“Security begins with you”: compulsory heterosexuality, registers of gender and sexuality, and transgender women getting by in Kampala, Uganda

Austin Bryan

Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA

ABSTRACT
This article examines how women getting by in Kampala, take up registers of gender and sexuality in a contemporary hybrid democratic-authoritarian state with compulsory heterosexuality. Sections 145–146 of Uganda’s fourth Constitution (1995–present) include language dating to the British colonial administration of the Uganda Protectorate (1950), which criminalizes “carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature.” This has been regularly used by the Uganda Police Force, since the contemporary politicization of homosexuality in the early 2000s, to justify the harassment, incarceration, and torture of those who are identified as “homosexual.” In addition to the economic precarity most Ugandans already face, transgender women seeking social services are often instructed by Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) social workers that “security begins with you” and are encouraged to manage the way they performatively index their gender and sexuality. Drawing from interviews and participant observations in Kampala, Uganda from volunteer work at the NGO, Sexual Minorities Uganda (2015–2016), I find that transgender women use various registers of gender and sexuality that do not fully conform with the norms for performativity inside the queer community and must reconcile their insecurity through privatized social services, security, and market activities that determine the insecurity of their daily life.

A segurança começa com você”: heterossexualidade obrigatória, registros de gênero e sexualidade, e mulheres transgêneros sobreviver em Kampala, Uganda

RESUMO
Este artigo examina como as mulheres que moram em Kampala, adotam registros de gênero e sexualidade, em um Estado híbrido contemporâneo, democrático-autoritário, onde a heterossexualidade é obrigatória. As seções 145–146 da quarta

CONTACT Austin Bryan abryan@u.northwestern.edu

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
Constitución de Uganda (1995–presente) incluyen linguagem que data da época colonial britânica, a administração do Protetorado de Uganda (1950), que criminaliza “o conhecimento carnal de qualquer pessoa contra a ordem da natureza.” Isto tem sido regularmente utilizado pela Polícia de Uganda, desde a politização contemporânea da homossexualidade no início dos anos 2000, para justificar o assédio, o encarceramento e a tortura daqueles que são identificados como “homossexuais.” Além da precariedade econômica que a maioria dos ugandenses já enfrentam, as mulheres transgêneros que procuram serviços sociais são frequentemente instruídas pelos trabalhadores sociais de Organizações Não Governamentais (ONG) que “a segurança começa com você” e são incentivados a gerenciar a forma como elas indexam performativamente seu gênero e sexualidade. Extraído de entrevistas e observações dos participantes em Kampala, Uganda, do trabalho voluntário na ONG Sexual Minorias Uganda (2015–2016), descrevo como as mulheres transgêneros usam vários registros de gênero e sexualidade que não estão em conformidade com as normas de performatividade dentro do comunidade queer e devem reconciliar sua insegurança através de serviços sociais privatizados, segurança e atividades de mercado que determinam a insegurança de sua vida diária.

“La seguridad empieza por ti”: la heterosexualidad obligatoria, registros de género y sexualidad, y mujeres transgénero sobreviviendo en Kampala, Uganda

RESUMEN
Este artículo examina cómo las mujeres que se desenvuelven en Kampala adoptan registros de género y sexualidad en un estado híbrido democrático-autoritario contemporáneo que impone una heterosexualidad obligatoria. Los artículos 145-146 de la cuarta Constitución de Uganda (1995–actualidad) incluyen un lenguaje que data de la administración colonial britânica del Protectorado de Uganda (1950), el cual penaliza el “conocimiento carnal de cualquier persona contra el orden de la naturaleza.” Esto ha sido utilizado regularmente por la Policía de Uganda desde la politización contemporánea de la homosexualidad a principios de la década de 2000, con el fin de justificar el acoso, el encarceramiento y la tortura de quienes son identificados como “homosexuales.” Además de la precariedad económica, a la que ya se enfrentan la mayoría de los ugandeses, a las mujeres transexuales que buscan servicios sociales se les indica por parte de las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales (ONG) que “la seguridad empieza por ti,” y se les anima a administrar el modo en el que performan su género y su sexualidad. A partir de entrevistas y observaciones de participantes en Kampala, Uganda, durante trabajo voluntario en la ONG “Minorías Sexuales de Uganda” (2015–2016), descubro que las mujeres transgênero utilizan varios registros de género y sexualidad que no se ajustan totalmente a las normas de performatividade dentro de la comunidad queer, y que deben conciliar su inseguridad a través de servicios sociales privatizados, la seguridad y las actividades del mercado que determinan la inseguridad de su vida cotidiana.
1. An introduction to insecurity

David and I left the “Pink Village,” driving across the capital city through Kampala’s morning traffic of bodas bodas (motorcycles), mini-bus taxis, and Saturday markets to the “Blue Village,” where, as David put it, “the rest of the kuchus lived,” a term I learned in Uganda was loosely synonymous with queer.¹ When we finally parked the car, I was confused. “This is a supermarket?” I naively asked. Making quick eye contact with me, David said bluntly: “security measure.” In 2015 David was leading organizing efforts for Pride Uganda, the fourth annual festival increasingly understood as a threat to the state’s compulsory heterosexuality, an ideology, and institution in which cisgender heterosexuality is required, enforced, and promoted as natural. David invited me to watch the auditions for a beauty pageant which would arguably be the festival’s main event. We walked to a residential home in a walled compound that had been converted into an office for an Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that provides free social services to the Kampala kuchu community (Figure 1).

The first competitor auditioning for the beauty pageant began by stating her name: Princess Rihanna. When the music began, it was a track by Rihanna, the international pop star, not to be confused with Rihanna, the young Ugandan transgender

Figure 1. Contestants audition for the beauty pageant and receive feedback from judges. Photo by Austin Bryan (2015) on an iPhone SE and lightly edited to distort faces.

¹Names have been changed for anonymity.
woman performing before us. In a leopard-print dress and bright pink 4-inch heels, Rihanna worked the room with a sensual routine, lip-syncing every word of the song nearly perfectly. At some point, each participant was asked questions by the judges about why they entered the competition. Another contestant, Patricia, also a transgender woman in her twenties expected to be a “rising activist” in the community, expressed her concerns:

I joined the LGBTI last year. We are three trans women [participants]. A trans woman winning Pride Uganda would mean a lot – I don’t think it’s ever happened before. There were “MSMs” [men who have sex with men], “gay bottoms,” and “tops” winning but they don’t represent trans women.2

The audience of approximately forty people, mostly comprising queer Ugandans involved in organizing the Pride festivities, but also a few photojournalists, erupted in discussion about the way Patricia, when recalling the institutional history of the pageant (and a disputed theory of its former winners), distinguished “transwomen” from “MSM,” “gay bottoms,” and “tops.” Transgender women’s sexual and gender identities notably fell outside of the LGBTI framework, suggesting that the range of sexual and gender identifications under a regime of compulsory heterosexuality are not adequately captured by the globalizing transnational clustering of “Lesbian,” “Gay,” “Bisexual,” “Transgender,” and “Intersex” that LGBTI NGOs found useful. More importantly, however, Patricia highlighted how “gay bottoms,” “tops,” and “MSM” have fundamentally different lived experiences of security than transgender women, who she later told me were “continuously left behind.”3 The beauty pageant thus became a way of negotiating the terms of gendered biological, political, economic, and social life under a specific regime of compulsory heterosexuality.

