GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

"We are our own social workers!"

-Social Work and the Discourses of LGBT Rights in Kampala, Uganda

Abstract

Social work has a strong tradition of supporting vulnerable groups and protecting exposed individuals in society and is by definition a human rights profession. In relation to the critical situation of LGBT populations in Uganda our aim is to study the position of social workers and their potential to make a positive change for sexual minorities and sexual rights in the country. Homophobia is institutionalized in many countries through 'anti-sodomy laws'; in Uganda this has further been manifested in an 'anti-homosexuality bill', which was first tabled in the Parliament in 2009. This bill has been criticized worldwide for targeting the LGBT community and violating their human rights.

In spring 2012 we traveled to Uganda to perform a 'minor field study' in Kampala; our aim is to study dominant and alternative discourses in regard to LGBT issues by conducting qualitative interviews and observations with social work actors. In light of the international standards of social work and human rights these are analyzed in terms of power, resistance, and culture. The sample mainly includes teachers and students, within the discipline of social work, but also human rights activists working deliberately with these issues. The results are framed with first-hand experiences of the current situation of sexual minorities. We have collected the most significant findings both in terms of 'typical' cases and in terms of 'alternative' cases in order to commit to a 'symmetrical approach'.

On the one hand, our results show that the powerful dominant discourses are heteronormative and homophobic, and they are closely connected to religious and cultural relativist claims. In a sense, homophobia is institutionalized in the educational system at large, as well as within the academics of social work. On the other hand, people representing alternative discourses argue that sexual rights are part of the human rights discourse and that human rights are universal. Nevertheless social work as a profession is considered weak and un-significant in the struggle for human rights of LGBT persons. In the social work department the human rights discourse more or less excludes the rights of LGBT persons from the agenda. Consequently individual initiatives and different forms of resistance (organized as well as unorganized) are currently crucial for the process of social change for the LGBT community in Uganda.

Title: *"We are our own social workers!"*-Social Work and the Discourses of LGBT Rights in Kampala, Uganda

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List of Abbreviations

AHB - Anti-Homosexuality Bill

ASSWA - Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRPD - Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

HRW - Human Rights Watch

IASSW - International Association of Schools of Social Work

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICRMW - International Convention on the protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and members of their families

IFSW - International Federation of Social Workers

ILGA - International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

IPPF – International Planned Parenthood Federation

LGBT(I) - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (and Intersex)

NASWU - National Association of Social Workers of Uganda

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN - United Nations

UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund

WHO - World Health Organization

Definitions

Sexual Orientation refers to; "each person's capacity for profound, emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender, or more than one gender" (As defined by OHCHR).

Gender Identity refers to; "each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means), and other expressions of gender including dress, speech, and mannerisms" (As defined by OHCHR).

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1. INTRODUCTION

The national politics of Uganda became an international concern when an individual Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. David Bahati, tabled a law proposal in 2009 aiming at strengthening the law against sexual minorities in the country (Kaduuli 2009). Obviously, the proposed law not only has implications for internal political affairs but also negatively affects sexual minorities and their relatives in their everyday lives. Previously, sexuality was generally considered a private 'non-issue' in Uganda, but in 2009 it became an 'issue of everybody's concern', particularly in regards to the practices and identities of sexual minorities.

Criminalization of homosexuality was introduced under colonial rule through 'anti-sodomy laws'; these laws remain in many former British colonies, for instance in Uganda. Thus the British power can be considered to have imposed homophobia in a society where the tolerance for diversity might have been higher before the colonization. As such, Uganda is an explicit example where so called 'state-tolerated' or even 'state-sponsored' homophobia operates (Csete & Cohen 2010:824).

Ever since 2009 there is increasing international pressure on the Ugandan state to stop the human rights violations targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations. International as well as Ugandan organizations that promote human rights in general and sexual rights in particular have long challenged and fought the structural discrimination against sexual minorities. Currently, activists in Uganda are forced underground due to strong stigmatization and the ongoing criminalization of 'promoting' LGBT rights (The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009).

Social work has a strong tradition of supporting vulnerable groups and protecting exposed individuals in society, and it is by definition a human rights profession. The international definition of social work, as adopted by the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), has a clear linkage to the history and values of human rights:

> "Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth, and dignity of all people. Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice has focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion" (IFSW "Definition of Social Work" adopted in Montreal Canada in July 2000).

We are two Swedish Master's students studying 'Social Work and Human Rights' and we visited Kampala, Uganda, from the beginning of February to the beginning of April 2012 in order to collect data for this thesis. Our intention is to study the position of 'social work' in relation to the human rights of LGBT populations in Uganda. We soon realized that this is a topical issue of national as well as international interest. Considering the definition and supposed purpose of social work it is interesting to explore what role and standpoint social workers take in the ongoing discussion about sexual minorities and human rights in Uganda. Only a week after our arrival it came to our knowledge that the law proposal; the 'anti-homosexuality bill', also known as; the 'Bahati-bill', had been re-tabled in the parliament (The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2012). There are some minor amendments in the bill, mainly in wording, and with those minor changes the authors hope that they this time will be able to pass it more easily as a law as an addition in the present Penal Code. This is indeed a critical point in history.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In relation to the current situation of LGBT populations in Uganda our aim is to study the position of social workers and their potential to make a positive change for sexual minorities and sexual rights. Relating to the close link between social work and human rights principles, we are also interested in how international guidelines concerning social work are being interpreted and utilized in the Ugandan context. Our research questions are:

- What discourses regarding sexual minorities can be detected among social work actors? What are the dominant discourses and what are the alternative discourses? How are these different discourses expressed?

- How can alternative and dominant discourses be understood in terms of power, in terms of resistance, and in terms of culture?

- How do activists from the LGBT community perceive the current situation of sexual minorities and their struggle for sexual rights?

- What is the discretion of social workers to support LGBT individuals and their rights? How can the potential to make a change be understood in the Ugandan social work context?

- How are future possibilities and challenges in the quest for LGBT rights envisioned?

The dominant discourses concerning sexual minorities are strong and highly normative in the Ugandan society (as in any society) as well as within the social work profession. As such the potential struggle between different discourses and the process by which certain discourses are legitimized on the behalf of others is imperative to our study. Our premise is that the presence of power entails the presence of resistance, and by highlighting power relations as well as alternative discourses we aim to acknowledge resistance and thereby the potential of change. Thus, our main focus is the *potential* within the social work profession and more specifically within the academic discipline of social work.

LIMITATIONS

In connection to our research questions we hereby want to motivate the choices and limitations we have had to make during the process of sampling. Our first intention was to concentrate mainly on social work teachers and students based at Makerere University, and practicing social workers in the area, but as the work progressed we also got the opportunity to talk to LGBT and human rights activists representing a range of NGOs working specifically within this field.

The situation of LGBTs is not our main focus, but as we feel that it is important to give voice to this population, we have chosen to frame our findings with first-hand experiences and depictions. With this as a background we are able to give a more balanced representation of the current situation and this works as a reasonable starting-point.

We realise that we could have applied anti-oppressive practice theories, and other critical theories fundamental to social work practice, but as our main intention has not been to look at the application of social work theories but rather to examine the views and attitudes among social workers within a particular context, we have not found such theories as necessarily fundamental to this study. We want to examine the potential roles of social workers in the resistance of the prevailing 'anti-homosexuality discourse' and how this involvement could possibly contribute to a positive change in light of the responsibilities and principles of social work and the current situation of LGBTs. Thus our sample includes some social work respondents that we know have an outspoken

interest in the topic of sexual minority rights. Nevertheless, most respondents were not picked consciously, which resulted in a quite diverse empirical sample.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE UGANDAN CONTEXT

In this chapter we aim to provide the necessary background needed to understand the Ugandan context in regard to national and international politics and human rights law. First we provide a map pointing out the geographic position of Uganda, in Africa and in the world, followed by some short facts.

(Uganda Map, web)

2.1 THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA- SHORT FACTS

Total population: 34 509 205 (in 2011)

Capital City: Kampala (with a population of approximately 1 700 000 in 2011)

Independence from the United Kingdom: 9th of October 1962

Bordering Countries: Kongo-Kinshasa, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda

Religion: More than 80% of the population is Christian, approximately 10% is Muslim, and the remaining 10% is adhering to traditional religions

Government: Presidential Republic under President Yoweri Museveni and Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi, National Resistance Movement (NRM)

(Landguiden Uganda, Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2012, web).

2.2 NATIONAL POLITICS OF UGANDA

In 1986, The National Resistance Movement, led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni forcefully seized the political power in Uganda. The public objective was to rebuild the country after years of democratic abuses by political leaders such as Idi Amin Dada and Apolo Milton Obote (Widmalm & Oskarsson 2010).

In 2005, the Ugandan constitution was changed in order to facilitate for a multi-party system. According to critics, the political power in Uganda is however not a true democratic representation; the political prohibition against a president sitting at the power for more than two mandate periods has been removed from the constitution, and today in 2012, Museveni still remains in power. Although the central parts of Uganda have experienced peace, as well as several democratic reforms under the leadership of Museveni, the northern parts of the country has been plagued for over two decades with a bloody civil war. Political groups, such as Lord's Resistance Army, lead by Joseph Kony, have gained worldwide recognition for a number of serious human rights violations. With accusations of aligning with Kony, the political opposition has been constantly harassed by Museveni ever since he came into power in 1986. Human rights abuses are commonly inflicted by Museveni and the political officials who surround him in order to secure their power (Landguiden Uganda, Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2012, web).

According to a report conducted by Human Rights Watch in 2012, the freedom of assembly and the freedom of expression are areas currently seriously affected by severe human rights violations in Uganda. During April 2011, nine people were shot and killed by police and military forces during protests. Further, The Rapid Response Unit is a special unit within the Ugandan police force created to fight armed crimes. According to the HRW report, this unit continuously detains suspects arbitrarily, often superseding the constitutionally mandate of 48 hours. In some cases suspects are also tortured or even killed while kept in detention. Concerning fair trials and due process, the HRW report states that Uganda's military court system continuously violates principles of international human rights: *"by its infrequent sessions, painfully slow processes, lack of adequate defense preparation, and lack of legal expertise among the army officers who act as judges"* (HRW 2012:2).

2.3 THE SOCIAL SITUATION

In order to create an understanding for the social work setting in Uganda it is important to first understand the overarching conditions of the nation's welfare provision. This includes taking a closer look at national conditions as well as economic global influences.

Although the political turmoil of previous repressive rulers led the nation into a deep economic crisis, Uganda is today financially a relatively stable country and has decreased its poverty rates significantly since the early 1990s (UNFPA Uganda 2012). Despite a steady economic growth for over a decade, Uganda is nonetheless still one of the poorest countries in the world according to the World Bank (2012), with 38% of the population living below the poverty line (approximately \$1/day) and with an income per capita around \$300/year (CIVICUS 2006). The northern parts of the country are particularly affected by widespread and severe poverty as a result of the extensive political turmoil which has long affected the region. According to the World Bank (2012) rural areas are generally more affected by poverty than urban areas. Furthermore, although the AIDS epidemic has truly declined in Uganda, large challenges still remain in this area as 1,2 million people are currently estimated living with HIV, including 150 000 children. In 2009 approximately 64 000 people died of AIDS in Uganda (AVERT 2012).

Similar to many other developing countries, the welfare of Ugandan citizens has been negatively affected by despotic rule, as well as by neo-liberal global factors reproducing colonial structural inequalities. From a global perspective these inequalities become evident as there is a huge discrepancy between rich and poor countries in the distribution of the world's economic resources, a gap which according to Healy (2008) actually continues to grow; *"The share of the world's income controlled by the richest one-fifth of the world's population has increased to 75%; at the same time, the share for the poorest one-fifth decreased from 2.3% in the early 1960s to a meager 1.5% today"* (Healy 2008:81). According to Payne and Askeland (2008) factors involved in causing these huge discrepancies can be seen as related to the process of globalization in the sense that powerful western countries control the global economic system through their industrial, scientific, and cultural influence. This process strengthens post-colonialism as previous colonial powers uphold control of earlier colonies through economic and cultural domination. Consequently global inequity and poverty is caused by the fact that some parts of countries and the world at large cannot attain the same pace of social and

economic development (Payne & Askeland 2008:10).

In the Ugandan context, Nyirinkindi (2007) means that various transnational corporations are able to exercise alarming amounts of influence over the state which leads to a major disempowerment of the enjoyment of economic and social rights as a whole. The major factor withering down the state as the main welfare provider is however according to her the structural adjustments programs enforced by the IMF from the 1980's and onwards (Nyirinkindi 2007:2). Research investigating donor conditions in various countries has shown that on an average, countries has had to fulfill around 67 donor conditions. Uganda has had to fulfill 197 conditions in order to get access to needed resources (Sveriges Riksdag 2006). Nyirinkindi means that around the African continent, vulnerable nations have been subordinated the world economic order and assigned a *"background and regulatory role"* as these donor conditions have mainly been motivated by economic considerations (Nyirinkindi 2007:2). Payne and Askeland similarly claim that economic processes of globalization *"[press] developing nations to focus on economic, rather than social development"* (Payne & Askeland 2008:18). As part of the structural adjustment programs, Uganda has for instance made huge cut backs in public health spending resulting in the privatization of services previously provided by the state (Nyirinkindi 2007).

Social welfare and educational policy is nevertheless primarily the responsibility of the central government of Uganda. According to Rwomire and Raditlhokwa (1996) nearly all African countries have a ministry or department of social welfare which at the governmental level has produced programs and policies aimed at expanding and improving social welfare provisions. In 1967 a social security system was introduced in Uganda, and it was amended in 1985 (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2011).

Even though the responsibility of social welfare lies within the jurisdiction of the state, the extended family network continues to operate as a social welfare system for many people lacking any form of social support throughout Africa (Chitereka 2009:145). Concerning the provision of social services, indigenous as well as international NGOs have an imperative role in providing welfare to the citizens of Uganda (Nabukeera 2002). In the health sector alone, NGOs provide at least 40% of all services (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2011).

NGOs in Uganda are governed by the constitution as well as by the NGO Registration

Act (1989) which provides for the registrations and regulations of NGOs (Thue et al 2002:17). According to this act, no NGO can operate in Uganda unless it has been registered and certified by the board of the statue. In 2000 the NGO Registration Act was amended with the Registration Amendment Act which enforced harder restrictions on NGOs and increased the control of the state. NGOs for instance have to renew their license certificates annually. This means that those NGOs that are considered critical to the government or otherwise unfavorable can easily be deregistered (Thue et al 2002:17).

Although the Ministry of Culture and Development sponsors some projects and programs (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2011) most NGOs depend completely on funding elsewhere for their programs and projects (most often from international sources) which seriously undermines their autonomy as well as sustainability (Thue et al 2002:7).

2.4 UGANDAN SOCIAL WORK- GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Social work is a relatively new profession to Africa. Even though the first school of social work was established in 1937 in Egypt, the profession did not become established on the continent until the1960s (Chitereka 2009:145). Preceding the expansion of constitutional welfare systems across the continent, there were different forms of 'mutual aid societies' providing support to members of communities: *"Some were family or kin-based (the largest category); others were cultural- and/or religious-based (such as rotating credit societies and informal service societies)"* (Chitereka 2009:145). Today social work is incorporated in most African governmental departments of social welfare; they work in hospitals, within the police and defense forces, and with correctional services. They also work within a wide variety of fields of different NGOs (Chitereka 2009:153).

During our stay in Kampala we learnt that social workers in Uganda are employed within governmental as well as non-governmental organizations. The Department of Social Work and Social Administration at Makerere University was established during the 1960's. Today there are a number of universities in Uganda where students can graduate in social work. With the academic degrees came the demand for an organizational body aiming at bringing together social work professionals. In the 1970's the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) was first established, however political and economic instability has threatened its existence over the years. NASWU was recently reestablished and is currently a member of IFSW (see NASWU's

homepage).

Even if there is a clear demand for an organization like NASWU, this specific organization has been criticized for being weak in terms of uniting social workers. Similarly, Rwomire and Raditlhokwa mean that African social workers are generally not sufficiently united which seriously undermines their professional position; social workers *"have not been able to develop a collective, coherent, vigorous voice to articulate their role and interests and boost their prestige and status"* (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa 1996, web).

SOCIAL WORK CHALLENGES IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

Social work professionals and academicians are globally organized by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) respectively. The internationally approved definition of social work was adopted by the IFSW General Meeting in Montréal, Canada, July 2000 (IFSW "Definition of Social Work"). The international code of ethics was approved at the General Meetings of the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in Adelaide, Australia, October 2004 (see IFSW "Statement of Ethical Principles" 2012).

Payne and Askeland (2008) however challenge the self-evidence in such definitions since ideas and principles from the west dominate the agenda and are hence allowed to prevail over ideas from other contexts. Certainly, an international social work view would only really be genuine if also encompassed perceptions from non-western parts of the world, which according to the authors would naturally also make it richer for western social workers. For example, certain African perspectives on family and community could *"lead western social workers to value shared experiences and collective, spiritual, family and community engagement in resolving social and personal problems"* (Payne & Askeland 2008:4). They however wonder if current so called 'international social work' is anything more than; *"western social work influencing the wider world through postcolonial cultural hegemony"* (Payne & Askeland 2008:2). Rwomire and Raditlhokwa (1996) similarly claim that even though there has been an increase in established schools of social work throughout the African continent, most educational programs are inadequate, particularly concerning their bias towards western experiences. In the same

way Osei-Hwedie (1993) argues; *"A major indictment against African social work practice is the gap between theory, Western theory and practice in response to local needs"* (Osei-Hwedie 1993:21).

Chitereka (2009) also talks about the negative implications western influence has had on African social work theory and practice in specific. He means that the profession was initially influenced by the colonizing powers in its curative approach. The British for instance exported a curative social work form to several African countries (including Uganda) based on the principles of remedial services in the United Kingdom (Chitereka 2009:149). According to the author, the profession has not yet sufficiently challenged this principle, as it still mostly works to remedy social problems from an individualized level. Consequently, African social work often lacks the proper tools to deal with specific challenges to the African continent. By focusing on individual pathologies, social development approaches, which could better target the vast social problems on the continent, combat social inequalities and provide tools of self-empowerment that are often being disregarded (Chitereka 2009:152).

According to Rwomire and Raditlhokwa other factors influencing the agency and status of African social work concern the fact that the profession is relatively new to the continent which causes social workers to lack credibility. As the role of the social worker is not yet completely recognized, the authors mean that the functions and objectives of the social work training and profession appear vague. As there is no obligatory certification to practice social work in many African countries (including Uganda), another problem is that many people are employed as social workers without being professionally trained within the field, which further seriously undermines the status of the profession. Rwomire and Raditlhokwa mean that this can be partly credited to the reduced spending on social welfare resulting in insufficient economic support for social welfare programs. The inadequate resources provided to social work further results in very problematic working conditions. The authors point out that *"the lack of recognition by governments manifests itself in the lower levels of remuneration and status accorded to social workers compared to other professionals with similar qualifications"* (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa 1996, web). As a result, they mean that the profession is *"one of the most overworked, underpaid, under-recognized and distressed professions"* (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa 1996, web).

According to Rwomire & Raditlhokwa, many of the challenges facing African social work can be explained by the fact that essential forms of social work interventions cannot yet be facilitated by the socio-political setting in many African countries. Thus they argue that the key obstacle is the political leaders constricted and traditionalist idea of the roles and functions of social work. They argue that: *"...developing countries' political elites have no intention of redistributing income and wealth to eradicate mass poverty. They use social work as a palliative and as a means of camouflaging the material basis of deprivation"* (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa 1996, web). This narrow perception of social work results to the fact that social work in many African countries do not effectively address structural inequalities but continue to function only as a *"passive and un ambitious distributor of meager means-tested food hand-outs which effectively keep clients in the vicious cycle of poverty"* (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa 1996, web). Likewise, Tlamelo Mmatli (2008) stresses the importance of social workers in Africa to look beyond individual interventions and actively engage in political processes in order to make sustainable changes on a societal level.

3. PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUAL RIGHTS

In this section we will first present a broad outline of the global discrimination of LGBT populations in order to shed light on the issue from a broader perspective as it by no means is a phenomena isolated to the Ugandan context. After that we will provide a general outline of the situation on the African continent as we can see that certain discriminatory manifestations and tendencies are occurring simultaneously in several different countries in Africa. Particular events can hence be said to be interlinked by similar forces. Following, we shall focus particularly on the situation of the LGBT population in Uganda and also give a comprehensive description of the 'Anti Homosexuality Bill'. Thereafter we shall provide a background of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.

3.1 THE GLOBAL SITUATION OF SEXUAL MINORITIES

Even though the equal rights and protection against discrimination of sexual minorities are integrated in numerous international human rights instruments, the actual implementation of these principles is far away in most places. It is also important to note that LGBT persons do not belong to a homogenous group internationally or nationally. As such; *"certain identities such as race, ethnic and social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as legal, economic, social and cultural situations disproportionately impact on their experiences and access to the full enjoyment of all rights and freedoms"* (The Resolution of the NGO Forum of the 49th Session on the African Commission on Human and People's Rights to end all Forms of Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Africa).

According to a report published by the Organization for Refugee, Asylum and Migration (ORAM) in 2011, LGBT persons around the world are hence exposed to different forms of inequity and discriminatory practices based on their sexual orientation or their gender identity. As such they are affected by different types of violence as well as by a range of barriers against their basic human rights: *"They are subject to violence – including rape, torture and murder – both by private citizens and agents of the government. Their marginalization is often characterized by barriers to health care, housing, education and employment"* (ORAM 2011:5).

By codifying the discrimination against LGBT people in legislative instruments

intolerance is often perpetuated: *"Hundreds of jurisdictions worldwide maintain laws that prevent or do not protect the full expression of LGBT identity, including limitations on legal partnership rights or cohabitation"* (ORAM 2011:6). According to the report, 76 United Nations member states criminalize adult consenting same-sex acts. Russia has for instance recently received worldwide criticism for passing a controversial law in St Petersburg which criminalizes the assembly of lesbian, gay or trans-persons and any form of public discussion on the behalf of their rights. Law makers in Russia are currently fighting to implement the law on a national level (All Out 2012).

At present, seven nations in fact maintain the death penalty for consensual homosexual acts; Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, as well as parts of Nigeria and Somalia (ORAM 2011:6). Sharia law governs some of these nations and enforces *"death by public stoning"* as one of the execution forms applicable for persons convicted for engaging in same sex acts (ORAM 2011:6). State-sanctioned persecution of LGBT persons further appears in un-codified forms like informal policies that accept police brutality against LGBT people;

> "These policies often discourage sexual minorities from reporting hate crimes, exposing them to an even greater risk of abuse. States also discriminate against their LGBT citizens by classifying untraditional sexual orientation or gender identity as mental illnesses and by legally limiting the expression of LGBT rights organizations" (ORAM 2011:6).

