmak's (2013) study, violations of LGBTI individuals are often sanctioned by the state. However, overturning anti-sodomy and/or anti-homosexuality laws does not seem to be enough in improving living conditions for LGBTI individuals. For example, numerable studies highlight that despite the constitutional legalisation of non-conforming sexualities in South Africa, lesbians still face a noteworthy risk of corrective rapes, a hate crime practiced to convert lesbians to heterosexuality (see e.g. Morrissey, 2013; Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2013; Swarr, 2012). The same studies point to the inadequacy of a rights-based approach alone to alter the heterosexist culture justifying violations against non-conforming sexualities (ibid.).

In sum, the connection between poverty and (homo)sexuality is indisputably "located at the intersection of many axes of social, political, and cultural stratification" (Oleksy, 2009:5). The reviewed studies establish that the experiences of marginalization and/or criminalisation of LGBTI individuals are not limited to a certain geographic location, and that the experiences of sexuality-based deprivations vary. Hence, to understand the link between poverty and (non-conforming) sexuality requires situated analyses of peoples' lived experiences.

### **2.3. Contribution**

The literature review demonstrates that studies preoccupied with the socio-structural connections between poverty and sexuality, particularly non-conforming sexuality, are wanting in general but more or less absent in Uganda. By looking at the socio-structural



sexuality-based deprivations LGBTI individuals in Uganda experience, and what hopes, fears and negotiations that define their experiences, the study's main contribution is empirical. Even though, the study does not seek to make a definite assessment of the needs of the LGBTI population in Uganda, the empirical account of their lived experiences aims to draw analytical generalisations of the dialectic between the public construct of homosexuality, experienced sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom. In doing so, the study applies the capability approach which is in itself also a rather novel approach to the exploration of the connection between sexuality and poverty. The way in which the capability approach has been adapted to fit an exploration of this connection is elaborated in chapter 4.

### 3. Methodology

To clarify the knowledge pursued, produced and presented in the study, the chapter outlines the methodology of the study through sub-sections covering the theory of science, design, sampling, methods, ethical considerations and analysis strategy. Seeing that the study is qualitative, the meaning of which is elaborated below, the quality of the study is judged according to criteria different from those used in relation to quantitative research. The study's quality is asserted in relation to the criterion of trustworthiness including *credibility* (how believable are the findings?), *transferability* (what is the applicability of the findings to other contexts?), *dependability* (what is the applicability of the findings in other times?) and *confirmability* (does the researcher's presumptions influence the study to a high degree?) (Bryman, 2012:49). When deemed relevant, these criteria are discussed in the different sections of the chapter.

#### 3.1. What can be known, and how to know it!?

The study's position on knowledge is critical hermeneutic or "triple hermeneutic" (Juul 2012:142–146) which implies a view of knowledge as biased, subjective and dialogical (Wernett, 2014:134). The study thus acknowledges that "[c]ommunities are collections of individuals and groups that share some understandings of the world, but individuals have their own perspectives and interpretations depending on their individual experiences and places in the social system" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011:129). Hence, the study aims for analytical and not statistical generalisation by linking the findings from the exploration of LGBT individuals' lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom to the capability approach (Schwandt, 2007).

Critical hermeneutic goes beyond double hermeneutic in which the researcher interprets a reality or meaning already interpreted by participants in the study, and adds an interpretation of the conditions that affect the phenomenon studied (Juul, 2012:142–146). While the interpretation of LGBT individuals' experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom constitute the double hermeneutic, the analysis of the ways in which the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda intersects with these adds the third dimension. A particular feature of triple hermeneutic is furthermore that a critical perspective is allowed to inform the research in question as long as it is explicated (ibid.). The study's critical perspective is that the social

development paradigm needs to include (non-conforming) sexuality as one of its dimensions to alleviate material and non-material sexuality-based deprivations.

In brief, the ontological contribution of critical hermeneutic is that it “reflects the many discrepancies that constitute our historical, social, and cultural universe” while the epistemological contribution is to “radicalize the task of comprehension” (Roberge, 2011:17). Critical hermeneutic hence resonates with the study’s intent to reflect the interplay between the public construct of homosexuality and the lived experiences of LGBT individuals in Kampala, and to radicalize the comprehension of not only the connection between poverty and sexuality but also the understanding of the concepts themselves.

### **3.2. Case Study Design**

Development research has typically been informed by quantitative methods due to the general economic approach to poverty (Mayoux, 2006:116–118). However, the broadened conceptualisation of poverty has created room for qualitative methods in development research. As such, the study, to some extent, also contributes by exploring the applicability of qualitative research to inform development. Rather than to measure predetermined hypothesis precisely, qualitative methods seek to produce holistic understandings of complex realities and processes where even the research questions and hypotheses emerge cumulatively (ibid.). Micro-level case studies explored with a combination of methods such as (in)formal interviews and participant observation thus often constitute the data in qualitative research (ibid.).

Correspondingly, a micro-level case study of LGBT individuals’ understanding of their lived experiences in Kampala was conducted for the study. The design is exploratory in that the study investigates the connection between poverty and sexuality in a way characterized by a lack of detailed preliminary research (Baškarada, 2014:5; Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). The case study design resonates with the study’s position on knowledge as subjective and biased by acknowledging that human understanding, experience and behaviour cannot be conflated into a homogeneous entity, and that social science cannot offer predictive theories but rather concrete, context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006:223). While this subjectivist stance offers great flexibility, it also means that the transferability and dependability of a case study significantly depend on the composition and execution of it, thus making sampling approaches central (Easton, 2010).

### 3.3. Sampling Approach

The study needed to gain access to LGBTI individuals in Kampala to fulfil its purpose. SMUG was deemed a strategic gatekeeper on the basis of its position as the only umbrella organisation for LGBTI individuals in Uganda. SMUG was consequently contacted through e-mail in the initial stages of the research upon which the organisation agreed to collaborate with the researcher<sup>8</sup>.

Subsequently, the informants for the qualitative semi-structured interviews were sampled through Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling refers to a technique in which the researcher samples a small number of participants relevant to the research questions, then the sampled participants propose other participants relevant to the research and so forth (Bryman, 2012:424). SMUG provided access to LGBT individuals through some of its member organisations that then in turn sampled LGBT individuals.

Overall, the sampling approach presented one main challenge to the study. That is the possibility of a skewed perspective as the sampled informants are all somewhat organized by being members of one or more of SMUG's member organizations, thus leaving out the 'unorganized' LGBTI individuals. However, with the external sensibilities of the current situation for LGBTI individuals in Uganda SMUG was a necessary gatekeeper. It would have been unethical and potentially dangerous to even attempt to sample informants who have not themselves made an active decision to be, to some extent, visible.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the sample was not designed to be representative. However, there were certain criteria for the member organisations' sampling of informants to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and to enable analytical generalisation. The criteria were: (1) the informants should not be employed in LGBTI organisation to avoid activist and/or organisational agendas distorting the study's findings; (2) the informants should represent different subgroups of the LGBTI group to increase the likelihood of variability in the informants' interpretations; and (3) the informants should have divergent profiles in the sense of age, education, tribe etc. to likewise ensure variability.

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<sup>8</sup> The use of third person to refer to myself in my study is merely a rhetorical preference of mine in academic writing, but it does not denote any particular meaning.

The study aimed at data saturation to determine when the sample size was adequate to enable analytical generalisation on the basis of the findings. Data saturation means to achieve thematic exhaustion and variability within the data (Guest et al., 2006:65 cited in Bryman, 2012:426). The study claims to have achieved data saturation, even though the second criteria was not completely fulfilled as no intersex individuals were sampled. As such, the study cannot rightly claim transferability or dependability of the findings to include intersex which is also the reason for the study referring to LGBT individuals and not LGBTI individuals.

### **3.4. Participant Observation**

While the informants were being sampled, participant observation was conducted. Given the lack of studies similar to the present one, and the researcher's unfamiliarity with LGBTIs in the context of Uganda, the purpose of using participant observation as a research method was in particular to ensure confirmability. In other words, the method was intended to provide a solid base for the subsequent qualitative semi-structured interviews by contextualising the data and thereby increasing the researcher's reflexivity of preconceived notions of the research subject (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011:10–15).

Concretely, participant observation allowed a better understanding of the LGBTI community's semi-formal<sup>9</sup> organisation, structural challenges, and discourse from an internal (the community itself) and external (affiliated organisations, donors and other stakeholders) prior to the commencement of the formal interviews. The method consequently assisted the researcher in moving beyond the "tired polemics of violence, disease and reproduction" and beyond heterosexual normativity that have otherwise predominantly characterised research about African sexualities (Tamale, 2011:30).

#### **Being the Participant Observer**

Observations conducted in direct conjuncture with SMUG involved the organisation's daily routines, language and dynamics; informal interviews with SMUG's staff; observation of one training conducted by SMUG at a partner (not member) organisation in the use of the information collection and management tool, Martus<sup>10</sup>; access to the

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<sup>9</sup> Given that it is illegal to be and/or assist LGBTI individuals, the organisation cannot rightly be labelled fully formal, if formality is defined in relation to existing laws.

<sup>10</sup> Martus is a free and open source information collection and management tool that seeks to empower human rights activists through a more secure software to capture injustice and abuse (Martus, 2015).

Martus database with descriptions of 46 cases of violations and/or harassment against LGBTI individuals reported from May 2014 until April 2015; visits to three of SMUG's member organisations (FARUG<sup>11</sup>, Icebreakers and Spectrum<sup>12</sup>); and three meetings of approximately one hour each at a public bar with self-identified gay men seeking the assistance of SMUG's legal advisor in matters of eviction, asylum and employment loss. The participant observations indirectly involving SMUG entailed the launch of a report about the abuse of LGBTIs in the justice system in Uganda by a local civil and human rights organisation, and one meeting lasting roughly 90 minutes at the Danish Embassy with a representative of DANIDA regarding its efforts and attitudes towards LGBTI individuals and organisations in Uganda.

The researcher's positioning as an overt participant observer eased the establishment of rapport with the staff at SMUG, and prompted frequent informal interviews with them. To build or establish rapport refers to a relationship between the participant/informant and the researcher characterised by mutual goals and efforts to achieve the given goals (DeWalt & Dewalt, 2011:47). Simplistically put, the mutual goal between the researcher and the informal informants' is to promote emancipation for LGBTI individuals in Uganda. During the informal interviews the informant's direction was generally followed through active listening and nonintrusive verbal cues, but sometimes questions were asked in the form of summary feedback to clarify uncertainties (ibid.:137–156).

Prior to the fieldwork the researcher worried that identifying as a heterosexual white Western woman would pose barriers in the building of rapport. Conversely, the differences in race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation proved to be an advantage to the researcher. First, the participants' worry for repercussion was reduced by the researcher not being Ugandan or having an affiliation with a donor organisation, hence not having certain perceptions of how their sexuality should or should not be framed. Second, the differences made it well-accepted for the researcher to ask so-called "naïve questions" (ibid.:150–51). This enabled insights from the informants' without the researcher exerting a particular impact on the interaction.

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<sup>11</sup> Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) is a Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LBTI) organisation established in 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Both Spectrum and Icebreakers were founded in 2004 and are concerned with men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly health issues in relation to HIV/AIDS and STIs.

A consistent field diary was not kept during the period of participant observation for three main reasons: First, the crime rates in Uganda in terms of theft are very high, and the researcher, being a white Western woman, is an obvious target. This assumption was affirmed, when the researcher was robbed on the street on the third day in Kampala, and later robbed in her house shared with two Ugandans. As such, the researcher deemed it too risky to the informants' confidentiality to do more than jot notes of significant phrases or events (ibid.:160–164); second, the researcher experienced explicit suspicion whenever field notes were taken during participant observation, and writing field notes therefore seemed counterproductive for the data and interpretation quality; third, internet is a constant challenge in Uganda, and writing field notes in an online platform consistently was just not possible given the conditions. Without a proper field diary and the opportunity to confirm the data in the Martus database, the degree of trustworthiness of the data collected during the participant observation was deemed inadequate for analytical generalisation. The study's data analysis is therefore based on the eleven semi-structured interviews conducted with self-identified LGBT individuals. Nonetheless, the participant observation was crucial to the trustworthiness of the data collection and interpretation as a method offering contextualisation.

### **3.5. The Intersubjective Interviews**

The qualitative semi-structured interview is particularly suitable to explore and understand what is meaningful to different people as knowledge derived from qualitative interviews is produced, relational, conversational, contextual, linguistic and narrative (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:71–74). Interview knowledge is, in other words, intersubjective. The intersubjectivity generally makes qualitative interviews exceed observations by enabling flexibility and cumulative understanding by capturing underlying meanings and providing the space for unexpected and sensitive issues (Willis, 2006). As such, the method resonates with both the study's position on knowledge, the chosen case study design and the controversiality of (homo)sexuality as a research topic. Thus, the method is particularly appropriate to explore LGBT individuals' experiences of sexuality-based deprivations and the meanings they ascribe to them and to freedom. However, the disadvantage of the method's intersubjectivity is that the knowledge produced is prone to influence from both the researcher and informant (Mayoux, 2006), hence rendering confirmability tricky.

Even though the identity assigned to researchers on the basis of race, nationality, age, gender etc. is largely outside the control of the researcher, the biases and impacts of them can sometimes be anticipated (Apentiik & Parpart, 2006:38). The fact that the researcher had lived and worked in Kampala prior to the field work, and conducted participant observations of the research field prior to the interviews enabled realistic anticipation of biases from the informants. For example, it was to be anticipated that the informants would ask the researcher about her sexuality, country of origin and organisational affiliation. As such the researcher had considered the answers in advance.

In the process of building rapport with the participants, the researcher also acknowledged the informants' curiosity towards her as a foreigner by, when it was deemed suitable, telling about her country's food, shops, infrastructure etc. and by encouraging the informants to ask questions unrelated to the research prior and after the interviews. In addition to the period of participant observation, measures taken to reduce the intrusion of the researcher's preconceptions was to seek feedback from SMUG and the researcher's supervisor on the initial interview-guide.

### **Data Collection**

A semi-structured interview guide<sup>13</sup> was created during the period of participant observation with which eleven interviews were conducted with members and service users from FARUG, Icebreakers and Spectrum. The duration of the interviews was averagely a little more than one hour, and while nine of the interviews were conducted at the organisation of which the informant was a member and/or a service user, two of the interviews were conducted at SMUG. In order to avoid exposure of the informants, they are only described in general terms. The informants included one female bisexual (informant 4), one transgender man (informant 7), one transgender woman (informant 11); one lesbian (informant 1), and seven male gays (informant 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10) in the ages from 19 to 35 years. Most of the informants have attended higher education within a variety of fields, nonetheless the majority of them were unemployed at the time of the interviews.

Concretely, the interviews were structured into five formal parts: (1) briefing the informant; (2) asking the informant to (verbally) consent to the interview; (3) asking the

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<sup>13</sup> See appendix 1 for the interview guide.

informants' permission to record the interview; (4) conducting the interview; (5) debriefing the informant including. The debriefing included highlighting the possibility of informant verification<sup>14</sup>. Most of the interviews also included a sixth and seventh informal part; one part during which the informant would typically ask the researcher about the situation for LGBTI individuals in respectively Sweden and Denmark, and another part where the researcher would engage in informal interviews with the staff at the member organisation of the given interview. These informal parts prompted the researcher to be constantly reflexive about her position in the field, that is to say the way in which the interviews were conducted, the questions asked and the immediate inferences made.