After the rehearsals, Faith, one of the organizers of Pride Uganda made an announcement: the contestants performing in the pageant would now be on the list for the “exclusive” opening night cocktail party. The committee had changed its “invitation only” stance after a niche protest on social media. The opening night of the festival was set to take place on the rooftop of one of Kampala’s high-end restaurant bar clubs. As one committee member explained: only “activists” were invited because the event was an opportunity to network with “key partners” such as NGO leaders in Kampala’s so called “civil society” and staffers of embassies or UN agencies.4 At a committee meeting, another activist said, “The whole thing about the cocktail has become so politicized. This cocktail is about building synergy.”5 However, community organizers, including one “2015 Pride Marshal,” Stella Nyanzi, a medical anthropologist who at the time had over 50,000 followers on Facebook, and would later be incarcerated for over two years for political dissent, had taken to the popular social media site to voice concern over such politicization, calling the festival event discriminatory and elitist.6 Nyanzi’s commentary on the Pride cocktail event (Figure 2) captured the widespread disdain for the new proliferation of LGBTI NGOs, organizing and gaining a footing for the first time in Uganda’s economy through so-called

---

2 Pride Rehearsals” Fieldnote, August 1, 2015.
3 Pride Rehearsals” Fieldnote, August 1, 2015.
4 Note the embassies and agencies included: UNWomen, UNAIDS, Norway.
5 Pride Meeting at Queer Youth Uganda” Fieldnote, July 24, 2015.
6 See Facebook post by Stella Nyanzi in 2015 in Figure 2.
“transnational” networks. Sociologist S.M. Rodriguez (2018), in an ethnography of the kuchu community in Uganda, critically described such transnational organizing as “cross-world organizing” not only because LGBTI NGOs rely on funding from the Global North but also because of the vastly different materially resourced contexts in which queer people live in the Global South. Rodriguez argues that because of this structural inequity, cross-world organizing is most often destined to fail.

When Faith made the announcement after the rehearsals about the policy change, however, there were stipulations around the dress code at the cocktail party: “If I’m a trans woman do I roll up in my dress?” she asked. “No,” Faith continued, “There are going to be security issues. It is a public event. This isn’t Ram. It’s something else,” referring to the popular kuchu friendly bar and night club in Kampala that transgender women were suspected to frequent more regularly (see Figure 3). Many queer interlocutors I spoke with in Kampala referred to Ram as “Church,” or where one would go for so-called “night prayers” when in the presence of others who may not be aware of the

---

7Translated by Grace, webale nnyo.
8I use the official name of the bar because it has been widely reported in national and international media. The ownership also changes frequently and in the months after the 2015 Mr. and Ms. Pride beauty pageant took place Ram was no longer “kuchu friendly” due to a change of ownership. When I returned in 2019 it appeared to be both “kuchu friendly” and actively surveilled by the Uganda Police Force.
business’s queer entanglements, which included a “Chinese Beauty Parlor.” Some international visitors to Uganda I spoke with knew of Ram as a queer bar. One Dutch man in his early thirties visiting Kampala on “business” for the first time told me that he knew of Ram from reading Ugandan tabloid newspapers online back in Amsterdam. To further clarify Faith’s provocations, she began pacing around the compound courtyard, demonstrating how to “walk like a man.” “Don’t walk like this,” she said as the rain started, flailing her arms to the side, limping her wrist, and swinging her hips back and forth. “I think you can dress like a man for thirty minutes on the boda boda (motorcycle). No dresses, no high heels. For your security! There is going to be media.” She warned the group in conclusion, “We have trusted you with this information. Don’t go telling anyone.”

How do transgender women in Kampala manage the tension between performing their genders and sexualities, fashioning their bodies, earning capital to make life livable, and maintaining their personal security? In this article, I will situate the compulsory heterosexuality of the Republic of Uganda, analyze the lived experience of insecurity for one transgender woman whose experiences represent those of many others, and then typologize registers of gender and sexuality used by transgender women to support the argument that personal security does not “begin with you” but begins with capital. In sociolinguistics, a “register” is a particular range of semiotic cues (both linguistic and

---

9“Pride Rehearsals” Fieldnote, August 1, 2015.
non-linguistic) used for indexing a particular social style in context. Genders and sexualities are enacted through registers like any social identity, such as “doctorese” or “lawyerese.” The registers of gender and sexuality that transgender women take up in Kampala are regularly conceived of as a matter of security, given the distinct visibility of transgender performative styles and regular targeting by the Uganda Police Force (UPF) and vigilantes, which present challenges for the entire kuchu community from the perspective of NGO social workers who respond to crises as they occur.

After the long day of rehearsals for the pageant was over, David and I got into his car to leave. Glancing out of the window, I saw one of the contestants walking down the side of the busy road leaving the compound. With a tote bag across her body, perhaps concealing the dress and heels she was wearing earlier when auditioning for the pageant, hips swinging and hands swaying by her side – exactly the way Faith said not to walk – she passed street vendors and boda boda stages, turning heads, but with hers held high. She definitely stood out, even with long khaki pants and a red polo shirt. David, laughed, turned to me, and said, “My God – that Patricia! She really is so gay!”

In other words, the registers of gender and sexuality that transgender women weave together in public and privatized spaces concurrently challenge the regime of compulsory heterosexuality in the Republic of Uganda and the norms of social workers and community organizers at Ugandan LGBTI NGOs.

2. Compulsory heterosexuality in the Republic of Uganda

To establish how heterosexuality is compulsory for full membership in Uganda I read the law of the Republic of Uganda with two theoretical frameworks from queer theory. The first framework I use is “compulsory heterosexuality,” a concept from the structural sociology of sexuality with origins in lesbian feminism and gay liberation movement literature of the 1970s–1980s. The second framework I use is the “compulsory order of sex, gender, and desire” from Judith Butler (1999) and her widely adopted philosophy on the “performativity of gender.”