One way of avoiding ethnocentrism is to look at the history and reflect upon how cultural understandings (dominant discourses and their truth regimes) have changed over time. In Sweden homosexuality was seen as an illness as recent as thirty three years ago, and although the right not to be discriminated against is part of a range of legal and policy instruments protecting the rights of LGBT persons, discrimination against LGBT persons still exist in several societal fields including the regulations of adoption, inseminations of lesbian women, and the legal determination of parenthood (DN 2009). Moreover, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention ('Brottsförebyggande Rådet') released statistics in 2008 showing a recent increase in reported cases of hate crimes against LGBT persons in Sweden compared to the year before (Kunskapsbanken 2012; RFSL 2009). We still have a long way to go globally as well as nationally.

THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

In many parts of Africa, the colonial powers introduced current anti-sodomite legislation (the prohibition against anal sex), as a means to combat same-sex acts with a particular

focus on same-sex relations between men. Homosexual acts are today criminalized in thirty African countries (Dahlqvist & Måwe 2011).

Sexuality, particularly sexuality transcending the heterosexual norm, has long been a controversial subject on the African continent. Homosexuality has for instance until recently remained a relatively invisible phenomenon. The struggle for equal rights by African LGBT activist has however made sexual minorities more visible in different African countries, but their efforts has also led to powerful counter reactions from religious leaders, the media, and politicians who have frequently joined their efforts in combating the societal inclusion of LGBT persons in Africa (Dahlqvist & Måwe 2011).

Strong religious discourses often play a particularly big part in the discrimination of LGBT person's rights and are largely influencing the politics shaping anti-homosexuality policies and legislation. According to Hultman (2012) another major factor influencing state-sponsored homophobia are strong patriarchic values and general political instability shaped by factors such as the influence of (often previously ruling) dictators, civil wars, and different forms of state-afflicted violence.

In 1996 South Africa adopted a new progressive constitution which included sexual minorities' right to protection against discrimination (Dahlqvist & Måwe 2011). In 2005, gender neutral marriage legislation was also enforced. South Africa's position in promoting human rights of LGBT persons did however stir up powerful counter reactions from prominent actors in other African countries claiming that South Africa had compromised it's African values under the influence of the global west. In 2005 Nigeria banned any form of support of the LGBT community while same-sex handholding became a ground for prison sentences for up to five years. The same year Uganda prohibited same-sex marriages and Zimbabwe strengthened its anti-gay legislation. Although Burundi previously lacked such legislation an anti-gay penal code was introduced in 2009, making acts of homosexuality grounds for prison sentences (Dahlqvist & Måwe 2011).

In Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria state-sponsored homophobia has a direct relationship to the influence of Christian right-wing conservatives. Through well-funded recruitment campaigns these actor's has often successfully managed to enlist African religious leaders in combating any types of equal rights of sexual minorities. The effects of these campaigns have been particularly clear in Uganda were the so called 'anti-homosexuality

bill' was introduced in 2009 right after persistent anti-gay campaigns in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. At the time over a thousand persons including teachers, politicians and policemen participated in a conference called "Pro Jesus – anti Homosexual" held in Kampala by three American evangelic pastors. The topics of the conference included: *"how gay people can be made straight"*; *"how gays recruit children"*; and *"how gay men often sodomized teenage boys"* (Adelgaard et al 2011:7).

Scott Lively, a prominent American evangelist, has had a particularly strong influence in the anti-gay campaigning in Uganda and has among other things made statements that gay people are rapists of children and ruin the culture of Uganda (The New York Times 2012).

Also, Gregory Branch (2010) quotes Sylvia Tamale when saying that the LGBTs, and homosexual persons in particular have became scapegoats in an attempt of Ugandan politicians to divert the attention away from more urgent issues: *"Politicians find that homosexuals are a great scapegoat or red herring to divert attention to more pressing issues [...] such as unemployment, corruption, poor health facilities, reform of electoral laws and so forth"* (Branch 2010, web). He continues to refer to Tamale who says that there are far more morally pressing issues of concern than homosexuality in Uganda: *"If we are to be absolutely honest with ourselves, we should ask whether there are not more pressing issues of moral violation in other areas such as domestic violence, torture and corruption. None of these areas have specific laws outlawing their practice"* (Branch 2010, web).

THE SITUATION IN UGANDA

Uganda has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has ratified a wide range of international and regional human rights treaties including the ICESCR (1966), the ICCPR (1966), as well as a number of specific conventions, such as CEDAW (1979), ICRMW (1990), and CRPD (2006) (Claiming Human Rights 2012). Uganda has not made any significant reservations to these treaties. Regionally Uganda has also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. The protection against discrimination is further granted under the Ugandan Constitution under article 21 (2) along with fundamental freedoms such as the freedoms of expression; thought; peaceful assembly; conscience and religion; and association. The liberty and security of the person and the

right to the highest attainable standards of life and health are also guaranteed under the Constitution (Amnesty International 2012). Furthermore, the Equal Opportunities Commission Act was created to enforce specific protection for marginalized groups (OHCHR 2009).

Even though the goal of the Equal Opportunities Commission Act was created to grant equal protection for all, it completely excludes LGBT persons from its protective scope. Section 15(6) of the Act; *"bars the Commission from investigating any matter involving behavior which is considered to be I) immoral and socially harmful, or II) unacceptable by the majority of the cultural and social communities in Uganda"* (OHCHR 2009:7). The Commission is hence guided by the perceptions of the 'majority' in determining what is suitable and moral. According to the OHCHR (2009) this makes it ineffective; *"permitting discrimination based on unclear and broad criteria as well as moving away from legal standards"* (OHCHR 2009:8). LGBT persons however not only lack legal protection against discrimination; normative and religious anti-gay beliefs within the Ugandan society are actually *legitimized* by anti-gay legislation, violating the human rights of LGTB persons. As such, the LGTB community living in Uganda is a highly stigmatized and marginalized group.

Previously, only male same-sex acts where illegal, but the Penal Code Amendment (Gender References) Act also criminalized female same-sex acts in 2000 by changing the reference 'any male', to 'any person' (Ground Report 2012).

The Ugandan Penal Code Act 1950 (Chapter 120) includes same-sex acts under the heading 145; 'Un natural offences' which is defined as following; *"A person who has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature; has carnal knowledge of an animal; or permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature..."* (The Ugandan Penal Code Act 1950:57). The offence is stated as liable to imprisonment for life. Heading 146 further criminalizes any *"attempt to commit unnatural offences"*, making such attempts punishable with up to seven years in prison (The Ugandan Penal Code Act 1950:58). Section 148 which includes 'Acts of gross indecencies' further includes act of homosexuality in the criminalization of

> "any person who, weather in public or in private, commits any act of gross indecency with him or her attempts to procure the commission of any such act by any person with himself or herself or with another person, whether in public or in private, commits an offence and is liable for imprisonment for seven years" (The Ugandan Penal Code Act 1950: 58).

As shown, long prison sentences can currently be sanctioned even same-sex acts conducted in private by consenting adults. A conviction however requires that the persons are either 'caught' in the actual sexual act, or confesses conducting the act to the authorities.

According to the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU 2010), the criminalization of same-sex acts in Uganda also makes LGBT persons extremely vulnerable to other abuses and often leads to *"failure of police to protect the LGBT victims of mob justice. It gives a green light to blackmailers and to police harassment of LGBT people, including the framing of LGBT people on false charges"* (IHEU 2010).

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB)

In 2009 the situation of Ugandan LGTB persons received worldwide attention as a new legislative proposal aimed at complementing the current legislation in combating homosexuality was introduced in the parliament by a Member of the Ugandan Parliament Hon. David Bahati.

The main objectives of the bill are to:

> "Provide for marriage in Uganda as that contracted only between a man and a woman;
>
> Prohibit and penalize homosexual behavior and related practices in Uganda as they constitute a threat to the traditional family;
>
> Prohibit ratifications of any international treaties, conventions, protocols, agreements and declarations which are contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act;
>
> Prohibit the licensing of organizations which promote homosexuality"
>
> (The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009, Article 3).

The AHB targets both male and female consensual same-sex acts. Article 2 (C) goes as far as criminalizing a simple 'touch' if done *"with the intention of committing the act of homosexuality"* (AHB, 2C 2009). A person who commits an offence under this section is liable to get convicted to imprisonment for life.

The bill also introduces a more comprehensive description of the LGBT community by not merely describing homosexuality as a disorder, but also including *"related practices"* as *"gender identity disorders"* in describing non-normative gender identities (AHB 2009).

Clause 18(2) further prohibits the use of any 'legitimizing' definitions such as gender identity with the intention; *"to legitimize homosexuality, gender identity disorders and*

related practices in Uganda" (AHB 2009). This clause has since then been removed and replaced with a more elaborated definition; *"Definitions of 'sexual orientation', 'sexual rights', 'sexual minorities', 'gender identity' shall not be used in any way to legitimize homosexuality, gender identity disorders and related practices in Uganda"* (Clause 18(2) AHB 2012).

Clause 3 (1) of the bill goes on to state that 'aggravated' (caught more than once) homosexual activities should be sanctioned with the death penalty. This is also the case when a person is found having sex with a disabled person of the same sex or with a person under the age of eighteen. Uganda has not executed the death penalty since 1999, and the implementation of the AHB (2009) would obviously reverse this development (OHCHR 2009).

A major implication of the AHB is that it aims to prohibit any type of activism and supportive work by NGOs and other organizations to support sexual rights by defining it as 'promotion of homosexuality' (e.g. a person or an NGO who 'funds' or 'sponsors' homosexuality). Such crimes are liable on conviction for five to seven years imprisonment (The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009, Section 13).

The implementation of the AHB would obviously result in a whole range of severe human rights violations against the LGBT community in Uganda as it would break a number of international human rights laws.

Actually, according to Amnesty International (2012) just launching the proposal has increased hate crimes and discrimination against LGTB persons in Uganda, for instance leading to the murder of the gay activist and human rights defender David Kato. Prior the murder, a public hate campaign against LGTB persons had been initiated by the Ugandan tabloid paper Rolling Stone in which the photographs and details of about one hundred known LGTB persons and activists, including David Kato was published on the front page with the headlines *"Hang Them"*. Kato had filed charges against the editors of the paper and had won the case in court (Amnesty International 2012).

According to The Resolution of the NGO Forum of the 49th Session on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to end all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Africa, further increasing human rights violations against LGBT persons in Uganda include;

> "…arbitrary arrests, detentions, extra judicial killings and executions, forced disappearances, extortion and blackmail, hate speech, violent attacks, including rape and other sexual assault, physical assaults, torture and murder, as well as the failure of protecting the rights to safety and security of the person, freedom of movement and association, freedom of expression…" (The Resolution of the NGO Forum of the 49th Session on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to end all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Africa).

Likewise, Amnesty International, states that LGBT persons and activists are continually facing arbitrary detentions, torture *"and other ill treatment by the police and other security personnel"* on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or involvement in the struggle for sexual rights (Amnesty International 2012).

Despite the increased risks of danger, there are nevertheless around twenty LGBT activist organizations in Uganda still fighting intensively for the rights of LGTB persons. The international community including countries such as USA, Sweden, Denmark and Norway has also openly criticized what is viewed as Ugandan violations of human rights concerning LGTB persons. IMF and Sweden has for instance threatened to withdraw aid to Uganda should the proposed legislation enter into force (Löfgren 2011), which together with the national resistance from human rights defenders in Uganda put a halt to the implementation of the bill. Nevertheless, in March 2012 the proposed 'anti-homosexuality bill' was reintroduced in the Ugandan parliament where a decision of whether or not it should pass into law is currently pending. The 'new' bill has some amendments in order to pass as a more diplomatic option against strong critical forces. It has for instance removed the previous clause 14 (the obligation for people in authority to report LGBT persons within 24h). Nevertheless, all other amendments are minor ones, and even though a common perception is that the death penalty has been removed under section 3 in the amended version of the AHB, it actually still very much applies through a referral to the penalty provided under section 129 of the Penal Code Act 1950.

Since we came home from our stay in Uganda (April 2012), Simon Lokodo, the State Minister of Ethics and Integrity has threatened to revoke the license of any Ugandan NGO working to support sexual minorities by any means. Even though the 'anti-homosexuality bill' has not yet passed as a law (October 2012), all of these NGOs are potentially facing shut downs on the accusation of 'promoting homosexuality'. So far in 2012, as many as 38 NGOs has already been banned, which is a serious violation of both the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly (The Guardian 2012).

Homophobia in Uganda

It is our understanding that homophobia is presently a widespread phenomenon in Uganda. We grasp the fact that we need to be sensitive concerning attitudes and beliefs which may be different from our own, but we believe that the usage of the concept *homophobia* is legit in this context as it encompasses the discriminatory beliefs and attitudes towards sexual minorities held by a large amount of people in the Ugandan society. As such many misconceptions about what constitute non-heterosexual sexuality and 'deviant' gender identities are part of highly normative and politicized beliefs. As it is often produced and reproduced in the major institutions of the Ugandan society this means that homophobia is institutionalized in the country. However, we recognize that not all citizens of Uganda hold homophobic viewpoints, and that understandings differ widely among the group of people holding such beliefs, as well as among the group who in one way or another are in favor of the rights-oriented discourse concerning sexual minorities. A clear division between the two groups cannot even be made, since persons may be ambivalent about their beliefs and attitudes. An individual may for instance have a personal conviction that non-heterosexual practices or gender identities, different from the norms, are wrong and 'unnatural', while at the same time supporting the human rights of LGBT persons in society. We also acknowledge that homophobia in the current Ugandan context often resembles homophobia in other contexts.

3.2 SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Presently, there are no human rights treaties which refer explicitly to 'sexual orientation' and/or 'gender identity' (OHCHR 2009). However, as recently highlighted by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, the equal rights of LGBT persons are today considered to be included in the guiding and overarching human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. Hence LGBT persons are entitled to *"all human rights and fundamental freedoms, which by nature are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated"* (OHCHR 2009:2). By referring to the term 'other status' the non-discriminatory principle has for instance been successfully applied in several international court cases of human rights violations against sexual minorities. The ICCPR is commonly seen as a particularly important instrument in the enforcement of sexual

rights as it was successfully referred to in the first ever court case concerning the human rights violations of LGBT persons (see Toonen vs Australia 1994). This event made the ICCPR applicable for other judicial claims of sexual rights and brought The Human Rights Committee to form a precedent within the UN human rights system addressing discrimination against sexual minorities (HREA 2012). The committee urges states to repeal any laws criminalizing homosexuality and to enforce legislated protection against any discrimination based on sexual orientation into their constitutions or other existing laws (OHCHR 2009:6).

The African Commission on Human and People's Rights, which monitors states' compliances with the African Charter similarly states that Article 2 in the African Charter can also be argued to provide protection against discrimination for sexual minorities under the reference to 'other status'. OHCHR refers to the 21st activity report of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' rights;

> "Together with equality before the law and equal protection of the law, the principle of non discrimination provided under Article 2 of the Charter provides the foundation for the enjoyment of all fundamental human rights. The aim of this principle is to ensure equality of treatment of individuals irrespective of nationality, sex, racial or ethnic origin, political opinion, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation" (OHCHR 2009).

The human rights prescribed under international human rights law, are hence entitled to all people; *"regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity"* (OHCHR 2009:2). This means that the human rights of sexual minorities does not differ from other peoples fundamental rights as they are neither special nor new. On the contrary, these claims demands that everyone; *"regardless of sexual orientation and – or gender identity, is guaranteed the fullest enjoyment of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights"* (OHCHR 2009:3).

As such, UN treaty bodies have confirmed that sexual minorities are in fact protected by the current human rights treaties, enriching various international human rights instruments with this principle, while providing for an extensive applicable scope. Globally, the anti-discrimination principles of article 26 in the ICCPR and article 2 (2) in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) embody this principle (MacNaughton 2009).

In 2006, the dedication towards implementing sexual rights brought a group of human rights experts together in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to develop *"a set of international legal*

principles on the application of international law to human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity to bring greater clarity and coherence to State's human rights obligations…" (OHCHR 2009:3). The two first principles concern *"the right to the universal enjoyment of human rights, and the rights to equality and non-discrimination"* (OHCHR 2009:3). The experts occasionally recommend states on how to apply the recommendations, and even though the principles are not legally binding, they provide guidance and persuasion on how to relate the norms of universal human rights to sexual minorities (OHCHR 2009:3).

The concept 'sexual rights' is sometimes used when referring to the human rights of sexual minorities. Important to note is however that the IPPF declaration of sexual rights (adopted in 2008) defines sexual rights as applicable to *all* people as it embodies the universality, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights; *"Sexual right are a component of human rights, they are an evolving set of entitlements related to sexuality that contribute to the freedom, equality and dignity of all people"* (IPPF 2008:10). The declaration however gives particular attention to groups whose sexual rights are more vulnerable to violations including LGBT persons, sex workers, child brides/mothers, and women and girls affected by sexual and/or domestic violence. Among other aspects, it focuses attention on gender equality as well as people's rights to define and express their own sexual orientation and/or gender identities. The declaration defines sexual rights as following;

> "Sexual rights refer to specific norms that emerge when existing human rights are applied to sexuality. These rights include freedom, equality, privacy, autonomy, integrity, and dignity of all people; principles recognized in many international instruments that are particularly relevant to sexuality. Sexual rights offer an approach that includes but goes beyond the protection of particular identities. Sexual rights guarantee that everyone has access to the conditions that allow fulfillment and expression of their sexualities free from any coercion, discrimination or violence and within a context respectful of dignity" (IPPF 2008:10).

3.3 SOCIAL WORK AND SEXUAL RIGHTS

According to the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW), principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental in social work (IFSW 2011). As such, covenants and declarations as for instance the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights are said to include values and guidelines

fundamental to the profession of social work universally.

Hence, according to the federation, all social workers have a responsibility to be aware of social inequalities and discrimination affecting groups and individuals and to actively endorse social justice on an individual level as well as in society as a whole. As such, social workers are seen as agents of change and are hence obligated to challenge any negative discrimination: *"on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin colour, racial or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs"* (IFSW 2011, web). Accordingly, in relation to LGBT rights, the International Federation of Social Workers requires that homosexuality is decriminalized wherever such legislation remains: *"This involves reviewing all legislation which could result in the discrimination, prosecution and punishment of people solely for their sexual orientation or gender identity"* (IFSW 2011, web).

NASWU has been criticized for lacking correspondence to these international standards of social work, for instance in regard to the debate following the tabling of the 'anti-homosexuality bill'. In an attempt to represent the views of the members of NASWU, the association has made a statement in support of the 'anti-homosexuality bill', which has been severely criticized internationally. In response the chair of the IFSW ethics committee, Richard Hugman, has written a statement in which he refers to the worldwide agreement of professional ethics, which includes *"the ethical requirement of social workers to challenge negative discrimination and within that identifies sexual orientation as an area in which such discrimination should be challenged"* (Hugman 2010). Moreover, in the IFSW statement the common connection made between sexual child abuse and homosexuality is raised as an unfortunate conception with no evidential backing; in fact *"the great majority of sexual abuse against children is heterosexual - that is, men abusing girls and young women"*, nevertheless, of course proper legislation needs to address all forms of abuse targeting young people (Hugman 2010).

One out of many human rights violations proposed to become law in the 'anti-homosexuality bill' is the introduction of the death penalty, which is criticized and problematized by Hugman in accordance to already established ethics;

> "The call for the death penalty as part of the Ugandan legislation also raises ethical concerns for social work [...] The IFSW/IASSW statement of ethical principles is clear that as a way of upholding human rights and social justice we should not contribute to

inhumane treatment of people" (Hugman 2010).

Lastly, even though religious believes are also acknowledged as grounds for discrimination, IFSW states that *"we should seek to find common ground in the way regard all humanity in looking at any specific question"* (Hugman 2010). Thus the definition of social work corresponds to international human rights standards and there is a clear connection to the universal principle in applying human rights and social justice; *"IFSW respects and upholds the international conventions and treaties which explicitly recognize the right of all individuals to give expression to their sexual orientation, among many other basic rights"* ("IFSW Statement- Human Rights and Social Work in Uganda" 2010).

IASSW harshly criticizes NASWU for its position in regard to the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and *"[urges] NASWU to reconsider their stance on homosexuality, as well as their support for a Bill which condemns people on account of their sexuality, which seeks to render them voiceless, and which promotes the death penalty as a means of enforcing their compliance with its provisions"* (International Schools of Social Work, May 2010). Importantly, in line with agreed international ethics in social work (as formulated by IFSW and IASSW) the regional Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA) also condemns homophobia, as it has been expressed in the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and furthermore criticizes NASWU's responses; *"ASSWA calls upon the National Association of Social Workers in Uganda (NASWU) to support the decriminalization of homosexuality and the protection of the rights and lives of gay and lesbian persons"* (IASSW Newsletter Number 1, 2011:12).

4. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

When exploring the previous research relating to our study we have searched for a range of different but somewhat interrelated categories: research regarding social work in Uganda, sexuality in Uganda, and more specifically social work and LGBT rights in the Ugandan context. Lastly we have reviewed the particular work of Professor Sylvia Tamale; she has performed an extensive part of the contemporary academic studies on sexuality in an African context, mostly from a legal perspective. In addition to finding articles and books by searching data bases online, we have brought indigenous work from Uganda.

We have used ProQuest Social Sciences that allow us to search in eight databases in parallel. Useful subject headings and keywords appear to be 'social work' or 'empowerment' in relation to 'LGBT', 'homosexuality'/'homosexuals', and 'sexual rights'. Furthermore we have searched in Gender Studies Database, Sociological Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, and Google Scholar.

4.1 SOCIAL WORK IN UGANDA- NATIONAL PRACTICE IN A GLOBAL WORLD

Much of the research performed on social work in Uganda is focused on development and health issues; the first two Ugandan PhD dissertations in social work were concerned with safe water systems and malaria prevention respectively (Asingwire 2008; Lubanga 2010).

Realizing how social services are organized in a society is key in understanding the premises of social work action and its actors/agents. *Human Rights NGOs in East Africa-Political and Normative Tensions* is an anthology edited by Makau Mutua (2009) in which the civil society at large, and more specifically human rights activism are scrutinized. In the Ugandan context professional social work is often performed in NGO-settings as a response to the lacking governmental services; *"the rise of civil society in much of Africa seems to directly correspond to the dysfunction of and despotism of the postcolonial state"* (Mutua 2009:13).

Inevitably, in the global world Ugandan social work is related to international social work norms. International social work is a vast research area on its own but we here want to

mention Lynne M. Healy's account *International Social Work- Professional action in an interdependent world* (2008). This book covers many related themes such as linking development to human rights, raising global social issues, as well as highlighting values and ethics in international professional action.

Likewise, Michael Preston-Shoot and Staffan Höjer (2012) explore the connections between social work and international human rights in the article "Social Work, Social Justice and Protection: a Reflective Review". It is worth noting that certain factors are found that constrain the social work profession in relation to human rights and social justice, relevant in our research are the *"close political links and dependence on government funding [...] lack of formal recognition by government and absence of national social work associations; [and] variable quality and standards of social work education"* (Preston-Shoot & Höjer 2012:259). In order to increase the standards, social work needs to be strengthened in terms of licensing, registering, and organizing social workers nationally and internationally (Preston-Shoot & Höjer 2012).