As a novice researcher the partiality of qualitative research rendered it tempting to resort to theoretical deduction during and after the interviews. For instance, during the first two interviews it became clear to the researcher that the mistake was unintentionally made of posing questions to the informants including concepts directly derived from the intended theoretical framework such as 'freedom', 'beings', 'doings' and so forth. Upon having established the informant's name, age, occupation, educational level, sexual and gender identification the first open question was therefore changed to be "*How would you describe your life as a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender person in Kampala?*" A combination of open and close-ended follow-up questions usually constituted the rest of the given interview whereby the interview guide was incorporated indirectly. The interview guide was not changed, however it was censored for theoretical concepts during the interviews to reduce the researcher induced bias.

### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

Research with LGBTI populations commonly occurs within a complex, dynamic and hostile socio-political environment, rendering them a very vulnerable group to research (Martin & Meezan, 2003). Ethical considerations thus needed to inform the study in all its phases to prevent harm and/or exploitation of the participants (Bryman, 2012:130–135), and this section outlines the study's considerations. Based on reviews of multiple professional principles for research ethics, Bryman (ibid.) identifies four common areas of concern: *harm to participants*; *informed consent*; *invasion of privacy*; and *deception*.

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<sup>14</sup> Only two of the informants expressed interest, and have subsequently verified the transcripts of their interviews.

These four ethical principles are complemented with points from Martin and Meezan's (2003)<sup>15</sup> discussion of ethical principles involved, when social workers research LGBTIs.

The first principle of confidentiality entails measures to ensure that the identities and records of participants in the study are not distinguishable to unauthorized individuals. An important step to safeguard confidentiality is not to store participants' names, addresses or correspondences on hard drives; to store the list of participants and their identifier codes separately in a locked cabinet; to ensure that transcripts do not include participants' names, and to also keep copies of transcripts in a locked cabinet (Holmes, 2004 cited in Bryman, 2012:137). Although, these guidelines were followed to the widest extent possible, it is still not realistic to promise that no one outside the research will ever have access to the material collected during the study (Swedish Research Council, 2011:69). This was stressed in the study's information sheet which overlaps with the second ethical principle.

As with confidentiality, the principle of informed consent is not as easily implemented as it might seem. Prior to the formal interviews, the intent was to provide informants with an information sheet and a consent form<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, those of SMUG's member organisations sampling informants were sent both electronically to give to potential informants well in advance of the interviews. However, this request was not granted, thus hard copies of both were brought to every interview for the informants to read. Given that English is only one of Uganda's many spoken languages, and all the informants should not be expected to be able to read, verbal information about the study was moreover given to ensure informed consent. The informants were not required to sign the consent form to further warrant confidentiality (CODEX, 2014).

Informed consent requires information about the overall research plan; the aim of the research; the methods to be used; the consequences and risks entailed in the research; who the principal investigator is; the fact that participation is voluntary; and the right of the participant to cease participation at any time (CODEX, 2014). As a part of ensuring responsible research practice (Martin & Meezan, 2003) the risks of participation were not clearly elaborated in the information sheet as the unclear legal situation and the variety

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<sup>15</sup> Martin and Meezan (2003) draw on Code of Ethics from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) from 1996. Even though, there is a newer version of the NASW's Code of Ethics from 2008, the ethical principles included in this section remain the same

<sup>16</sup> See appendix 2 and 3 for the information sheet and consent form adapted from Bryman (2012:141).

of violations experienced by LGBTI individuals made it difficult to narrow down the risks. Instead, potential risks and measures taken to minimize them were discussed with each informant prior to the interview. For instance, one informant had already experienced being outed in the media and as such she was not particularly worried about having her name revealed. Conversely, this informant was nervous about the name and location of her dance group for lesbians being revealed, and as such neither was asked about before, during or after the interview. A general security measure was, to set the interviews at either SMUG or the organisation of which the given informant was a member as these places have extensive security systems, undisclosed locations and are familiar to the informants.

The third ethical principal concerning the invasion of privacy intersects with the first principle. Seeing that the member organisations and SMUG provided space for the interviews, it was not necessary to conduct research in the private sphere of the informants. The invasion of privacy can, of course, also happen through the questions asked during interviews. However, the participant observation prior to the interviews established a knowledge base of discursive, linguistic and practical practices to counter unnecessary invasion of the informants' privacy, and potential (un)conscious biases towards the LGBTI population (Martin & Meezan, 2003).

The last principle involves the question of deception in the sense that researchers represent their work as something that it is not (Bryman 2012:143). The study's intent was never to deceive any of the organisational or individual participants, on the contrary. Thus, in addition to sending the research proposal to SMUG prior to arrival in Uganda, providing the organisational participants and individual informants with an information sheet and a consent form, informants were presented with the opportunity of informant verification. Concretely, the informants, or their organisations, had to send an e-mail to the researcher to receive a transcript of their interview. The transcripts were not sent to the informants automatically as this could have jeopardized the informants' confidentiality and privacy. The researcher would moreover have had to store the informants e-mail addresses, thereby contrasting with the principle of confidentiality.

### **3.7. Qualitative Data Analysis: An Attractive Nuisance**

A hermeneutic approach to data analysis rejects the notion of one adequate interpretation (Wernet, 2014:234). Hence, hermeneutic data analysis only claims partial representation

of the data, with the chosen analysis strategy greatly influencing what is and is not represented. This section subsequently presents the study's analysis strategy.

The challenge of reducing the study's data was both theoretical (Roulston, 2014:304–5) and ethical (Willig, 2014:141). On the one hand, the, in part, pre-determined theoretical framework informed the data reduction process; on the other hand, data openness was essential to increase the confirmability of the study and to avoid misrepresentation of the informants' meanings. Seeing that postcolonial critique of development's account of the global South inspires the study, data openness was increasingly important.

Correspondingly, the themes that emerged from the iterative process of reading, coding, reflecting, writing, and rereading the interview transcripts (Roulston, 2014:305) are a mix of substantive/emic and theoretical/etic themes (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014:25–30). The first form of theme is data close as it involves concepts and phrases used by the LGBT individuals whereas the latter connects the data with the theoretical framework (ibid.). The themes are a result of two cycles of manual coding of the interview transcripts.

The first cycle of coding consisted of *in vivo* and descriptive coding, approaches particularly suitable for novice researchers (ibid.: 70–93). *In Vivo coding* refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record while *descriptive coding* consists of a word or short phrase that summarises the basic topic and not the content of a passage (ibid.). *In Vivo* coding is especially suitable to ensure data analysis' confirmability as it provides “a crucial check on whether you have grasped what is significant” to the informants, and help “crystallize and condense meanings” (Charmaz, 2006:57 cited in Saldaña, 2009:75). The coding method is moreover relevant to (dis)prove that a multidimensional understanding of the interplay between sexuality and poverty is needed, given that the method holds the potential of providing imagery, symbols, and metaphors for rich differentiated themes (ibid.:76). The appeal of descriptive coding is that it increases the analysis' dependability and transferability by enabling a “categorized inventory” (ibid.: 72) that makes it easy navigate the data and check the applicability of the findings spatially and temporally. Concrete examples of *In Vivo* codes significant in the chosen representation of the data are “hide my identity”; “we fear”; “we are not free in this life”; “mind-set in Uganda”; “people are born gay”; “act straight”; “they all use religion and culture to stigmatise us more”; “you just tend to keep quiet”; “you cannot

express yourself in public”; “you should adjust by being like they want”; and “my family does not love me”. The most frequent descriptive codes were pretence, fear, violations, culture, family, religion; public misrepresentation; freedom, adaptation and community.

The second cycle of coding used *focused coding*, the search for the most frequent and/or important first cycle codes to develop analytical themes. In contrast to the topics derived from the descriptive codes, a theme is a phrase that identifies what an unit of data means at a manifest and/or latent level (ibid.:139). While the first cycle of coding was done without consciously drawing on the theoretical framework in order to stay close to the lived realities of the informants, the second cycle of coding included the theoretical framework to enable analytical generalisation.

Four analytical themes emerged as a result of the coding process: (1) Sexual Agency within the Fear of Insecurities; (2) Social and Institutional Ostracism; (3) Ascribed Inferiority in the Misconstruction of Homosexuality; and (4) Freedom as Adaptation to Hegemonic Heteronormativity. While the three first themes were established in dialogue with the theoretical framework, the fourth theme truly arose cumulatively out of the frequent codes free, freedom, adaptation, and community. The study did not originally plan to include an analysis of the informants’ notions of freedom as it was deemed outside the scope of exploring LGBT individuals’ experiences of sexuality-based deprivations per se. However, the informants’ understandings of freedom underscored the importance of the theme for an inference of the unfreedom they experience. Therefore, the scope of the study was broadened and the research questions revised to include the theme. Moving on, the theoretical concepts needed to follow the analysis of the themes are elaborated in the next chapter.

## **4. Theoretical and conceptual Framework**

The study seeks to make several rather novel connections in its framework by connecting development with social work, poverty with the capability approach, development with sexuality, and the capability approach with sexuality. Thus, the chapter is structured to gradually narrow down the framework from the social development paradigm to the operationalised concepts from the capability approach used to carry out the analysis.

Correspondingly, the first section of the chapter in brief outlines the intellectual heritage of the social development paradigm, while the second section elaborates on the capability approach to poverty. The third section offers a definition of sexuality and a short elaboration of the historical link between sexuality and development while the fourth section explains the study's approach to operationalise the capability approach.

### **4.1. The 'new' Social Development Paradigm**

In order to understand the social development paradigm with its new normative conceptualization of poverty and development, a short outline of the main epochs in the history of development is required (Midgley, 2003:832). That is to suggest, before social work and development could dialogue, a paradigm shift from modernization and dependency theories to wellbeing and welfare theories was necessary.

When the concept of development arose in the immediate aftermath of World War II, it was mainly conceptualised through the Eurocentric modernization theories in which the global North was preoccupied with reconstruction and economic development, especially for the global South (Payne, 2006:270). Development was seen as a universal and linear process in which some states were ahead or behind of others, thus development had to promote modernity and remove traditional barriers to it (Gaba, 2014:58–61; Potter, 2014:50–51). The rather paternalistic modernization theories were opposed in the 1960s and 1970s by the conflict-oriented dependency theories that arose in Latin America. From this perspective, underdevelopment was a result of unequal exchange between countries in the global system, and social problems were subsequently either direct consequences of the global South's economic dependence on the global North or effects of structural changes forced by the same dependence (Gaba, 2014:63; Payne, 2006:271). Development was seen to only happen, if the global South pursued alternative development paths

independent of the global North (Potter, 2014:51). Although, the means to development differed in the two approaches, the end of development within them converged.

The paradigm shift that eventually altered the economic conceptualization of poverty occurred from the mid-1980s with the “impasse in development studies” (Schuurman, 2014:55–56). Two of the main catalysts for this impasse was development’s failure in the global South combined with the diversity of (under)development experiences, and the postmodernist and postcolonial critique of the normative characteristics of development (ibid.). With its emphasis on a broadened understanding of poverty, sexuality and the connection between them, the study thus draws on the lessons learnt from the impasse.

The impasse paved the way for the social development paradigm that redefined the concept of development to be socially relevant (Bak, 2004:82). In brief, the paradigm has four distinguishable cornerstones: “(1) a shift of the focus on the maintenance of living standards to actively promoting social change; (2) a strong focus on empowerment and self-determination; (3) a preference for participatory methods; (4) a shift from individual (casework) to developmental (community) work, community work” (Gaba, 2014:66). It is beyond the scope of the study to discuss in what ways its findings could be addressed alongside these cornerstones. However, the cornerstones illustrate that the means and ends of development are fundamentally more social than in the modernisation and dependency paradigms.

The most visible contributor to the new paradigm has been Amartya Sen with his capability approach (CA), an approach that equates development with freedom (ibid.:64). Given the CA’s constitutive role in the social development paradigm, it is also arguably the determining link between social work and development studies. The CA subsequently constitutes the foundation for this study’s theoretical and conceptual framework.

## **4.2. Poverty as Capability Inadequacy**

With the study having repeatedly indicated that poverty needs to be comprehended in more than material terms, this section outlines the way in which the study conceptualises a broadened understanding of poverty. As mentioned above, the study draws on the CA to poverty, and this section thus outlines the main thoughts and concepts underlying the approach.

Instead of merely echoing previous criticism of utilitarian and income-based understandings of poverty and development as evident in the modernisation theories (Berges, 2007:17), the CA, in line with the study's epistemological position, proposes an alternative space to conceptualize both (Alkire, 2005:117). In accordance with the study's ontological position (see section 3.1.), the main appeal of the CA is its emphasis on the heterogeneity of historical, social, and political structures and personal characteristics that constitute the experience of well-being and ill-being (Robeyns, 2005). Contrary to the idea of one hegemonic model of development as in the modernisation theories, the CA thus emphasises differentiated models.

In the CA *poverty* is understood as *capability inadequacy* (Sen, 1999:90). Rather than to equate poverty with the lowness of monetary income, poverty is viewed as the deprivation of basic capabilities hampering people's freedom and agency to lead the lives they value and have reason to value (ibid.:87). From this perspective, development is the process that removes *unfreedoms* such as systematic social deprivation, tyranny or neglect of public facilities, and expands *substantive freedoms* such as access to education and health facilities (ibid.). Essential in the CA's emphasis on freedom as the means and end of development is that development needs to include the process of removing unfreedoms, even if a person does not have an interest in exercising the freedom that is promoted (ibid.:37). That is to say, from the perspective of the CA, a person is still unfree, if the person does not have the opportunity to exercise alternative valuable choices (ibid.). In other words, the *agency* of a person in the sense of "someone who acts and brings about change" is central to the CA to poverty and development (ibid.:19), and hence central in the study's analysis.

*Functionings* and *capabilities* constitute freedom whereby the first refers to a person's achieved beings or doings, and the latter corresponds to the various opportunities an individual can choose from (Ibrahim, 2014:3), that is the freedom to choose from different ways of livings (Alkire, 2005:121–123). The CA puts emphasis on two forms of capabilities; instrumental and intrinsic capabilities. *Instrumental capabilities* cover different kind of rights, opportunities and entitlements that contribute to the general enhancement of freedom whereas *intrinsic capabilities* include the opportunities that are important to a person in their own right (Sen, 1999:36–37). A simplistic example in line

with the study's purpose could be that access to safer sex information (instrumental capability) enables sexual health (the intrinsic capability).

The functionings and capabilities a person has *reason* to value are determined by the social, economic and political context. For instance, a LGBTI individual might be in, and value being in, a same-sex relationship (the functioning), however the person cannot choose to get legally married in Uganda (the capability). Hereby, LGBTI individuals face a capability inadequacy (unfreedom) compared to heterosexual individuals in Uganda in regards to marriage. This is to say that marriage (intrinsic capability) is a legal right (instrumental capability) the general (heterosexual) population in Uganda can choose to use, rendering the choice of marriage something LGBTI individuals in Uganda have reason to value. In this example, the unfreedom to remove, whether the LGBT individual in questions wants to get married or not, is the legal prohibition of same-sex marriage, while the substantive freedom to expand is the positive right to same-sex marriage. In sum, the CA's main contribution thus lies in its emphasis on people's freedoms and on the role of people's agency in achieving these freedoms.

With the main concepts for the analysis in place, the concepts need to be operationalised. In order to operationalise the rather airy framework of the CA within the scope of this study, a definition of sexuality and an outline of the connection between sexuality and development are first needed.