The Republic of Uganda can be understood as a modern state with a hybrid authoritarian-democratic regime (Tripp 2010) and a slow-growth economy. The president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, has been in power for over thirty years after coming to the presidency in a US-backed military coup (Epstein 2017). The World Bank’s International Comparison Program projects that Uganda’s 2020 gross domestic product per capita adjusted for purchasing power parity, a macroeconomic metric to compare standards of living between countries, is $2,297.179. Although Museveni eventually allowed multi-party elections, the ruling National Resistance Movement party maintains control by frequently suppressing dissent, manipulating state resources, corruption, extrajudicial killings, gerrymandering, and regularly amending the constitution to extend the power of the president (Freedom House 2021). Most recently, the ruling party amended the constitutional age limit for holding the office of the president so that Museveni could be re-elected in 2020 amidst pandemic restrictions on in-person campaigning and protest violence where over 54 people were killed. The state frequently uses force to crack down on dissent.

10“Pride Rehearsals” Fieldnote, August 1, 2015.
11Human Rights Watch (2021), https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/21/uganda-elections-marred-violence.
which has included consistent threats to LGBTI organizations by the Ugandan Police Force, often with direct orders from the Office of the Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity. More recently, these threats have targeted popular art and music festivals such as the 2018 Nyege Nyege festival, which the Office alleged to be “celebrating the recruitment of young people into homosexuality” despite no formal connection to LGBTI NGOs operating in the country.¹²

The vague language of Ugandan law, which has origins in the British colonial administration, criminalizes sexualities and genders. However, post-colonial theorist Rahul Rao (2020) asserts that we must not gloss over the post-colonial agency of states like Uganda, which had attitudes and sentiments of stigma toward sexualities and genders in pre-colonial society, and have re-signified anti-queer laws and made them their own. In Uganda, Sections 145 and 146 of the law concern “unnatural offences”:

145. Unnatural offences.

Any person who –

(a) has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature;

(b) has carnal knowledge of an animal; or

(c) permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature, commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for life.

146. Attempt to commit unnatural offences.

Any person who attempts to commit any of the offences specified in Section 145 commits a felony and is liable to imprisonment for seven years.

Uganda is a complex socio-cultural context where compulsory heterosexuality works in mundane institutional ways. From identification paperwork for passport applications to marriage licenses, the state sees its subjects as heterosexual and cisgender. Compulsory heterosexuality can be understood as a scheme of the state to make the population legible and thus easier to control, manage, cultivate, regulate, and tax just like projects such as “census data,” “standardized” measurements, and “uniform” languages (Scott 1998 [2020]).

This means that cisgender heterosexuality must be repositioned as an institution. This is arguably the most important concept contributed by critical sexuality studies. In response to how “the literature and social sciences” positioned women as “innately sexually oriented toward men” in an article which is considered to have popularized the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality,” poet, essayist, and feminist Adrienne Rich (1980) aptly posited that heterosexuality could be understood as an “institution” and that the institutional requirement of heterosexuality as a default was widely-accepted. Writing on the experience of lesbian women, Rich found that “the lie of compulsory female heterosexuality” effects discourses, epistemologies, and ideologies and thus creates:

a profound falseness, hypocrisy, and hysteria in the heterosexual dialogue, for every heterosexual relationship is lived in the queasy strobelight of that lie. In however we choose to

¹²France24, (2018), “Uganda Backtracks on Festival Cancelled Over Sex, Gays and the Devil,” https://www.france24.com/en/20180905-uganda-backtracks-festival-cancelled-over-sex-gays-devil.
identify ourselves, however we find ourselves labeled, it flickers across and distorts our lives. (Rich 1980)

Sociologist Steven Seidman (2009) critiques “compulsory heterosexuality” as a Global North concept no longer relevant for even the Global North context (best periodized to the 1950s–1980s in the US, UK, and northwestern Europe). Even if this may be true, since Seidman also notes that “norms of heterosexuality vary across populations and change over time” (23), compulsory heterosexuality may be useful to structurally apprehend experiences in contexts like Kampala, where state and private institutions such as schools, military, police, bureaucracy, passport controllers, licensures, churches, mosques, and temples maintain normative cisgender heterosexuality as a condition for membership and belonging, despite the agentive work of community organizers against this institution.

When cisgender heterosexuality is an institution and a requirement for membership, gender performative practice is a strong semiotic force used to index, fashion, and style one’s belonging. The indexes of divergence from cisgender heterosexual life are constantly negotiated given the vague language of the law and the inherent flux of culture and social life. Given that gender is not something one is but something one does, the work of Judith Butler (1999) provides an important note on the task of researchers concerned with the compulsory order of gender, sex, and desire. Butler writes:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. To expose the contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity, a move which has been a part of cultural critique at least since Marx, is a task that now takes on the added burden of showing how the very notion of the subject, intelligible only through its appearance as gendered, admits of possibilities that have been forcibly foreclosed by the various reifications of gender that have constituted its contingent ontologies. (Butler 1999, 44)

To begin deconstructing the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for these acts within the compulsory frames of heterosexuality set and policed by the Republic of Uganda, its institutions, societies, cultures, and market forces, I turn to a set of notecards that David, the community organizer mentioned at the start of this paper, showed me after collecting them from nurses, pharmacists, and physician assistants at a workshop he facilitated to “sensitize” health workers to queer life in 2015. Participants were asked to write down stereotypes about homosexuals. The results (detailed in Table 1) trace trends in stereotypes about sexual and gender minorities – undoubtedly the same or similar indexes to those the Uganda Police and vigilantes use to police divergence from compulsory cisgender heterosexuality and which frequently target transgender women.

Themes of (1) morality, (2) drug use, (3) sexual health, (4) appearance, (5) affluence, and (6) crime and violence emerged as overwhelmingly negative stereotypes about the social life of sexual and gender minorities. During fieldwork, I found when observing these types of workshops that participants would sometimes become hostile, walk out, or threaten to call the Uganda Police Force. Holding the events, often in hotel conference rooms, almost
always included difficult negotiations with hotel management before the event commenced. A 2008 ethnographic film documenting an organizer named Victor conducting a workshop at Makerere University Medical School charts early versions of this practice with medical academics (Piehl 2008). The health workers that David trained revealed ways that homosexuals are commonly indexed: their appearance in fashion (such as wearing too many clothes, earrings, and diapers), sense (such as smell), having diabolical features (such as “red eyes”) and displaying an incongruent embodied habitus (such as “acting like a female”). Anthropologist Melissa Peters found that the use of the biomedical descriptor, “MSM,” that emerged in the theme of morality, precludes transgender people from HIV treatment and prevention programs in Uganda (Peters 2016). These negative indexes are a cause for anxiety among many transgender women that I spoke with about their human, political, and social security because there is always the risk that an index becomes an identification. These women must be extraordinarily careful when taking up the performative queer register of gender and sexuality. Further, for transgender women who are often slotted as cisgender heterosexual “men” at birth, these indexes also are in tension with situated masculinities such as physical maturity, independence from the parental home, wealth building, and sexual activity as Nyanzi, Nyanzi-Wakholi, and Kalina (2009) found in trends shaping masculinities from 221 boda boda (motorbike) taxi riders in Masaka, Uganda.