4.2 CRIMINALIZATION OF SEXUALITY IN UGANDA

Dominant discourses regarding sexual minorities in Uganda are often built on religious beliefs. In *Disabusing Sexuality* Canon Nathan Karema holds that homosexuality is one of many 'behavioral deviations', and like rape, child exploitation and divorce homosexuality is an example of 'sexual abuse' (2012). Even if this book does not claim to provide a scientific analysis this is an example of how indigenous publications tend to depict and categorize the sexual minorities in ways that result in a denial of fundamental human rights. See also Tamale's publication *Homosexuality: Perspectives from Uganda* with articles from the media showing examples of both dominant and alternative discourses are represented (2007).

While traditional notions of sexual minorities in Uganda tend to exclude these populations from the human rights discourse, the other side of the coin is the negative implications of criminalization. As the title suggests, the article "Health Benefits of Legal Services for Criminalized Populations: The Case of People Who Use Drugs, Sex Workers and Sexual and Gender Minorities" by Joanne Csete and Jonathan Cohen analyzes the correlation between legal sanctions and bad health of criminalized individuals in society (2010). In other words criminalization leads to harsh violations of human rights and

"[reinforces] discrimination and social disdain, constitute barriers to access to social and health services and employment, and contribute to psychological stress" (Csete & Cohen 2010:825). There are also implications for NGOs willing to support these individuals: *"Around the world, gay, lesbian and transgender organizations are prohibited from being registered and receiving funds as NGOs, from organizing peaceful marches and from other exercise of their basic rights"* (Csete & Cohen 2010:823).

4.3 SOCIAL WORK AND LGBT RIGHTS- INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Pernilla Ouis (2012) discusses sexual health and rights in relation to tradition and religion in Lars Plantin and Sven-Axel Månsson's anthology of sexuality studies that covers different interrelated themes within the field of social work and sexuality, recently released in Swedish. According to Ouis, in the rather complicated strive for universalism the United Nations and its expert authorities, e.g. WHO, sometimes tend *not* to problematize traditional values and religious believes in order to avoid problematic conflict areas in their definitions regarding sexual rights, since these can be regarded reflections of a *western* discourse (Ouis 2012:108-110). However, Ouis questions UNs overtly precautious approach as it can be *"seen as an expression of pragmatism; if no cultural and religious considerations are taken, basically no developmental work can be executed, or it can be radically obstructed"* (Ouis 2012:124, our translation). Ouis claims that it is important to underline the processes by which religion have the power to legitimize discriminative structures in society; the 'heteronormative marriage' is an example of an institution claiming high status while homosexuality can be seen as a challenge and threat of such norms (Ouis 2012 113-116). In the Ugandan context Ouis sees the increasing homophobia partly as an effect of moralizing HIV-prevention methods (e.g. the successful 'ABC-strategy'), and therefore international aid that is channeled through 'faith-based organizations' should be heavily criticized (Ouis 2012:121). In conclusion, currently UN is facing a dilemma that is partly solved by providing a kind of 'culture lens' aiming at facilitating the understanding of diversity for instance in regard to local power structures. UN has come to admit that there are sometimes conflicts between cultural discourses and universal ideas and realizes that there is a great need to 'over-bridge' such conflict areas (Ouis 2012:123).

4.4 SYLVIA TAMALE- AN OVERVIEW

Sylvia Tamale has a special position regarding research on human and sexual rights in Uganda. She is a 'feminist lawyer' based at the legal department, Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Consequently her work has a legal perspective and the human rights perspective is clearly of great importance in this respect. Over the years she has covered topics around gender identity, sexual orientation, heteronormativity, discrimination, sex work, women, minorities, human rights etc. Importantly Tamale holds a critical perspective against power structures, normativity, and oppression.

The anthology *African Sexualities: a Reader*, edited by Tamale, was published in 2011. *African Sexualities* is an ambitious piece of work including a range of perspectives and stories in diverse forms; academic texts and official documents are mixed with fiction, poems, and photos. The contributions come from different parts of Africa and show examples of very diverse meanings of both 'African' and of 'sexualities'. The book also contains a number of Tamale's own articles. Among the most relevant articles that she contributes with is "Researching and theorizing sexualities in Africa", which covers probable implications for researchers in this field. The cultural aspects of sexuality are highlighted as crucial in understanding the context, but at the same time as researchers we need of course to avoid stereotypes, preconceptions, and Eurocentric representations. The article covers the importance of researching sexualities in different settings and contexts: *"Because the topic of sexualities is often wrapped in silences, taboos and privacies, researchers need to hone distinctive techniques and methods that unearth invisible, silenced and repressed knowledge"* (Tamale 2011:12). Similar to Tamale's approach to collect contemporary representations of African sexualities, Signe Arnfred (2005) has published an anthology called *Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa*, with the aim to critically discuss previous representations as well as providing alternative perspectives. The scholars are Nordic/Scandinavian and they mainly embrace a queer-feminist approach.

In 2007 *Homosexuality: Perspectives from Uganda* was published with the ambition to collect articles from the debate over homosexuality in Ugandan print media during the period 1997-2007. Tamale is the editor of the book and she explains that homosexuality is currently one among the most controversial topics, and that the Ugandan context provides *"an interesting local African dimension to an issue that is at the core of a clash of*

perspectives about how we order our lives in the 21ˢᵗ Century" (Tamale 2007a:ix). Importantly it includes articles from different sides in the debate; political and religious leaders, both for and against the rights of sexual minorities, as well as activists are represented in order to give a somewhat balanced overview.

In "Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda", Tamale explores the *"gendered dimensions of sexuality"* (Tamale 2007b:19). The gender hierarchy in society is legitimized and reconstructed through criminalization of sexual practices (such as same sex acts) and through creating a taboo around such topics (Tamale 2007b).

According to Tamale (2008) many African feminists tend see 'culture' and 'rights' as opposites in regard to women, and she argues that this perspective is problematic; it exemplifies a narrow, essentialist and static interpretation of culture, assuming there is no room for change. In response she aims to *"explore, using the example of sexual rights, the emancipatory potential of culture to enhance the quality of women's lives in Africa"* (Tamale 2008:48). The universalism/cultural relativist debate is important also in regard to sexual minority rights and Tamale encourages a critical but positive and open understanding of culture, and this is an important perspective in our study as well.

4.5 A GAP TO FILL

Significantly, when it comes to the connection between social work and sexual rights in Uganda we find a gap in the previous research and that has motivated us to take this direction. Thus our research about the complexities and paradoxes of social work in relation to human and sexual rights discourses, in a Ugandan context, is a first attempt to begin filling that gap.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical framework covers theories concerning power, resistance, and sexuality. Homophobic beliefs and attitudes are widespread and highly normative in the Ugandan society; they are permeating general normative beliefs as well as official policies and legislation. As such, any alternative viewpoints can be viewed as some form of strategy to oppose dominant discourses and hence as intentional or unintentional forms of resistance. We have focused especially on these alternative discourses in our research as we believe that they are an essential part in understanding the potential within the profession of social work to support the rights of sexual minorities. Before we plunge into the specifics of our chosen theories of resistance, we will first provide an outline for our theoretical understandings of power[1] as well as of sexuality as a research field.

5.1 POWER

According to Mona Lilja, Docent in peace and conflict studies and Stellan Vinthagen, Docent in sociology and Doctor of philosophy in peace and conflicts studies (2009), our understanding of resistance is inseparable to how we understand power. There are large differences between different schools of research concerning resistance studies as well as the study of power. Certainly the study of resistance as well as power is also completely dependent on the context we study and what we as researchers choose to view as important. Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) bring forth examples of this;

> "Sometimes resistance is all about acting, sometimes it is all about not acting. Sometimes resistance against different discourses – languages of truth - is at the center, while other researchers study resistance as an organized practice against different individuals, decision-makers or decision-making organs/organizations or institutions" (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:14, our translation).

Different forms of power can be detected within different fields of the Ugandan society. We have previously given a short description of the current political system allowing little space for democracy by limiting the voices of the opposition. We have also shown how the political system is closely connected to the lack of safety within the legal system resulting in a number of human rights violations. Successfully regulating the media, politicians have used the issue of homosexuality to curve discontent and criticism among

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[1] Several conclusions based on Michel Foucault´s theoretical concepts have previously been made by Regnander (2010).

the population by using homosexuality as a 'red herring' hence shifting focus from political failures and unfulfilled promises to a new imminent evil to society – homosexuality. Through mutual interests, politicians have cooperated with international as well as national religious actors in order to inflame homophobia among the general population including the academic society of Uganda. The major backing of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' by the general population is a direct result of this. As such political and religious structural power is directly linked to discursive forms of power.

Certainly, there is a lot to be said about power structures affecting and oppressing persons identifying themselves as LGBT. Already marginalized they are among the most vulnerable for human rights abuses. As such, they are often deprived of many civil and political rights (e.g. the freedom of assembly, expression and political representation), as well as social and economic rights (e.g. the right to housing, employment and education). The application of an intersectional perspective also shows how factors such as gender and sexuality co-exist with other factors, for instance class and ethnicity, in the oppression of individuals and groups. They are inter-linked and often reinforce each other in the structures of power and marginalization: *"Intersectional approaches illustrate how issues of sexuality and gender do not stand alone but are rather components of social injustice and inequality that is connected to a general system of oppression"* (Fish 2008:49).

Of course we could choose to mainly focus on the different forms of oppressions affecting LGBT persons. Nevertheless this area is not the main aim of this thesis. Rather than focusing merely on repression, we want to focus more on the potential to change power relations. Concerning our chosen power theories we could also have continued to view power as exclusively structural or formed as the intentions and interests of a ruling elite, but instead we have aligned our thoughts with those of the French philosopher and researcher Michel Foucault who believed in shifting focus from the exercise, or essence of power, to instead study its effects, more specifically to what it *produces*.

MICHEL FOUCAULT AND POWER

According to Foucault (1980) all exercises of power encompass aims as well as goals, but it cannot be claimed to obey anyone's sole intentions as it in a much more subtle way functions through its symbiosis with knowledge. According to him, power enclasps

subjects through a sort of invisible web and reproduces through relationships. No matter the level, he viewed power as always the same *relational* phenomena (Foucault 1980:120). Therefore power can according to him never exist in any solid form, although the possibility of its enforcement can potentially exist everywhere.

Foucault hence shifted focus from previous quantitative power studies which observed power mainly as structural or as something oppressive, which was owned and exerted by the ruling elite. He did not deny the existence of different forms of structural power, but believed that by focusing on power as structural one risks losing sight of the actual *effects* of power (Foucault 2003:12-15).

Foucault used the concept of 'disciplinary power' to show how power in a modern society infiltrates its (often) unconscious subjects through unspoken societal rules of 'normality and deviance'. He believed that the emergence and maintaining of disciplinary power is closely linked to what he described as the 'disciplinary technologies' employed by the major human service institutions and professions in order to normalize and socialize the citizens of a society (Nilsson 2008:63, 84).

Indirectly this power is according to Foucault exerted through the current 'knowledge discourses' in a societal context, i.e. the ways in which knowledge is organized in a society and is given prevalence over other forms of knowledge (Gustavsson 2008:36).

The Discourse

According to Foucault, a discourse consists of very specific concepts and ideas expressing a particular view about human and social phenomena within a given societal context and time (Segerberg 2007:14). He meant that it is these discourses which determine our mutual comprehensions of the world by constructing the framework of what is considered good, desirable and normal, while simultaneously excluding perspectives and concepts that do not fit into this framework. As such, they are the direct result of very specific concrete historical practices producing power relations (Rosenberg 2002:21). Foucault thought that knowledge throughout history has always been influenced by different power interests, but not necessarily by the individuals themselves as he rather envisioned processes whereby the interests of persons are being lifted by the discourse itself as interests are incorporated into the structure of knowledge, developed by individuals partly sharing common aims (Gustavsson 2008:36).

The discourse hence organizes our thoughts, and as such, discourses can be said to act as representations of reality (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:77). Sounds, images, concepts and words etc. communicates certain ideas and thoughts. As different representations are repeated over a continuum of time, different discourses are created. All discourses however entail their own internal representation of the truth, which means that those specific truths do not exist outside the discourses. Bengt Starrin, and Hans Swärd, Professors in social work, show how Foucault called these 'truth regimes' (Swärd & Starrin 2006:253). Social work for instance has its own specific discourses, and hence also its own specific truth regimes. According to the authors, Foucault saw these 'truth regimes' as the source from which professional social workers gather their professional 'knowing' in the supportive work with clients (Swärd & Starrin 2006:253) This process works to differentiate between discourses in order to determine which discourses should be legitimized on behalf of others. Through reaching the highest status, certain perspectives concerning (for example) what exactly constitutes a certain social problem and how it is best solved gains credibility while other perspectives are dismissed.

Pastoral Power/Caring Power

According to Roddy Nilsson (2008), Docent in history, Foucault saw the normalization processes used by the human service professions as characteristic for the disciplinary power of western societies. By relying on control mechanisms and techniques rather than on older, more 'repressive' forms of power, punishments and legal terminologies has been replaced with the control exerted by institutions *"outside the machinery of the state"* (Nilsson 2008:90, our translation). As already mentioned, this form of power is more 'productive' than oppressive and works normalizing through different power techniques (Nilsson 2008:90-91). Foucault meant that these techniques used by human service professions (such as social work) can be compared with those employed by priests in the older Christian tradition in order to control as well as support the congregation at the same time (Svensson 2002:72). Foucault called this form of power 'pastoral power'. Svensson (2002) show how the reverend exerted 'pastoral power' by being responsible for the salvation of the entire congregation. The role of the reverend was mainly to offer guidance and support, but in order to ensure that each and every member would be granted access to heaven in the afterlife the reverend also had to have rigorous control over his assembled members. By gathering information about the inner thoughts and

feelings of all individuals, he could guide them all in living virtuous lives (Svensson 2002:72). According to Foucault, this was the whole rational behind the ritual of the confession (Foucault 1980:76).

As the religious aims were replaced with more 'worldly' goals during the 18th century, the health and safety of citizens became prioritized over concerns of their 'afterlives' (Svensson 2002:72). Margareta Järvinen, Professor in sociology (2002) refer to Foucault when saying that even though the original power function of the church has disappeared, it remains in the human service professions through the dual functions of providing support as well as exerting control over citizens (Järvinen 2002: 258). The aim is still to support and control the individual while at the same time controlling/aiding the congregation/population. The endeavor towards reaching a 'better' quality of life has simply replaced the endeavor towards salvation.

With the expansion in human service occupations, the exertion of pastoral power has according to Foucault also increased (Järvinen 2002: 258). Mostly giving the impression of being supportive, pastoral power is according to him very difficult to oppose, which in turn makes it very effective. Hence the most disciplinary relationships appear within professions were this form of power is exerted (e.g. social work).

Foucault (1980) believed that just like in the older tradition, pastoral power is still based on a detailed description of the inner life of the individuals in need of support/control. It particularly focuses on the weaknesses and troubles of individuals (Järvinen 2002:258). According to Foucault (1980), the ritual of the 'confession' still plays a big part in this process whereby the client is encouraged to talk openly and intimately about her/his private feelings and thoughts. Of most interest is the clients own perceptions and 'truths'. Foucault however meant that not all truths are considered of value as they first and foremost have to match the knowledge discourses of the particular institution (Foucault 1980:76). As this information is never objectively received, the relationship is highly hierarchical as the silent part constantly evaluates what is being said and has the power to steer the conversation towards what is considered normal and desirable (Foucault 1980:96). Accordingly, the truth of the client must match the truth regimes which constitute the requirements of the 'system', namely the discourse and the framework of normality used to normalize the client. Above all, this is a process whereby the client is encouraged to willingly participate in her/his own disciplining through internalizing the

norms and values of the professional (Järvinen 2002: 258).

Inspired by Foucault's (new) ideas of pastoral power, Svensson 2002 show how Annemieke van Drenth and Fransisca de Haan (1999) have further developed the concept. By referring to this power as 'caring power' they want to show how the caring principles of human service professions cannot be separated from disciplining aspects. As such, they believe that although the coercive measures of deviant clients may be based on different ideological premises than those efforts merely seen as supportive and caring, they are in fact the same fundamental actions seen from different ideological perspectives. Thus they believe that disciplining sanctions can be viewed as support, and support and care can be viewed as discipline (Svensson 2002:73).

The authors bring forth Elisabeth Fry, a prominent figure in the Quaker movement during the 19th century, as a textbook example of the exercise of caring power. She worked extensively to support women released from prisons in leading better lives while also socially reintegrating them back into society through the exertion of discipline. In order to receive her assistance and support, they first had to change themselves and their behaviors according to her demands. If they refused to yield and adapt, Elisabeth Fry would withhold all support (Svensson 2001:44-45). Her philosophy consisted of meeting these persons with dignity, kindness and respect. As they needed her support, they simply first had to change according to her norms, or in her own words: *"prisoners are ruled by kindness, chains are therefore unnecessary"* (Svensson 2001:44). This is also a good example of how Foucault viewed power, e.g. not as merely oppressive, but as a 'productive' force expressed in relationships.

We believe that the ideas of Foucault are helpful in understanding power in our research context as they allow us to examine power as closely connected to the normative beliefs in a specific society at a specific time in history. We will further show that is a perspective critically problematizing the relationship between knowledge and power by focusing on how different categories are created in opposition to each other.

Even though the power relations (and hence the discretion) among our different respondent groups of social work teachers, students and practicing professionals are dissimilar in some ways, the respondents abilities, willingness or unwillingness to support sexual minorities are all either supporting or resisting highly homophobic beliefs within the Ugandan heteronormative discourse, creating its very own practices, understandings

and power relations; so what constitutes a homophobic discourse? In order to answer that, we first need to take a closer look at heteronormativity. In doing so, we want to borrow concepts and ideas from queer theory, but let's first take a closer look at sexuality as a research topic in this context.

5.2 THEORIZING ABOUT SEXUALITY

According to Tamale (2011), there is always a risk that white western scholars researching sensitive topics in Africa (like sexuality) makes mistakes based on academic ethnocentrism. Applying theoretical models that does not take into account the cultural specific meanings, and variations of chosen research contexts outside the west, is according to Tamale a sort of continued western imperialism that risks resulting in simplifications with elements of exotic and racist depictions of African people (Tamale 2011:11-14) She does not reject the usage of western theoretical models when researching African contexts, but she calls for a great deal of contextualization and caution when doing so. She argues that even though sexuality, with its meanings and variations on the African continent, can be understood differently from many western conceptualizations created for western settings, there are certain rationales in the governing of sexuality which can be understood through the lens of western theories because of the historical linguistic domination of western colonialists in the creation of sexuality discourses in Africa. As such, meanings and definitions rooted in the colonizing countries' own traditions and history were imposed, while native beliefs and values were depicted as uncivilized and inferior compared to the religious (mainly Christian and Islamic) 'enlightened' beliefs of the colonialists (Tamale 2011:12).

The colonialist discourses of sexuality were according to Tamale (2011) institutionalized through customary, religious and statuary law. She means that anti-homosexual legislation was enforced in most of the colonized African countries by the colonial rulers. Deeply influenced by Christianity and Islam, sin and uncleanness became associated with the female body and her sexuality as well as with non-heterosexual sexual practice (Tamale 2011:16).

Tamale (2011) means that many of the patriarchic contemporary laws and moral codes regulating sexuality in Africa is hence a direct result of previous colonial rule still effectively oppressing women and sexual minorities by holding on to fixed gender roles

and constructions of sexualities. As such perspectives and theories from the west are to a certain extent able to identify the *"rationale and practice of the legal regime governing sexualities in Africa"* (Tamale 2011:25). Similarly Arti Divani (2011), a freelance journalist with expertise in African gender studies, discusses that mainstream African conceptions of homosexuality as something in need of legal definitions and regulations is a *"product of colonial government which was imposed upon the African population"* (Divani 2011, web).

Not surprisingly, research reveals that same-sex practices have existed all over the world throughout documented history (Tamale 2007b). As such, most societies have records showing the historical practice of same-sex acts among men and women alongside the sexual practice of persons of the opposite sex. Without going into specifics, research illustrates that same-sex acts were fairly common in many parts of pre-colonial Africa. Divani show how *"Pre-colonial Africa contained a range of approaches to sexual behavior, including many which permitted same-sex relationships to exist without violating social norms"* (Divani 2011, web). The fact that the last king of Buganda (an area within present Uganda) engaged in same-sex acts is for instance a well-known 'secret' (Hoad 2007).

Although a number of records show the existence of female as well as male same-sex acts in many different African countries, it is however important to note that these practices were set in their specific social and cultural contexts defining them differently from contemporary understandings. Neither is it lightly that individuals engaging in same-sex acts defined themselves as belonging to any contemporary definitions of homosexual groups. According to Divani (2011) same-sex acts were for instance in some places not considered incompatible with a person's procreative role as long as one's 'communitarian obligations' to reproduce and cater for one's community still could be exercised (either symbolically or in actuality). Tamale (2011) however claims that in some places some same-sex acts were coated with taboos while they in other places (and in other variations) were entirely socially acceptable. In short, meanings and definitions always depend on their contexts. In fact, Rosenberg (2002) show how it was not until the 20th century that homosexual men and women in the west were identified/identified themselves as being lesbian or gay according to particular categories. She refers to Foucault when saying that although homosexual acts had previously been coated with taboos *"they were previously*

considered temptations anyone could fall for" (Rosenberg 2002:2). According to Foucault the *"sodomite relapse sinner"* was actually constructed as a *"homosexual specificity"* first in 1870 (Rosenberg 2002:29). Divani (2011) similarly show how the social definitions and meanings of same-sex acts and relationships on the African continent gradually changed along with colonization processes, and how persons engaging in such relationships and acts started constituting specific identities. As such, the social meaning of same-sex acts and relationships changed during the 19th century: *"with the onset of colonialism transforming it along rigid Western ideas of sexuality and gender, and formulating the idea of same-sex relationships as foreign to Africa"* (Divani 2011, web).

THE CREATION OF SEXUALITY- A QUEER THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Contradictory to the common opinion of many African public actors, same-sex relationships is as shown *not* a western import. Despite persistent arguments, non-heterosexual acts were not introduced through colonialism or neo-colonialism. On the contrary, Divani (2011) explains that colonizers brought new norms to the continent; *"What colonialism did introduce was a binary model of sexuality, and systems of jurisprudence that identified and regulated sexual behavior to conform to the norms of the colonizer"* (Divani 2011, web).

According to Rosenberg (2002) western ideas of homosexuality as a societal evil were not suddenly created as an isolated phenomenon of perversity, but rather within a hierarchical relationship where heterosexuality was successfully defined through the denunciation of homosexuality. Important to note is that both forms of sexual behaviors are in fact historical and social constructions. In *The History of Sexuality* (1980) Foucault hence show how sexuality have been chiseled out in a sort of distinguishing process as certain discourses of sexuality have been historically legitimized on behalf of others. As such he means that sexuality (how it is depicted and perceived) do not express any truths about true human nature, but that it rather is a product of power mechanisms operating to create disciplined subjects.