### **4.3. When Sexuality and Development first met**

Similar to poverty, sexuality is a temporally and spatially contested concept. Conceptualisations of sexuality generally overlook that social and legal norms and economic structures based on sexuality impact people's opportunities of sexual self-determination, physical security, bodily integrity, health, education, mobility and economic status (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008). Thus, the study adopts the multidimensional definition of sexuality below as it not only underlines that sexuality and gender are both dynamic constructs interacting with and being defined by their social, economic, political and religious structures. It also indicates that the way in which sexuality is constructed has implications for people's sexual actions and choices in the private and public sphere, thus resonating with the CA's emphasis on the dialectic between context and agency.

[S]exuality is about a lot more than having sex. It is about *the social rules, economic structures, political battles and religious ideologies* that surround physical expressions of intimacy and the relationships within which such intimacy takes place. It has as much to do with being able to move freely outside the home and walk the streets *without fear* of sexual harassment or abuse as it has to do with whom people have sex with. It is as much concerned with how the body is clothed, from women feeling forced to cover their bodies to avoid unwanted sexual attention to the use of particular colours to mark the gender of infants and begin *the process of socialization* of boys and girls as different, as what people do when their clothes are off. And, where society and the state collude in *policing gender and sex orders*, it can be about the very right to exist, let alone to enjoy sexual relations (my emphasis).

(Cornwall, Corrêa & Jolly, 2008:5–6)

Even with this multidimensional definition of sexuality at hand, the study still argues that the social development paradigm risks overlooking non-conforming sexuality as a part of its frame. This claim is motivated by postcolonial scholarship's critique of development's hegemonic accounting of time (history) and the spatial distribution of knowledge (power) that often constructs the global South (Kapoor, 2002; McEwan, 2012:125; McFarlane, 2006; Simon, 2006; Sylvester, 1999; 2006), a critique that can arguably be extended to (international) social work (Dominelli, 2012). The entrenched heteronormativity in development presents such a hegemonic account, an account traceable back to when development and sexuality first encountered.

Contrary to what might be expected, sexuality and development have been coupled since colonialism where rigid gender and sexual binaries were imposed by the global North on the global South through laws that regulated sexuality by proscribing non-reproductive sexual expressions against the order of nature (Cornwall, 2014:610–611; Jolly, 2010b). When the technocratic modernization theories emerged, the colonial concern with sexual moral shifted to control of reproduction (ibid.). The shift meant that sexuality was primarily framed as a health issue underlined by a focus on disease, pregnancy prevention and curbing sexual excesses and perversions (Tamale, 2011:16). This idea of sexuality seems to permeate the contemporary understanding of sexuality as the reviewed studies on poverty and sexuality in Uganda suggest (see chapter 2).

Development and sexuality are thus not strangers, however sexual essentialism continues to be underscore development theories, values and application. In other words, little acknowledgement prevails of sexuality norms' influence on wellbeing for the ones not conforming to the given norm (Jolly, 2010a:18), and even the more recent rights-

based approaches to development have yet to incorporate sexuality as a core dimension of freedom and wellbeing (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008:32). A growing number of scholars correspondingly assert that the intimate connection between sexuality and poverty needs to be addressed by development (see e.g. Armas, 2008; Jolly, 2010a, 2010b; Lind, 2010; Runeborg, 2008). Drawing on Robert Chamber's "Web of Poverty's Disadvantages" that identifies several possible dimensions of poverty, Corrêa and Jolly (2008:29) have created an illustration of the web of connections between sexuality and poverty:

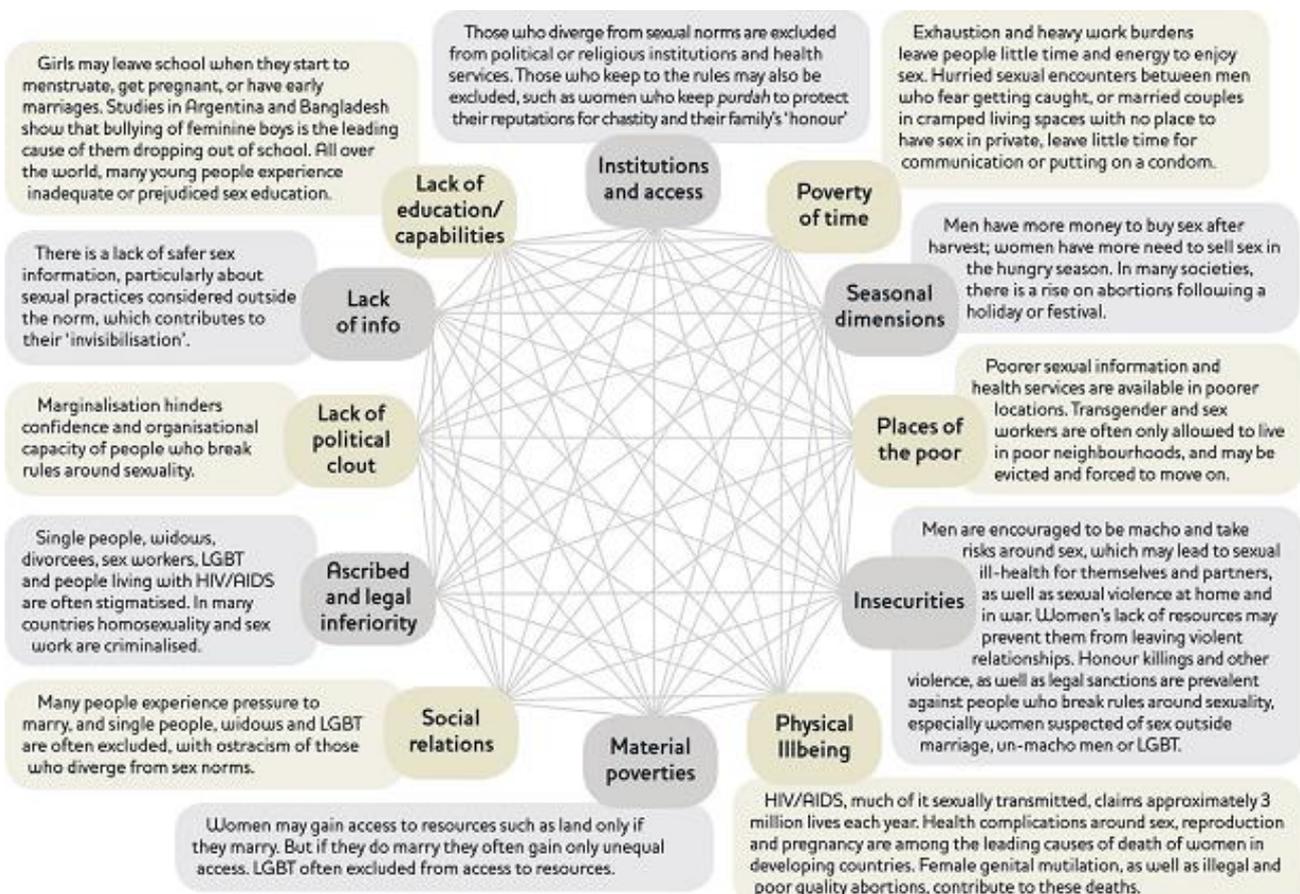


Figure 1: Web of Connections between Sexuality and Poverty

The illustration shows twelve generally possible connections between sexuality and poverty. Overall, the illustration underlines that the connection between sexuality and poverty is far from purely material or linear, and that one poverty dimension can easily lead to or be reinforced by another poverty dimension. For instance, the illustration shows that a transgender individual is often only allowed to live in poor areas and has a high risk of eviction (places of the poor) which renders the general sense of stability and safety

wanting (insecurities). This transgender person probably also faces legalised sanctions on the basis of his/her non-conforming sexuality (lack of political clout) which enforces social alienation (social relations), lack of access to resources (material poverty) and so forth. Thus, when development only addresses health aspects of (hetero)sexuality, attention is diverted from the multiple and mutually enforcing social and economic dimensions of poverty that the connection between poverty and (non-conforming) sexuality can also entail (Cornwall, 2014:613). At best, this reductionism means that the discursive comprehension of sexuality is inadequate; at worst, it ignores the ill-being of people experiencing sexuality-based deprivations beyond the conventional scope of development and sexuality.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to distinguish between the twelve poverty dimensions and the deprivations inherent in each of them. Drawing on the terminology of the CA, each poverty dimension inherently represents an unfreedom, and within each unfreedom there is a cluster of possible capability deprivations. Therefore, the illustration is not intended as an exhaustive portrayal of the inevitable capability deprivations for a person clashing with norms and structures constructing sexuality in a given setting, but rather as an exemplification of the capability deprivations a person can experience on the basis of sexuality. Returning to the previous example of the different dimensions of poverty a transgender person might experience, this means that even if another transgender person experiences exactly the same dimensions of poverty, the deprivations constituting the dimensions might still diverge for the two. Hence in line with previous research (see chapter 3), the web in combination with the CA support the need for situated studies of sexuality-based deprivations that people experience to understand and ultimately alleviate the form of poverty they live within.

In sum, the web provides a way of understanding different dimensions of poverty, whereas the CA provides an opportunity to understand the contextual constellation of the dimensions. The study moreover draws on the web to consolidate that the sexuality-based deprivations LGBT individuals in Kampala experience constitute dimensions of poverty, and thus focal points for development. The next section further elaborates how the CA has been operationalised in the study, and how the illustration plays into this operationalisation.

#### 4.4. Operationalising the Capability Approach

Generally, the CA is a framework used to explore well-being. However, the study somewhat reverses the CA by putting primary emphasis on sexuality-based deprivations to accentuate that there is a connection between poverty and sexuality vis-à-vis sexuality and development. Moreover, the study moves beyond the conventional use of the CA as a “distant assessment of human capabilities” relying on an objectivist methodological approach which focuses primarily on the use of secondary data to generate indicators or indices to explore the capabilities or functionings of particular individuals or groups (Ibrahim, 2014:10–12). The reason being that the study considers the conventional application of the CA insufficient in capturing the opportunities, choices and freedom intrinsically important to people.

Whilst the CA’s intentional width presents its greatest advantage, it simultaneously presents its greatest disadvantage. Correspondingly, one of the main criticisms of the CA concerns the difficulty of its operationalisation (Laderchi, 2003:255). Although, the study acknowledges that it is not straightforward to operationalise the CA, the study still argues careful methodological choices such as: “(a) secondary or primary data; (b) macro- or micro-level analysis; (c) grassroots or country-level exploration; (d) subjective or objective indicators; (e) qualitative or quantitative methods; and, lastly, (f) individual or collective levels of application” (ibid.:10) does allow for operationalisation of the CA. Pointing back to the study’s methodological chapter, it ought to be clear that the study depends on primary data obtained with qualitative methods in order to conduct a micro-level analysis of LGBT individuals lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations in Kampala, Uganda.

As previously explained, the distinction between functionings (achieved ability to be and do) and capabilities (ability to choose between valuable beings and doings) is central in the CA’s conceptualisation of freedom vis-à-vis development. Irrespective of the aforementioned methodological reflections, the CA’s multidimensionality with its emphasis on intercultural and interpersonal variations still makes the question of how to select relevant capabilities and/or functionings persistently central to any operationalisation attempt (ibid.:17). Robeyns (2003 cited in Ibrahim, 2014:17–18) proposes to operationalise the CA by first, explicitly formulating the chosen capabilities; second, methodologically justifying the selection of capabilities; third, considering the

empirical application of the research; and fourth, ensuring that all salient capabilities are included. Although, this suggestion transcends many of the scholarly discussions stranded on whether to put emphasis on functionings or capabilities in the operationalisation of the CA, it nevertheless contrasts with the study's critical hermeneutic approach to knowledge production given its rather deductive reasoning.

Hence, the four procedural steps were more or less reversed in the study's operationalisation of the CA. That is to say, although the CA was established as a theoretical framework prior to the fieldwork, a pre-determined list of capabilities and deprivations on which to focus during the interviews was considered counterintuitive to the CA's normative framework (Alkire, 2005:121–123). Moreover, a pre-determined understanding of the sexuality-based deprivations experienced by LGBT individuals in Kampala would have contrasted with the study's claimed alignment with the post-colonial critique of development's engagement with sexuality. As such, the study first, indirectly ensured the inclusion of all deprivations salient to LGBT individuals in Kampala through data saturation, and then established and formulated the deprivations on which to focus during the cycles of coding by focusing on the informants' realized (functionings) and realizable (capabilities) beings and doings.

The most salient codes were divided into the twelve dimensions of poverty in the web of connections between poverty and sexuality to determine the most important dimensions. These include insecurities, ascribed and legal inferiority, social relations, institutions and access, and lack of political clout. *Insecurities* refer to vulnerability to violations in a broad sense such as physical assaults and unsubstantiated evictions; *social relations* and *institutions and access* are strongly intertwined as they include the opportunities people have to engage in private and public social areas of life. *Ascribed inferiority* refers to the deprivation of a person's intrinsic value. Based upon divergences and convergences between the deprivations in each dimension, the dimension of social relations and institutions and access were merged into social and institutional ostracism. The rationale behind this final step in the operationalisation of the CA is that, if capabilities are constitutive of freedom, deprivations must be constitutive of unfreedom. As such, the division of deprivations into dimensions of poverty, assisted in the broadening of the concept of poverty and in the understanding of the framing of non-conforming sexuality in Uganda.

In the methodology chapter the analysis strategy to reduce, reorganise and represent the data material was outlined. Combining the analysis strategy with the established theoretical and conceptual framework, the table below provides an excerpt of the process of operationalising the CA for the poverty dimension of insecurities.

<b>Dimension of Poverty: Insecurities</b>	
<b>Codes</b>	<p><u>Fear of Violations</u></p> <p>“a victim of rape”</p> <p>“Being beaten and assaulted, being evicted”</p> <p>“beat me so badly”</p> <p>“stone you to death”</p> <p>“they are hunting us”</p> <p>“We fear violence and rejection”</p> <p>“I was fearing mob justice”</p> <p><u>Being in the Public Sphere</u></p> <p>“we are not free in this life”</p> <p>“we cannot move freely, the way we were, that is the fear I got</p> <p>“a very closeted life”</p> <p>“places where the rest of the public engage in”</p> <p>“act straight”</p> <p>“you are not yourself, when you are in such places”</p> <p>“It is easy for people to ruin you, if they know that you are gay”</p> <p><u>Job Insecurity</u></p> <p>“I cannot get a job”</p> <p>“change my look”</p>
<b>Deprived Functionings</b>	<p>Bodily integrity</p> <p>Sense of safety and security</p> <p>Self-integrity</p> <p>Mobility</p> <p>Access to material resources</p>
<b>Deprived Capability</b>	<p>Sexual Agency</p>

*Table 1: Excerpt of Operationalisation Process*

The first part of the table shows some of the most salient in-vivo codes (quotation marks) and the descriptive codes (underlined) that emerged from the coding process. The second part then uses the codes to establish the beings and doings (functionings) that LGBT individuals are deprived of in Kampala on the basis of their sexuality. For example, the descriptive code ‘Fear of Violations’ shows that LGBT individuals are deprived of the functioning to feel safe and secure in the public sphere due to direct or indirect experiences of violations. The last part of the table ultimately looks at the functionings that LGBT individuals are deprived of, and then establishes the overarching capability inadequacy that characterises the given poverty dimension in the case of LGBT individuals in Kampala.