Uganda’s hybrid democratic-authoritarian state uses police brutality to enforce compulsory heterosexuality. Gender policing occurs when a performative practice of gender and sexuality has strayed from the socially acceptable normative register as defined by regimes of power which include the language of law. Sexual minorities in conflict zones are at a heightened risk for sexual violence, torture, and death (Moore and Barner 2017). This is similar to what Historian Lillian Guerra (2010) found tracing

### Table 1. Table of themes in stereotypes of homosexuals in Uganda.

| Morality                  | Drug use                                          | Sexual health                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| “When you enter their group, they don’t allow you to leave it” | “They use njaga [cannabis] to be strong, and use beer to keep tight” | “If they fail to get clients they do it among themselves to satisfy themselves” |
| “They are social outcasts” | “They smoke marijuana and just go to bed for sex without feeling anything” | “They use Omo [detergent] for tightness” |
| “They have no interest in women” | “They swallow certain drugs to be energetic” | “They promote promiscuity” |
| “MSMs [men who have sex with men] hate ladies” | “Homos are all drug abusers, and can influence others” | “If they are going for HIV test they use tabs for results to be negative” |
| “All MSM [men who have sex with men] are devil worshippers” | “That most ‘homos’ take drugs so are sex workers” | “They all have HIV/AIDS” |
| “They are inhuman” | “They smoke drugs, dangerous leaves” | “They put on diapers, because they have loose anal muscles” |
| “The ‘homos’ [homosexuals] are mentally sick” | “Homosexuals use njaga [cannabis]” | “They put on pampers in order to control the fecal contents” |

| Appearance              | Affluence                                         | Crime and Violence                      |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| “They wear so many clothes” | “Gay people are rich” | “They are rapists, defilers” |
| “Gays prick one ear”     | “They get a lot of money” | “He can rape you as you are engaging him” |
| “Putting in ear pins”    | “Sponsored by bazungu [white people]” | “They are criminals and don’t want to work” |
| “They have red eyes”     |                                                    | “They are always violent”               |
| “They smell badly”       |                                                    |                                         |
| “Act like females”       |                                                    |                                         |
the internment of homosexuals in forced labor camps (Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción) in Cuban history. The Cuban state’s “gender policing” was an integral component to recraft the economy in and through obedient workers to legitimize political authoritarianism in a generation coming of age under the Revolution of 1965–1970.

Responses to the crises of violence for sexual and gender minorities under compulsory heterosexuality are exacerbated by the neoliberal economic transformation that has individualized personal security and privatized social services. These are two interlocked forms of insecurity for transgender women since they are burdened with the individualized protection for their bodies, and only a few can afford the protection of private services. The “compulsory frames” Butler has referred to are established in part by “various forces” of Uganda’s neoliberal economic transformation. Uganda’s National Resistance Party’s self-congratulatory narrative of progress should be questioned from the perspective of those experiencing the silenced crises that have generated exponential wealth for very few and economic impoverishment for many (Wiegratz, Martiniello, and Greco 2018). Neoliberal transformations also present a crisis for those who use minoritized registers of gender and sexuality that determine and structure their ability to afford food, healthcare, or security. To show how transgender women, intelligible only through gender, have been “forcibly foreclosed” in Kampala by the various reifications of gender, I will turn to the lived experiences of one transgender woman, Rihanna, who auditioned for the beauty pageant detailed at the start of this paper, and whose lived experience of incarceration (2014–2015) represents that of many transgender women with similar experiences and troubles managing their personal security.

3. Living with insecurity in Kampala

In June 2015, when I first visited Rihanna, (then) 22-year old, she had just moved into her new home in a Kampala neighborhood on the outskirts of the city center and was renting it for 70,000 shillings (approximately $20) per month. However, in December, after just six months, Rihanna was forced to leave her new home when the property owner accused her of being a “homosexual.”13 When I visited her there, we often just sat and talked. Consequently, this is where some of the most thoughtful conversations we had about gender and sexuality took place. Rihanna’s mother lived in a house in the same neighborhood and until accusations of her identity began recirculating, for the most part, Rihanna reported good relations with her neighbors.

Rihanna, whose legal name is Jackson Mukasa, was one of the first two people in Uganda to be arrested under Section 145 of the Ugandan law.14 In 2014, she was incarcerated with her friend Kim Mukisa after residents in their neighborhood suspected that they were a couple. Previous persons charged with “unnatural offenses” had paid fines or bribes to avoid incarceration and public trial. Rihanna and Kim’s case was widely covered in national and global media, with almost all major news outlets citing Rihanna by the name “Jackson Mukasa” and as a “gay man” (see Figure 4). This suggests the indexes of gay men or “homosexuals” (such as those traced in Table 1) are pertinent for understanding how the reification of Rihanna’s gender and sexuality made formal

---

13Fieldnotes “World AIDS Day [Event at Mulago Hospital]; Rihanna,” December 1, 2015.
14Penal Code 145. See original text reproduced above.
employment exceedingly difficult. Rihanna told me she had been interviewed by journalists often, particularly since her 2014 arrest. After clarifying that I was not a journalist, but a researcher needing informed consent to continue, she agreed and pulled out a blurry photocopy of a newspaper with a headline that read, “Horrible! City Sodomite Infects 17 Boys With HIV,” and pointed to the mug shot of her that was underneath. She began telling me what she had become well versed in recounting:

We were still sleeping – it was approaching 6:30 a.m. The landlord said, “you people get ready for what’s coming!” We heard people screaming outside. We opened the door and the chairmen, journalists, police, and people from around were there. They said “Get out! Remove all your things! We won’t tolerate gay people in our area!” It was mob justice – they beat us badly.15

She pointed to a large scar which ran across her leg and said, “That’s even how I got this wound,” and continued:

15Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.
We were taken to police. We were forced to make a statement. Beaten and threatened to make a statement. They forced an examination. You understand? We did not want it. We did not like it. They put their hand up there – in our anus. They forced us to sign. A lot of things happened in prison. We were raped. Beaten.\textsuperscript{16}

She paused for a few minutes, clasped her hands, and continued, "We spent almost five months in prison. And I realized when you’re in prison there is no one for you. Because you cannot even get a piece of soap." Then Rihanna pointed to the shirt she was wearing and said, "You can’t get these clothes. You can’t get nothing. The food they cook – maize brand – is the same they give to the hens."\textsuperscript{17} There is now a growing body of critical literature on human rights abuses toward sexual and gender minorities in Uganda under compulsory heterosexuality (Thoreson \textit{2014}, \textit{2015}; Peters \textit{2014}). This includes accounts reported in Ugandan NGO literature of the UPF mass arrests in 2012, 2017, and 2019, the murder of queer people, including activists David Kato in 2014 and Brian Wassawa in 2019, by vigilantes often called “mob justice.”\textsuperscript{18} On the surface, reporting such abuses without context may support an “imperial temporality,” or a denial that Uganda is of the same age as the rest of the world. Rao (2020) finds that queer theory has offered that the denial of what Fabian (1983 [2014]) called “coevalness” may be transmuted into a “refusal,” and that being placed “out of time” may actually be both oppressive and liberating for queer subjectivities. For example, community organizers in Kampala may be able to use the oppressive notion that Uganda is temporally “behind” the global North in terms of protections for queer subjectivities to strategically procure funding from partners in the Global North.