As shown, new definitions of homosexuality were introduced in the late 19th century, but in this context, new definitions of heterosexuality were also introduced. During the second half of the 19th century, the concept heterosexuality actually encompassed several

meanings including having a strong sexual attraction to persons of the opposite sex as well as to same-sex persons (Rosenberg 2002:89). The other meaning of heterosexuality was used to describe an abnormal sexual attraction to persons of the opposite sex, a form of fetishism. As such the concept of heterosexuality as well as homosexuality was regarded as deviant, but as homosexuality came to be regarded an illness, new constructions of heterosexuality developed as representations of the normal. A natural and reproductive 'middle class heterosexuality' appeared as a representation of the holy, Christian alliance between husband and wife, contrasting the 'promiscuous' sexual behaviors of the lower and upper classes. Along with depictions of a natural sexual attraction between man and woman, heterosexuality *"came to be normative, universal and natural"* at the end of the 19th century (Rosenberg 2002:89, our translation).

According to Rosenberg (2002) the late 19th century was characterized by the emergence and success of biological and medical sciences. Nilsson (2008) means that a new scientific rationale aligned with the evolutionary thoughts of Darwin completely permeated new discourses producing the 'truth' about a variety of social phenomena (Nilsson 2008:133). During the 18th century, different biological and psychological attributes had been associated with men and women. As such the concepts of male and female started applying as strictly divided categories with different qualities (Rosenberg 2002:30). With the development of the methodology of classification during the 19th century, biological characteristics of men and women were further depicted as innate and natural along with their ascribed appropriate tasks and roles: *"As women had smaller brains and weaker body constitutions, their roles were considered confined to attending to tasks within the household, while men with the possession of bigger brains and stronger body constitutions were expected to take on the space in the public"* (Rosenberg 2002:31, our translation). Human behaviors, attributes, sexualities and gender roles etc. were hence mapped out and classified into opposites where constructions of the normal and the deviant started appearing as separate categories. A new form of govern mentality was created were the deviant was made visible by the normal and vice-versa. The normalization of heterosexuality is according to Rosenberg (2002) a product of this systematic categorization were it was successfully cleaned from the sin and shame traditionally associated with sexuality (Rosenberg 2002:91). As such, the sexual uncleanness was successfully transferred to others in society who did not fit into to the norm (Rosenberg 2002). In this sense, the negative definition of homosexuality as a

sexual deviance provided an idealized image of heterosexuality as obligatory and natural.

HETERONORMATIVITY

The central theme of queer theory is the critical questioning of heteronormativity i.e. *"the assumption that everybody is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is the natural way of life"* (Rosenberg 2002:100, our translation). Heterosexual relationships may be the statistical average, but it is according to Rosenberg heteronormativity, not heterosexuality per se, that legitimizes its superior status, making the identification and analyzes of normative systems an urgent task of queer theorists. Queer theory is not a single theoretical model but rather a compilation of different studies that are critical against heteronormativity, for instance *"the institutions, structures, relationships and actions which sustain heterosexuality as a uniform, natural and universal originating sexuality"* (Rosenberg 2002:13, our translation). As shown, the foundation of heteronormativity is a binary division of the sexes, and a strong hegemonic heterosexual norm. Anything outside its normative realm is according to Rosenberg (2002) classified as deviances resulting in different sanctions of the deviant individual or groups of individuals: *"Sanctions range from more concrete and measurable forms like prison sentences and forms of violence, to more indistinguishable expressions, such as marginalization, invisibility, stereotyping, cultural dominance and homophobia"* (Rosenberg 2002:101, our translation).

As shown, the 'homosexual other' was a product of the social change demanding a new construction of heterosexuality (Rosenberg 2002). According to queer theory this 'other person', the deviant 'queer', is not so much a term describing a certain individual but rather a way of problematizing the heteronorm; *"[...]a way of distinguishing and concretizing heteronormativity as an excluding practice"* (Rosenberg 2002:17, our translation). It rejects the logic behind favoring 'political minority representation' or 'minority interests' instead of questioning the heteronorm. In other words the aim is to *"make a theory queer, rather than creating a theory about the queer"* (Rosenberg 2002:49, our translation).

Highly influenced by gay and lesbian studies as well as by ideas and concepts from particularly lesbian feminist theory in the west, many thoughts in queer theory are a further development of already existing thoughts. While the mistake of equalizing queer

theory with more general LGBT studies is often made, the latter focuses on the history and current social situation of the groups, while the former studies normative practices from a broader societal perspective (Rosenberg 2002:16).

We have given an outline of how we view power in our research context and we have shown how it works through representing depictions of the truth through certain knowledge discourses. We have also provided a theoretical base for the understanding of the major component in the ruling discourse – heteronormativity. As our main focus does not lie in power relations, but in the strategies of resistance we shall however not dwell longer in aspects of power, as we would rather turn our attention to the possible strategies of undermining power. According to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) a multitude of research has focused mainly on the study of oppressive forms of power and marginalization, overlooking opportunities of transformative actions in the process. As such we would like to supplement this research field by lifting the strategies of groups as well as individuals opposing dominant discourses and *"their significance for social change and the undermining of power asymmetries"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:47, our translation).

5.3 RESISTANCE

Even if Foucault believed that power is 'all surrounding', he did not see it as absolute or stable in any way. In fact he meant that there is no power relation without an imminent element of resistance, and that power transforms constantly which opens up for conscious as well as unconscious redistributions (Foucault 1980:121-123; Svensson 2001:35; Nilsson 2008:86). As such we have shown how discourses are never historically created through some linear logic, but rather as products of a range of different factors including political and economic processes. Resistance and conflicts are always part of these processes and potentially have the power to undermine and change them. As such alternative actions and the ability to resist always appear (Foucault 1980:121).

According to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) there are two main agreed features characterizing resistance within the whole field of research: *"1) that resistance is an activity, an action and 2) that resistance exist in some form of oppositional relationship to power"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:49, our translation). Apart from those two characteristics, researchers disagree on whether or not resistance has to be *deliberate* or *recognized* as resistance per se by the different actors involved. We would like to align

our position with that of Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) in saying that resistance as we see it neither has to be deliberate or recognized as long as it has the possibility to undermine and challenge power relations. It is unavoidably connected to power, but is not merely a response to it as it has *"its own productive creativity or initiative"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:53, our translation). The authors further exclude intention, ideology and motive as fundamental in the understanding of resistance strategies. Although intentions and motives can be important elements in unveiling strategies of resistance, they may not always be detectable. Hence by allowing for their exclusion, more forms of resistance can be studied (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009).

Not only do the authors believe that resistance can be seen as an action taken by somebody in an inferior position in relation to power, but also as an act of solidarity with somebody else in an inferior position, a phenomenon they call 'solidarity resistance' (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:51, 'ställföreträdande motstånd', our translation). According to Lilja and Vinthagen solidarity resistance has among other things great potential in the bridging of class alliances and group bridging networks.

Just as there are many forms of power, there are certainly many forms of resistance. As we lack the space here to discuss the variations of resistance, we will mainly discuss the forms of resistance which we find most relevant to our research context, namely what Lilja and Vinthagen refer to as 'everyday resistance' (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:74). The authors define this form of resistance as the; *"unorganized or individual actions of resistance aimed at an authority or at some other power"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:74, our translation). They refer to James Scott who shows that resistance is seldom expressed in the violent or organized forms we expect. He meant that the vast majority of resistance is actually expressed as 'hidden transcripts' or as 'everyday resistance' *"behind the open scene and the public discourse"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:74-75). In the presence of power, alternative cultures exists behind the scenes were actors can express alternative viewpoints and/or ridicule the people in charge. These practices do not usually aim to be recognized as resistance, they are unorganized and not explicitly confronting. Scott however means that this hidden form of resistance can (if given time) be the constituents needed for a future organized resistance and confrontation in the open (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:77). He even sees the practice of 'everyday resistance' as the potential seed needed for revolutions to happen; *"In those situations where the system of power is in crisis, a*

charismatic leader takes initiative or the everyday resistance has grown strong enough to spark a trigger, yes that's when the 'spontaneous' revolution may happen" (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:76).

As shown, we have chosen to view power in our research context mainly from a discursive perspective. As the understanding of power and resistance are inseparable to each other, our perception of resistance is closely aligned with the theories of discursive resistance research.

RESISTANCE AGAINST THE DISCOURSE

We have shown how discourses are the creations of different representations repeated over a continuum of time (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). They are created and recreated through all forms of social and institutional interaction (through the relationships of society). Fixed forms of sexualities do for example not exist naturally by themselves, but are created continually through their repetition and the consolidation of their binary nature.

If discursive power is maintained by a constant repetition legitimizing its validity, it can according to Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) for instance be challenged by the sort of everyday resistance through which discourses are repeated somewhat different. Of course, discourses can according to the authors also be challenged by the repetition of alternative discourses in an attempt of creating new discourses (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:78). How these attempts succeed depend on *how* the representations are repeated. Within this research area, focus is further put on how certain representations of the truth are used and if these representations are adaptable to other discourses.

According to Foucault, different individuals have different amounts of influence over the 'truth'. As already discussed, social workers have more influence than others over the right to define and invent the solutions for social problems. Malcolm Payne explains that social problems typically

> "arise when a social group successfully makes a claim about social issue, particularly using mass media, that it is problematic, requiring social and political action. The argument is that social problems are not inherently problematic: they are created by 'claims-making'" (Payne 2005:164).

In the same way, doctors have more influence over the medical discourse. Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) however mean that certain individuals can use their identities, or leap

between different identity- positions in order to challenge, or renegotiate current discourses. The authors however point out that identities are continually produced and reproduced through a variety social representations and discourses making identities ambivalent and paradoxical (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:79).

The authors further mean that the fact that we tend to see discourses as 'natural', also means that we tend to view power relations as given. In order to de-mask this false image and reveal possible change potential, several researchers engage in the research of 'deconstruction' (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:81). Deconstruction is aimed at dismantling discourses so that they appear to be what they in fact are, namely interpretations of reality, this of course means that other interpretations also exist bringing the notion that the discourse could have been constructed differently. Moreover resistance is closely connected to processes of empowerment of exposed and vulnerable individuals and groups in a society. Importantly empowerment is directly related to the agency and discretion of individuals and/or collectives (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:57).

There are different levels of empowerment; on an *individual* level persons have the capacity to use their resources and power to change their own living conditions, on a *group* level empowerment means a change of attitudes in regard to the rights of citizens, on an *organizational* level resistance and change are coordinated and leveled for instance by associations and NGOs, lastly on a *societal* level normative politics are eventually evaluated and new structures can be developed and formed. Change on a societal level takes a lot of work and time and in order to enable this change a wider social movement is crucial (Adams 2003).

6. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we present our chosen methods and describe the mode of analysis used while conducting this research. Moreover the chapter includes discussions about ethical considerations and contextualization.

6.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

This is a cross-sectional and qualitative study; we research the topic at one specific point in time within a certain context by conducting interviews and observations. Our main method, qualitative interviewing, is a helpful tool in order to detect normative as well as alternative discourses among the respondents. This type of research method is useful when being interested in and concerned with *"how people understand their world and their lives"* (Kvale 2009:xvii). Through interviews and observations, we hope to acknowledge how sexual minorities and the current situation of LGBT populations are currently talked about and addressed. By conducting qualitative interviews the intention is to grasp the individual perspectives of our respondents, in relation to their own identities and positions in the society. Hence, we are aware that interviews are reflections of our respondents' subjective opinions and experiences and that these should not be used to generalize the opinions of all e.g. social workers in Uganda. Nevertheless, these conversations exemplify and give an idea of how for instance homosexuality and human rights claims of sexual minorities are talked about at a specific place and in a specific point in time, within this professional group. Certain common discourses can thus be detected and analyzed as such. This also goes for the observations. During the workshops we have taken the opportunity to observe the setting and conditions of how the discourses can be represented and thus reproduced.

INTERVIEWS- PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

We have two main types of empirical samples, the first consists of individuals in the social work field, and the second consists of individuals explicitly working with human rights activism and advocacy. Nevertheless some of the respondents are bordering these two main categories. All in all we have conducted 21 interviews and the total sample includes 6 teachers, 2 PhD students, 5 third year social work students, 6 human rights activists/advocates, 1 practising social worker, and 1 representative from the National

Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU). One of the human rights advocates that we have interviewed is the well-renowned Professor Sylvia Tamale, who is a spokesperson in the quest for human rights in Uganda at the moment. Currently she works as an Associate Professor, Department of Law and Jurisprudence, School of Law, Makerere University.

Our supervisor Professor Staffan Höjer, who works at the Social Work Department, Gothenburg University, Sweden, linked us to our primary contact person in Uganda at an early stage in the process. With the help of our contact person we were able to get in touch with teachers and students within the department of Social Work and Social Administration (SWSA Department), Makerere University.

Among the activists there are individuals who are able to share first hand experiences of what it is like to live as LGBT persons in Kampala; these respondents both represent the NGO they work for and belong to the LGBT community themselves. As the LGBT community is not a homogenous group, (as it includes minorities both in regard to sexual orientation and in regard to gender identity), it has been of importance for us to be able to give voice to different representatives from the community. Hence among the respondents there are individuals identifying themselves as lesbian, gay, and transgender (individuals who are born male and identify themselves female are referred to as transwomen, and individuals who are born female and identify themselves male are referred to as transmen).

We have designed specific interview guides for each sample group since they come from somewhat different backgrounds; we realize that the level of knowledge regarding the subject can be significantly different among the respondents as some of them work with this on an everyday basis, while others might never have thought about this in terms of a human rights issue. Before we began interviewing we conducted one pilot interview with a teacher in the department, we then had the possibility to adjust the interview guide and reflect over the procedure in accordance to that teacher's recommendations as well as our own experiences from the occasion. The interview guides are semi-standardized and contain open as well as specific questions, this structure helped us to ensure that the interviews overall covered the same major themes (Kvale 2009:130). In other words the guides worked as tools in guiding us through the range of themes that we aimed to discuss with our respondents, nevertheless, during the interviews we also consciously

followed the respondents' directions in order to let them talk as freely as possible and allow them to bring out issues that we had not necessarily thought of ourselves.

The main themes that we formulated in the process of designing the interview guides were also used in coding and analyzing the interviews. These are the following: sexual minorities and human rights, the public debate and the law, social work and advocacy, the international community, and last the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and the future. We intentionally introduced our topic by asking one particular open question in the beginning of the interviews (see Interview Guide for Social Workers Appendix 1).

Both of us were present in all except for two interviews, however we always had clear and somewhat separate roles as interviewers during the conversations; one of us lead the interview and the other one listened, took notes, and helped in asking follow-up questions.

OBSERVATIONS- PROCEDURE AND APPROACH

When we were in Kampala the 'anti-homosexuality bill' was re-tabled in the Parliament. Hence, this was a point in time when the question of sexual rights was once again on the agenda and thus sexual minorities were debated in a range of settings. As a complement to conducting interviews we have had the opportunity to attend three workshops/seminars concerning these issues and during which we conducted observations. The names of the workshops were the following:

1. 'Protecting Ourselves: Does Criminalizing Gay Violate the Right to Non-Discrimination?' at Makerere University.

2. 'Information Sharing Workshop on Sexual Minority Person's Human Rights Claims in Uganda' at Makerere University.

3. 'Awareness Round Table Discussion' organized by an NGO working actively for diversity and anti-discrimination in Kampala.

Invited to and present at the workshops were (among students and teachers), a number of well-known individuals that are active and recurring in the debate of sexual minority rights in Uganda. Importantly, the settings of all three workshops encouraged an open discussion in which the audience also had a say. As mentioned, human rights activist are often forced to work underground, nevertheless during these workshops people

representing both 'sides' of the debate, i.e. both pro and against human rights for LGBT populations, were present and that allowed a nuanced and thus more balanced discussion.

ANALYSIS- A SYMMETRICAL APPROACH

As two main perspectives regarding sexual minorities were represented during the workshops and seminars, the analysis of our observations (and interviews) will be done with a specific approach in mind. According to Margareta Hallberg (1998) 'symmetry' is desirable and thus to be considered a commitment of the social researcher. Hence, in line with Hallberg's recommendations, our diverse sample and broad perspective have motivated us to try to use a 'symmetrical approach'. In this context symmetry means to give equal and balanced attention to different views in the field as *"all knowledge deserves (sociological) explanation and both the true and the false deserves analysis in the same terms"* (Hallberg 1998:8). Importantly we do not aim to make any claims to hold the truth; nevertheless we are aware that it is a challenge to disregard one's own assumptions and preconceived ideas.

Considering our own background, within the human rights field, and also considering the fact that we are new acquaintances with the Ugandan context the benefits with symmetry are many. Hallberg holds the position that

> "when one approaches a specific science which is unknown (or not very well known) to the social analyst, or when the views, statements or conflicts that proceed from contested knowledge claims within that science are at issue, the advantage of a symmetrical position is in my view beyond dispute" (Hallberg 1998:9).

However, to reach symmetry is certainly not an easy task, especially not when the researcher(s) has *"emotional and political commitments"* in regard to the research topic and its subjects (Hallberg 1998:9). Naturally, with personal involvement it is more problematic to be fair and unbiased: *"It seems to be much more difficult to maintain symmetry if the analyst already has a strong opinion of what ought to be right or wrong, good or bad"* (Hallberg 1998:9). Consequently, symmetry is also very closely connected to reflexivity, in other words the implication of the researcher(s) on the study and its results (Hallberg 1998:11). In other words, with a symmetrical approach our attempt is to highlight different views and acknowledge the diverse discourses, dominant as well as alternative.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Since this is a controversial issue in Uganda we have been well aware that we need to be flexible during the research process, and that a great deal of contextual sensitivity needs to be applied when constructing our interview guides and while conducting the interviews. Knowledge is (re)produced in the interaction and social relationship between the researcher and the participant in the interview setting; there is always an impact of the researcher and that is important to acknowledge (Kvale 2009:54). Before constructing the interview guides we prepared ourselves by reading studies and texts about this topic, written mainly in a Ugandan or East African context. This was crucial for us in order to get an idea of how to talk about sexuality in an appropriate manner, knowing that it is considered a sensitive subject. In other words, we wanted to learn what concepts and language to use.

There is a need to be aware of the context, and acknowledge that our perspective might be different from the perspectives of our respondents. We represent a view in which sexual rights are assumed to be part of the human rights discourse; however this might not always be the case. Nevertheless, when we were in Uganda we wanted to show a sincere interest, openness, and curiosity rather than pointing out our own convictions. Our topic is controversial in Uganda, and considering the fact that we have chosen to discuss LGBT persons in the light of human rights we realize that it is impossible to be objective. Consequently, reflexivity is in a sense more significant than objectivity (Kvale 2009:242). It is important to consider what effect this may have on our research and the responses we got from our respondents. Interestingly we soon realized that even if people did not 'agree with us' they still had an interest and showed much willingness to discuss these issues.

DATA ANALYSIS

All the interviews have been recorded with the consent of the respondents and worked through thoroughly. The first step of the analysis took place already in the meeting with the respondents. There are some advantages of being two interviewers, for instance in the course of asking follow-up questions and introducing other relevant topics to the discussion, which the person who leads the interview might not think of. As such, asking following up questions and probing during the interviews are part of the process of

validation.

The second step was to listen to the interviews and transcribe. We have transcribed most of the interviews 'verbatim' (i.e. literally), which according to Nigel Gilbert eventually guide the researchers in the process of analysis as transcriptions help in familiarizing with the data at an early stage in the process (Gilbert 2008:135-136). However, as we got the opportunity to conduct many interviews, and the time was limiting us, we decided to listen to the rest of the interviews and only transcribe important passages to their entirety. These interviews are summarized in lists and the time frames of the listed passages are typed clearly so that we can easily go back whenever needed. In other words, we made the choice to do 'selective transcription' (Gilbert 2008:135).

The next step was to read through the interviews and search for common and reoccurring themes. In addition, since we are dealing with counter discourses we also want to acknowledge things that diverge from the dominant representations. Last but not least we coded the material in accordance to our most significant themes; we attached keywords and concepts, and made notes pointing out the essence of the quotes. In this respect we are inspired by Steinar Kvale's method of 'meaning condensation', a process in which the researcher concentrates the text by taking out parts that are less necessary and make shorter and more convenient formulations out of the remaining data. Then it is time to start interpreting what it means; this is where the theoretical analysis actually begins (Kvale 2009:201-208). Deborah K. Padgett highlights the fact that themes *"may jump out at you early"* (Padgett 1998:83); this was the case during the process of performing our interviews which exemplifies that the process of analyzing actually started at an early stage.

Moreover we want to clarify that for the convenience of reading this thesis we have chosen to use italics for short quotes, and for quotes longer than three rows we use paragraph indention and a smaller character size.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REFLEXIVITY

Before traveling to Uganda we were awarded with 'Minor Field Studies' (MFS) scholarships from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). In December 2012 we attended the mandatory introduction course organized by Sida for scholarship holders; during this two-day course Sida's representatives gave

recommendations and offered modified supervision concerning for instance methodology and ethical considerations.

As we are aware that talking about sexuality is somewhat controversial, and that sexual minorities and their advocates are threatened in the Ugandan society, we had to make sure we did not put ourselves nor our respondents at unnecessary risk while conducting interviews and observations. Anonymity, confidentiality and trust are therefore of great importance and we took the chance to discuss this during the course organized by Sida. The University of Gothenburg as well as Sida are keen that students follow the ethical principles regarding research as presented by The Swedish Research Council ('Vetenskapsrådet'). According to the council there are four main requirements concerning how to conduct research in an ethically appropriate manner, in which each individual participant is protected. The four requirements include 'information', 'consent', 'confidentiality', and 'usage' (Vetenskapsrådet, our translation).

We hereby want to show how we, in our work with this thesis, aim to live up to each one of these requirements considering the interviews. The first two requirements, information and consent, were met through a written 'Letter of Introduction'. Similar to The Swedish Research Council, Kvale (2009) explains that 'informed consent' is crucial in order for the respondent to participate on a voluntary basis. The respondent will need to know of the overall purpose and procedures of the research and be aware of their rights as a study subject (Kvale 2009:70). Because of the proposed criminalization of talking about sexual minorities and the sensitive circumstances around our topic we chose to read the 'Letter of Introduction' out loud at the beginning of each interview in order to guarantee that the respondents understood the terms and conditions of their participation. In the letter we clearly stated that participation is voluntary and that the respondent at any time has the right to stop the interview, or decline to answer any question, as well as to ask for clarifications. We informed the respondents what the overall purpose of our research is and declared where it will eventually be published. This way we followed the principle of informed consent.