While Corrêa and Jolly (2008) primarily use the web of connections to underline their argument that sexuality is socially constructed without any further the discussion of it, the study uses it to cement the multidimensionality of poverty and its connection to sexuality. Furthermore, the illustration not only assists the study in systematically organising and cross-checking the sexuality-based deprivations that emerged from the data with well-established dimensions of poverty. It also accentuates that situated empirical studies are needed to understand the contextual connections between poverty and sexuality to, in turn, alleviate the poverty. The next chapter correspondingly outlines the context that informs the dimensions of poverty and sexuality-based deprivations that LGBT individuals experience in Kampala.

## 5. Background

In line with critical hermeneutic reasoning and the theoretical framework, throughout the previous chapters it has been claimed that LGBT individuals' sexuality-based deprivations in Kampala need to be viewed in conjuncture with the way in which homosexuality is constructed socially, economically, religiously and politically in Uganda. The chapter begins with a descriptive overview of the three distinguishable phases from the introduction to the withdrawal of the AHB to situate the study's case temporally and spatially. Then the chapter draws on secondary literature to provide an understanding of the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda. The chapter is located at the end instead of the beginning of the study as it is closely linked with the thematic analysis.

### 5.1. The Journey of the "Kill Bill"

Homophobia in Africa is not merely about the rebuff of Western influence, but also the rejection of the visible, political and personified gay identity (Msibi, 2011:69). This is underpinned by the murder of David Kato, a Ugandan gay rights activist, in his home in January 2011. The event took place shortly after a national newspaper, Rolling Stone, published pictures of Kato and others in an article titled "Hang Them"<sup>17</sup>.

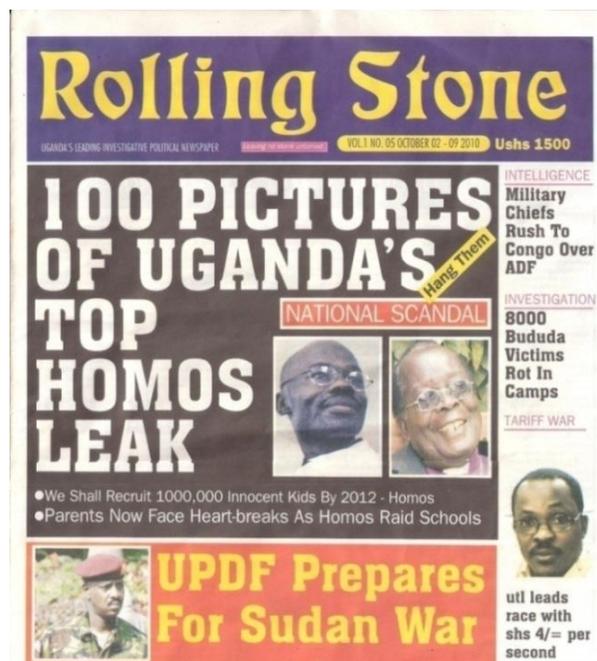


Figure 2: Rolling Stone "Hang Them" Front Page

<sup>17</sup> The article depicted or rather outed people in Uganda who are allegedly LGBTI.

Both the article and murder are arguably manifestations of the state-sanctioned homophobia inherent in the AHB, or the “Kill Bill” (Strand, 2011). The AHB was introduced the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 in Uganda’s parliament as a private member bill by Member of Parliament David Bahati from the ruling National Resistance Movement party. The purpose of the AHB is:

[T]o establish a comprehensive consolidated legislation to protect the traditional family by prohibiting (i) any form of sexual relations between persons of the same sex; and (ii) the promotion or recognition of such sexual relations in public institutions and other places through or with the support of any Government entity in Uganda or any nongovernmental organization inside or outside the country. This Bill aims at strengthening the nation’s capacity to deal with emerging internal and external threats to the *traditional heterosexual family* (my emphasis).

(Bahati, 2009)

According to content analysis of editorially controlled representation of the AHB in Uganda’s two most popular newspapers, the New Vision and Daily Monitor, three periods are distinguishable from the introduction to the withdrawal of the AHB (Strand, 2013). In the first period (14<sup>th</sup> October – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009) the AHB was approached as a human rights issue. Local human rights defenders tried to make the media highlight three concerns: (1) the AHB constitutes a threat to public health by undermining international commitments and efforts to provide universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; (2) the AHB contradicts Uganda’s commitment to international human rights and its own constitution; (3) the AHB presents repercussions for all Ugandans and not only LGBTI individuals (Strand, 2013; Strand, 2011:922). Given that the media in Uganda is only partly free (Freedom House, 2012; 2013; 2014), the human rights defenders’ influence was expectedly limited (Strand, 2011; 2012; 2013). As such, the public portrayal of the AHB remained one-sided.

In the second period (17<sup>th</sup> November – 22<sup>th</sup> December 2009) a wide variety of religious leaders, development partners, international and diplomatic figures from the global North and South voiced their concerns and condemnation of the AHB. The AHB was concurrently reframed from a simple means to deal with the “moral panic” (Cheney, 2012; Sadgrove et al., 2012; Tamale, 2013) in Uganda to a source of conflict and controversy internally and internationally (Strand 2013:286–288). President Yoweri K. Museveni consequently distanced himself and his government from the AHB.

The third period (8<sup>th</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010) was somewhat a repetition of the first period with renewed international criticism, especially from the United Nations (UN). The criticism scorned the AHB's violation of human rights in general, and the violation of the right to universal access to HIV prevention and treatment in particular (ibid.). The intensified criticism and aid cuts made it evident that the AHB threatened trade relations with e.g. the U.S. (Ewins, 2011). This resulted not only in non-governmental actors opposing the AHB but also senior government officials (Strand, 2013:288), and the AHB was withdrawn. Insofar, the AHB was overturned on the basis of economic and political concerns, rather than public opposition to its violations of Ugandans' fundamental constitutional and international rights (Lebrón, 2011:175).

The sustainability of the withdrawal was thus questionable, and the AHB was passed in parliament the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2013. This happened in the aftermath of a diplomatic clash between speaker of Uganda's parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, and Canada's Foreign Minister, John Baird, during the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Quebec, Canada, in 2012 (BBC, 2012; Red Pepper, 2012). Thus, the AHB seemed to have become a symbol of Uganda's moral integrity to resist (postcolonial) imposition from the immoral West (Sadgrove et al., 2012:104). The 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2014 the AHA was publicly signed into law by Museveni with the argument that according to a scientific committee, commissioned by himself, homosexuality is learnt, thus it is society's responsibility to prevent the adaptation of this behaviour (Balter, 2014). This argument was, however, criticized by members of the committee for being a misrepresentation of their findings (ibid.).

The 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2014 the Constitutional Court of Uganda revoked the law as it was not passed with the required quorum, a ruling that supporters of the law immediately appealed to the Supreme Court. Although, the annulment of the AHA appears like progress for the LGBTI community, there is reason for cautious optimism. This is to point out that the annulment of the AHA coincided with the African Union's Executive Council's unanimous appointment of Uganda's Foreign Minister, Sam Kutesa, to president of the UN's General Assembly, the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. The appointment was questioned by human rights organisations and world leaders as Kutesa's past explicit support for the AHA contrasts the UN's general values of equality and justice (BBC, 2014; Ssebagala, 2011; The

Guardian, 2014). The annulment can therefore be seen a strategic move to ensure Kutesa's position with the UN. Irrespective of these speculations, the next step in the journey of the AHA is not yet certain. Supposedly, a revised version of the AHA will be tabled either right before or after the presidential election in 2016 when attention again needs to be diverted from debates of the presidential succession, accountability of public resources, governance and alike (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

The brief overview of the period from the introduction to the withdrawal of the AHB/AHA has shown that the public's access to differentiated accounts of its implications was limited. The overview has moreover demonstrated that the withdrawal of the AHA was motivated by instrumental reasons rather than the recognition of the intrinsic harm of it to LGBTI individuals. However, the overview did not offer any suggestions of the notions making the AHB viable in the first place which is the aim of the next section.

## **5.2. The Import of Homophobia**

The homophobia condoned and promoted by many African leaders is based on unsubstantiated claims of homosexuality as a Western import, homosexuality as a threat to the heterosexual family, contradictory ideas on moral, and the use of colonial laws (Msibi, 2011:55). These each influence the way in which homosexuality is constructed in the public sphere, and they are therefore addressed.

### **The Western Disease**

One of the most potent arguments for anti-homosexual sentiments in Uganda is that homosexuality is un-African and a Western import. However, a well-assorted range of authors<sup>18</sup> (Cheney, 2012; Epprecht, 2008; Msibi, 2011; Nyanzi, 2013; Sadgrove et al., 2012; Tamale, 2013) underline that Uganda, and Africa, has a long pre-colonial history of same-sex relations. With the exception of Hollander (2009:226), the general conviction thus seems to be that there is little or no historical, legal or linguistic evidence of formal or informal sanctions against same-sex relationships in pre-colonial British East Africa (Amadiume, 1987; Cheney, 2012; Epprecht, 2008; Msibi, 2011; Muth; 2013; Nyanzi,

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<sup>18</sup> Considering the argument that homosexuality is a Western import, it is important to note that Nyanzi (2013) and Tamale (2011;2013) are both Ugandans working in Uganda, and Msibi (2011) is a South African. Thus, the argument that pro-LGBTI attitudes exclusively derive from the West seems rather misleading.

2013; Oyēwùmí, 1997; Sadgrove et. al., 2012; Tamale, 2013). Rather, the criminalisation of homosexuality is a modern, Anglo-American, and, hence, imported practice (ibid.). More specifically, a “don’t-ask-don’t-tell attitude” seems to have existed where marriage and reproduction were acceptably used as camouflage while engaging in same-sex relations (Epprecht, 1999 cited in Msibi, 2011:64). The claim that homosexuality is un-African therefore exposes “postcolonial amnesia” in which Africa is constructed as:

[A]n exclusively heterosexual continent, and the appeal to “tradition” is used selectively to erase social practices such as same-sex relations from history. In this context, the present moral panic over homosexuality can in fact be seen as colonial inscription of heterosexual norms on a more sexually diverse “traditional” Africa.

(Cheney, 2012:83).

The international community’s condemnation of the legalisation of homophobia in Uganda can likewise be seen as “selective amnesia” given its colonial role in the “othering” of non-heteronormative sexualities (Tamale, 2013:35). With a significant number of studies disproving the notion of an African sexuality reducible to a hetero/homo binary, it is puzzling that the idea of a sodomy-free Africa persists. However, Msibi (2011:63) demonstrates that three main forces contribute to this misplaced notion: (1) the dominance of state-related historical studies; (2) the notion that homosexuality is irrelevantly marginal and (3) the context-specific construction of homosexuality.

### **Homosexuality; a Threat to the Social Order in Uganda**

Similar to the state’s defence of its indifference to attacks against transgender people in Turkey (Cakmak, 2013), the homophobic sentiments in Uganda are primarily justified with the safeguarding of public moral. As such LGBTI individuals are politically and religiously constructed as threats to the social cohesion of Uganda by juxtaposing the debate about homosexuality in three ways; secularism vs. extreme liberalism; spiritual vs. capitalist ideals; and morality vs. money (Sadgrove et al., 2012).

State leaders in Uganda conveniently use LGBTI individuals in their “politics of distraction” (Tamale, 2013:39) as a means to gain and maintain power by diverting attention from prominent socioeconomic and political problems such as rising inflation, increasing unemployment, corruption, and repression (Nyanzi, 2013; Sadgrove et al., 2012:110; Tamale, 2013:39). U.S. evangelists likewise use Uganda as an arena to support its own anti-homosexuality agenda by building ties with religious and political leaders

(Cheney, 2012; Kaoma, 2009). Kaoma (2009) goes so far as to claim that Africa has become “collateral damage” for the U.S. culture wars. In the religious ideologies promoting a culture of homophobia (Sadgrove et al., 2012:113) homosexuality is, ironically, labelled as a neo-colonial imposition (Cheney, 2012; Nyanzi, 2013; Tamale, 2013), yet again representing post-colonial amnesia.

The anti-homosexual sentiments might, however, be about more than Western homophobia. Drawing on long-term fieldwork among Ugandan born again Christians, Boyd (2013) argues that the homophobia is rather motivated by two different frameworks for ethical personhood in Uganda; the first is the utilitarian societal notion that reproduction and fertility are indicators of social stability whereby sexuality becomes a social responsibility, whereas the latter is founded in the neoliberal construct of the individual right to any sexuality.

Moving beyond ethical personhood, the neoliberal rights-based approach fuelling, for instance, the UN’s retort against the AHB poses another dimension in the Ugandan homophobia. The international community with its “[d]o what we say, or we will take this aid money away” (Muth, 2013:249) reactions to the AHB/AHA, has given the impression that sexuality and sexual rights are more salient rights than any other rights. Arguably, this has fostered resentment against the LGBTI community as the needs of a minority are prioritized over those of the majority. In addition, it has supported the notion that LGBTIs choose their sexual orientation to gain material and instrumental advantages from the international community (Sadgrove et al., 2012:124).

### **The Promise of Tradition**

The remedy for the moral panic is, according to state and religious leaders, the protection and restoration of tradition. However, it is quite complicated to define tradition in the midst of Uganda’s heterogeneity of more than 50 tribes, multiple colonial influences, and three main religions; Christianity, Islam and African traditional religions each with multiple dogmas, sects and ethos (Nyanzi, 2013:953). Thus, rather than to consolidate or conserve a specific Ugandan identity, tradition is used as a means to gain support for a neoconservative political agendas (Cheney, 2012; Msibi, 2011; Tamale, 2013).

As emphasized in the preamble of the AHB, tradition is connected with the heterosexual family. Though, in the context of Uganda it is not just nearly impossible to define tradition but also the traditional heterosexual family given the multitude of family

and marriage forms such as polygamy, polygyny, polyandry, monogamy, bigamy, exogamous, endogamous etc. (Nyanzi, 2013:953). Hence, the AHB and the AHA do not only underline an assumption of a monolithic, static and uncontested African culture but also seeks to invoke the imprecise idea of a homogenous and static family and marriage form (Cheney, 2012:86).

While patriarchy and heteronormativity dictate gender norms and sexual behaviour in Uganda (Nyanzi, 2013:955), there are divergent opinions of the resonance with the moral panic. On the one hand, the main concern is argued to be the alleged threat LGBTIs pose to social and sexual reproduction, particularly women's status (Cheney, 2012; Sadgrove et al., 2012); on the other hand, the argument is that LGBTIs constitute a threat to patriarchy, particularly men's role (Msibi, 2011). Neither of the arguments seem valid though in that countries where homosexuality is legalized rather than criminalized, the fertility rate appears to be affected positively (Cheney, 2012:89).

The assumed inability of LGBTIs to reproduce does not only serve as a justification for the construction of them as a threat to Uganda's social stability and future but also for the accusation of them as child molesters (Cheney, 2012: 89; Sadgrove et al., 2012:121) and secret recruiters of Ugandan heterosexual youth (Tamale, 2013:39). These accusations do not only demonize and dehumanize LGBTI people, they also divert attention from the abuse and exploitation that children experience by their (heterosexual) family, neighbours, teachers etc. (ibid.). Correspondingly, Hollander (2009:254) observes that since the Ugandan government fails to protect family life from other issues such as gender and age-based violence, it is clear that the anti-sodomy and anti-homosexuality laws are motivated by animus rather than reason.