In the case of Rihanna and Kim, the classification of their gender and sexuality as “homosexual” or “unnatural” as per the law of Uganda led them to face incarceration, torture, forced anal examinations, rape, eviction, physical, mental, and emotional violence from state and vigilante actors. Interdisciplinary social scientist and Ugandan academic, Mahmood Mamdani (1996) provides a robust account of obstacles to democratization in post-independence Africa, with a notable emphasis on how the power to classify is a tool of technology adopted as a part of statecraft during and after colonialism. The indexical relations of a “homosexual” in this context, charted in Table 1, have formed within the domains of colonization and racialization (Tamale \textit{2014}; \textit{2011}; Zethu \textit{2014}; Snorton \textit{2017}) and in the post-colonial nation building as American evangelical churches have supported the policing of homosexuality in Uganda (Kaoma \textit{2017}; Boyd \textit{2013}). While always in flux, these indexes have nonetheless congealed over time to seem as some sort of un/natural biological state.

\textbf{4. Registers of gender and sexuality}

Returning to the task of deconstructing the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locating and accounting for these acts within compulsory heterosexuality, I now turn in my analysis to the semiotics of gender and sexuality. In the gender performativity of transgender women in Kampala, I identified three different

\textsuperscript{16}Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.

\textsuperscript{17}Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.

\textsuperscript{18}See: Jjuuko (2018, 2016, 2017), Jjuuko and Balya (2017), Bryan et al. (2016), Ateenyi and du Toit (2016), Mukwano et al. (2012), and Okille and Byarugaba (2019).
registers (of an incalculable amount) at which social life frequently operated. This included a “queer” register which is celebrated in the public-private spaces created by NGOs and community organizing such as the beauty pageant or “kuchu friendly” bar, which is detailed at the opening of this paper. However, in this section, I will focus on two other registers to extend the discussion of personal security and capital under compulsory heterosexuality.

First, I will describe the “heteronormative register” for self-presentation, which Rihanna and her friends posit must be carefully upheld in public space in the interest of personal security. The second, a “market register,” is used when sexual and gender minorities are managing their insecurity by obtaining material power or capital. I will discuss registers of gender and sexuality and how they may be used under compulsory heterosexuality, and then describe how they differ from but are influenced by situated stereotypes of “heterosexuality” such as those traced in Table 1.

Following linguistic anthropologist Alessandro Duranti (1997), all genders and sexualities may be usefully conceptualized as cultural communication. An example of this, in theory, may be found in the work of theorist David M. Halperin (2012), who explores the cultural production of gay ontologies in the book How to be Gay and establishes that “gay” is a cultural product with material attachments. Borrowing precise terms from sociolinguistics, genders and sexualities may operate as different registers which are indexed in a multiplicity of ways. A register is generally associated with a particular situation of use and when analyzed includes three components: the situational context, the linguistic features, and the functional relationship between the two (Biber and Conrad 2009). Asif Agha (1999) has described how “distinctive registers are associated with social practices of every kind – such as law, medicine, prayer, science, magic, prophecy, commerce, military strategy, sport commentary, the observance of respect and etiquette, the expression of civility [and] social status” (1999, 216). To analyze registers of language, scholars look at linguistic or semiotic features in situational contexts, such as, what a feminine walk, way of talking, or standing is in a given cultural setting (Ochs 1992). Elinor Ochs gives the familiar example of standing with one leg bent and hands-on hips as an index of femininity. However, as already demonstrated in Table 1, what may signal the heteronormative, the masculine, the queer, the cisgender, or otherwise, will be different in various contexts and temporalities.

4.1. A heteronormative register

“Personal security begins with you” is a phrase that social workers for Uganda’s LGBTI NGOs use to prepare beneficiaries for the risks involved in attending events they help fundraise and organize. Under such conditions, gender performance is an obstacle for the NGO workers who work with transgender women as clients and know that their limited operating budgets will be strained if someone is attacked or arrested. Prevention, such as coaching transwomen on how to “walk like a man,” as described at the start of this paper, is understood largely as a common sense among the activists that I spoke with. Successfully using a heteronormative register of gender and sexuality was expected by cisgender activists and transgender women like Rihanna. The logic of individualizing security emerged as a frequent topic of discussion among the transgender women that I spoke with, particularly when instances of state violence had been perpetrated
towards members of the community. For example, after discussing news that a transgen-
der woman had been attacked, at one meeting at Rihanna’s house, one of her friends
began telling me how difficult it was to conceal the “girlish ways” which helped them
come to terms with their transgender identity at a younger age. Rihanna added:

> It’s hard to control. You can limit it – like me. But there are those [transgender women] that
can’t hide it. You can’t hide the voice, the walk. You can only try to hide it. Me, I’m a trans but I
> can really control my girlish ways. When Rihanna is at his village he does not show he is trans.
> He shows he is a man – the one they expect.

When I asked about these “girlish ways,” Rihanna stood up from where we were sitting
and said “like this!” and began a demonstration. “Femininity” is different from “acting
straightly,” she said. Rihanna told me that “acting like a straight” is one of the ways of
hiding “trans ways” after I asked how she managed her security, given her visibility in
tabloid newspapers, documentaries, and international media coverage. Later, when I
asked Rihanna what it means to “act like a straight” she told me:

> Acting like straight is like putting on huge clothes – something which is big. It is one of the
> ways of hiding being in the trans community. Putting on big t-shirts and trousers, something
> which is not too tight, because when you put on a tight thing you can expect to be seen
easily. When you look like a lady people can easily see. If you are trans you need to
> change your walking behaviors and walking styles, [for example] the behaviors when you
> are in the [kuchu] community.