The third requirement regards confidentiality; in the 'Letter of Introduction' we informed the respondents that we will ensure their anonymity and not publish their names or any information that can reveal their identities. As we have shown, our project includes ethically sensitive elements, especially in the context where the research was conducted,

and we are aware that we therefore have to take this very seriously. Importantly, we do not know how the situation regarding sexual minorities will develop in the near future, especially considering the political tensions and the 'anti-homosexuality bill' which was recently re-tabled. Thus, even if some respondents explicitly stated that they did not mind if we publish their names we have made the decision to treat them all in the same confidential way (the only exception is Professor Sylvia Tamale who has agreed not to be anonymous as she herself has published many texts around this topic).

One problem that has occurred in the process of interviewing is the fact that some respondents know each other; consequently, it was at times difficult for us to be discrete considering who we conducted interviews with. Therefore it is extra important for us to be careful while quoting in order not to reveal who has said what and to anonymize the empirical material so that they cannot be easily identified by each other, therefore we have chosen to refer to wider categories, namely 'Teachers' (social work teachers and PhDs), 'Students', and 'NGO Representatives' (including LGBT persons), respectively.

The last requirement concerns the usage of the material and in this regard we have informed the participants that the material we have collected will only be used for the purpose of the research. Moreover, transcriptions and recordings are to be kept in a safe place.

Since we were traveling from outside to study a phenomena in Uganda, and since we are fundamentally critical towards the retrogressive movement concerning LGBT rights in the country, we realize that it is crucial to stay open-minded and avoid being judgmental and ethnocentric. However we are aware that we have had our own contextual pre-understandings and values, and that it would have been impossible for us to disconnect ourselves from these completely. We do nevertheless feel that by being aware of this fact, our goal has been to detect and reflect upon our own attitudes and biases in a critical manner. The human rights perspective indicates where we stand; nevertheless our aim is not to criticize social workers, but rather to understand the views of students and professionals within the field and learn about the position of the profession of social work in the Ugandan society. Fundamentally we are interested in the potential resources empowering and enabling professionals to act as change agents.

Concerning the observations, the ethical considerations have had to be cared for differently. We did not plan to attend these meetings and to conduct observations, but

since we were invited to participate we got the chance to follow the debate and observe how controversial issues like this one can be addressed, and moreover how people actually may talk about these questions, both in academic settings and in the civil society. Importantly, during the workshops/seminars we had the chance to introduce ourselves as Swedish students and inform the other participants of our interest in the issue. However we do not have the informed consent by each and every participant of the meetings, therefore we focus mainly on observing the settings and conditions and use these as examples of the academic/public debate. Moreover, we use no direct quotations from the workshops when depicting the observations.

ISSUES OF VALIDITY, RELIABILITY, AND GENERALIZATION

'Validity' and 'reliability' need to be acknowledged in light of the context of the research as well as our role as researchers. Hence these are closely connected to reflexivity and transparency. Padgett offers *"alternative terms for reliability and validity"* in qualitative research, namely 'trustworthiness' and 'reflexive accounting' (Padgett 1998:89). Validation is a process that ought to be ongoing throughout the conduction of the research: when formulating interview questions, during the interviews, and when analyzing the results (Kvale 2009). One example of validation is to ask follow up questions and reformulate the respondent's answer during the interview in order to make sure we have understood what she/he means.

In quantitative research 'reliability' refers to the possibility to reproduce the research and provide the same results disregarding the particular researcher, however this is difficult and less relevant in qualitative research where it is more about being able to follow the researchers line of thought. Thus, trustworthiness of qualitative studies is best reached through transparency of the research process and the methods used. A different researcher might have done different interpretations but can thus understand the explanations and analysis made in regard to the chosen focus (Niemi 2010:82-83). Furthermore, in our study the awareness that activists are repeatedly threatened and therefore might be suspicious regarding our presence leads back to the 'truth value' of our findings (Kvale 2009:244). Thus we have of course needed to gain the respondents trust in order to increase the trustworthiness of the study in itself.

In terms of 'generalizing' the findings and the results of the study, its setting and context

is of great importance. With a small qualitative sample it is not so much about generalizing as about understanding a local phenomenon as subjective perceptions of our respondents. Nevertheless, since there is a gap to fill and as there is a lack of research in this specific area, we consider the results of this research the best known truth so far. Regarding generalizations in qualitative research Kvale argues as follows;

> "Consistent demands for the social sciences to produce generalizable knowledge may involve an assumption of scientific knowledge as necessarily universal and valid for all places and times, for all humankind from eternity to eternity. In contrast, pragmatist, constructionist, and discursive approaches conceive of social knowledge as socially and historically contextualized modes of understanding and acting in the social world" (Kvale 2009:261).

Talking about certain groups makes them visible, but it also contributes to their social constructs. According to Rosenberg (2002), no matter in what ways social groups are theorized about, normative standpoints are unavoidable. Some queer theorists claim that dividing people into categories and groups is the whole root of oppression. To us, social groups are however not interesting per se as it is rather the discursive, social processes creating them and placing them in hierarchical relationships that is our focus. Unless individuals affected by oppression are in some way grouped together, power relations cannot be made visible. This does not mean that we see neither the LGBT community nor heterosexuals as being part of homogenous groups.

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

As part of our preparations we considered the obstacles that we might come across in terms of for instance difficulties to find respondents that are willing to talk, issues of security, and concerns regarding our role as researcher. In regard to activist respondents we imagined that it would both be difficult to access representatives of NGOs and also be dangerous to make appointments; however, human rights activists were more easily accessible and more willing to talk than expected. It was a matter of finding key persons and once we started to conduct interviews the snowball effect followed. After deciding to make appointments with activists the security issues around meeting them were crucial; we made sure that the respondents themselves could choose where and when it was convenient to meet. Even if the respondents could choose a place where they were comfortable there have still been disturbing elements in the surroundings during some interviews (for instance people knocking at the door, interruptions in the recordings, and background noise). At times this might have affected the respondent and consequently the

validity of his or her answers.

Another practical issue that is important to highlight is the language barrier; neither our respondents nor ourselves are native English speakers. In this regard the respondents' level of education is significant; we have mainly talked to highly educated individuals with a high English proficiency and therefore we never needed to use an interpreter.

It is important to note that although it has been easy for us to reach the majority of our respondents, it has been very difficult to meet with practising social workers working with issues concerning sexual minorities. There is only one practising social worker working within this field included in our sample. A major reason for this is that not many social workers can be said to actively work with these population groups, in all probability due to the stigma attached to these populations. Working with sexual minorities can thus be viewed as controversial within the profession which also explains why these social workers are less visible. We did however become aware that several such social workers exist, however due to the time restriction of our stay in Uganda we were not able to build a network enabling us to contact these professionals. If our stay had been longer we would have had greater chances to meet with a higher number of practicing social work respondents.

7. RESULTS

We have chosen to follow a certain conscious outline of the results, first we give a short summary of our observations, and then the remaining parts are divided into four sub-chapters. Importantly, in order to frame the findings we want to give voice to the LGBT community itself; therefore a presentation of inside perspectives regarding the situation of LGBT people in Uganda is provided. This is followed by three main themes reflected in the interviews: first 'dominant discourses', second 'alternative discourses', and last 'social work and LGBT'. The most noticeable divisions within each discourse are organized under subheadings and at the end we present the proposed solutions in regard to the dominant and alternative discourses respectively. The last theme, social work and LGBT, reconnects to the dominant and alternative discourses and offers examples from the former two.

7.1 THE OBSERVATIONS- A SHORT SUMMARY

In addition to the interviews we have attended three workshops during which we have done observations in regard to how discussions around sexual minority rights can be organized and (re)presented. Two of these were held in academic settings. The choice of invited presenters and guests appeared to be conscious aiming to promote a balanced and nuanced debate; human rights activists from different settings, university teachers and students, religious and political leaders respectively had the chance to present their viewpoint in regard to the issues at hand.

In short, the main aim of the workshop 'Protecting Ourselves: Does Criminalizing Gay Violate the Right to Non-Discrimination?' at Makerere University was to provide a platform for an open discussion about sexual minority rights. It was organized by the Collage of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Liberal and Performing Arts. The very name of this workshop is interesting; although posed as a question, it indicates that there is a human rights approach. The issue is how human rights relate to LGBTI populations, which was highlighted and addressed from different angles during the presentations. Many discussions ended up to be in response to some of the dominant discourses that we have also revealed during the interviews, e.g.' homosexuality perceived as a sin' and 'how to protect minors'.

The initiators of the second workshop, 'Information Sharing Workshop on Sexual

Minority Person's Human Rights Claims in Uganda', were representatives from Makerere University School of Law. The main aim was to create knowledge and share information about the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and to discuss the future in terms of implementation and necessary amendments. Some sections of the bill were highlighted as problematic and suggestions of how to move forward were discussed. Two main camps could be observed: human rights defenders on the one side and persons opposing human rights for sexual minorities on the other.

Each session was concluded with an open discussion in the form of a round of questions. Our experience during these first two workshops was that people representing dominant discourses were in majority in the audience; consequently, they took up most time in terms of putting forward their arguments in the discussions following the presentations. Importantly, alternative viewpoints were also given space, however sometimes they were not taken seriously and were thus ridiculed by other people in the audience.

The third workshop, 'Awareness Round Table Discussion', was organized by an NGO consciously and actively working for human rights including sexual rights. In this specific workshop there was a very clear presumption of sexual rights being an obvious component of human rights. Thus the context was slightly different in comparison to the former two workshops. The main focus of the workshop was 'Gender and Sexuality' and one of the aims was to exchange experiences and raise awareness regarding the situation of sexual minorities in Uganda as well as highlighting societal and personal effects of heteronormativity. There seemed to be a wide range of professionals from the public sector and the civil society attending the workshop with a shared willingness to discuss and to learn more about these questions.

To conclude, these workshops can be regarded good examples how this topic, that formerly was considered a 'non-issue', is now an issue that is discussed in different settings, for instance in workshops organized by departments of the university.

7.2 THE SITUATION OF LGBTs

Although our main focus is not to study the marginalization of LGBT persons in Uganda, but rather the potential within the profession of social work, it is essential to first understand the situation of LGBT persons. We find the perspectives of LGBT persons imperative to our study as they provide a description of our research context from the

inside. Thus in this section we will present a framework of the situation of LGBT persons in Uganda by providing a voice to these inside perspectives.

According to one respondent, LGBT persons in Uganda started to become more visible during the late 90's. She says that although people at that point generally were not hostile towards the LGBT persons 'coming out' they were hardly taken seriously either. In the early 2000 LGBT organizations started forming, and as sexual rights started being claimed LGBT persons also became more visible in society (Interview NGO Representative). Today there are around twenty LGBT organizations in Uganda, most of which focus on gay men. Surprisingly, it is according to many respondents however the lesbian movement that is the strongest. The explanation is often that they have been backed and supported by a few prominent actors within the growing feminist movement of Uganda. Most of the LGBT organizations in Uganda are unregistered and depend completely on international donor funding.

All of our respondents from the LGBT community agree that their situation has in a sense both worsened and improved after the re-tabling of the 'anti-homosexuality bill'. This is a result of different factors, including international and national religious 'anti-gay' influences trying to combat the increased claim for sexual rights throughout the African continent. On the one hand, the bill has led to an increased visibility of the LGBT community. This means that a group that was previously invisible has now became a recognizable community facilitating for the expansion of the LGBT activist community as well as aiding the 'coming out process' for many individuals, who would otherwise be too afraid or isolated to embrace their sexualities or gender identities. As such, a female activist means that: *"being visible is in itself progress, whether for the bad or for the good, it is progress"* (Interview NGO Representative). As the bill has in part facilitated for discussions about a topic that was previously too taboo to address, a certain amount of awareness has actually been raised among the public as well as among some human rights defenders who now include the quest for sexual rights in their agenda for human rights and cooperate with LGBT organizations. A male activist explains that

> "however much [the bill] was so negative, it also gave us a platform to outsource for 'allies', to you know penetrate through the civil society, and the coalition was formed. It's a coalition of civil society organization which are mainly dealing with different kinds of human rights like women's rights, children's rights, everything but they came on board to fight the 'anti-homosexuality bill' which was an achievement" (Interview NGO Representative).

Certainly, the bill has also brought international awareness to the situation of the LGBT

community in Uganda which in effect has put pressure on the government to halt the negative development for sexual rights. It has also effectively inspired many international donors to help out with the funding of many LGBT organizations. On the other hand, the backlashes of the bill have also been severe as it is part of a general trend of state-inspired homophobia. As such, much negative focus has been put on LGBT individuals making them targets for many misconceptions and negative attention from the public and the media. Hence, several activists describe an increase of discrimination and hate crimes after the introduction of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' in 2009.

Even lesbians are targeted in the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and that is a relatively new phenomena as previous focus has mainly been on the act of sodomy (anal sex), and thus on gay men. Several activists explains that before the introduction of the bill, lesbians and transmen have been two relatively invisible groups in society as they have been seen mainly as 'sportswomen' or 'tomboys' (Interview NGO Representatives). When the bill was introduced, along with national hate campaigns against LGBTs, the public was made aware of 'the dress code of the lesbian woman', which according to several respondents means clothing which is not stereotypically female (of course, it has to be noted that there are also many lesbian women who do wear stereotypically 'feminine clothing'). One activist says that in relation to this campaign, lesbian women were portrayed as confused, and accused of being *"man haters"* and of *"breaking up families"* (Interview NGO Representative). She says that there is still a lot of confusion among the public concerning lesbian women, as most of the focus still lies on homosexual men and the way that they are presumed to have sex. As the sexual act is presumed always having to include penetration, it is generally considered that women cannot have same-sex relationships. Because of the fact that many people still negatively associate homosexuality with male same-sex relationships, many activists tell us that gay men are generally more vulnerable to public discrimination and hate crimes than lesbian women, particularly men who stand out as more 'effeminate' than other men in their appearances. As patriarchic structures are still strong and heavily connected to men's ability to procreate, gay men are frequently said to be mostly stigmatized and vulnerable to different forms of discrimination due to their 'lack of masculinity' (Interview NGO Representative).

Nevertheless, several respondents also say that lesbian women as well have been made

more visible in society; they also face discrimination and severe human rights violations such as 'corrective rape' which is used as a method to 'rehabilitate' lesbian women into heterosexuality (Interview NGO Representative).

Almost all of the activists express that public discrimination is *particularly* affecting trans-persons as they are more visible in the way they dress: *"The situation for LGBTs has worsened since the re-tabling of the bill and the most people that are at risk are the transgender because they are easily identified and easily seen"* (Interview NGO Representative). This particular activist defines himself as a transman (a man born a biological woman). He means that most of the homophobia in Uganda is actually what he calls is 'transphobia', because lesbians and gays are not as easily identified. According to him people do not generally know the difference between homosexuality and trans-identity because of ignorance or misinformation. This leads to the misconceptions that transmen are actually lesbians and that transwomen are actually gay men. Most activists mean that because of their visibility, and the particular negative associations with gay men, it is the transwomen that face the greatest risks. An activist who defines herself as a transwoman (a woman born a biological male) means that they will be the first victims if the 'anti-homosexuality bill' is implemented; *"because of visibility I know we are the first victims. So it is my worry, it is my fear that transwomen will be the first victims if this bill is passed because… … the bill talks about reporting"* (Interview NGO Representative). She expresses that she and women like her are already facing grave discriminations such as violent hate crimes due to their visibility in society. She also means that most of the transwomen she knows are or have been supporting themselves as sex workers, putting them in an even greater risk to e.g. harassment, police brutality, and exclusion from social services. Furthermore, both of the transgendered respondents express that they to various degrees have experienced exclusion even from the LGBT community, as misconceptions of gender identity also permeate this community. Consequently, they have been active in sensitizing LGBT activists about these issues. They are also independently very active in the quest for the rights of transgendered persons in the Ugandan society; *"We have helped supporting gays and lesbians, but now we are starting to advocate for ourselves"* (Interview NGO Representative).

When talking to activists about human rights violations affecting them, it becomes clear that there are substantial gaps in their enjoyment of civil and political rights as well as in

their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. One activist talks about the fact that the freedom of assembly is a granted right within the constitution of Uganda, but that this right is being systematically violated:

> "Recently, in fact this year, we were literally chased out of a conference, a workshop; in fact it was a leadership workshop. Just because we were LGBT organizations doing a leadership workshop the so called minister of Ethics and Integrity came in and announced the meeting null and void, and we were like 'Hey, we paid for this premise', you know. And what he was accusing us of was that we gays have no right of assembly" (Interview NGO Representative).

The respondent further talks about other violations, for instance in regard to freedom of speech as well as arbitrary arrest of LGBT persons. This activist tells us that the police sometimes use 'entrapment' in which a policeman pretends to be gay and seek sexual contact with supposed gay men in order to arrest them. By catching the unknowing victim in the act of agreeing to have sex, he is arrested and sometimes charged with faulty charges. According to the respondent, most times the police do not even know the content of the Penal Code as they seem to think that the 'anti-homosexuality bill' has already been implemented. Many victims plead guilty because they are afraid and because they are pressured to do so; *"you find that a lot of people are getting arrested because they don't have the knowledge, and they don't have the resources"* (Interview NGO Representative). The respondent works for an NGO that helps victims of these sorts of human rights abuses by bailing them out or by using the assistance of lawyers who can plead for their cases. Most of the times, this work is very successful, although there are cases where the victim has already pleaded guilty to the charges, in which case the person has no choice other than serving a long prison sentence. Another activist tells us that there are also cases where transgendered persons are arrested and forced to undress in front of police officers who demand that they reveal their biological sex to them (Interview NGO Representative).

Other human rights violations pervading all interviews with activists are barriers to education, employment, housing, and healthcare. They all talk about the fact that many persons are expelled from the educational system on the cognizance or suspicion that they are LGBT (Interview NGO Representatives). The same goes for employment as *"most of the LGBTI people here are jobless. They cannot get jobs because of their sexuality"* (Interview NGO Representative). Access to housing is also expressed as very difficult. As many LGBT persons in urban areas rent their housing, landlords frequently expel or resist LGBT persons from renting their property. Another shared experience is the great risk of

being disowned from one's own family; one activist says that *"most of the LGBT people, mainly even most of our volunteers here were chased out of their families, they don't have homes"* (Interview NGO Representative). This activist however means that the most common and worst human rights violation is the barriers to health care that LGBT persons (mostly gay men) suffer. He claims that there are many cases of persons who have been refused treatment on the basis for their sexuality and refers to a case where a nurse note wrote in a patient's journal that the patient is gay and hence should be refused any future treatment (Interview NGO Representative).

Not surprisingly, many respondents describe the LGBT community as generally very underprivileged in society. Without the support of a family network, and with substantial barriers in accessing civil and political rights as well as education, employment, housing and health care they are not only stigmatized, but also marginalized in their communities. One activist expresses; *"If you cannot stand your ground at times you lose everything"* (Interview NGO Representative). This makes the LGBT community an extremely important network of mutual support and strength. Working as an LGBT activist is however not without danger. One activist explains that after the introduction of the 'anti-homosexuality bill', she always feels an underlying threat to her safety. The organization she works for receives many threats, but the police are not willing to offer them support. Consequently, she describes herself and her fellow activist colleagues as vulnerable to any sort of attack; *"Someone can walk in and shoot you dead"* (Interview NGO Representative). She also says that people sometimes humiliate her and other activists publicly. The organization has also been raided, whereby a number of computers and other working materials were stolen. She is sure that the burglars were part of the police force wanting to monitor the activity of the organization as the office is well-known by the government.

However, one activist argues that some international reporting on the situation of LGBTs in Uganda has been exaggerated (Interview NGO Representative). He particularly describes one case he remembers where a foreign film maker came to Uganda to illustrate the situation of LGBTs and grossly exaggerated the situation by for instance describing Uganda as 'the worst place to be gay', which is something the respondent does not agree with. As the filmmaker had consciously distorted facts and statements during his research, he produced a faulty image of the situation which resulted in the lack of

credibility for LGBT activists nationwide. The respondent agrees that the LGBT community in Uganda is marginalized and discriminated against, but he also expresses that there are in fact places where he and his fellow activists feel relatively safe, and where people are generally more accepting and open-minded towards LGBT persons (e.g. certain 'LGBT-friendly' areas and bars).

There are some conflicting ideas among respondents whether or not urban areas are safer than rural areas. The above respondent experiences urban areas to be more dangerous than rural areas:

> "the biggest cases of homophobia are coming from the urban areas, in rural areas you hardly hear about cases of torture and discrimination. You find that some people are okay with certain people, you know, being homosexuals as long as they respect the people, and they are not criminals who are doing anything wrong in society, so society adapts to them" (Interview NGO Representative).

This respondent finds urban slum areas particularly dangerous for LGBT persons. However there are great differences in the tolerance for LGBT persons in different rural areas, which explain why some respondents experience that urban areas like Kampala are safer. Thus a person's view is based on her/his own experiences; *"Urban areas are safer for LGBTI persons than rural areas. In rural areas people are ignorant, and the environment is hostile. Homosexuality is especially not tolerated in the villages. Kampala is a bit more liberal"* (Interview NGO Representative).

Several of the activists express that homophobia has particularly festered among the academics; *"Funny enough, the most educated people in Uganda are the most, the worst, the biggest homophobes…the ones who are tolerant are the ones who are less educated… people from rural areas"* (Interview NGO Representative). Another activist talks about the academics in a similar way; *"they have this instilled homophobia and transphobia, they are the ones being worse than you would expect"* (Interview NGO Representative).

The already mentioned hate-campaigns against LGBT persons took place mainly in urban areas like Kampala which fueled homophobia among the public. As such one respondent says that the situation for LGBTs got more hostile in Kampala after accusations that homosexuals was recruiting young children for instance in schools (Interview NGO Representative). One activist believes that homophobia and heteronormativity within the academic environment can also be explained with the religious background of the Ugandan educational system (Interview NGO Representative). This is something that we will come back to later on.

7.3 DOMINANT DISCOURSES- LGBT AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

The dominant discourses in Uganda hold that sexual minorities constitute a 'social problem'. Individuals with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual or with a gender identity that is not conforming to the norm are seen as deviant, or even abnormal. They are considered a threat towards society, and therefore the idea is that *they* need to change and adapt in line with the societal norms (e.g. heteronormativity) and expectations in regard to their biological sex.

Evidently these perceptions are strong in the Ugandan society today. All of our respondents, no matter their personal viewpoints and positions regarding LGBT and sexual rights, in fact confirm the existence of certain dominant discourses, which in many cases are interconnected. As we will show, what we here call 'dominant discourses' are mainly connected to perceptions of homosexuality and ideas of what it entails, traditional family values and religious beliefs, and cultural values, which often leads to a discussion of cultural relativism in regard to human rights.