### **5.3. The Public Construct of Homosexuality in Uganda**

The chapter has so far provided an overview of the ways in which the society and state of Uganda construct homosexuality. Pointing back to the web of connections between sexuality and poverty (see section 4.3.), the chapter has provided an overview of the basis on which the informants are ascribed social and legal inferiority, denied political clout, and banished from fundamental institutions such as family, marriage and religion. Thus, in addition to the dimensions of poverty described in the former chapter, this chapter adds the dimension of *legal inferiority* and *lack of political clout* which both refer to the lack of instrumental capabilities to utilise political and legal entitlements such as political

expression, an uncensored press and political dialogue. That is to say the outline of the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda suggests that the dimensions of poverty that LGBT individuals in Kampala experience are highly intertwined with the dimensions of poverty created by the this construct.

Drawing on the definition of sexuality previously presented (see section 4.3.), homosexuality in Uganda is visibly constructed by *economic structures* (aid relations, trade relations, and governmental corruption), *political battles* (AHB/AHA, (post)colonial power relations, (governmental) politics of distraction), *social rules* (moral panic, ethical personhood) and *religious ideologies* (US evangelical movement). The public construct of homosexuality seems to be especially influenced by the societal notion of personhood, but the emphasis on the threat LGBTI individuals pose to public moral makes it even more connected to the idea of nationhood. Similar to during President Thabo Mbeki's rule in South Africa, the policing of sexuality in Uganda inheres in the idea of a stable, orderly and unified nation (Posel, 2011:139). That is, sexuality needs to be productive and life-giving to strengthen the nation (ibid.).

Thus, a certain degree of functionalism seems to fuel the construct of homosexuality in Uganda as LGBTI individuals are greatly constructed as unproductive or even counterproductive for Uganda first, by failing to fulfil their reproductive responsibility as Ugandans, and second, by recruiting others to make the same (immoral) choice. Paradoxically, the public construct of LGBTI individuals as the tangible scapegoats for the missing homeostasis in society essentially reduces Ugandan nationhood to sexuality and sexual practices. That is to suggest, LGBTI individuals in Uganda are presented to fail the first due to the latter. Interestingly, self-identified LGBT Ugandans do not define their "Africanness" according to sexuality but rather geography, ethnicity and nationality (Nyanzi, 2013:960), thus it is perplexing that sexuality has gained momentum as a feature of person- and nationhood.

At a more general level, the chapter highlights that homophobia in Uganda is too multifaceted to be altered by a mere overturning of anti-sodomy and/or anti-homosexuality laws. This is not to say that the annulment of the AHA in the case of Uganda was not an achievement. Rather, it is to say that changing the laws only serves as a symbolic victory inside and outside the LGBTI community without automatically creating new substantive freedoms for the LGBTI community (Hollander, 2009:224), or



adequately countering the political, cultural and religious fundamentalisms or unfreedoms that shape the backlash against LGBTIs (Msibi 2011:59). Conversely, applying the CA to the analysis of lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations for LGBT individuals in Uganda provides a space for whatever choice and agency remain possible to define their experienced sexuality-based deprivations and their valued freedoms. With the context in place, the next chapter looks at the dialectic between it and LGBT individuals' experiences of sexuality-related poverties.

## 6. Analysis

The chapter presents a thematic analysis structured according to the four analytical themes identified in chapter 3: (1) Sexual Agency within the Fear of Insecurities; (2) Social and Institutional Ostracism; (3) Ascribed Inferiority in the Misconstruction of Homosexuality and (4) Freedom as Adaptation to Hegemonic Heteronormativity. To revise, the questions that the analysis seeks to answer are: (1) What sexuality-based deprivations are constitutive of LGBT individuals lived experiences in Kampala?; (2) How does the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda play into LGBT individuals' experiences of living within these sexuality-based deprivations in Kampala? And (3) How do LGBT individuals understand freedom from their experienced sexuality-based deprivations? Although, the analysis overlaps in answering the three questions, the first two themes put an emphasis on the first operational question, the third theme on the second question and the fourth theme on the third question. Each of the themes is presented with related data to illustrate and support the given interpretation, and entails an integrated discussion of the findings. The chapter is concluded with a summative section.

### 6.1. Sexual Agency within the Fear of Insecurities

According to the definition of sexuality used in the study (see section 4.3.), sexuality is about the ability to move freely in the public sphere without fear of harassment or abuse. Conversely, the first theme underscores that being LGBT in Kampala is first and foremost about fear, thus rendering insecurities one of the most prominent dimensions of poverty in the informants' lives. The fear is rooted in direct or indirect experiences of material deprivations, physical violations, and the publicly ascribed legal and social inferiority of the informants.

#### **“We fear violence and rejection”<sup>19</sup>**

The manifest deprivations experienced by the informants include sexual violence in the form of corrective rape (informant 1), physical assaults and attacks (informant 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11), employment loss (informant 1, 3, 6, 7, 8), house eviction (informant 1, 6, 7, 11), blackmail (informant 6, 8), arrest (informant 6) and violence and rejection from the family

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<sup>19</sup> Quote from informant 4.

(informant 1, 6, 7, 8, 11). The deprivations are perpetrated by a wide range of actors but recurrently include family members, the local community, landlords, employers, the police and the government. Thus, the deprivations are not imposed by either private or public actors but by a combination of both.

The fear described by the informants is underscored by the societal impunity with which the capability deprivations are executed. The sense of impunity is particularly evident in the first interview where the informant, upon telling about one of her experiences of eviction, was asked in what way the police and landlord justified the eviction given that it took place after the annulment of the AHA.

There is just this *mind-set of Ugandans* being under the homosexual family, I do not know, there is a way they see it like *evil*. They do not even need like, for instance, someone has reported you like that person is a lesbian or that person is a homosexual, *they do not even need to go around and maybe looking for evidence or anything*. As long as they come, at least they will make you sleep there [prison] like a day [...]. They just have this mind-set that homosexuals are *evil*. [...] As Ugandans it is just like that (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

The informant's portrayal of her experience shows that the social attitude towards homosexuality rather than the legislative regulation of it matters for the instrumental capabilities LGBT individuals do and do not have in Uganda. The informant's experience of eviction clearly reflects the interplay between LGBT individuals' general lack of political clout, and the publicly induced moral panic of homosexuality. That is to say, the informant explains the impunity with which LGBTI individuals can be evicted by public (police) and private (landlord) actors on the basis of the public construct of LGBTI individuals, and her, as "evil".

The informants' experiences of arbitrary arrests, evictions, and physical assaults are all manifestations of their instrumental incapability to seek any formal redress for violations exercised against them. The missing disclosure and lucidity from the government in regards to the informants' exact legal status accentuates this incapability as it means the informants are forced to navigate a *legal limbo*. This is to say, at the moment of writing the AHA is revoked, however rumours of a new similar draconian bill are circulating. Therefore, the informants are uncertain of the *extent* but not *existence* of their lack of political clout and legal inferiority.

Even though, four of the informants did not have direct experiences of any of the aforementioned material or non-material deprivations at the time of their interviews, the fear of intrinsic deprivations or fear of insecurities seemed ever-present. The fear of insecurities is mainly prompted by experiences of discursive reproduction of the public construct of homosexuality. For example, informant 5 describes the fear he experiences when people in his presence talk hatefully about the LGBT community (paraphrased from interview 5). The influence of the publicly encouraged homophobia on the informants' instrumental capability to move in the public sphere is contextualised further by informant 9, when he describes his discomfort of using public transport.

You can sit in like a taxi<sup>20</sup>, and you find that maybe someone brings up a topic of the LGBTI, so you find that that person is kind of against it, the way he talks, and all that. So you find yourself like, something comes to your mind, *how would they treat me*, if they found out right now that I am so and so. *Yeah, kind of fearing and all that* (my emphasis).

(Interview 9)

In line with previous literature concerning lesbians' silence about their sexual preferences due to fear of employment loss in Latin America (Sardá, 2008), the fear that underscores the two informants' experiences can readily be labelled as the fear of *potential* sexuality-based deprivations. This indicates that whether or not the informants face or have faced manifest sexuality-based deprivations, the informants are deprived of the intrinsic capability to be safe and secure while being in the public sphere due to the public anti-homosexual sentiments.

### **"I try so much to hide my Identity"<sup>21</sup>**

With fear as a cornerstone in their lives, the informants have developed corresponding pretence functionings that are strategically employed to avoid manifestations of the fear of insecurities. Pretence functionings is a concept that arose out of the frequent In Vivo code "Pretence/Pretending" and the CA's concept of functioning. Here, it refers to ways of being and doing that the informants would not be or do without the current public construct of homosexuality in Uganda. The public sphere is where the informants feel

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<sup>20</sup> A taxi in Uganda conventionally refers to a matatu which is a privately owned minibus that functions as a small city bus.

<sup>21</sup> Quote from informant 1.

especially vulnerable to intrinsic deprivations, hence where the pretence functionings are deemed needed by them.

It is more when it comes to public places like schools, universities and restaurants and clubs. Places where you can go and have fun, *places where the rest of the public engage in*. So you cannot do what you want to do or you are forced to even *act straight* when in such places cause you would not want to get exposed to the rest of the public that you are gay. So you, I can put it like this: *You are not yourself*, when you are in such places; you act straight, sometimes you do act straight, and also sometimes you would be forced to walk the way you do not want to walk, you would be forced to say what you do not want to say or to get engaged in conversations, different conversations with straight people (my emphasis).

(Interview 5)

It is not the sense of potential exposure per se that is noteworthy in the quote. Rather, it is the inherent negotiation of what the informant *has to do* (act straight) in order to do what he *wants to do* (access the public sphere), and the implications it has for the informant's *sense of self* (being himself). Analysed with the concepts from the CA, the informant chooses to employ a pretence functioning (act straight) to do something he has reason to value (access the public sphere) at the expense of an intrinsic capability deprivation (being himself). Although, his deliberation shows agency, the consequence of accessing the public sphere is still a capability deprivation in that the informant does not have an alternative valuable opportunity to access the public sphere. Moreover, the quote implicitly conveys that the informant's (in)security in the public sphere can be narrowed down to whether or not he manages to mimic heteronormative behaviour through his pretence functioning, a notion reflected in all of the interviews. This evidently denotes certain value judgements from the informants of what it means to look and act straight vis-à-vis what hegemonic heteronormativity entails in the Ugandan setting.

When asked, informant 5 explains that acting straight entails the functionings to be “bossy” and “manly”, to talk about girls, and to walk in a certain way. The description corresponds with every other informants' emphasis on certain visible functionings such as walking and talking style to camouflage their sexuality in order to obtain a sense of security in the public sphere. The informants exercise agency in negotiating the functioning to be secure in the public sphere with the intrinsic capability of sexual agency. In other words, the informants appear to exchange their intrinsic capability of sexual agency at the expense of being secure in the public sphere. With the concept sexual agency is meant the capability to be honest and open about oneself in one's sexual acts,

feelings and identifications irrespective of sphere. The interpretation is not to suggest that the informants are not moral or ethical beings. Instead, it is to indicate that the informants are deprived of the capability of sexual agency in the public sphere due to insecurities. As such, the intrinsic capability of sexual agency becomes an instrumental capability in accessing the public sphere.

In other words, having the intrinsic capability of sexual agency does not mean that the informants *have to be* openly LGBT in the public sphere, rather it means that the person *ought to have* the opportunity to choose whether or not to be openly LGBT. However, the fear of insecurities means that the informants have to juxtapose their bodily and personal integrity when choosing whether or not to be a part of the public sphere. Even with the compromise of sexual agency, the informants are still not capable to move freely in the public sphere as they avoid particular public places such as schools, bars, restaurants etc. out of fear of insecurities. Hence, even in the agency visible in the informants' negotiation of ways to access the public sphere, the overarching unfreedom of LGBT individuals in Uganda plays in.

An additional pretence functioning some of the informants employ or have employed in the past to enforce the act of straightness to gain access to the public sphere and navigate it in relative security is to be in a heterosexual relationship.

I used to have a pretence girlfriend, she was Lesbian. So we could go to bars, pretend, you know, try to be touchy touchy but that is all crap! Because at the end of the day they will be like 'you are not staying together, you are not producing'.

(Interview 10)

Notwithstanding the visible pretence functioning of heterosexuality, the informant indicates that the act is not consolidated without reproduction being the socially constructed product of heterosexuality. Here Boyd's (2013) study (see section 5.2.) arguing that homophobia in Uganda is motivated by two different frameworks for ethical personhood comes into play. The informant's experience of the pretence functioning to be in a heterosexual relationship as not being enough seems to be rooted in the utilitarian societal notion that reproduction and fertility are indicators of social stability whereby sexuality, or rather the sexual act, becomes a social responsibility. The short quote thus confirms that the public construct of homosexuality denotes that LGBT individuals are insecure in the public sphere because they do not fulfil their socially ascribed functioning

of reproduction, and thus pose an insecurity to Uganda's social stability. As such, the public construct of homosexuality as a threat to Uganda's social order transcends the public sphere into the private sphere of reproduction.

Taking the interpretation further, the notion of ethical personhood as being when a Ugandan reproduces could also be seen to mirror the colonial imposition on the construction of sexuality in general. That is to suggest, during the epoch of the modernization theories the colonial concern was with control of reproduction (see section 4.3.), and the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda likewise, in part, seems to be about the public sphere's control of all Ugandans' reproduction.

An additional aspect in the informants' pretence of heterosexuality to gain access to the public sphere is the implicit dichotomisation of the public and private sphere.

**Q: How would you describe your life as a transgender man in Kampala?**

It is not easy because people are different here. Some people like, others does not like. *The biggest majority are these ones who does not like people like me*, but it depends on how you also *treat yourself in public*. If you treat yourself in a bad way like showing of that because you are Tomboy<sup>22</sup> you have to be with your girlfriend and being kissing and everything, you know people want to do that but you cannot be free. *You do it when you are home* (my emphasis).

(Interview 7)

The quote shows that the informant understands there to be a clear division between the functionings appropriate in the private sphere (kissing and everything) and the public sphere (treat yourself in public). This division of functionings into public and private is greatly informed by the informant's notion of the unfreedom to be publicly LGBT (The biggest majority are these ones who does not like people like me). Similar statements include "[t]hey [LGBTs] should stick to their business in their bedrooms" (interview 3); "sexuality is private" (interview 10); "I am not saying that we should have freedom, like now we are moving, kissing in the public and all that, no!" (interview 1). Hence, the value judgement of which functionings are appropriate in the private of public sphere respectively, not only display the way which the informants have naturalised the separation of the two spheres out of fear of insecurities. It also illustrates that the informants do not even envision a process of freedom leading to the capability to choose whether or not to be publicly LGBT.

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<sup>22</sup> The informants used the terms 'Tomboy' and 'Tommy Tommy' to describe transgender men, and Lesbians who are stereotypically labelled 'butch'.

Lastly, the interviews show that the pretence functionings to tackle the fear of insecurities lead to capability deprivations in the informants' social interactions and relations, whenever they engage with people outside the safety of the LGBTI organisations.

*You find yourself hiding some information about you. And even the what, the interactions sometimes, when you are not at Icebreakers, you find that the environment is not kind of friendly and all that, so it is not an easy life (my emphasis).*

(Interview 9)

The interplay between the fear of insecurities and pretence functionings applies whether the interaction in question is motivated by romance or friendship. This includes reluctance to disclose to heterosexual friends (informant 4), preference for the company of other LGBTs (informant 5), and difficulty in approaching a potential new partner (informant 7). In other words, the public construct of homosexuality causes the informants to fear insecurities which leads the informants to apply pretence functionings to remain safe and secure, however they are still fearful. In effect, the public construct of homosexuality as evil strongly influences the informants' intrinsic capability to be social and sexual as they can never be certain when it is safe to stop pretending.