Another one of Rihanna’s friends, Ben, a 24-year old gay man who had been quiet up until
this point quickly added, “even your hairstyle determines who you are” echoing similar
qualities that South African youth expressed to Reid (2013) in “How to be a Real Gay,”
in which hairstyling emerged as a significant index of homosexuality. Rihanna continued:

> Acting straightly – acting straight is really important. Because even if you don’t put on the
> make up and put on the tight clothes, the way you behave matters the most. Because
> even if I put on the big trousers and the big t-shirt and I move out like this – and stand
> like this –

Interrupting herself, Rihanna began demonstrating again “girlish ways” adding “that
[behavior] can be very dangerous if you don’t hide it.” The objectifications of the two reg-
isters (heteronormative and queer) and their associated signs in conversations with
Rihanna and her friends make evident that the economy of signs is something to worry
about and to manage carefully. The heteronormative register is what Rihanna describes
as “difficult” for some transwomen because they must “hide” the queer register – cele-
brated in the kuchu community but vaguely criminalized by the state, and actively
policed by state actors and vigilantes. The heteronormative register nonetheless includes
cultural communication beyond language and speech acts, including walking, naming
practices, hairstyling, fashioning, and branding. Rihanna suggests it may be most success-
fully managed for her and other transgender women when she wears “baggy clothes” and
“big trousers” as opposed to the “tight clothes” and dresses she wears when taking up the
queer register. Rihanna’s observations about her own performativity of gender and

---

19Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.
20Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.
21Fieldnotes “Rhianna,” August 19, 2015.
sexuality further underscore how social groups conceptualize gender and sexuality in culturally specific and meaningful ways, echoing what Ochs (1992) posited, that despite language being the major symbolic system of the human species, few features of language directly and exclusively index gender. Thus, to understand how gender and sexuality operate, analysis requires attention to the situated context including an emphasis on the bodily performance of both gender and sexuality and the material power or capital of the subject. For example, Nyanzi (2014) published “a reading of the bodies at Uganda’s first Gay Beach Pride,” which also follows Butler’s call to locate and account for the substantive appearance of gender within compulsory frames, and usefully begins to sketch out features of the queer register that Rihanna notes must be hidden when in public:

The sexy bodies of drag queens gyrated, twirled, and pulsed rhythmically to local beats. Queen Bad Black, in a lacy scarlet bra and green kaffiyeh over boxer shorts, danced barefoot on the dust path. Dancing seductively, Princess Nature Raymond, whose hairy chest was sprayed with thick paint, wore only boxer shorts and knee-high socks in rainbow colors. Sister Kelly Daniels’s breasts were covered only with rainbow squares worn above a rainbow sarong. … The solidarity of our proud queer bodies on display in the botanical gardens that afternoon symbolized the subversion and transgression of a highly politicized heteropatriarchal social order. In that moment, the widespread illusion of a universally heteronormative Ugandan nation was shattered.22

However, when the Uganda Police Force surrounded the beach, cut off exit routes, and began arresting organizers, participants, and journalists, Nyanzi notes leaders began to sing “happy birthday” as a prearranged security measure. Nyanzi wrote, “Because I was among the oldest looking marchers, I embraced the role of Kasha’s aunt [referring to organizer Kasha Nabagesera] who had organized the supposed birthday party.” The switch to a heteronormative register in this instance included a reorientation towards a heteronormative kinship system to appear more respectable and to minimize experiences of brutality while being arrested and detained by the Uganda Police Force.

4.2. A market register of gender and sexuality

In resisting and managing gender norms in a state with compulsory heterosexuality, transgender women like Rihanna live materially limited lives and often make money by selling clothes, food, sex, data, and increasingly, their expertise as social workers and peer educators at NGOs. In these contexts the range of signs that index one’s gender and sexuality must also be managed in particular ways. An example of the intersection of sexual and gender performativity with the material conditions of Rihanna’s lived experience in Kampala occurred in 2015, when I noticed a small television in her home, and after inquiring about it, learned that Rihanna had recently received it from a man visiting Kampala from Europe on “business,” who called up Rihanna to have dinner. “I told him I was a gay,” Rihanna said while laughing.

Over the following years, I began to realize just how adept Rihanna was at managing her use of the market register of gender and sexuality – within both heteronormativity and homonormativity – to get by but also to make life livable, fun, and materially resourced despite the anti-poor social, political, and economic structures working

22Nyanzi (2014, 37).
against her. Like many transgender women I met, reading her ability to exploit knowledge of the complex indexical relations of gender and sexuality for their potential to generate capital reveals the impetus of self-determination for class mobility. Following Butler, given “one may be forcibly foreclosed by the various reifications of gender,” sexual and gender performativity may preclude or include one in different political-economic markets. Anthropologist George Paul Meiu (2017) has analyzed the historical, social, and material dynamics of “ethno-erotic” economies in the case of the ethnicized, racialized, and minoritized Samburu Warriors of Northern Kenya who now seasonally migrate to the Kenyan coast to pursue economic futures with white women, which, in turn has generated new structural relations for communities back in the traditional Samburu homeland.

The same day Rihanna noted her procurement of the television, we also talked a bit about community news and I learned that one of her kuchu friends was having a baby. Rihanna added, “Banange! (Oh my God!) And my mom just now the other day said again, ‘You do your kuchu life, but first give me a child.’” When I asked her to explain, she said:

My mother is always demanding that I raise a child, but I am going to impregnate a girl. I will, I’m not lying! Even me I have a girlfriend. She is called Joan. And after her raising my child she will leave – I don’t want her. For me I will raise one child – a boy. When my girlfriend gets pregnant, I will take her to my grandmother’s place. I have her for plans to make a baby. (Butler 1999, 44)

I asked Rihanna if she was attracted to women, “I’m a trans – can’t I raise myself on a girl?” she said. “But I first think of my man before” noting her boyfriend Godfrey who she had been seeing for the past year, not the European visitor who had procured her television. Rihanna told me she met her “girlfriend” Joan while out dancing and exchanged phone numbers:

I gave it [phone number] to her because she told me that she liked me. Because for me I don’t want to disappoint people. I don’t want to disappoint someone. No one calls me my name when I am with my girlfriend. They call me Jackson – she calls me Jack. But she even calls me “baby” sometimes.

5. Personal security begins with capital

Having “carnal knowledge against the order of nature,” albeit a vague concept currently in a lingering post-colonial afterlife, precludes transgender women like Rihanna from having full membership in the Republic of Uganda and ensures their ongoing insecurity. In her case that was brought before the Uganda High Court, the prosecution was unsuccessful in producing any witnesses and evidence, and thus Rihanna was held in prison for months. Rihanna’s experience of gender policing by the Ugandan Police Force and vigilantes through harassment, incarceration, and torture represents many more documented in reports by national and international NGOs, and justifies the work towards emancipation and liberation that activist NGOs cite in their mission statements. There have been multiple well-documented murders of members of the Kampala queer

23At Kim’s Place” Fieldnote, August 28, 2015.
24“At Kim’s Place” Fieldnote, August 28, 2015.
25Supra note 12.
community, yet the “reason for death” often has complex material attachments. Was their life terminated because of their sexual orientation and gender identity or because they were living while queer and poor during a neoliberal transformation? David Kato, whose life and work has been documented well in the African social movement literature including the film Call Me Kuchu (Hart and Dillwood 2015), was murdered at his home in Kampala in 2014 and the questions surrounding this violence remain unresolved.