It is argued that prior to the tabling of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' issues of sexual minorities were generally not taken seriously. Persons with a sexual orientation or gender identity other than the normative were relatively invisible in society and the topic was often subject to ridicule. Today it however comes across as a highly political and thus very sensitive topic. With that being said, sexuality is overall a subject which many respondents describe as coated with taboos making it a difficult subject to talk about and to address even in academic settings; *"I don't think it is just religious, it is about culture, sexuality is not talked about, you just do it"* (Interview Teacher). For many people the subject of sexual minorities is even more prohibited; *"that kind of sexual orientation, or the minority as we may term it, it is not something people want to talk about, it's taboo actually. That's the best way I can say it"* (Interview Teacher). As of recent, many respondents are however more willing to address the topic of sexual minorities as a result of already mentioned wider societal discussions, often in relation to ethical concerns:

> "This is a new problem, relatively new, in this country […] There is a time I couldn't even feel like talking about it, discussing, passing it a word through my mouth; it was that bad. But of recent, this is one of the issues I have been discussing; whenever I talk about ethics we use it as a case to study" (Interview Teacher).

PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

When discussing sexual minorities, which is a concept that includes diverse identities and orientations, much of the focus is on homosexuality and more specifically homosexual men. That is also what the Ugandan Penal Code is focusing on with its 'anti-sodomy law'. While respondents with alternative viewpoints often pay attention to the consent of adults and their right to their own sexuality, respondents with dominant viewpoints often focus on homosexuality as a threat to Ugandan cultural and religious values. A great amount of emphasis is also put on sexual force, western infiltration, pedophilia, and defilement (a term that our respondents often use in regard to sexual relations with minors).

By interconnecting homosexuality with defilement and the sexual abuse of children, the 'anti-homosexuality bill' reflects various fears recently stirred by many different political and religious actors. The bill however also reflects many people's fears towards homosexuality as a sort of impendent threat to the values and order of society as a whole. One social work teacher expresses that it is a phenomena worse than murder:

> "It is threatening an entire society and creation, unlike even murder; you murder you kill one person, that one is gone, you threaten, you create panic immediately, but this one has a way... it threatens creation, it threatens procreation, it threatens cultural values... core... it threatens families, it threatens society and social organization" (Interview Teacher).

As mentioned, one negative perception often correlates to another. However, below we present two distinct perceptions among the respondents concerning LGBT persons.

The Protection of Children

When addressing the topic of sexual minorities, many respondents primarily talk about homosexuality or the LGBT community as a threat to the safety of children. The main argument to support this fear is that a recruitment campaign allegedly took place in schools whereby homosexuals 'recruited' children into homosexuality. When talking to a spokesperson of the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU), we learn the association has concerns regarding these campaigns:

> "We had something like a recruitment of students in boarding schools into homosexuality and lesbianism. And this was not just hearsay, it was real because students used to come home complaining to their parents that they had been sodomized, that they were being recruited into these acts of sexuality. So it is like they were stuffing this thing down on the children, trying to tell them it is normal to be like this..." (Interview NASWU Representative).

This respondent furthers her line of reasoning by saying that many people are very economically underprivileged in Uganda which is why some children and adolescents may be willing to perform sexual favors in return for the payment of school fees etc. (Interview NASWU Representative).

The concept of 'recruitment' does not exclusively encompass ideas of sexual force and violence, but also an idea that this is one of the ways in which the LGBT community 'expands their membership' (Interview Student). As such, there is a general belief that the sexuality of a homosexual person is acquired through socialization as the result of some sort of manipulation. According to many respondents, this manipulation entails that persons are told to abandon their heterosexuality 'in favor' of homosexuality.

While many respondents holding alternative viewpoints say that these 'recruitment campaigns' were elaborate lies spread by the anti-gay campaigners, respondents believing in them claim that there is valid evidence proving their occurrences. In fact, all of these respondents talk about them as self-evident facts. Even some respondents who believe in the enforcement of sexual rights become ambivalent when they speak of these alleged recruitment campaigns. As such several respondents believe that although the LGBT community should be granted their minority rights, there are also deviant individuals within this group who can and should be legally distinguished from the heterosexual majority (even though pedophiles mainly exist amongst heterosexuals). As previously mentioned, many respondents talk about the 'anti-homosexuality bill' as a way to counteract this envisioned threat against children's rights. One teacher who shows a certain amount of ambivalence says; *"the argument is that 'how do you protect, especially the young generation, from being carried away into a culture that is external to their?' and which maybe they think is not suitable"* (Interview Teacher).

Another strong idea among social work students and teachers is that homosexuality spreads in same-sex environments such as prisons and boarding schools, particularly girls' schools, and that preventive measure are (and should be) taken to prevent these same-sex relations. One student holding very dominant viewpoints says that homosexual practices are strictly prohibited in boarding schools, and that students who are caught engaging in those actions will be expelled immediately. Fellow students are not accepting of these kinds of actions, and although they will not normally resort to violence, they will expose the girls in question to ridicule (Interview Student).

Many respondents holding dominant viewpoints however diminishes childhood and adolescent same-sex acts amongst girls by referring to a sort of sexual curiosity that would otherwise be naturally targeted towards boys. As such respondents regularly say that girls who are sexually attracted to other girls will eventually 'grow out of it'. Although generally speaking in favor of sexual rights, one teacher for instance believes that lesbianism is something that girls will outgrow; *"[the girls] will see the light at some point, yes"*. He means that these girls will *"get back to the dominant orientation"* once they have left the boarding schools (Interview Teacher).

Homosexuality as a Western Import

The occurrence of homosexuality and non-normative gender identity was until recently relatively invisible in Uganda. Along with the fact that sexual rights have been legally implemented in many western countries, many LGBT organizations in Uganda are also financed by western donors. As of lately, there has also been much pressure on Uganda from western countries to implement sexual rights. As such, the ideas of recruitment and socialization of homosexuality are entwined with perceptions that homosexuality is essentially a 'western' phenomenon.

Just like children and adolescents are perceived to be 'recruited into homosexuality' because they are financially underprivileged and easily manipulated with money, many respondents believe that adults are recruited the same way, and that they provide for themselves either by prostitution or are in other ways financially supported by the LGBT movement. One student means that the government has to find a way to stop these recruitments; *"they can advocate, 'if you want to get rich, you can come and join us'... and they'll give you whatever you want on those conditions, so I think it's also the duty of the government to come up and begin stopping such institutions from frapping people"* (Interview Student). A common perception is that the resources used by the LGBT community to 'recruit' new members come from the west. One teacher explains:

> "but also you know what is happening in this country... in many cases those people get oriented into, ehm 'gayism' or whatever, one of the causes is poverty. That is a perception that gay men and women, whatever that is, they have resources, because we have a perception that they come from the west and come here, so they have resources" (Interview Teacher).

Likewise, the spokesperson from NASWU claims that the alleged recruitment campaigns amongst school children were funded with western money: *"and from the information that was gathered there was a lot of money from the west, including countries like*

Sweden…" (Interview NASWU Representative).

FAMILY VALUES AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Religion, first and foremost Christianity, has a central role in the Ugandan society. As most citizens regularly visit their churches, the teachings of religious leaders have a huge influence on the normative beliefs and values as they are highly esteemed authorities in society. As such, many respondents tell us that religious discourses often permeate other forms of discourses, even within the academic setting, granting huge amounts of precedence over knowledge to religious leaders.

During our interviews, it hence becomes clear to us that many heteronormative perceptions within the Ugandan society are closely connected to religious discourses:

> "Religion plays a very big role, it is very, very big because […] Uganda is basically a religious country, people here really do believe in God regardless of whether they are Catholics, Protestants, Muslims. And all these religions are anti-LGBT, they teach 'heterosexualism'" (Interview NASWU Representative).

The respondent says that religious leaders condemn homosexuality, and that the population listens to them. Accordingly, the majority of Ugandans are in favor of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' as a result of these religious teachings in churches as well as in mosques:

> "And during that time of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' there is a lot on it, there is a lot of talk on it in churches and mosques and everything and the population was angry – why is the west interfering, we can make our own laws and everything. So they do really listen to these religious leaders, they have a very big role. Yeah" (Interview NASWU Representative).

Because the message of religious leaders reaches many people, the respondent also means that they can be extremely useful in their willingness to spread the message of certain social programs.

During many interviews it becomes evident that the religious discourse is closely linked to concepts of the Ugandan family institution, and that there are strong expectations on women and men in fulfilling their gender roles in society according to traditional Ugandan family values. Many respondents holding dominant viewpoints reference the Bible when saying that men and women must oblige to the norm. One particular teacher shows a strong moral standpoint:

> "if you say 'you are supposed…you are free to do what you want, and you're free to marry…a fellow woman', that is morally wrong, because humanity by nature, and creation, it did not begin like that. Morally…if you take it by the Bible, you may not believe in the

Bible, but that's the origin of man…creation, there's creation, man…and woman in the beginning, that is full stop, it doesn't need any argument" (Interview Teacher).

This and other respondents often refer to the 'natural order' of Adam and Eve when pointing out the fact that the order of the sexes and their relations has been predetermined by God; *"God created them in the beginning: man and woman, Adam and Eve* - *finish*!" (Interview Teacher). In this context, any sexual relations outside the hetero-norm are often seen as wrong as they are *"outside the normal"* (Interview Teacher). Several teacher and student respondents also stress the fact that same-sex relations are 'sinful' according to the Bible and should be seen and treated as any other sin; *"It is a weakness and a sin […] It is a sin. S-I-N. And therefore it is like any other sin because to me there is no bigger or smaller sin, they are all sins […] To me it is a weakness"* (Interview Teacher).

According to many respondents, the biggest concern of same-sex couples is the inability to procreate together. When talking about same-sex relationships one student asks; *"How can you really like get a child?"* (Interview Student). As the family network is often an extremely important source of social support, many respondents stress the importance in procreation to ensure the expansion of the community and one's own family network. As mentioned before, many respondents believe that homosexuals are socialized into homosexuality. As such there is a fear among several respondents that people will start abandoning heterosexuality in favor of homosexuality, deteriorating 'African values', communities and the family institution in the process.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Same-sex relations and non-normative gender identity are seen as new phenomena on the African continent by many respondents. These are however not merely viewed as western 'imports', but also as expressions of neocolonial oppression affecting Uganda as well as the whole of Africa. By enforcing and legitimizing 'foreign' behaviors, the west is alleged to deliberately counteract the normative beliefs and values of African countries; consequently, many respondents voice that cultural relativism should prevail over the universality of human rights. As such, many respondents disregard sexual rights in the discourse of human rights. Since homosexuality is considered essentially un-African, the quest for human rights of LGBT persons is hence seen as un-implementable in a Ugandan context:

> "The society doesn't accept this, not within us. It looks like it is foreign; it is not part of us. For us, we... we have great strong values of marriage and childbearing. People need to marry and need to have children, and many children. So if... given that cultural position now, where does this one come in? It becomes an outside thing, outside the core values of the society" (Interview Teacher).

Several respondents also talk about the right to sovereignty; *"Uganda is a sovereign state and our constitution is informed, yes by the international standards of human rights, but also by our values and you know our way of life as a country"* (Interview Teacher).

In the discussion of cultural relativism of human rights, our respondents often highlight ideas of what 'Ugandan culture' historically have been, currently is, and should be in the future. In this context, many respondents believe that the morality of their society is essentially anchored in religious beliefs, and that religious principles are prioritized over principles of human rights; *"Morality is anchored in religion and goes beyond the scope of human rights. Religion has been the foundation of everything"*. Same-sex marriages are for instance not seen as a human right as it is *"outside creation"* (Interview Teacher).

When discussing the critique from the international community concerning the negative development of sexual rights in Uganda, many respondents feel that foreign politicians, media and other actors is exaggerating the situation of sexual minorities in Uganda. They do for instance not believe that the LGBT community is exposed to the kind of discrimination and marginalization reported by international media. Neither do many respondents understand the massive criticism of the 'anti-homosexuality bill', as they themselves are often in favor of implementing most parts of the bill. Overall, respondents talk about a clash in values and a western lack of sensitivity for the values and norms of Ugandan society:

> "Of course nobody denies human rights, you have the right to be who you are, the right to decide, to become something, fundamental human rights are there, but…in the background, the people don't normally ask the question; 'is it right to do certain things?', and that's now when values begin to clash. Is it right?" (Interview Teacher).

This particular teacher believes that the concept of human rights is being abused when referring to sexual rights as he does not see the LGBT community as a vulnerable minority group, but as a group of confused and disturbed individuals living outside the norms of society. Another teacher equals sexual rights to 'bestiality' (humans having sex with animals):

> "Now if you go and start associating with an animal…is that a good right? Here's when values begin to clash. You say freedom of speech, but what kind of speech are you making; it's also very important what kind of speech! So, this takes us to this single thing, those sexual things; it is your right to be who you are, that is very true, but now if you say for

example that I am right, say to marry a fellow man, that is, that is morally wrong, that's morally wrong" (Interview Teacher).

Rather than believing in the protection of the rights of sexual minorities, many respondents see that society needs protection from them, rather than that they need protection from discrimination; *"Protect what…? It is a sin!"* (Interview Teacher).

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS IN REGARD TO DOMINANT DISCOURSES

As shown, many respondents with dominant viewpoints talk in harsh terms of sexual minorities. During interviews respondents frequently refer to them as criminals, pedophiles, and sinners. Many respondents are also in favor of the implementation of the 'anti-homosexuality bill'; *"naturally it's not normal and society does not, does not see it as a normal thing, so when you are found doing it, it must be considered a crime, yes! That's straightforward because it is not normal…to do that"* (Interview Teacher).

Important to note is however that none of our respondents believe in the implementation of the death penalty, as it is judged too hard a sentence. One student says *"maybe the other person can be in prison, or be punished, but not death, yeah"*. This particular student however means that homosexual persons should be punished rigorously; *"They shouldn't be killed straight away, maybe you can do something apart from killing, yeah. Maybe the person can be in prison for like 20 years"* (Interview Student). The fact that the respondent expresses that homosexual person's should rightfully serve prison sentences for about 20 years is nevertheless a rare view among our respondents.

Although many do believe in the continuous criminalization of homosexuality and the reinforcement of even stricter regulations for homosexuals, most respondents also have a 'softer' approach to sexual minorities whereby they believe that the persons in questions should be given a chance to receive counseling and other forms of rehabilitations before being trialed for 'crimes'; *"They should not get killed or put in prisons – they should get professional help"* (Interview Teacher). As such respondents are also usually against the section of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' where private citizens as well as professionals would be legally obliged to report homosexual persons to the authorities (or risk penalties themselves). This is also the general position taken by NASWU. Strict legislation is among many respondents suggested to have more a symbolic value as it might stop more people from 'joining' the LGBT community; *"The laws would come to stop eh, more people from becoming eh gay, or lesbian or something like that"* (Interview Teacher).

Other respondents stress the role of religious leaders in the 'rehabilitation' of sexual minorities: *"I think the religious leaders have to come out to begin teaching people… what they are supposed to do… cause I believe that those who engage in it, they lack what? Religious advice"* (Interview Student). This student also stresses the fact that homosexuality is a sin and that sexual minorities need to acknowledge the consequences of their behaviors; *"I really see that the religious leaders have to come up… to begin like teaching people about that thing. It is a sin. If they begin teaching people that, you avoid such kind of things. It's a sin and God will punish you. I believe that you will change"* (Interview Student).

7.4 ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES- SEXUAL RIGHTS *ARE* HUMAN RIGHTS

Although the dominant discourses regarding sexual minorities and LGBT rights prove to be fairly strong, we have also found counter discourses, i.e. alternative views, among our respondents. Nevertheless, according to Tamale alternative viewpoints are in minority within the general discussion:

> "the voices that are heard most are those that are extremely homophobic and then there are voices that are minority voices, even within religious circles, within political circles, that talk about, you know, 'Just leave them alone, they are human beings'. But those are the minority" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Not surprisingly, our strongest voices representing alternative discourses are those by activists, actively working for human rights, but importantly we have also seen resistance against the dominant discourses within the profession of social work, and among the more liberal social work teachers and students. These respondents essentially consider sexual rights as part of the human rights discourse, however we want to emphasize that during many interviews we have also discovered ambivalent and somewhat paradoxical claims.

According to some respondents there is a positive side to the 'anti-homosexuality bill', namely that it has brought questions of (homo-)sexuality to the agenda. One activist explains that it has created a kind of openness in the sense that he is now able to sit down and talk to his family about this; before the tabling of the bill there was *"no avenue on where to start to talk from"* (Interview NGO Representative). In other words the bill has opened up for a discussion which there previously was no room for. Tamale also appreciates this development:

> "consequences of tabling that bill, I think, was that it opened up the debate much, much

more, the door was flung open so many more people have been forced to listen to the other discourses; people that would, before the bill was tabled, would just close, shut their ears and simply they didn't want to know, they didn't want to hear anything to do with homosexuality, they have been forced to listen to the other voices. I think it also boosted the activism of gay, LGBT people, themselves" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Thus t 'anti-homosexuality bill' has *"awakened many people"* and now people are speaking much more about these things, nevertheless it is also necessary to point out that discrimination and hate-crimes have increased since the bill was first tabled (Interview Social Worker).

IN RESPONSE TO DOMINANT DISCOURSES AND HOMOPHOBIA

A common estimation is that most Ugandans are in favour of the 'anti-homosexuality bill'; it is understood as protecting children and children's rights, and this is used as an explanation why many people support a new law. One NGO representative argues that the Ugandan state is homophobic and that there are strong dominant discourses concerning rumors of recruitment in schools, which at length lead to a need to protect children and consequently have fueled the homophobic attitudes (Interview NGO Representative). In response to this common argument, some respondents highlight that there are already laws in place that in fact are not fully implemented in this respect. Consequently, criminalizing gay people in the name of children's protection is considered as *"uncalled for"* (Interview Teacher).

There is an assumption that the Ugandan people lack knowledge regarding the national laws and therefore are easily deceived; one teacher wonders *"what is it that they have been told about the bill? What is it that they have been told about the already existing laws, which are protecting the children? What is it that they understand about it?"* (Interview Teacher). Likewise, one of the activists considers the perception of recruitment part of a wrongful and harmful discourse; *"for an attitude to be that a homosexual can recruit a child is very, is very delusional and I would even say disrespectful because that is not the case. That is not the case [...] where is the evidence?"* (Interview NGO Representative).

One social work respondent, representing a more liberal view, finds that sexual minorities are not *"recognized as natural"*, which he considers a crucial problem (Interview Teacher). Another respondent explains how LGBT persons are treated as if they have disorders; *"we have a counseling course for social work students, and there… they don't*

even talk about minorities, I think they talk about 'sexual disorders'" (Interview Teacher). Hence, there is a need to shift the focus from labeling sexual minorities as criminals that are violating children to recognizing that there are 'consenting adults' with a free will and that they are entitled to rights, e.g. the right to privacy:

> "if two consenting adults are together, and they may not even necessarily be engaged in sexual acts, why is it a public matter? And why should it be criminalized? And why should the person die for that? Because I think it is a personal thing, bedroom matters are personal things" (Interview NGO Representative).

The activists we have interviewed, and also some of the more liberal social workers, strongly argue against the claim that sexual orientations and gender expressions outside the norms are 'un-African' and therefore must be considered 'western imports'. Many respondents recollect depictions in the national history of Uganda and find that homosexuality already existed a long time ago in the country, and therefore the perception of western import is to be considered wrong. Accordingly, homosexuality is not to be considered alien to African culture.

However, matters of LGBTs have previously not been openly discussed in Uganda; consequently, when the politicians in the west start to threaten to contract aid, for instance, these harmful perceptions might be strengthened (Interview Teacher). Cutting aid is also not preferred because it affects everyone; *"we suffer the homophobia and we suffer the consequences of not having aid [...] however much I'm LGBT, I'm still a Ugandan citizen"* (Interview NGO Representative). Moreover, members of the sexual minorities feel that the western import argument basically excludes them from the Ugandan culture; *"I think the threats are only fueling people's attitudes to pass the bill because now they are looking at it like 'you see it is really true, you know... it is a foreign thing and it is a western civilization thing' so... but aren't we Ugandans too?"* (Interview NGO Representative). The identity of an individual is complex and so is culture in itself, thus it is problematic to claim that certain gender expressions are outside of culture, in the words of a respondent; *"much of these people actually practicing that, they are not interfering with your culture, they remain with your culture as a person"* (Interview Student).

Tamale turns the argumentation around and states that *homophobia*, not homosexuality, is imported; it was brought to the continent mainly by missionaries proclaiming their religion and colonizers introducing foreign laws. According to Tamale, homophobia in Africa is

"state-inspired, very much inspired by organized religion that were introduced on this continent in the 19th Century. Before that, homosexuals, transgendered people existed, everyone would know about them, they would whisper, you know, about them but they would not be tortured, they would not be punished; our customary law does not include any crimes to do with LGBT. So all this was imported and these over-enthusiastic religious people, of course the laws that were introduced by the, you know, Victorian British colonialists, and politicians taking advantage in a very populist fashion, whipping up this hatred and fear of homosexuality" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

In a similar fashion, currently the 'anti-homosexuality bill' whips up the fear and strengthens homophobic attitudes in the country. Importantly, Tamale clearly states that homophobia in Uganda is not different from homophobia in other parts of the world, for instance in the west; it follows the same kind of argumentation which leads to similar fears and repercussions.

As a consequence of the history outlined above, activists claim that homophobia and heteronormativity are also institutionalized in the academics:

"Through the history of Uganda, most schools that were started up were, were put up by the missionaries […] most of the schools here have religious backgrounds […] there is no syllabus that talks about sexuality or sexual diversity in schools. The only thing they talk about is health and heterosexuality alone!" (Interview NGO Representative).

Additionally there is a somewhat contested idea that highly educated people are among the biggest homophobes and that people who are less educated, and people in the rural areas, are in fact more tolerant towards diversity (Interview NGO Representative). Tamale confirms this perception and states that *"even in academia there is a lot of homophobia"* (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Responses to religious claims can be connected to those of culture; a great part of the Ugandan identity is associated with the Christian faith and most activists are Christians just like the majority of the Ugandan population. There is a belief that the role of religion and culture are just excuses to stay ignorant. One critique is that people do not reflect on what the Bible actually says and do not generally question the words of religious leaders. Thus the interpretation of the gospel is one among many issues. In fact, one of the respondents exemplifies how Christianity can be appreciated as a tolerant religion; *"They said the Bible hates homosexuals. Where is this written? Jesus said 'Let everyone come to me', so why should you say 'Because you are a homosexual you should not come'?"* (Interview NGO Representative). His argumentation continues with reference to the 'Golden Rule':

"you say you're a preacher, then isn't the first command in the Bible love? 'Love you neighbor as you love yourself'. So why are you hating other people? People are misinterpreting things […] they use the Bible also to condemn such things, but isn't it the

same Bible that says 'Do not judge'?" (Interview NGO Representative).

One respondent reflects upon the fact that there are contradictions in claiming that homosexuality is a western import, and therefore should be banned, when the import of religion itself has been highly welcomed and is basically not questioned at all (Interview Teacher). Accordingly, religion can be considered an import just like the Penal Code.

Furthermore there is a political side to the re-tabling of the 'anti-homosexuality bill'. It is used as a 'red herring', i.e. a political strategy to focus on homosexuality instead of other governmental infractions, such as issues of corruption:

> "The community starts giving an opinion; […] when they look at issues of homosexuality they forget about the fuel prices or the crises around, the corruption and what? And focus on that! […] And they don't know that this is a strategy […] it's a deflection from, you know the real issues, so mainly that's the only way the international community can really help, you know, divert anything. And it would really keep us safe, but still, it won't help to do like…the other community members wouldn't have to suffer, just because of LGBT issues" (Interview NGO Representative).