In addition, the quote below explicates that the pretence functioning to be heterosexual and, by extension, homophobic is experienced as a compromise of the informant's intrinsic values. The pretence functioning thus deprives the informant of his intrinsic capability of self-integrity. In other word, the informants have to trade their self-integrity with the sense of security.

*[B]e selective of what you say cause people may bring up something, let me say, if you are a politician and people may bring up an issue of homosexuality, so you would, however much you would want to be on the positive side, you end up being at the negative side cause you are going to win the favour from people (my emphasis).*

(Interview 5)

When asked, the informant elaborates that to be on the negative side means "Like the hating side, even in schools", in other words to be hateful of the LGBTI community. The incapability to choose whether or not to be openly LGBT without fear of insecurities leads the informant to reproduce, or at least not oppose, the same misconception of homosexuality that has led to his own unfreedom to be and do as he values. That is to

suggest, the construct of homosexuality in Uganda not only impedes the informant's agency to challenge the structure due to fear of further capability deprivations, but actually also makes the informant confirm the public construct of homosexuality. By depriving LGBTI individuals' of any instrumental capabilities, the structural construct of homosexuality seems to have created a form of feedback loop that continuously reinforces itself, thus making the construct ever more impervious.

### **Recap**

Insecurities is one of the dimensions of poverty outlined in the web of connections between poverty and sexuality. The first theme likewise shows that fear of insecurities is fundamental in the lived experiences of LGBT individuals. That is to suggest, the public construct of homosexuality depriving LGBTI individuals of any instrumental capabilities in the form of political, legal and social clout, and providing social impunity for society to do the same, means that the informants live in a constant state of fear of violations. The state of insecurity means that the informants generally fear to access and utilise the same social opportunities as their heterosexual counterparts. In turn, the informants fear accessing opportunities that could allow them to achieve functionings such as being mobile (transport), being educated (schools) and being social (bars, restaurants, cafes).

The fear restricts the informants' sexual agency as they have to employ pretence functionings such as pretending to be straight and in a heterosexual relationship to realize the functioning be secure in the public sphere. Arguably, the negotiation and exchange of functionings to gain access to the public sphere does portray a degree of informed agency for the informants. However, with their agency being confined within the overall unfreedom constituted by the public construct of homosexuality, they are not capable of choosing between different valuable alternatives.

The closest to a protective security network the informants get is the one offered by the different LGBTI organisations, however the organisations themselves lack political clout and are ascribed legal and social inferiority. As such, the organisations are also in a constant state of insecurity.

## 6.2. Social and Institutional Ostracism

The second theme merges two dimensions from the web of connections between poverty and sexuality (see section 4.3.); social relations and institutions and access. According to the web the first dimension has to do with the deprivation of for example marriage as an option due to divergence from sexual norms, whereas the second dimension covers deprivation of access to political or religious institutions. Based on the findings, the study argues that it is counterintuitive to separate the two dimensions. Instead, they are highly intertwined in the incapability LGBT individuals in Kampala experience in accessing any public or private social areas of life whilst having free sexual agency. The section is subsequently structured around the subthemes of culture, religion and family as these institutions with their social actors were found to be most salient in the experiences of whom the informants feel ostracised by. An attempted division between culture, family and religion has been made, however the exact demarcations are difficult to distinguish as they are highly intertwined in the informants' experiences of them.

### **“You are so much attracted to the culture”<sup>23</sup>**

For unfreedom to be socially constitutive in a given setting, culture has to play part in the process. In other words, cultural codes need to sanction the ostracism of an individual and/or social group for the process to become social i.e. systemic. The interviews correspondingly demonstrate that the informants' do indeed consider the so-called Ugandan culture to be fundamental in their unfreedom.

In the real sense, *culture should be us*, not culture changing us to what it calls for. But people here, many people here do not understand. They think culture here, *we are supposed to adhere to the demands of culture*; a man must marry a woman, they must produce children. There is a lot of stigma already with people who are barren; the couple is childless. But when they hear that somebody is gay, people think that, according to the anti-gay crusaders<sup>24</sup>, they claim that when Uganda leaves gay people alone, and they do not chastise them, they do not harass them, then *God is going to be angry with the country of Uganda*, and we shall experience hurricanes, floods, fire, and brimstone will burn this place down. So people fear, and out of this fear they hate people who are gay (my emphasis).

(Interview 6)

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<sup>23</sup> Quote from informant 5.

<sup>24</sup> The informant supposedly refers to the American Evangelists' in that he previously referred to “the antigay agenda” of Pastor Scott Lively.

Contrary to Uganda's cultural heterogeneity as pointed out by Nyanzi (2013), the informant demonstrates an understanding of culture in Uganda as deterministic and static. Interestingly, the quote also reveals that the public construct of homosexuality does not only render LGBT individual fearful, but surprisingly also the (hegemonic) public. That is to say, the quote points to that the way in which the religious ideologies have influenced the construct of homosexuality in Uganda may also have resulted in a certain form of incapability for the general public to functioning in any other than homophobic way. As such, the religious ideologies have, apparently, successfully juxtaposed support of homosexuality with the anger of God.

The quote again points to the societal value put on heteronormative reproduction and heterosexual marriage as reasons for banishment of LGBTI individuals in Uganda. Reversed, the quote consolidates that reproduction and marriage are two of the capabilities that Ugandans have reason to value in the public sphere, capabilities that are simultaneously instrumental to the consolidation of heteronormativity. Interestingly, the quote also hints that heterosexuality does not necessarily mean the complete absence of capability deprivations, if the heterosexuality does not result in reproduction as for "people who are barren."

Although, the informants generally emphasise the overarching norms and values underlying Ugandan culture as very harmful to the LGBT community, many of them do not distance themselves from the culture per se.

**Q: What does it<sup>25</sup> make you think about Ugandan culture?**

This Ugandan culture of ours, as I told you, we cannot fight nature. We just live as us. That culture cannot help us fight nature. So culture is basically the main reason as to why this bill is passing to intimidate us.

**Q: How do you then relate to Ugandan culture?**

To the gay community it is doing more harm, but to the entire community it is doing more good than harm. Living happily, kissing, loving each other. That culture is not allowed.

(Interview 11)

Even though the informants generally acknowledge that the Ugandan culture banishes them on the basis of their sexuality, culture is still viewed as something they

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<sup>25</sup> The informant had just mentioned that the Ugandan culture does not allow non-conforming sexualities, and that is what 'it' refers to.

have reason to value. The informants find meaning in the way culture shapes norms, manners, and discipline beyond the matter of sexuality (paraphrased from interview 5). In the quote below, the informant conveys his reluctance to be reduced to and let his sexuality determine whether or not he participates in cultural activities.

However much I would want the whole world to know that I am gay, I just cannot let that happen because *there are so many things to life than just being gay*, you still have to get a job and... So however much you would want the whole world to know, or you are going to put on a shirt that says "I am gay, I am proud" you cannot because people would stone you to death, they would attack you during the night (my emphasis).

(Interview 5)

Indicated is that for the informant to take part in the culture, he needs to discern between himself as 'Ugandans' and himself as 'LGBTs'. Similar to Nyanzi's (2013) study showing that "Africanness" is defined not according to sexuality but rather geography, ethnicity and nationality (see section 5.3.), the informant negotiates his functioning to be LGBT and his functioning to be Ugandan to achieve the capability to participate in culture. In other words, the informant does not employ a pretence functioning as described under the first theme. Rather, he disintegrates the functioning to be homosexual and the functioning to be Ugandan in order to achieve a form of capability to partake in culture. This disintegration of functionings moreover translates into some of the informants keeping very clear borders between the community in which they live, and the LGBT community.

You know me, since that time<sup>26</sup>. I do not go. I just keep myself where I am. That is why I told you even going to bars, I cannot. If I want to talk to somebody I just call them. They [friends] do not even know where I stay, I just do not want. Because if they come, some of them behave like girls, they walk like girls, their behaviour is like girls, so I do not want them to come to my place.

**Q: So you need to live two lives as a gay man and as a part of the community?**

Yeah.

(Informant 2)

The quote shows that the informant does not have the capability to be social as they do not have friends and/or partners from the LGBTI community visit. For them, the

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<sup>26</sup> The informant had to flee his former community as he was allegedly nearly imprisoned for being gay.

deprivation of the capability to enjoy social and sexual relations and to express physical intimacy is hence not limited to the public sphere or societal institutions, but permeates social relations in the private sphere.

**“Even we Gay men, we have Religion”<sup>27</sup>**

Six of the informants describe being ostracised explicitly by the ideologies underlining their religions. However, they tackle this not by distancing themselves altogether but by differentiating between the institution (religion), the organisational manifestation of it (the church/mosque), and the personalisation of it (God). The findings more specifically indicate that despite the religious ideologies underpinning the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda, the informants either distance themselves from the church or from religion, but never from their respective God(s). A detailed example of some of the thoughts of the interface between being a LGBT individual, being ostracised and having faith is presented by informant 6 who says:

I have been battling religion since I was outed<sup>28</sup>. Before that I used to be a church goer. Every Sunday I would go to church, I would read the Bible all the time, but when we had this legislation in the parliament, the Anti-Gay Bill, it had contentious oh... it had contentious issues with it. It had these clauses which were really terrible like talking about murder by hanging the suspects and those confirmed to be gay, and then they are continuously using the Bible, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, they are using the book of Leviticus, they are using the book of Luke, chapter... I do not remember, it has been a while. So I was like what about religion? So these days I tend to disagree with it. Because I know, God is not religion, no religion can represent God. So I always disagree with some of the biblical verses, and I tell people that I believe in the Bible, but not everything written in the Bible. So where there is a lot of religious sentiment, I tend to distance myself from it because people are riding on what is written in the scriptures to hurt us in the gay community.

(Interview 6)

The strong interface between politics and religion in Uganda concerning the anti-homosexuality semantics has not only made the informant think it necessary to give up activities he used to value (go to church), but to question the belief system he has reason to value.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview 5.

<sup>28</sup> The informant was outed in a local tabloid in his home town which lead to employment loss and rejection from the family after which he moved to Kampala.

Where informant 6 emphasises the public use of religion to deprive LGBTI individuals, informant 8 gives a personal account of the same whereby he underlines the crossing point of the institutions of family and religion.

My family has a strong religious background. They are Muslims and where my mother is born they even have a mosque in the compound. So that is the level they are. Now to hear such... *it is like a very big insult to the family* or something. So I think that is one of the major reasons why I had to lose out with them (my emphasis).

(Interview 8)

The informants' common disinclination to completely cast-off religion seems very much informed by the context of Uganda wherein religion constitutes a fundamental institution. Religion is therefore something the informants experience as reasonable to value, and thus keep the parts of religion such as the image of God that does not directly or indirectly deprive them of the capability to be religious on the basis of their sexuality.

Here, because we grew up with religion, you feel like there is a supernatural being who is watching over you, so you keep running to him. But religion does not represent you, so *we try to be defensive in our hearts, but it is hard to live without religion*. Sometimes I feel resigned to faith, and I am like when is religion going to help us out of this, if it is the one that is hurting us. Whether it is in parliament or out there, they all use religion and culture to stigmatise us the more.

(Interview 6)

### **"I look at them like an Apple in Thorns"<sup>29</sup>**

A perpetual point in all the interviews is that the family constitutes the institution the informants value most. None of the informants have disclosed their sexuality to their family voluntarily, however four of the informants have families that know about their sexuality. While three of these informants experienced the deprivation of being outed in the media, one estimates that his family knows about his sexuality in the aftermath of him getting chased from his community after a quarrel with a partner.

Exemplary of the experiences of the outed informants and the fear of insecurities the undisclosed informants have, is informant 1's experience of her family's response to her sexuality. While she was a teenager informant 1 realized that she was not attracted to boys but only girls, a realization her mother also reached shortly after. When the mother's attempt to make informant 1 like boys by acquainting her with a family friend failed,

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<sup>29</sup> Quote from interview 8.

informant 1 decided to leave home. Afterwards, informant 1 stayed in sparse contact with her mother. When the informant was outed in the media, her mother called her shortly after to come home (paraphrased from interview 1). The quote below mirrors the interaction with her family in the aftermath of the phone call.

Now me I went thinking, maybe she [mother] want to reconcile, maybe she has understood me, but she did not actually. She called me, when I reached home I found all my aunties and uncles at home. I reached, my mum just grabbed me and then started slapping me. And they all told me that, *if you find out that one of us is dead, never even come to burry us, and tell all your friends that you do not have a family, no one should bother calling us to come and burry you. We shall not come [...].* That was in 2009. I've never gone back again [...]. The only way I can go back home is going back home and tell them: "Okay, now I have changes, I have come with a man, now I am getting married". Or else I stay away from home (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

Here it again becomes evident that the borders between culture and family are not easily separable as heterosexual marriage is depicted as the way back into the entity of the family. It also becomes evident that marriage is truly a capability the informants have reason to value within the context of Uganda. The quote simultaneously demonstrates that marriage can be both an instrumental capability (way into the family) and an intrinsic capability (an end in itself). The interview with informant 9, the only informant who still lives at home, brings some more nuances to fear of insecurities concerning the family.

**Q: Why would it be so bad, if they [family] found out?**

Well, they are against it. You can even hear by their talking, the way they talk against it. Like maybe she [mother] watched some news on TV like LGBT carrying out some campaign, so she will be like "there is a way I do not like these LGBTI". So I get scared, so you get scared like how would she react, if she finds out that I am that person whom like, if she finds out that I am gay, I do not know how she would react. But so far she does not know that I am an LGBTI, so even my brothers and sisters they do not know.

**Q: Would you like to be able to tell them?**

I feel not ready to tell them right now because I do not know the outcome of telling them, how would they react? If it is a harsh reaction, how would I react to it!? So sometimes I just keep silent.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Two questions are left out here; one has to do with how the informant found out about his sexuality, and what he thought about it. They are not deemed relevant for the interpretation of this theme.

**Q: Do you think about your family in another way?**

Yeah, it is. It is changed. Before I used to be so open with them, talking on every issue but in this setup I live in right now, I just talk a little about what I experience in a day. Just talk a little.

(Interview 9)

The exchange reflects the unfreedom of the public construct of homosexuality in the private sphere through the fear of latent insecurities, and the decision to functioning differently by putting distance to the family to avoid exposure and, hence, deprivation. Whether the informants have been outed or not, they generally seem to withdraw from their family not out of want but out of self-preservation.

However, the deprivation by and from the family is not an absolute given according to some of the informants. Rather, it depends on the dependency relations between the family and the LGBT individual.

I have my family, but *I look at them like an apple in thorns*, you know... You really want to pick it, but you cannot. So that really increases depression and stress and all that [...]. What I realize in this country is that *if you are outed, and you have some money, you have a good job, they depend on you for something they do not take it as a big deal*. And at the end of the day they will try to cover it up and forget or just tolerate you, because they know they depend on you for something. But if they do not depend on you for anything... No one cares... To lose you. *But I loved them, and I still do, but I cannot reach them* (my emphasis).

(Interview 8)

The first point to notice is that money seems to trump moral in terms of whether or not the informants are ostracised from their families. That is to say, the right time to disclose to the family, if any, is generally deemed to be when the informant in question is not dependent on the family in terms of tuition fees, housing or, even better, if the family is dependent on the informant. As such, access to economic facilities can be an instrumental capability for the informants to gain access to the family. This does not mean that the family accepts the informant's non-conforming sexuality. Rather, it means that the non-conforming sexuality is tolerated as long as it is not too visible. Ironically, this takes the justification of homophobia inherent in the public construct of homosexuality as an immoral choice to make money (see section 5.2.) and turns it around. That is, if the informants can and do provide economic capabilities to the family, and thus acquire the functioning as the provider, the family can disregard their non-conforming sexuality.