Personal security under compulsory heterosexuality may not only “begin with you” through the careful management of the registers of gender and sexuality one uses, as social workers emphasize, it may rather begin when one acquires the necessary capital to purchase security through private cars, drivers, homes in gated communities, apartments behind barbed wire, and security guards. Given the unequal distribution of resources in this hybrid democratic-authoritarian state, transgender women like Rihanna are precluded from increased material power or capital because her use of the queer register of gender and sexuality has led to incarceration and made formal employment exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, Rihanna’s use of the queer register enables access to free social services, and her more frequent need to use the market register, whether heteronormative or homonormative, to provide her with free meals or small assets such as a television, reveal the precarious and marginal ways she has had to get by after incarceration.

The fashioning of appearance in line with the indexical relations of stereotypes is one important way of identifying various registers of genders and sexualities. Fashioning the body, particularly through brands, is a subject anthropologists have considered useful to analyze projects of modernity, nationalism, and citizenship (Newell 2012; Nakassis 2016), and is a practice that should be more closely analyzed in sexual and gender minority communities. For example, the business-style fashion in Figure 5 worn by the finalists of the pageant, introduced at the start of this paper, signals a tension between a neoliberal economic logic governing Uganda, the drive for self-determination, and an oppressive regime of compulsory heterosexuality. In their entries for business fashion, transgender women accessorized themselves with a handbag, a notebook, a laptop bag, and a folder from the UN Women office in Kampala. While a privately hired security detail stands watch at the edge of the runway, transgender women communicate through this fashioning not only their ability to manage their gender, sexuality, and personal security but make the case that they too may be productive and respectable economic units for the state.

The NGO social workers that strive to establish a safety net for transgender women in Kampala, reinforce structures that establish a value with the vaguely criminalized queer register of gender and sexuality, while marginalizing the identities and experiences that result from the lived necessity to communicate gender and sexuality in the market register. The various registers at which gender and sexuality are communicated for transgender women are often read by state actors and vigilantes as not only “homosexuality” but also as “fraud” and “impersonation” leading to crises of personal security that NGO social workers are called on to respond.

Analyzing LGBTI organizing in Namibia, Ashley Currier and Julie Moreau (2018) note the intricacies of how donor funding for African LGBTI organizing is highly political and constantly in flux underscoring the inequitable instability activist NGOs have in relation to the material power dynamics of their funders. There is a need for further research into what subject positions donors and thus NGO workers promote for sexual and gender minority communities. Anthropologist Erin V. Moore (2016) examined feminist NGOs in Kampala, where activists
were concerned with crafting particular forms of gendered subjectivity which Moore called “postures of empowerment” for donors’ desire for “aspirant feminism,” or the desire for membership in transnational feminist movements because of its elite status and material wealth. Like “postures of empowerment” for aspirant feminism, “security begins with you” is an NGO product of queer neoliberal economic integration. Sexual and gender minorities, organizers and LGBTI NGO budgets are consumers of barbed wire, glass shards, ten-foot concrete walls, automatic gates, guard dogs, finger-print scanners, alarm systems, private security, and even the security services of the Uganda Police Force. In the past four years, human rights lawyer Adrian Jjuuko (2018, 2020) has edited reports that include both sections on Uganda Police Force abuses and instances of the Uganda Police Force actually protecting sexual and gender minorities. However, the experiences of transgender women getting by

Figure 5. Contestants at the 2015 “Mr. and Ms. Pride” Beauty Pageant at the Ram Bar in Nakesero, Kampala pictured in the business fashion category accessorize with a folder from the UN women office in Kampala (top left), a laptop bag (top right), a handbag (bottom left), and notebook (bottom right) while a privately hired security guard stands at the edge of the runway. Photos by Austin Bryan taken on a Nikon D5000.
in Kampala reveal that even within the marginal but increasingly organized, funded, and secured Kampala community of sexual and gender minorities, life is not equal. Anthropologist Sandra Wallman (1996) described in *Kampala Women Getting By* that managing wellbeing was critical for women in the city’s poorest neighborhoods. Scholarship must now understand women as inclusive of transgender women, and that managing “wellbeing” in the so-called “time of AIDS” for women in Kampala’s least resourced neighborhoods includes the management of registers of gender and sexuality and participation in markets that further gender, racialize, sexualize, and ethnicize themselves while simultaneously making life slightly more materially resourced. The experiences of transgender women like Rihanna provide a theory of gender and sexuality that reveals how all humans use registers of gender and sexuality, like registers of language, as tools to live and get by through inequitable life courses.

**Acknowledgements**

Thank you to Adia Benton, Caroline Bledsoe, Siri Lamoureaux, Robert Launay, Rihanna Mukasa, Richard Rottenburg, and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article. Further thanks to members of the Northwestern Department of Anthropology’s 2019 Ethnographic Writing Seminar, participants at the Chicago Ethnography Conference 2019 (Northwestern University), and 2016 Feminisms Here and Now Conference (UNC-Chapel Hill) where earlier versions of this paper were presented. Ideas for this article were cultivated in linguistic anthropology courses taught by Katherine E. Hoffman and Shalini Shankar at Northwestern, and a queer literature course taught by Gene Melton at North Carolina State. Much appreciation to friends and colleagues at Sexual Minorities Uganda without whom this study could not have taken place. Any and all mistakes remain my own.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

**Funding**

This work was supported by National Science Foundation [grant number NSF: DGE-1842165], North Carolina State University, and The Graduate School and the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University.

**Notes on contributor**

**Austin Bryan** is a Ph.D. student in Anthropology at Northwestern University and a Research Assistant at the Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs in Evanston, Illinois. When fieldwork was conducted for this article, Austin was a student of Africana Studies at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and a Research Fellow at Sexual Minorities Uganda in Kampala, Uganda.

**References**

Agha, Asif. 1999. “Register.” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9 (1–2): 216–219. doi:10.1525/jlin.1999.9.1-2.216.

American Bar Association Center for Human Rights. 2020. “Uganda v. The 67.” Chicago, IL: American Bar Association Center for Human Rights. https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/human_rights/trialwatch/fair_trial_report_uganda_the_67.pdf

Ateenyi, Francis Tumwesige, and Linette du Toit. 2016. “Legal Regulation of Sex Work in Uganda: Exploring the Current Trends and Their Impact on the Human Rights of Sex Workers.”
Kampala: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum. https://hrapf.org/images/researchpapers/161228legalregulationofsexworkersinugandastudy_updated-1.pdf

Biber, Douglas, and Susan Conrad. 2009. *Register, Genre, and Style*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Boyd, Lydia. 2013. “The Problem with Freedom: Homosexuality and Human Rights in Uganda.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (3): 697–724.