It has become a politicised matter and the future development much depends on Museveni's power and will:

> "he seems to enjoy dangling it like a […] sword, you know, taking it out whenever he wants to distract the population from real issues like oil, corruption, unemployment, and so on. He loves it when the bill comes and, you know, everyone is talking about the bill, they forget about the real issues. So he uses it politically, without any doubt […] it is like a 'red herring'" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The dominant view expressed concerning human rights among our respondents is that rights should be culturally relative. Consequently, sexual minorities can be excluded from the agenda and thus the dominant discourses are criticized for focusing on the foreign impact instead of the universalist principle of human rights; *"they are looking at it as an international thing, a foreign thing, LGBTI. And yet we are all human beings, these are personal issues"* (Interview NGO Representative). Furthermore, human rights in general and sexual rights in particular are *"not a very vibrant field, we rarely talk about sexual rights and issues of sexuality"* (Interview Teacher).

However, among the alternative viewpoints we find universalism as one of the core principles of human rights and Tamale underlines that sexual rights *are* human rights:

> "For me LGBT, sexual minorities, the rights of sexual minorities, are part and parcel all of the rights of everyone, including all marginalized groups. So sexual minorities are part of several social groups that are excluded by society, that are denied their rights" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

One respondent refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when she motivates why sexual minorities also deserve to claim and express their rights; she explains that this UN declaration has enlightened her and it *"is what makes me think they deserve a chance to live, they deserve to express their rights"* (Interview Student). Given that Uganda has signed many of the fundamental human rights documents there are contradictions within the legal system. The death penalty is a good example of such contradiction; this respondent highlights that *"it is just not right for someone to take a life because still, the same constitution still defends people's… I mean the 'right to live'"* (Interview Student). This respondent proves to have a strong persuasion when it comes to the egalitarian and universal principles of human rights:

> "Everyone deserves a right, irrespective of what they believe in, irrespective of their sex orientation, I do believe, you know me, not being part of that sexual minority, does not really, really turn me away, make me look away, while people are really being killed" (Interview Student).

Likewise, another respondent regard himself in support of the egalitarian principle: *"I want to call myself one of those who believe in human rights protection of all kinds of people"* (Interview Teacher). However, one person also argues that the rights of sexual minorities should not be different from other human rights, that their rights are no different than others', and therefore *"[sexual minorities] should not have preferential treatment"* (Interview Teacher). Here, the universalist principle is highlighted but the respondent underlines that it should not mean any supplementary formulations; there is a fear that the rights of minorities will negatively affect the rights of the majority.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS IN REGARD TO ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES

Respondents with alternative viewpoints recognize that LGBT persons are discriminated in the Ugandan society. In regard to sexual minorities, the fight for rights is a recent movement in Uganda and it is to be considered a response to the existing Penal Code which is discriminatory against LGBT people (Interview Teacher). Discrimination is a barrier to the access of services and in order to change this and improve the situation, oppressed groups need to be recognized as human beings with human rights.

A change will take time and when describing people's general attitudes and the character of the situation one respondent says; *"So to begin to change that mindset will take a long time, and it will be challenging people's faith and many people do not want to challenge their faith, it is an issue of faith, it is not an issue of empirical discussions"* (Interview

Teacher). There is a suggestion to start acknowledging the principle of universalism of human rights, no matter the cultural issues. Accordingly, one proposed solution is to start focusing on the rights discourse; *"I think we shall start perceiving human rights as a key issue [...] but here traditions, religion, they come first, that's what happens, so even as a professional, your logic will be treated second to religion and tradition"* (Interview Teacher). More specifically, one respondent suggests that the Ugandan Human Rights Commission should lobby for the rights of these people (Interview Student).

One social work respondent is concerned that people are considered different before the law. Instead of enforcing an 'anti-homosexuality' law, an anti-discriminatory law ought to be implemented, but that cannot be done before people start understanding these issues. The respondent believes that social workers need education and sensitization in order to understand the problem and begin to support sexual minorities. He believes that most social workers wear shields that blind them to the issue. Social workers should be active in trying to stop the 'anti-homosexuality bill' or at least in advocating for changes in the bill. If the bill is being implemented it will be difficult to move forward because of the 'promotion clause'. The profession of social work should be visible in the fight against discrimination; being social workers means we need to *"make sure we are at the center of advocating for these things"* (Interview Teacher). Social workers who do already support sexual minorities cannot do it openly, they are activists who mostly operate underground, and they need support in the fight.

Likewise, some social work teachers criticize the lack of knowledge and claim there is a need to give voice to the current population in question; change needs to be brought from within the LGBT community. They need to be given voice and space in order to *"change our mind-set and attitudes towards them, because many of us don't understand... why they do that. We think they are simply deviant"* (Interview Teacher). Social workers could work together with activists in order to learn more. One issue is the fear to talk about this issue because of the hegemonic discourses, therefore the topic needs to be brought to the surface and given space:

> "The hegemonic does not have to be too strong against other voices or the other discourses, and so on. You know, once there is a major discourse there should also be space for the counter discourses and the counter groups and so on, you know, and there should be more like, you know, a level ground for everyone to speak, to act to do their best, you know, within the framework that allows people's potential and expressions to be nurtured" (Interview Teacher).

Moreover, when it comes to bring about a change in the social work department one

respondent believes that the attitudes of the leadership need to change in order to create a more supportive discourse among the social work academics: *"Me, I cannot come up and say 'Let me organize my colleagues' and maybe say something about this, you know we need leaders, people who are already in positions of influence to come up and say something about these things"* (Interview Teacher).

'Exposure' is a word many respondents themselves use when talking about people's interaction with cultures other than Ugandan, most explicitly in more 'LGBT friendly' contexts located in 'the west'. Many respondents claim that there is a tendency to become more liberal after exposure and interaction with European or American people, for instance during student and teacher exchanges. Therefore such interactions and collaborations within the academic world are also found among the proposed solutions in regard to how the situation can improve. One teacher claims that sexual minority rights is still a very sensitive issue, and most university students are not very liberal unless they have interacted in such manner (Interview Teacher). Tamale offers an explanation of where dominant discourses come from in relation to the education most Ugandans are exposed to:

> "the dominant one is of course the one which is articulated by people that have the platform, the microphones, so religious people, politicians and of course because they have more airtime to talk about these issues they influence ehm... they influence the larger population and I think there are several factors that factor into why people simply swallow or buy into the dominant discourse without questioning it, without criticizing it. I think, you know, one of the factors of course is the kind of education that the majority of Ugandans are exposed to; it doesn't encourage critical thinking. [...] what they hear the man at the pulpit say it becomes literally gospel truth: 'It is a sin'" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

In response to the 'anti-homosexuality bill' politicians, the media, and activist groups in Europe and the USA have reacted through arguing for sanctions and threatening to cut aid. The feelings about these reactions are mixed since the risk is that the LGBT population is blamed for this negative development. Tamale confirms that economic sanctions make things worse and questions the reactions from the west in regard to this issue:

> "Out of all the human rights violations that Africans have been screaming about and […] the western politicians have been turning a blind eye or a deaf ear, why is it this one that they begin to talking about economic sanctions? By doing so, they are giving credence to those myths about this being a western import about, you know, it being un-African and... and giving the impression that the rights of LGBT are more important than other rights [...] it gives justification for the homophobes to target LGBT people, because, you know, 'It is because of you that our country is suffering from these sanctions'. So it is, it wasn't very wise, so that was not welcomed. I think it was, you know, the west being too enthusiastic without thinking of the consequences" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Therefore many respondents feel this is not the right way to go. There is rather need of a dialogue (Interview Student). Tamale explains that the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law prefers diplomacy behind closed doors:

> "So those phone calls from the Prime Minister of Britain before, in 2009 when the Bill was first tabled, the Prime Minister of Canada, Hillary Clinton, and so on, were very welcomed and they were done with, *after* consulting the coalition" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Accordingly, international reactions should be in consultation with for instance this Ugandan coalition. International actors should rather sit down with the leaders and revise and renew the laws in line with international human rights, which Uganda has already subscribed to.

7.5 DISCOURSES CONCERNING SOCIAL WORK AND LGBT

As shown, our respondents have somewhat differing views and represent dominant as well as alternative discourses concerning LGBT matters. Inevitably their ideas about the potential role and actual responsibility of social workers in this area of work much depend on those views. We have therefore chosen to divide this chapter into sub-chapters in relation to the dominant discourses and alternative discourses respectively. However, first there is a depiction of our findings in regard to what social work entails in this specific context and in relation to human rights, followed by the experienced discretion of social workers in Uganda, and an account of the academic discussion.

SOCIAL WORK IN UGANDA

Social workers in Uganda consider social work a rather 'weak' profession in the sense that it has no certification, no legal basis, and that there is no strong organization standing behind and bringing together social workers (NASWU is repeatedly criticized for not living up to this need). According to one teacher there is a lack of Ugandan social work traditions; *"we don't really have an indigenous breed of social work"* and therefore *"the social work profession is not vibrant"* (Interview Teacher). For professionals there is a lack of legal protection which is considered a problem by many:

> "To me that is the core issue of social work in this country […] We are trying to see how we can do it and I was telling this to the National Association, at least see what we can do, but we must first make our solutions as relevant as possible, so that we can get it […] As long as everybody thinks they can do social work then we may not do that. As long as we don't have a very strong like association, like you see the legal counsel, the association of engineers, […] it will take a while. And as long as the priorities of this country is not social issues but infra-structure and whatever, it will take long […] People can have different

bigger social problems […] As long as we are still thinking more material infra-structure issues, and less to do with the social well-being, it will take long" (Interview Teacher).

Moreover the same respondent explains how the focus in Uganda needs to shift from technical to social development and says that because of the weak definition and recognition of social workers much 'informal social work' is performed by people without both training and education. Furthermore, social work in Uganda lacks proper policy:

> "We don't have a common voice in the first place because we have a weak institution […] The starting point is policy. If you don't have a policy…a policy should be able to guide you in everything, so if you don't have it, you will lose your bearing, and that's precisely what we are" (Interview Teacher).

The IFSW provides guidelines for social work which social work teachers claim they follow. Currently in Uganda there is a big clash between the proposed 'anti-homosexuality bill' and the international social work standards; it is problematic to work with these populations since the law is criminalizing them and you at the same time need to have that discretion as a social worker. If the bill passes, the social work profession itself will be affected because *"there will be a clash between the law and the profession"* (Interview Social Worker).

It can be an important part of social work to identify and react on human right violations; however, because social work is not recognized as being strong regarding whistle-blowing, this course of action is often very risky. In order not to cause oneself, or the agency one works for, any trouble the recommendation from one teacher is to *"always try to abide […] by the existing laws"* because *"definitely the government's laws and policies always come into question"* (Interview Teacher). It is very dangerous to try and make a change from below and since activists are threatened they are forced to work underground (Interview Teacher). Concerning whistle-blowing, one teacher compares social work in different contexts and claims that the profession in Uganda

> "is not as strong in terms of recognition as social work in [Europe]. Because everybody thinks they can be social workers, when you do some voluntary work […] 'I am a social worker'. So in a way people think everybody can be a social worker, so to what extent shall it be, the social worker, be listened to? You get what I mean? So yes, I am sure they can, but to what extent would it be effective doing that, to what extent would they look at this profession. And how many social workers would be onboard in blowing a whistle on that?" (Interview Teacher).

Hence, a crucial aspect in regard to the practices of social work is professionalism. Much social work is generally conducted informally by untrained professionals, and thus one respondent highlights the importance of training: *"it is very vital that people are skilled,*

really skilled and can handle… certain areas. Otherwise if someone fail then they will lose confidentiality or confidence within the social work education, and this we are going into a profession, really we must be professional to be trained" (Interview Social Worker).

Many teachers consider human rights important in the profession of social work. In the general description of what social work entails human rights legislation is considered a *"key component [...] I do not think you can talk about social work as a profession without talking about human rights"* (Interview Teacher). Others argue that the link between human rights and social work is weak and are therefore not sure that social workers understand what human rights are. There are many violations but social workers often stay silent and are not very critical (Interview Teacher). Social work as a profession is connected to human rights but importantly it also operates within certain cultural contexts;

> "we are a profession which is concerned with people's needs and problems, solving and accessing opportunities, maximize potentials, equalizing opportunities, which are rights. And we don't have yet a course on just social work and rights but I have been now modifying it at all levels, even undergraduates talk about human rights and then relate it to what we do. Basically we are concerned with human rights: equalizing opportunities, maximizing potentials, but taking it to account in the context, especially the cultural context, the economic context, operate within a context [hits in the table]" (Interview Teacher).

However, the idea that social workers should advocate for the rights of the LGBT community in particular rests on the premise that sexual minorities are considered belonging to societal groups that lack fundamental rights. Thus sexual rights are in some cases excluded from the human rights discourse. In this sense the connection between human rights and social work is loose, it is seen as *"a helping profession that helps people to function normally by providing solutions, helping… so it's like somebody's having a compassionate heart and helping… not that the other persons deserves a right to. That's how it is presented"* (Interview Teacher). Thus a central practice of social workers is to offer a *"helping hand"* (Interview Social Worker). One somewhat ambivalent student says that the reason why many social workers do not see the possibility working to employ social work principles *and* working for the rights of sexual minorities is that there is no real coordination between the two. There has been no promotion of that among social workers in Uganda. She believes that social workers should advocate for the rights of sexual minorities and talks about the value of 'self-help' and 'self-determination', and that it is very important for social workers to employ these

principles with clients in general and sexual minorities in specific. Social workers are 'supposed' to be nonjudgmental and minorities should be respected as they are (Interview Student).

There are some paradoxes and ambivalence relating to the role and responsibilities of social workers in this specific field. Accordingly, the 'anti-homosexuality bill' has affected the profession immensely, it *"has almost thrown the social work profession in Uganda, or the social work practitioners in Uganda into chaos"*, and this is because of NASWU's statement in support of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and the following reactions from IFSW (Interview Teacher).

SEXUAL RIGHTS AND THE DISCRETION OF SOCIAL WORK

One central question in regard to the challenges and the potential to make a change is the discretion of the social work profession. Interestingly governmental control seems to be strong in many sectors in Uganda; *"in this country, you know, no profession works very independently, I don't think so"* (Interview Teacher). Thus, NGOs that organize much of the social work in the Ugandan context have restrictions in regard to government policy:

> "they have organizational constraints, they work within the confines of an organizational policy, okay, they work within the confines of the policy of government, so you might have some wonderful ideas, okay, that you have learned in class and that you have learned through your travel, whatever, okay, but when you are employed within this organization okay, then it is like you are put in a box, and say 'okay here we do these things, in such and such a way' so those, those are some of the obstacles that are met, that are met in practice, and in terms of the policy, the government policy, definitely you are informed and you know you work within the boundaries of government policy" (Interview Teacher).

Social workers in Uganda are not free to take much own initiatives. One respondent claims there is no legal instrument, and compares with some European contexts, how then *"can I say we are free to do anything? [...] Yeah, we don't have the discretion. We are controlled a lot"* (Interview Teacher). Likewise the national legal context is also a constraint for social workers:

> "I have to work within that legal context; I have to respect the rules of the country, first and foremost. There... so I don't know, it is a dilemma, I think we have to note that this is a dilemma; who do you... whose laws and values do we adopt in such 'conflictual' situation? I think that's the problem" (Interview Teacher).

Hence social workers within NGOs cannot operate very independently, and consequently NGOs working with these questions in specific need to work more or less underground; if you say openly what you work with LGBTs the license will be withdrawn (Interview Teacher). The governmental control is a great barrier for many NGOs, and individual

social workers within those organizations might be afraid to *"spoil the name of the agency"* if working with controversial issues, and consequently they are limited as *"they cannot go beyond the limit of what their agencies think it should be"* (Interview Social Worker).

Hence, there is a need of change in policy before social workers can take the necessary steps forward. However there is a lack of political will to do so; politicians *"don't want to give [social workers] space [...] they don't give us much space to talk"* (Interview Teacher). One of the more liberal respondents claims that the potential to make a sustainable change lies within developing stronger associations of social workers in Uganda (compare to NASWU) and at the same time putting international pressure from above (for instance from IFSW). Currently there is not much one can do except from trying to associate, write papers, arrange and attend conferences and discussions, however in the professional role one needs to be careful; *"relating this to social work is something a person like me should avoid if I want to maintain my job"* (Interview Teacher).

Arbitrary arrests are also fairly common and therefore *"it's not a very flexible environment by the way. If you are doing anything they feel is turning towards politics- you can be arrested"* (Interview Teacher). Consequently, the same respondent says that *"many of us don't want to associate with them [laughs], as much as we may understand that they are discriminated. So actually, the social workers who work with them rarely come out openly, they are just a few"* (Interview Teacher). The proposals in the 'anti-homosexuality bill' puts social workers in a difficult situation; although the profession of social work is perceived as standing for principles of openness and confidentiality social workers dealing with sexual minorities risk being accused for promotion something considered 'immoral':

> "It is going to be very, very tough like I said […] I think many of the social workers will be arrested, because it is we, social workers, that work with people every day [...] they will say you are promoting […] If they say you get to the person they think is an LGBTI you have to report! If you don't... and now you will be conflicting the profession that says non-discrimination or non-disclosure, you know? We will be conflicting..." (Interview Social Worker).

Hence the 'anti-homosexuality bill' limits social workers, as well as other professionals, to take action. One respondent clearly expresses his concerns; *"I don't know then how you would do anything about that without being seen to promote"* (Interview Teacher).

None of our respondents from the social work academic setting have personal experience in working to support the rights of sexual minorities, and very few have told us that they know of social workers working within this field. In cases when our academic respondents have referred to certain individuals, those persons have in fact not been professionally trained social workers; they have been professionals from different academic backgrounds or LGBT activists working to informally support members from their own community. Nevertheless, at the end of our stay in Kampala, we did manage to meet with one professionally trained social worker specializing in supporting sexual minorities and other marginalized populations. According to him, there are several trained social workers like him, although they are not always easily identified and localized. He says that since the subject of sexual minorities is controversial in Uganda, NGOs working to support LGBT persons have to do so discretely. This respondent works for an organization with a holistic approach in regard to social services. In the quest for human rights, lawyers and social workers work side by side and complement each other in their work to support marginalized populations. The role of the social worker can however be extensive, and as only a few professional social workers are hired, the respondent partly delegates tasks to other academically untrained social workers in order to cope with the workload. Him and other professional social workers are however ultimately responsible for the social work division. They also carry out training for the unprofessional social workers throughout the year.

The respondent describes that he is also receiving regular threats for his professional commitment to sexual rights, then it is not strange that social workers within this field prefer to stay relatively hidden from the public; *"it also risks being attacked, severely attacked, we are on a list of people that are wanted, even myself and other social workers"* (Interview Social Worker). A social work teacher also describes the fact that professionals working to support LGBT persons can be stigmatized along with their clients; *"sometimes the stigma is not only those practicing homosexuality, also the stigma and fears can come even those who are trying to... trying to protect them, because they would be labeled among them"* (Interview Teacher).

THE ACADEMIC DISCUSSION

The general discussion, with its dominant and alternative discourses respectively, is reflected in the academic discussion within the department of social work. However, in

the academic sphere the debate also relates to the principles and assumptions relating to the profession of social work itself. Most would agree that it is the responsibility of social workers to help marginalized groups, and to some extent this includes LGBT populations; *"we promote a policy of non‑exclusion […] they need to know and to have an idea that these people exist and maybe they need to be sensitive… about these issues"* (Interview Teacher).

Apart from the official statement made by NASWU in relation to the 'anti-homosexuality bill', there is no clear position on the issue of sexual rights within the profession of social work in Uganda. Neither are sexual minorities mentioned in any national social work guidelines or principles used within the vocational field or during the education. As the subject has no place in the educational curriculum, sexual rights or other issues of sexual minorities are hence a subject which many teachers do not address. If they do open up for a discussion relating to the topic, it is individually initiated according to their own moral or ethical viewpoint. One of our more liberal respondents confirms that LGBT are seen as constituting a *"contemporary social problem"* and explains how dominant views are reproduced in the faculty of social work; *"In class we reproduce our, our views, our dominant views, we reproduce them in class, there is not much debate"* (Interview Teacher).

The starting point in including matters of sexual minorities in the social work education could be to bring it from the issue of vulnerable groups. In their work, some social work teacher respondents claim they encourage an open and free discussion; *"Personally, I am a liberal person, and I enjoy people talking about it… I would encourage students to discuss it, to tell me what they think"* (Interview Teacher).

However, in being a teacher it is challenging to foresee one's own morals and this is a challenge of which some are aware; *"in our teaching we don't promote discrimination, no. I told you I would allow the discussion, but you need to remember that the people who teach also have their own moral judgment"* (Interview Teacher). One teacher explains how he addresses the topic in class as a sexual practice that is against Christian values. He believes that only two out of ten (teachers) would disagree with his opinion. He would possibly bring the topic up spontaneously as a contemporary social problem: *"I say 'I see some of you, you are young people, don't let anybody deceit you to do a,b,c,d. If you are mature, grow, get a partner, marry of the opposite sex, have a family and enjoy your life.*

That is the natural'". When asked what happens if students have a different opinion he says: *"Nobody has raised their hand and said… at least you cannot… if they're there it can be done out of the very many in class who will fear also to speak because he fears people will…the fellow students will condemn him or her because it looks abnormal"* (Interview Teacher).

In this rather harsh environment some social workers are afraid to be labeled as homosexuals themselves if they express alternative viewpoints. Many say that it can be dangerous to stand up for the rights LGBTs; one can be ostracized and excluded from the academic society. The topic is controversial among colleagues; it is hard to express alternative viewpoints without being ridiculed, there is stigma attached to the rights based perspective in regard to sexual minorities since they are often viewed as criminals. Thus social workers have failed to openly address the issues and in the academics there is not an open discussion of the issue. One respondent thinks this has to do with strong images of normality and deviances: *"they are not open about these things; they do not want to discuss them because they feel there is something normal and abnormal"*. The academics of social work are hostile against LGBTs, which complicates the involvement: *"I am not sure any of us can, you know, call a seminar or a workshop that you are going to discuss sexual minorities"*. Furthermore, when the respondent defends the rights perspective, colleagues think that these opinions have been too much influence by the time spent studying abroad and therefore they do not take those opinions seriously (Interview Teacher).

One student says that Ugandans in general are against homosexuals and that *"even in our class we do not encourage that"* (Interview Student). Furthermore the same student says that while some people in school advocate for the rights of sexual minorities, the teachers do not agree with the 'promotion' of homosexuals. Thus the climate in class can be harsh; *"You can comment in class, but the rest will laugh. When you say 'Some of you, you look like you are really part of this thing', then others will laugh. So it is generally not a normal thing in society"* (Interview Student). Consequently, no one will raise their hand to disagree (Interview Teacher). Another student claims they have learned nothing about LGBT populations in the social work education which indicates there is a lack (Interview Student), and this is further confirmed by a teacher;

> "I don't think there is specific address on that [...] because one... I think we have a course
> on sexuality... the last time I looked at the units; I didn't see the sexuality of the minority.