Thus, there seems to be a very arbitrary relation between when something is deemed moral and immoral in relation to sexuality. On the other hand, the arbitrary relationship between the two might be understandable in the overall economic poverty experienced in Uganda. Hence, the assumed willingness to disregard the homosexuality of a family member could be seen as the family exercising its capability to choose between access to economic resources or adherence to public moral. Another point to note is that family, in its traditional sense, does not seem to be exceeded by the informants' access to the LGBTI community.

Sometimes there are these things where I feel so tortured or maybe happy, sometimes it is not about me being sad or being in pain, sometimes I just have these happy moments where I feel like now this is a moment I should share with my family, and *I do not even find one person I can lean on as family, as real family*, though I have friends I can call, it is not the same. There are times where you really need them, and they are not there. [...] *It has been years, but that gap is always there* (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

To some of the informants, the core problem with the deprivation by and from the family is not just about the loss of social cohesion, but also the loss of corresponding social functionings. Informant 3 demonstrates this by saying: "My life is really wanting to care about my family, not for me to develop as an individual alone but to look at the broader picture of my family to pick up". As such, the informants appear to value the family for instrumental and intrinsic reasons.

## Recap

The second theme portrays social relations and institutions as a prominent dimension of poverty in the lived experiences of LGBT individuals in Kampala. The theme demonstrates some of the ways in which the informants are denied the social protective security of the family and the institutional protective security of religion and culture on the basis of the public construct of homosexuality. Interestingly, the informants seem to fragment their identity into that as Ugandans and that as LGBT to ensure, at least, partial capability to participate directly or indirectly in certain aspects of culture and religion. Thus, the informants negotiate their functioning to be cultural and to be religious with their sexual agency. The same negotiation does not take place when it comes to the family. Rather, the informants unanimously choose to negate their sexual agency to not be

ostracised by the family LGBT. Again, the absence of a valuable alternative to choose differently is obvious.

### **6.3. Ascribed Inferiority in the Misconstruction of Homosexuality**

In contrast to the two other themes, this theme shifts its focus directly to the informants' experiences of the ascribed inferiority inherent in the public construct of homosexuality. This theme in particular resonates with the study's critical hermeneutic stance in the sense that it takes the informants experiences, interprets them and adds an interpretation of the conditions (the public construct of homosexuality) that affect their experiences.

The unfreedom of the informants to live the life they value is consolidated through the public ascription of inferiority. The ascribed inferiority of LGBT individuals inherent in the public construct of homosexuality as immoral and as a choice deprives the informants of their intrinsic value as human beings.

#### **“One thing I am sure of is that I am born Gay”<sup>31</sup>**

Although, the perceived reasons for non-conforming sexualities did not constitute a focal point in the interviews for the researcher, most of the informants repeatedly underlined that they, and LGBTIs in general, are born gay. The informants correspondingly see one of the primary unfreedoms to be removed for LGBT individuals to be free in the Ugandan society to be the deconstruction of homosexuality as learnt.

People still look at *homosexuality as a habit* like smoking or drinking in Uganda. The defining point would hence be that people realize that people are born gay (my emphasis).

(Interview 3)

The public construct of homosexuality as learnt, an idea used by Museveni to justify the signing of the AHB into the AHA (see section 5.1.), intersects with many of the informants' experiences of deprivation. In relation to her experiences of eviction informant 1 explains that “they [the community] think you start spoiling friends, people around”. From this perspective the simple mechanism seems to be that LGBT individuals are viewed as having non-conforming sexualities by choice, and as being dangerous because they might inspire others to make the same choice. This not only represents (homo)sexuality as a matter of choice, but also shifts the responsibility of society's

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<sup>31</sup> Quote from informant 3.

systemic deprivation of the informants to the informants. In this construction it is the LGBTI individuals who decide not to live up to the Ugandan notion of ethical personhood and nationhood by not conforming to the hegemonic heterosexuality in Uganda, and it is therefore the LGBT individuals who choose not to live a life that society dictates as reasonable to value. In other words, society's construct of homosexuality depicts homosexuality as a capability to choose between different sexual beings and doings. The public construct of homosexuality as learnt furthermore renders recruitment a recurrent topic for the informants.

For them, they think homos are harmful which is not true, at all. Most people are those who are not recruited, this [sexuality] has been with them since their childhood. It is very hard to recruit someone who is straight, and they think homos are harmful because they will recruit other.

(Interview 1)

Informant 8 and 10 likewise bring up the topic of recruitment to deflate the notion that they were ever recruited or paid to be LGBT. The noteworthy aspect of the topic of recruitment is not only the (unprovoked) need to debunk idea during the interviews, it is also that the notion of it being possible to recruit i.e. teach someone to be gay seems to have been somewhat internalised by some of the informants. With the concepts from the CA in play, this essentially means that sexuality in Uganda is portrayed as the outcome of the capability to choose between different functionings, that is to say the functioning to be either heterosexual or homosexual.

The public construct of homosexuality as a matter of choice between two possible sexualities renders a degree of ambivalence traceable in some of the interviews. The ambivalence concerns the informants' value judgement of whether or not being a LGBT individual is a perversion, a defect, a choice or simply inherent. Informant 8, for instance, points to the ambivalence by saying: "When people are taught about reproduction, also make it known that men can fall in love with other men. Do not encourage it, but mention it." On the one hand, the informant here points to the lack of adequate (sexual) education as constitutive of the public misconception of homosexuality. On the other hand, the informant also signals the value judgement that homosexuality should not be fortified. Contrary to the public construct of homosexuality as a matter of the capability to choose between sexualities, two of the informants clearly signal that sexuality is not a matter of choice, because if it was, they would not have chosen theirs.

Actually, if I had a choice, I would not be gay. *I would not like to be part of the group that is so much hated*, you know. So much hated in the society, everything bad is thrown at you. No, *I would love to be at least among the happy people*, people who are maybe generally accepted, *people who are free to do anything at any time they want*. Yeah, but here I am (my emphasis).

(Informant 8)

The quote shows that the public construct of homosexuality with its subsequent material and non-material deprivations renders some of the informants to value the capability to choose (hetero)sexuality to be included “among the happy people”. This notion portrays that heterosexuality is considered an automatic ticket to the Ugandan society which, in turn, obscures that there are differentiation of valuable functionings within heterosexuality too. As such, the public construct of homosexuality not only seems to convey to the informants that LGBTI individuals are a homogenous entity unwanted by society, but also that heterosexuals are one homogenous entity wanted by society.

### **“People think that Gays have a lot of Money”<sup>32</sup>**

The societal idea of homosexuality as a choice seems paradoxical seen in relation to the material poverties and general insecurities identified under the first theme. Moreover, the idea manages to juxtapose homosexuality to be a choice between money and morality whereby the moral choice is to live a life of ethical heterosexual personhood.

#### **Q: What would you say are the misconceptions about the LGBT community that bother you most?**

That LGBT people have money, that some of us we are gay because we want *to get money* from rich guys, the Western world is giving us money to be gay. That gay behaviour is taught, that we are not born gay, that it is learnt behaviour. *I used to deny it because I thought maybe I am abnormal*.

(Interview 10)

In the quote there are traceable parallels to Muth’s (2013:249) claim that the international community’s aid cuts as a reaction to the AHB/AHA has translated into the assumption that homosexuality is an instrumental capability to make money from the global North (see section 5.2.). An implication of this depiction is that several of the informants describe the process of (re)negotiation of their self-perception and self-worth

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<sup>32</sup> Quote from informant 6.

upon realizing that they did not identify with the heteronormative sexuality. A similar narrative comes from informant 3 who describes considerations of whether or not he was possessed or perverse, when he acknowledged his homosexuality (paraphrased).

The informants generally describe finding out about the plurality of sexuality and the LGBTI family<sup>33</sup> as a double-edged sword. For example, informant 5 confesses that while getting a label and explanation for his feelings was liberating, mindfulness of his public functionings immediately started constraining him. Thus, the freedom inherent in finding others with the same sexuality was darkened by the instigation of the fear of insecurities. Ironically, in the midst of the fear of insecurities the informants describe the media's outings of alleged LGBT individuals as helpful in their search for others to identify with and to initiate contact with. Thus, while the media's portrayal of homosexuality was intended to consolidate the state-sanctioned unfreedom of LGBTI individuals, it also provided the informants with the capability to choose whether or not to be a part of the LGBTI community. Seen in relation to the social and institutional ostracism described in the previous theme, the identification of the LGBTI community is something all of the informants expressed reason to value as it provides them with a space of instrumental capabilities such as health care and the intrinsic capabilities such as sexual agency.

The interviews did not only reveal the informants' frustration with the misplaced perceptions of how and why someone is LGBT, but also indicated that the demeaning assumptions of what it entails to be an LGBT individual trouble the informants greatly. The quote below shows that the informant is bothered by the misconstruction of what being homosexual entails.

So many things bother me, but what bothers me most is people's ideas of homosexuality. Like people's views of homosexuality, what they think. Sometimes I just wish I could go and tell them, it is not the way they are thinking. *Some of them think we put on pampers, that we have to put on diapers because we are leaking or something like that.* That really bothers me a lot [...] (my emphasis).

(Informant 5)

The informants describe the unfreedom of LGBTI individuals to be informed by the idea that relationships between LGBT individuals are deprived of intrinsic capabilities such as intimacy and authenticity, and instead merely about the sexual act.

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<sup>33</sup> The LGBTI family is a way all of the informants referred to LGBTIs as a social group.

*It is not about sex! We would need somebody to tell them that it is not about sex. People know, being gay is about sex. They run, their minds run to the sex part of, they do not think about, people who are, somebody who is gay, he is a CEO of a company, he is a mechanic, he is a taxi driver, he is a preacher, and he is an MP, he is a minister. People do not want to know that. They want to hear that somebody is gay, and he is doing wrong. And when they are trying to blackmail you, they do not want to say that you had sex with an adult, they want to claim that you took advantage of somebody (my emphasis).*

(Informant 6)

The informant principally conveys that LGBT individuals are represented as demoralised, abnormal and abusive beings in the public construct of homosexuality to legitimise the public deprivations of them. The quote also shows that the public construct of homosexuality is underpinned by obscuring commonalities between the LGBTI and mainstream community through the reduction of LGBT individuals not to their sexuality but to their, reputed, sexual acts.

### **Recap**

The public construct of homosexuality constantly draws the public's attention to the ways in which LGBTI individuals diverge from heteronormative practices of, for instance, reproduction, rather than to the ways in which LGBTI individuals converge with Ugandan nationhood through common language, culture and/or economic life. Furthermore, the public construct of homosexuality portrays homosexuality as an instrumental capability LGBTI individuals employ to get access to economic resources, thus LGBTI individuals are viewed as a threat to Uganda's moral integrity. In other words, LGBTI individuals are depicted as immoral beings who do not deserve the freedom to be or do as they value in the Ugandan society. The public construct of homosexuality in Uganda thus renders ascribed inferiority another prominent dimension of poverty in the lives of LGBT individuals in Kampala.

### **6.4. Freedom as Adaption to Hegemonic Heteronormativity**

In contrast to the three former themes, this theme turns to the informants' understandings and negotiations of freedom as LGBTs in Uganda. While the informants generally point to overcoming material poverties such as insecurity of employment and housing on the same terms as their heterosexual counterparts, the intrinsic capability of inclusive social relations was the defining point in their understanding of living a free life as LGBT individuals in Uganda.

[B]eing free is ohm, not living in fear of losing jobs whenever cause that is the fact, in Uganda or in Kampala, you can get a job, in the start, but because it is what you are, even if you try to keep on hiding, hiding, hiding, hiding it, hiding your identity, *there is that point when you get tired of pretending*. Because, you know, pretence does not last. There is that point *when the real you get out*, and definitely you have to be fired, unless, that goes back to the other point, you get understanding people. If you get understanding people, you can continue working with a lot of conditions, so that would be one of the things to do with freedom. Yeah, even living in the community with people. Like you not having this fear of now I am going back from work to where everyone is talking about me. Because this is a place where they can stone you to death [...]. It is very hard to find a homo who has been in an area for more than 1 year (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

The quote underlines that social acceptance has a recognised intrinsic and instrumental value to the informants. Social acceptance would allow for the informants to stop the pretence functionings of being straight and being fearful of insecurities while simultaneously improving their capability to access to material resources. Constitutive in the informants' notion of freedom is thus a mix of intrinsic and instrumental possibilities. These possibilities include to:

[B]e *married freely, have kids freely* without having questions about how they got the kid which a homosexual person cannot [...]. They [heterosexuals] also have this family thing like, for instance, a straight person has a girlfriend and takes them home, you know, maybe the family is happy for them. It is different for a homo cause you can't take your favourite girl, and take this person to your parents and be like mum and dad this is my girlfriend, she is the one I'm getting married to, trust me, you will be beaten to death (laughter) [...] They are *fully accepted in their communities* which is not the same for the homos (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

In line with the former themes, the informants consider the access and socially grounded choices to marriage, reproduction, culture and family as constitutive to the freedom they have reason to value. Essential in the informants understanding of freedom is furthermore not the creation of special rights for LGBTI individuals, it is the extension of the same entitlements and responsibilities innate to the non-LGBTI Ugandan citizen.

I do not like so much getting the what, getting the LGBTI in like separating them so much from the society. I would love, we should have a life of equal opportunities. People should be left to have everything equally. *Why would some be branded to be an LGBTI or a gay*, you know, I would not love that. I would not love for someone to go out there and get shouting "I want my rights as a gay", you know. I would like someone to say "*I want equal rights for us all!*" Because we are all human beings, we all do the same thing (my emphasis).

(Informant 8)

The means to achieve freedom is consensually considered to be that LGBT individuals need to adapt their functionings to heteronormativity. The rationale behind this idea is outlined by informant 1 who argues:

I think the only person that can convince a straight person that okay, I am not harmful, is just by being okay with him, by showing him, by behaving well in the community, so even by the time... [...]. [I]f there is this good relationship between the straight and homos, cause that is one thing, *the first thing the homos need to understand is that the straight world will not come*, requesting for their, trying their best to understand, *it is us who need to be understood, so it us who need to do the biggest part* (my emphasis).

(Interview 1)

The sense of adaptation as the means to achieve freedom moreover translates into a notion of, if a LGBT individual faces violations, it is due to lack of the functioning to adapt. In other words, there seems to be a strong sense of individualised responsibility of capability deprivations experienced by the informants.

Some of us have failed to tame ourselves, *if we tame ourselves, people would appreciate us*, they would know, if there would be some kind of taming, at least, we would be able to live good in the community. The problem comes when people go for a straight person, or when there is action in the presence of the community [...]  
(my emphasis).