Bryan, Austin, Bob Bwana, Richard Lusimbo, Brant Luswatu, Isaac Mugisha, Tom Kizito, Douglas Mawadri, and Jimmy Kato. 2016. “And That’s How I Survived Being Killed: Testimonies of Human Rights Abuses from Uganda’s Sexual and Gender Minorities.” Kampala: Sexual Minorities Uganda. https://sexualminoritiesuganda.com/publications/blog/and-thats-how-i-survived-press-release/.

Butler, Judith. 1999. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Currier, Ashley and Julie Moreau. 2018. “Queer Dilemmas: LGBT Activism and International Funding.” In *Routledge Handbook of Queer Development Studies*, edited by Julie Moreau, 223–238. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315529530-15.

Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Epstein, Helen. 2017. “Another Fine Mess: America, Uganda, and the War on Terror.” New York, NY: Columbia Global Reports. https://globalreports.columbia.edu/books/another-fine-mess/

Fabian, Johannes. 2014. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Freedom House. 2021. “Freedom in the World 2021: Uganda.” Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-world/2021

Guerra, Lillian. 2010. “Gender Policing, Homosexuality and the New Patriarch of the Cuban Revolution, 1965–70.” *Social History* 35 (3): 268–289. doi:10.1080/03071022.2010.487378.

Halperin, David M. 2012. *How to Be Gay*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Hart, Carrie, and Rick Dillwood. 2015. “CALL ME KUCHU: Post-Colonial Dynamics in Transnational LGBT Filmmaking.” *Feminist Media Studies* 15, doi:10.1080/14680777.2015.1008535.

Jjuuko, Adrian. 2016. “Uganda Report of Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 2016.” Kampala: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF). https://www.hirschfeld-eddy-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user_upload/laenderberichte/Uganda/16_10_04_Uganda_Report_on_LGBTI_Violations_2016.pdf

Jjuuko, Adrian. 2017. “Protection and Violation of the Rights of Female Sex Workers in Uganda in 2016.” Kampala: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF). https://hrapf.org/index.php/resources/violation-reports/103-protection-and-violation-of-the-rights-of-female-sex-workers-in-uganda-2016/file

Jjuuko, Adrian. 2018. “The Uganda Report of Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2018: Increasing Protections and Reducing State Violations.” Kampala: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF). https://www.hrapf.org/index.php/resources/violation-reports/118-the-uganda-report-on-human-rights-violations-based-on-sogi-2018/file

Jjuuko, Adrian. 2020. *The Uganda Report of Human Rights Violations on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, 2019. Kampala: Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF).

Kaoma, Kapya. 2017. *Christianity, Globalization, and Protective Homophobia: Democratic Contestation of Sexuality in Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York, NY: Springer.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. 1st ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Meiu, George Paul. 2017. *Ethno-Erotic Economies: Sexuality, Money, and Belonging in Kenya*. 1st ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Moore, Erin V. 2016. “Postures of Empowerment: Cultivating Aspirant Feminism in a Ugandan NGO: Postures of Empowerment.” *Ethos* 44 (3): 375–396. doi:10.1111/etho.12124.
Moore, Melinda W., and John R. Barner. 2017. “Sexual Minorities in Conflict Zones: A Review of the Literature.” Aggression and Violent Behavior 35 (Supplement C): 33–37. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2017.06.006.
Mukwano, Kelly, Ochan Christine, Brant Andrew Luswata, and Ambrose Barigye. 2012. “Hate No More Campaign: A Report From the Second Phase.” Kampala: Freedom and Roam Uganda. https://www.faruganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Hate-No-More-21.pdf.
Nakassis, Constantine V. 2016. Doing Style: Youth and Mass Mediation in South India. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Newell, Sasha. 2012. The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Côte d’Ivoire. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Nyanzi, Stella. 2014. “Queer Pride and Protest: A Reading of the Bodies at Uganda’s First Gay Beach Pride.” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 40 (1): 36–40. doi:10.1086/676892.
Nyanzi, Stella, Barbara Nyanzi-Wakholi, and Bessie Kalina. 2009. “Male Promiscuity: The Negotiation of Masculinities by Motorbike Taxi-Riders in Masaka, Uganda.” Men and Masculinities 12 (1): 73–89. doi:10.1177/1097184X07309503.
Ochs, Elinor. 1992. “Indexing Gender.” In Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon, edited by Alessandro Duranti, and Charles Goodwin, 13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Okille, Ashanut, and Clare Byarugaba. 2019. “My Child is Different: A Baseline Study of the Perceptions and Experiences of Parents, Families and Their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Children in Uganda.” Kampala: Chapter Four. https://chapterfouruganda.org/articles/2019/02/19/baseline-study-my-child-different
Peters, Melissa Minor. 2014. “Kuchus in the Balance: Queer Lives Under Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill.” PhD diss., Northwestern University.
Peters, Melissa Minor. 2016. “‘They Wrote “Gay” on Her File’: Transgender Ugandans in HIV Prevention and Treatment.” Culture, Health & Sexuality 18 (1): 84–98. doi:10.1080/13691058.2015.1060359.
Piehl, Mathilda, dir. 2008. The Kuchus of Uganda. Montreal: Cinema Politica.
Rao, Rahul. 2020. Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Reid, Graeme. 2013. How to Be a Real Gay: Gay Identities in Small-Town South Africa. South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
Rich, Adrienne. 1980. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” Signs 5 (4): 631–660.
Rodriguez, S. M. 2018. The Economies of Queer Inclusion: Transnational Organizing for LGBTI Rights in Uganda. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Scott, James C. 2020. Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Seidman, Steven. 2009. “Critique of Compulsory Heterosexuality.” Social Policy 6 (1): 11.
Snorton, C. Riley. 2017. Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Tamale, Sylvia. 2011. African Sexualities: A Reader. Cape Town: Fahamu/Pambazuka.
Tamale, Sylvia. 2014. “Researching and Theorizing Sexualities in Africa.” In Sexuality and Politics: Regional Dialogues from the Global South. Sexuality Policy Watch. http://www.sxpolitics.org/sexuality-and-politics pdfs/volume1/2.pdf
Thoreson, Ryan. 2014. Transnational LGBT Activism: Working for Sexual Rights Worldwide. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Thoreson, Ryan. 2015. “Global Homophobia: States, Movements, and the Politics of Oppression.” Culture, Health & Sexuality 17 (5): 663–665. doi:10.1080/13691058.2015.1009682.
Tripp, Alli Mari. 2010. Museveni’s Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
Wallman, Sandra. 1996. Kampala Women Getting By: Wellbeing in the Time of AIDS. 1st ed. London: Ohio University Press.
Wiegartz, Jörg, Giuliano Martiniello, and Elisa Greco. eds. 2018. Uganda: The Dynamics of Neoliberal Transformation. 1st ed. London: Zed Books.
Zethu, Matabeni. 2014. Reclaiming Afrikân: Queer Perspectives on Sexual and Gender Identities. Cape Town: Modjaji Books.