(Interview 3)

Put differently, the informants' regard of themselves as the ones who challenge the hegemonic heteronormative society of Uganda means that they correspondingly view adaptation as their task to eventually achieve some sort of assimilation of the structures. As such, the informants use adaptations as an instrumental functioning to achieve freedom. Correspondingly, the fourth theme shows that rather than to value differentiated freedom in the sense of the public and private sphere encompassing their non-conforming sexualities, the informants value the same political, economic and social opportunities available to their heterosexual counterparts. Hence, the capabilities valued by the informants are capabilities the public construct of homosexuality has successfully deprived them of. In other word, the informants paradoxically value the same capabilities that are constitutive of heteronormativity in Uganda. Hence, social acceptance and social belonging are the substantive freedoms most salient to the informants. To promote these freedoms, the informants consider it their challenge and responsibility to achieve the functioning to be 'the good homosexual' (the adapter) in contrast to 'the bad homosexual'

(the dissident). Interestingly, only a few of the informants specifically point to legislative changes to promote freedom for them as LGBT individuals in Uganda. This could indicate that the informants realize that the fundamentalisms fuelling the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda go far beyond the law, thus supporting Hollander (2009) and Msibi's (2011) claim (see section 5.3.). It could also indicate that the public construct of homosexuality with its inherent legal devaluation of LGBT individuals makes laws and legislative framework something the informants do not see any reason in valuing.

### **Recap**

The freedom the informants' value is characterised by the notion of sameness and equality rather than the notion of difference and equality. For the informants to understand adaptation as the means to freedom and equality of sameness as the end of freedom is very fathomable given their lived experiences. However, from the CA's perspective on freedom as the capability to choose between different valuable alternatives, this understanding could arguably be seen as LGBT individuals wanting an unfreedom as their freedom. That is to suggest, if the informants achieve the freedom of sameness and equality, their instrumental and intrinsic capabilities are still inherently confined to the same heteronormative context that fostered their unfreedom in the first place.

### **6.5. Lessons Learnt**

As stated previously, the answers to the three operational questions were overlapping in the analysis above given the intimate interlinkages between the public construct of homosexuality, experiences of capability deprivations and understandings of freedom. This section therefore seeks to explicate the answers according to each question in chronological order.

Drawing on the study's definition of sexuality (see section 4.3.), there is no doubt that the state and society at large coincide in policing of homosexuality in Uganda. Firstly, the public construct of homosexuality deprives LGBT individuals in Uganda of political, economic, religious and social capabilities to be and do what they value and have reason to value. That is to suggest, LGBT individuals do not experience themselves having the opportunity to choose whether or not to use political freedoms such as freedom of speech, economic facilities such as employment, religious freedoms such as being part of a congregation or social freedoms such as establishing new relationships.

Despite the complex and intertwined web of sexuality-based deprivations, it is the social capability deprivations that are constitutive of the informants lived experiences as LGBT individuals in Kampala. More specifically, LGBT individuals in Kampala live in a constant state of fear of manifest and latent insecurities and social and institutional ostracism, primarily from family, culture and religion. The only way for the deprivations not to become manifest are for the informants to employ different pretence functionings. As such, the informants do not have the intrinsic capability of sexual agency, especially not in the public sphere. Thus, the most essential unfreedom in the LGBT individuals lived experiences is the lack of sexual agency. That is to suggest, the absence of the opportunity to choose whether or not to be publicly and privately open about their sexuality without fear of deprivations.

Secondly, the public construct of homosexuality limits LGBT individuals' agency tremendously. As a result the informants self-police their sexuality in the sense that they are painfully aware of which functionings to employ when in the public or private sphere. To have some form of capability to partake in social life in Uganda, LGBT individuals therefore continually negotiate between different beings and doings. As such, the functionings of LGBT individuals in Kampala are in a constant flux to adapt to the structures constructing their sexualities. This, in turn, points back to the LGBT individuals' incapability of sexual agency.

Thirdly, as mentioned before, the state and society's collision in policing homosexuality seems to have been somewhat internalised by LGBT individuals. This is particularly evident in the way the responsibility to avoid private and public deprivations has been individualised, and the way freedom is seen to be through behavioural adaptation. Correspondingly, LGBT individuals in Kampala seem to seek access to core institutions such as marriage, family and religion, as 'good' citizens who want to be included and share in the same capabilities as their heterosexual counterparts. As such, LGBT individuals in Kampala appear to value equality of sameness rather than equality of difference. That is to say, LGBT individuals refute difference and desire normalcy. On the one hand, this could be seen as an informed form of agency whereby LGBT individuals use adaptation as an instrument to access the same instrumental and intrinsic capabilities as their heterosexual counterparts to then challenge the general public construct of homosexuality. On the other hand, this could be seen as the public construct



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of homosexuality in Uganda having translated into a self-serving prophecy where heteronormativity is reproduced and maintained as a political, economic, religious and social organizing principle, even by LGBT individuals.

## 7. Conclusion

The study commenced with the contention that despite well-established links between poverty and sexuality, non-conforming sexuality is a missing dimension of development. The study further argued that there are three common justifications or barriers to non-conforming sexuality becoming a dimension of development. These are development's (1) narrow understanding of poverty, sexuality and the connections between them; (2) relegation of sexuality to the private sphere; and (3) entrenched heteronormativity. Conversely, the study set out to underpin that non-conforming sexuality should be a dimension of the social development paradigm as social injustices on the basis of sexuality are otherwise overlooked and unalleviated.

The study has therefore explored the connections between the public construct of homosexuality, experienced sexuality-based deprivations and understandings of freedom in the case of LGBT individuals in Uganda. For this purpose, three operational questions were posed (1) what sexuality-based deprivations are constitutive of LGBT individuals lived experiences in Kampala?; (2) How does the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda play into LGBT individuals' experiences of living within these sexuality-based deprivations in Kampala?; and (3) How do LGBT individuals understand freedom from their experienced sexuality-based deprivations? The answers to these three questions were established primarily on the basis of ten weeks fieldwork in Kampala, Uganda, from late January to early April 2015. The fieldwork included participant observation eleven interviews with self-identified LGBT individuals. The findings were thematically analysed by using the social development paradigm's inherent conceptualisation of poverty as capability inadequacy and development as freedom in combination with the web of connections between dimensions of poverty and sexuality.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study relies on the capability approach (CA) that defines development as the process allowing freedom of actions, decisions and opportunities (Sen, 1999:17). Freedom refers to the *presence* of valuable options or alternatives (capabilities), meaning valuable instrumental and intrinsic opportunities that are effectively available to a person. Poverty is subsequently defined as the deprivation of the freedom to act and make choices between valuable basic and complex beings and doings. Rather than to explore wellbeing as the CA framework is generally used to do, the sexuality-based deprivations that LGBT individuals in Kampala experience are

accentuated in the study. This emphasis serves to stress that there is a connection between poverty and sexuality, and that non-conforming sexuality should therefore be a dimension of the social development paradigm. To further consolidate the multidimensionality of the intimate connection between poverty and non-conforming sexuality, the web of connections between poverty and sexuality was used to position the empirically established sexuality-based deprivations within well-established dimensions of poverty.

In accordance with the CA's inherent shift from a mere economic conceptualisation of poverty to an increased social orientation, the study demonstrates that even though LGBT individuals' lived experiences of sexuality-based deprivations are indeed material, the deprivations underpinning LGBT individuals' experiences are profoundly socio-structural. That is to say, LGBT individuals in Kampala do not put as much emphasis on their limited capability of obtaining access to economic resources and facilities as on their diminished capability of engaging in social relations and institutions primarily embodied by the family, religion and culture. In short, the study finds that constitutive of LGBT individuals lived experiences is the constant state of fear of material and immaterial violations and of social and institutional ostracism.

Thus, with its emphasis on the context's influence on what a person actually does or is and what a person can effectively be and do, the CA presents a suitable framework to demonstrate that the institutions, rules, and informal norms of sexuality not only affect access to resources but also agency to make choices or imagine alternatives for LGBT individuals in Kampala. The study correspondingly shows that sexuality surpasses the private sphere by outlining the ways in which the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda plays into LGBT individuals' lived experiences in Kampala. That is to say, while the public construct of homosexuality ascribes social inferiority to LGBTI individuals to justify the deprivation of instrumental capabilities such as political clout and legislative protective security, it simultaneously sanctions society at large to reinforce and add to the deprivation of LGBTI individuals. This evidently hampers LGBTI individuals' possibility of social adequacy publicly and privately.

With agency at the centre of the CA, the study's thematic analysis furthermore includes an extensive focus on LGBT individuals' actions within the public construct of homosexuality in Uganda. The study consequently finds that the social impunity to deprive LGBT individuals on the basis of their sexuality means that they continuously

have to restrict or adapt their beings and doings in the public and private sphere to avoid additional instrumental and/or intrinsic deprivations. In short, the contextual institutions, norms and rules policing (homo)sexuality in Uganda deprive LGBT individuals of any free sexual agency, leaving them with only restrictive or adaptive sexual agency. The use of the word ‘agency’ in connection with restriction and adaptation might seem misplaced seeing that the CA refers to an agent as someone who can act and bring about change. However, when the interviewed LGBT individuals in Kampala for example narrate about pretending to be heterosexual in order to be and move in the public sphere, the pretence presents an act that promotes a change in the access and utility of the public sphere. This is not to suggest that either the act or change make up any form of capability adequacy. Rather, it is to underline that within the chosen framework the significant distinction to make is not whether or not LGBT individuals have sexual agency, it is to distinguish whether or not they have *sexual agency freedom*. That is to say, the freedom to be and do sexuality in the manner valuable to a person.

In relation hereto, the study illustrates that while LGBT individuals perceive freedom as having the same instrumental and intrinsic capabilities as their heterosexual counterparts, they consider adaptation as the means to achieve freedom. In this understanding of the means and end of freedom, adaptation is thus considered a form of agency to obtain *wellbeing freedom*. That is to say, the freedom to live the life valuable to a person. Thus, the study could indicate that the public construct of homosexuality somewhat reproduces itself in that heterosexuality has been naturalised by LGBT individuals as a way to achieve capability adequacy. This interpretation of wellbeing freedom is understandable given that LGBTI individuals in Uganda are deprived of capabilities exactly because of their sexuality. However, according to the CA’s understanding of freedom, LGBT individuals should be able to have both wellbeing freedom and sexual agency freedom. That is to suggest, to be free LGBTI individuals should have the same instrumental and intrinsic opportunities as their heterosexual counterparts without having to pretend to be or do heterosexuality. Again, this does not mean that LGBTI individuals in Uganda necessarily have an interest in visibly being or doing their sexuality, it means that they ought to have the opportunity to choose to be or do their sexuality while simultaneously to live the life they value.

In sum, the study has established that non-conforming sexuality is indeed connected to different dimensions of poverty, that sexuality is private as well as public, and that heteronormativity is used as a justification to render LGBT individuals deprived by the state and society at large. Therefore, if the social development paradigm, as assumed in the study, adheres to its definition of development as freedom, it needs to stop overlooking the connection between non-conforming sexuality and poverty. Furthermore, to challenge the systemic and systematic social injustice LGBT individuals experience on the basis of their sexuality, the social development paradigm needs to contest its own simplification of sexuality, its relegation of sexuality to the private sphere, and its own entrenched heteronormativity.

### **Recommendations for further Research**

Given the exploratory nature of the study, many unanticipated insights were gained about the lived experiences of being LGBT in a context that criminalises and stigmatises this very being. The study could regretfully not address all its findings within the set framework, however some of them may serve as points of departure for further research.

One of the unaddressed findings was that gender seems to intersect strongly with the likelihood and extent of experiences of capability deprivations. In other words, the informants unanimously pointed to individuals identifying as either transgender men or transgender women as being the ones most vulnerable in the context of Uganda. According to the informants, the reason is that transgender individuals often have a difficult time to adequately adapt their behaviour to the norm when in the public sphere. Likewise, the informants pointed to that gay men are generally more prone to capability deprivations due to the patriarchal gender norms in Uganda. Combining this with the study's finding that LGBT individuals are less likely to be ostracised by their family, if they provide economic facilities and resources to the family, a study exploring the intersections between forms of oppression, domination and submission in more details could be highly relevant to understand the power causalities and dynamics fuelling the unfreedom of LGBT individuals in Uganda and elsewhere.

The study's focus on the public construct of homosexuality has touched upon this vaguely. However, a more comprehensive understanding of how different regimes of power surrounding sexuality generate accepted submission and self-perceived inferiority could be investigated through a post-structuralist approach. This could provide a better



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understanding of the dynamics between knowledge and power that need to be addressed by development to remove sexuality-based deprivations. In turn, this could prevent social development from the pitfall of rendering the promotion of freedom technical. In correspondence with this study, an emphasis on power and knowledge structures could further cement that sexuality is not just about sex, but about *the social rules, economic structures, political battles and religious ideologies* constructing our sexual agency.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide

#### Intro:

My background; aim and purpose with the study; use/analysis of the data; confidentiality; verbal consent

#### Background:

- What is your age?
- Where are you from? Why do you reside in Kampala?
- What is your primary occupation?
- What is your level of education?
- What is your sexual and gender identification?
- Is your sexual/gender identification disclosed? Why/why not?
- What LGBTI organisation are you a member of? Why?

#### Questions:

1. What do you think are the most important things you do or are in your life? / What aspects of your life is most important to you? Why?
2. How does your sexual and/or gender identification influence your ability to be and do these things? (functioning)
3. How does your sexual and/or gender identification impact your opportunity to *choose* between *alternative* things to be and do? (capability)
4. How would you describe a life of value/the good life in Uganda in general? (reason to value)
5. What do you think about the notion of the 'good life' in Uganda?
6. How would you describe your life compared to the life of value that you have just described?
  - What, in your opinion, are the main differences between your life as an LGBTI individual and a non-LGBTI individual?
  - What, according to you, are the reasons for these differences?
7. What changes are needed to increase your freedom to live the life you value
  - Who is responsible?
  - What is your role?
  - What is the role of the LGBTI organisation that you are a member of in this change?
  - What values/norms need to underline the changes?

#### Debriefing

- Sum-up of what the findings will be used for again;
- Answer potential questions from the participants;
- Ask whether the participant wish to do 'participant validation'?



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## **Appendix 2: Information Sheet for Informants**

This information sheet, in short, explains who I am, what the study is about, and how I would like you to participate in it.

I am a Danish master student in Development Studies with a major in Social Work at Lund University in Sweden. I expect to graduate in June 2015, and the study is the foundation for my master thesis.

The aim of the study is to explore LGBTI individuals' understanding of their capability to be and do what is valuable to them; opportunity to choose the life they value; and vision for substantive change of the situation concerning sexual minorities in Uganda.

In order to answer the two above questions adequately, I want to get your points of view through an interview. The interview is expected to last between 1 – 2 hours at a location of your choice. Before the interview begins, I will ask for your permission to audio record it. In case you do not want the interview recorded, I would still appreciate an interview with you. The interviews will be transcribed for further analysis.

The information provided by you will be used for research purposes such as my master thesis and potentially for publications in relevant academic journals and alike. Research ethical guidelines are followed to ensure that any details allowing identification of your individual responses remain confidential.

Seeing that the study deals with a sensitive topic, it is important to underline that you can withdraw from the study at any time in the research process without questions asked about your reasons.

Once again, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If you have any questions about the research at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

**Tanja Dittfeld**

E-mail: [dvs13tdi@student.lu.se](mailto:dvs13tdi@student.lu.se)

Mobile: 0758936245

### **Appendix 3: Interview Consent Form**

- I have read and understood the study information sheet provided by Tanja Dittfeld.
- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation in the study involves being interviewed and possibly audio recorded.
- I have been given adequate time to consider whether or not to participate in the study.
- I understand that my personal details such as name, address, employer address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the study.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs without the disclosure of my name or other identifying details.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to participate.

**Name of Participant:**

**Date:**

**Researcher Signature:**

**Date:**