What we look at mostly are maybe issues to do with adolescence and sexuality" (Interview Teacher).

This respondent thinks there is very little discussion (in class, in the curriculum, in development studies); *"I think we have not really isolated this phenomena as a major issue of rights, issue for discussion and for bringing on board in our trainings"* (Interview Teacher). Still, one teacher claims that she always tries to educate the students in this field, because she feels that her students need to challenge the way they perceive certain issues:

"personally, I am a liberal person, I talk about these things, it's fine, like when we are talking about assessment of human needs, I always bring out sexual minorities because they're a group of people who you know, are not given any recognition here […] I always challenge my students" (Interview Teacher).

Another teacher similarly argues that there is a need to discuss, within the academics of social work, how to address the LGBT community and their needs because there is a lot of ambivalence. Different realities have to be understood as they change, people can't pretend to live in the past. This particular respondent says he has colleagues on each side of the debate and they argue about this issue a lot. The discussion is very open and it is not dangerous to express an alternative viewpoint as most teachers has had some kind of international exposure through living in more liberal places (Interview Teacher).

SOCIAL WORK AND LGBT- DOMINANT DISCOURSES

Among the social work respondents with more dominant viewpoints, there is generally a perception that social workers as a professional group can and should have a role in working to resolve the 'problems' with LGBTs for the sake of the greater society. One common perception is that LGBT persons can be 'cured' from their sexual orientation or gender identity and that social workers can and should have an important role in what is referred to as the 'rehabilitation process'; *"We are governed by the idea that these people you see, with unacceptable behaviour, can change, for goodness sake, it is a value we hold, a very strong value. All of us have potentials to change"* (Interview Teacher). As such, respondents tend to believe that with the right pedagogic tools, severe punishments are redundant; *"We are not anti-LGBT, we are not against these people, we are against what they do and we do not want them punished, but we think we can help them"* (Interview NASWU Representative). With the help and guidance from professional social workers it is thus believed that individuals can change and adapt to the norms and then be 're-socialized' into society; *"If you are rehabilitated then you are reintegrated"*

(Interview Teacher). The friendly relationship between the client and social worker is also highlighted as important for the reintegration process; *"If you want them to achieve this then let them, let us become their friends. Okay, and we work together and we see how we rehabilitate them and modify their behaviour and their attitudes"* (Interview Teacher). The same teacher means that it is very important to first listen to the life story of the client in order to understand the 'nature of the problem' *"Let the person tell you his or her story first, and you listen, and that´s why I´m saying you need professionals. Just go and find out, talk, and it´s not a one day thing, it´s a process, yeah it´s going to take time, talk to them, find out: why did it start? When did it start? Eh? What is the nature of the problem?* (Interview Teacher).

One teacher means that in order to help the individual to 'become heterosexual' or to adapt to a rightful gender behaviour, the client first need to truly *understand* that her/his behaviour is problematic; *"It is very difficult to go to someone who has not known, who has not acknowledged that there is a problem, it's very difficult"* (Interview Teacher). This teacher means that these persons first must acknowledge that they are *"patients in need of help"* before they will want to receive help and successfully change. He also believes that the 'problem' will need many different interventions of individual case work as well as group work before it is 'resolved'. As such the respondent thinks that the client's whole social group of LGBT persons need to be 're-socialized' into a heterosexual normative way of living, as the client would otherwise easily relapse back into her/his deviant behaviour. The concern is that *"They have created a world of their own with deviant norms"*. In short, many respondents believe that sexual minorities have to be *taught* the norms of society; *"They are outside the normal – they don't fit"* (Interview Teacher).

Most of our respondents talk about the principals of 'non-judgment' and 'non-discrimination' as core values in social work, even while working with sexual minorities. Hence they often express that they do not and never would judge or condemn LGBT persons in the delivery of social services, but that these individuals simply need to understand and learn how to change their 'problematic behaviors';

> "I was talking about service delivery, you can't discriminate, you can't. You can't because they are human beings, they are special, and this was based also on another value which we hold that people have a lot of potential to change, from unacceptable behaviour to acceptable behaviour, if they are helped. But if you start of with discrimination, no!" (Interview Teacher).

Some respondents however see that there is a dilemma between what they refer to as core values within social work, and religious and cultural values. One teacher explains how she previously would never bring up the topic of sexual minorities in class as she thought the subject was too horrible to address. By reading and studying principles and guidelines she however realized that no client should be discriminated against in service deliveries, no matter their 'sins':

> "For me I had to change my attitude, I said no, the ethic is saying no discrimination, that is what is very clear, why do you discriminate? But how... what helps you not to discriminate is to know that this is behaviour, a difficult behaviour, unacceptable behaviour, it is a sin like other sins, take it like another bad behaviour, which is not acceptable to your culture, and serve. And serve […] Give the rest to God, to them and their God" (Interview Teacher).

The above teacher believes that social workers has to continue to work 'within the guidelines and principals of social work' until they get the legal direction from the government in how to handle sexual minorities. Social workers will then willingly oblige to these directions as they as professionals would be imprisoned otherwise. This respondent favours rehabilitation over punishment; *So they gain, they get integrated into the mainstream culture, cultural practices, sexual cultural practices, rather than saying you are criminalizing them, you are going to kill them".* As the behaviour is in fact criminalized already, the respondent does not believe in their 'empowerment' but in their social and cultural rehabilitation as well as reintegration on all social levels. Homosexuality is 'outside the culture' and social work interventions aimed at combating homosexuality must be conducted within the 'cultural norms'. The respondent believes that she represents the vast majority of social workers when saying that sexual minorities are 'culturally wrong'; *"It is unacceptable culturally, that is our position as social workers"* (Interview Teacher).

Several respondents believe in the implementation of early interventions where parents discourage their children from 'the practice'; *"I think it all has to start in the homes and in schools, I think, that is where we have to put our emphasis... on discouraging the practice, you have to, because it is outside our culture"* (Interview Teacher).

When talking about interventions in schools, this respondent wants social workers to have a role (especially in same-sex schools) in preventing the 'recruitment' of non-normative sexuality. There is however a problem in identifying the pupils in need of interventions; *"schools, I think, can work a lot with this population. But the problem is identifying them, because it is hidden, it is undercover, but it is there"* (Interview Teacher). By addressing

whole classes of pupils, the respondent however feels that the collective mentality of the pupils can be successfully targeted:

> "I think when you address, are addressing these problems in schools you are addressing everybody. It is just like addressing the healthy and the non-healthy together. And say these are the standards, and why is society taking this position. But suppose you are already there, what do we do? We can change, we can change so that we follow more into acceptable group. I think that is what they are likely to do. Changing attitudes […] changing behaviours. Targeting at changing attitudes and changing behaviours of those who are not yet practising it so that they don't follow" (Interview Teacher).

One of the teachers also relies on God in finding solutions to the ambivalence within the profession. She claims that social workers (as 'good Christians') should serve sexual minorities without discrimination just like any other *"people engaged in unacceptable behaviour"* (Interview Teacher).

During discussions about the tensions between the universality of human rights and cultural relativism within the profession of social work, it becomes evident that even though respondents with more dominant viewpoints view human rights as natural and self-given for all citizens, they exclude sexual rights from that discourse. Rather than seeing the pursuit for sexual rights as part of the social workers responsibilities and as part of legislative protection against discrimination, they see their responsibilities lying in finding out the reasons for individuals 'problematic' behaviours in order to 'cure' them:

> "Yeah, what type of right…what is good to have? But we should not misunderstand it, we should not blank it and refer to human rights 'you are free to do what you want', no that cannot be right. So the issue is not separating, segregating against those kind of thing, the issue is just trying to show that it is, it is not right. The other thing which I personally have not understood when you talk about this sexual minority: the gay, the lesbian, no you see – they…most time they come and they say that they are discriminated against, but I think what the society has not done is to try to find out from these people whether, there is no problem with them or not…because that is part of social work, yeah because being a gay, having a lady and a lady, then you start justifying it by saying; 'you see, people should not discriminate against us, this is how we are born', I've heard some argument like that; 'it's how we were born', so its most likely these people have some, some problems, and they need help" (Interview Teacher).

The International Federation of Social Workers favors a global implementation of sexual rights and harshly criticizes the criminalization of homosexuality and the statement made by NASWU in relation to the 'anti-homosexuality bill'. When discussing this conflict the respondents often express a disappointment towards the international community of social workers as they are believed to impose their values onto the Ugandan social work profession, their autonomy, and their obligation to work within the national legal framework;

> "This international, federation I don't think it is over or it can, has any powers. It is not a

UN body is it? […] So cannot impose values, its values, on states. Can it? […] But they cannot do much on states. And neither can I work outside the context, the legal context, of my state" (Interview Teacher).

This teacher means that Ugandan social workers would betray their culture and the confidence of the population if they started promoting sexual rights; *"Social work is always practised within the cultural context, and if you try to promote something outside the culture, the core cultural values, you will be thrown out as a professional group; you will be working against the very people. To us this is the problem"* (Interview Teacher).

Another teacher means that there is a dilemma between the global responsibility of the social worker to advocate for peoples human rights, and the responsibility to work within the norms and values of the country. He however believes that the sovereignty and the values of the country and its citizens should always be respected:

> "on one hand, as a social worker, as a social professional, I believe we have a right, I believe we have a role to play, advocate for people's rights globally, okay […] on the other hand, we have, for as long as the nation does not go into you know radical... radicalizing their views, you know, and killing and miming those who are on that side of life, as long as that country is not doing that okay, somehow the sovereignty of that country, and the values they hold as a country, should be respected, so there should be a balance" (Interview Teacher).

SOCIAL WORK AND LGBT- ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES

Even though many teachers express ambivalence on the subject of sexual minorities (believing in certain alternative as well as dominant discourses), a few academicians are predominantly or even completely convinced that sexual minorities is a vulnerable and marginalized group in need of legislated sexual rights and anti-discriminatory protection. These respondents do also generally feel that social work as a profession should be part in providing supportive service deliveries to sexual minorities, and that they should advocate for their rights in society. One respondent is therefore particularly disappointed with the 'anti-homosexuality' statement made by NASWU since he believes that they, as a joint association of social workers, should rather take a clear stance in the fight for sexual rights; *"NASWU should be the leading institution or association that is fighting for the rights of these people, but they are silent and they are, you know, not even supportive of this, you know the rights of these people, it is very strange in my opinion"* (Interview Teacher).

Although other respondents express more ambivalence in putting forward their viewpoints, several teachers and students do believe that social work principals of

acceptance and non-judgment should supersede any private moral beliefs when dealing with the LGBT community. As such they believe in working against the discrimination of LGBT individuals as well as working to ensure their fundamental human right rights. Some respondents also believe that the social work professionals should not only advocate for sexual rights, but take a lead in that quest; *"if we believe as we do, in rights of everyone, protection of rights and so on, and so on, as long as what we are defending does not infringe on other people's welfare, then why shouldn't we be a part of that? If not actually take lead in it…?"* (Interview Teacher).

One teacher believes that Ugandan society needs to be less discriminatory against minorities in general and more understanding to the fact that people can in fact be different from the majority. For this cause social workers should engage in sensitizing community work;

> "we believe in acceptance you know, we believe in…these principals are very clear: our values of social work, although we keep saying 'in harmony with the rest of the community' and we have been asking ourselves…the rest of the community is problematic, then you have to work with it, that is when we talk about community work instead of case work, if the deviance is within individuals, then you do case work, but if the deviance or problematic is within the community, then you have to do the community work" (Interview Teacher).

Social work respondents often refer to social work principles of non-judgment and acceptance, and one person says that social workers who are against sexual rights are not genuine social workers as they have misunderstood those core meanings of the profession; *"if we are all social workers, we must believe in the principals of social work"* (Interview Social Worker). When asked why the respondent chooses to work within this field despite its controversial setting, we learn that as a new employee of the organization, the perception of this respondent changed while working with a transgendered client in need of support. Through this professional relationship the social worker learned how to genuinely understand issues of sexuality and gender identity and also the significance of sexual rights. Basically, the respondent believes that supporting sexual minorities is part of the social workers' professional responsibilities;

> "…so social work is very, very, very instrumental in this line of working with the sexual minorities or the LGBTI, and basically if a social worker is very, very flexible, you know social work is the helping profession, it is our role, our role is to offer a helping hand, extending that hand in the situation where somebody, you know, think it is difficult" (Interview Social Worker).

Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that, as within any other professional group, most social workers in Uganda prioritize their cultural/religious values over their professional

ethics. Consequently, according to the same respondent, social work professionals need to learn how to understand LGBT clients, respect them for who they are, and realize that they also are part of the Ugandan 'culture':

> "even the people that we work with come from within a culture and they are our brothers […] we should address clients the way they come to us […] I am telling you that until we've learned to appreciate people the way they come to us it's going to be very difficult for us to work on this" (Interview Social Worker).

Being discriminatory as a social worker is thus contra productive in social work; *"how will you help a person that you discriminate? Its better you decline […] then make a referral to another person you think will handle…"* (Interview Social Worker).

Furthermore the respondent explains that initially only lawyers were employed at the NGO, but it was realized that social workers were better suited for many of the tasks needed to support clients. As such, the social workers of the organization now work to fulfill a range of client's needs by conducting advocacy; making home visits in communities; making needs assessments; providing support in finding housing; and counseling individuals as well as families. The empowerment of clients is stressed as very important; *"so at the end of the day if we are helping, we are helping someone to come up and also help themselves to gain that sense of ownership, to gain that sense of credibility to stand, to move through a state of a difference"*. Another big part of the respondents work in the organization consists in visiting communities and initiating dialogues with community members about issues of sexuality and legislation in order to increase the awareness and tolerance for human diversities; *"we also try to sensitize the communities about these issues of sexuality […] go and talk about the laws"* (Interview Social Worker).

Even though the above respondent is a good example of a social worker engaged in empowering and supporting sexual minorities, there are not many social work professionals working within this field, which leaves a gap of service provision to LGBT persons in need of targeted support. In fact, when we ask respondents from the LGBT community how they perceive the current role of social workers as providers of professional support to their community, they all talk about their absence. Instead, we have found that much of their own work actually resembles social work practices that could possibly be performed by educated personnel within the social work field. In the absence of professional support, one activist talks about how they are 'their own social workers' within his organization;

"Well, the mainstream social workers have not really been involved. No […] Actually we are our own social workers! […] We try to do everything and most of us did not study what we are doing, so like, we need capacity. But we try to do…we take a one week kind of training and get an idea [laughs], you know in how to deal with everything. We used…at first when we started we used to counsel people, but we are not professional counselors, but just because we've taken a one week course, we can try to talk to people cause we identify with them and then we'd use a kind of 'sit in a circle' sharing, you know people share their issues, their trauma so that others feel like they're not alone, you know, giving them hope and everything […] We still have a long way to go […] when it comes to social workers" (Interview NGO Representative).

As many LGBT activists describe discrimination in attaining social services, there is a desire among many activists that social workers start reaching out to the LGBT community in an anti-discriminatory way, in order to understand and support their need; *"Well, I think they should be able to reach out to the LGBT community, talk to them, try to identify their problems, try to know them, you know, try to know what their needs are…"* (Interview NGO Representative).

One activist tells us that she up-started an organization targeted particularly at empowering and counseling transwomen, since this is a group perceived as not receiving that help professionally. This respondent nevertheless sees a need of the professional support of social workers; *"that is why I made that organization for transwomen to be counseled if they are traumatized [...] We need social workers first of all to like, those social workers, of course they can work like counselors. We need people to mentor us"* (Interview NGO Representative).

Other suggested roles of social workers from activists include conducting needs assessments within the community, helping to start up empowerment programs, where the focus is targeted at people's potentialities, and teaching self-help techniques promoting economic independence:

"Do a needs assessment and try to find a way of helping out, finding avenues of helping out, creating small-scale, you know, empowerment programs like trying to train them on, train the community on being, you know financially stable and independent because we lack all that, you know, skills of starting up small scale industries, skills in the…you know. But if we had the social workers who would come in and tried to outsource, you know, abilities to see what people are capable of and they help out like getting them connected, connecting them into loan-giving institutes so that they can become, you know, self-dependent. And once they become self-dependent we wouldn't have cases of homeless LGBT people, we wouldn't have cases of you know, people who are thrown out of schools, these people would be able to indulge school administrations, you know going where we activists can't reach like reaching avenues where activists cannot reach. Mainly that's what I expect social workers to do" (Interview NGO Representative).

THE WAY FORWARD- POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

Considering the crucial point in time it is interesting to see how social workers envision the future in regard to the responsibility and potential role of the social work profession in the fight for sexual rights. Thus, in this section we highlight possibilities and challenges that our respondents predict.

Sensitization- the Changing of Mindsets

When respondents with alternative viewpoints are asked what they regard as the biggest potentialities and challenges in the implementation of sexual rights in Uganda, many different (sometimes conflicting) viewpoints come across. Certainly the re-tabling of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' in February 2012 was according to many respondents a huge setback, as many people had great hopes in the denunciation of the bill. The fact that voices of the opposition were loud enough to shelf the bill the first time it was introduced is however encouraging and many respondents express hope for the near future. Other respondents are more skeptical and strongly believe that the bill will pass within short time (the AHB had still not passed, October 2012). It is however our impression that all of our respondents with alternative viewpoints believe that things *must* eventually change for the better and that sexual rights *will* in time be incorporated in the wider scope of human rights. Perceptions of the time scale and *how* to get there nevertheless differ.

Many respondents express that what is primarily needed right now is to work for a change in the perceptions of the public, the way forward hence starts with the attitudes of the people. One respondent predict that if the bill was put to a vote among the Ugandan population, it would pass within 20 minutes with an approval of 95% (Interview Teacher). One activist tells us that many people from the LGBT community are living in fear right now because the bill has been re-tabled, creating an urgent need for community sensitization;

> "with funding we are able to strategize, and have more sensitization projects, and then do community outreach as a way to really change attitude of society cause that's the main big, big, big issue that we need…to do, tackle. Keep talking against the bill, talk out cause it also helps"… (Interview NGO Representative).

He says that since so much effort has been put into lobbying and advocating for sexual rights at the national level, attitudes at the grassroots level have been left behind along with the 'grass root person' and her/his security and needs (Interview NGO Representative).

Social workers are according to one professional social worker particularly effective in creating awareness and sensitization about important matters as they (better than other professionals) are trained in initiating dialogues with communities; *"Social workers can better penetrate communities to create awareness, because they are not forceful"* (Interview Social Worker). The same respondent says that teaching communities to understand sexual minorities is part of the professional role:

> "it is my role as a social worker to talk to the communities, issues of acceptance, the issues of tolerance, issues of co-existence"[ ] "People always shod away these issues of sexual minorities... mere victims of sexual violence: 'How many are they'? For me, I don't think that we should discuss the number now; we should discuss what is happening [...] a social worker can help the community to overcome these challenges [...] social work should be integrated into all work across" (Interview Social Worker).

Several respondents however stress that the problem is that social workers have not collectively taken a stance *for* sexual rights, which means that social workers are still free to choose their own perspectives and interventional methods according to their own personal beliefs and values (Interview Social Worker). As such, many respondents with alternative viewpoints mean that social workers first have to be sensitized *themselves* to issues concerning sexual minorities and thus begin to learn about issues relating to sexualities and gender identities before they can come to the realization that the responsibility to support and protect sexual minorities is part of the social worker's role. One teacher says; *"for social work definitely... maybe we should be the first people to try to understand them"* (Interview Teacher). Tamale similarly talks about the importance that people start relearning what they think they know in the context of sexual rights: *"to learn and unlearn"* (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Changing the mindset of the Ugandan population in regards to sexual rights will according to one respondent require a *"mental revolution"* which according to him absolutely *must* include the academics (Interview Teacher). Tamale however means that the academics generally do not have much knowledge in the human rights field, and that attempts to connect principles of human rights to different academic disciplines have failed:

> "The human rights and peace centre here had a huge project where they tried to integrate human rights into all units of the university [...] it did not yield much result since there is a lack of knowledge, most academic staff, they don't have the knowledge of human rights in the first place [...] let alone relating it to their own disciplines" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Tamale says that there is a great need of integrating issues of human rights and gender into disciplines in general so that students will be provided with the tools of knowledge

and understanding in their future academic careers (Interview Sylvia Tamale). One activist also means that in order for social workers to support LGBTs, there must be an introduction of new policies in which the human rights of sexual minorities are included. She means that would be the starting point (Interview NGO Representative). Concerning social work, one social work teacher similarly claims that the space for advocating for rights is fundamentally missing in the Ugandan social work profession; *"so we are trying to change all those mentalities and attitudes and they're really necessary, they are really necessary, but the space to advocate for such rights is practically not there"* (Interview Teacher).

Tamale mentions 'Ubuntu' as a possible approach of creating awareness about sexual minorities from an African perspective:

> "I was bringing out, the information, the facts about homosexuality historically being part of our culture. Giving them that information and showing how they were treated, okay, ehm looking at African communities where homosexuality is not criminalized and, because if they say it is un-African it means that no one in Africa, you know, it assumes that everyone in Africa has criminalized this 'horrible' act […] you talk to similar cultures that are more tolerant, because if you are saying it is un-African how come there are some Africans that are more tolerant? Talk to them. So a lot of, a lot of homophobia is based on total ignorance, you know […] talking to other African cultures, reawakening this philosophy of Ubuntu among Africans, I think it's a challenge but it can be done" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Ubuntu is an African humanist philosophy based on the belief in strong mutual relations and loyalty within the community.

There is a belief that social workers should develop the research field in order to create and spread understanding and awareness (Interview Teacher). Much hope lies in the educational system, one respondent says: *"I think it has to start with schools, it has to start with educational practitioners, medical practitioners; it has to start from the roots, advocate communities. Show them these people are actually very normal"* (Interview Student). In other words, in the process of sensitization norms need to be addressed and questioned on the grass root level.

Political Will and Legislation

As shown, many respondents stress the importance in changing the negative public attitudes concerning sexual minorities before expecting the situation of LGBT persons to change for the better. Contradictory to this belief, Tamale thinks that progressive legislation predates the mainstream tolerance and understanding of sexual minorities; *"So*

people's attitudes have to catch up with the law [...] the law comes first, the law is basic it should be there to protect" (Interview Sylvia Tamale). She thinks that if the protection against the discrimination of LGBT persons is legislated, homophobic attitudes will subside over time, and she believes that change will come. What is currently experienced as a 'backlash' in sexual rights is really according to her only the manifested fear of old religious and other leaders towards a growing young and very brave community of LGBT activists. She sees a change taking place within the next generation:

> "We will get there, just like the west did, I mean legislatively we will, without any doubt, we will. We are just going through what... others have gone through, that have eventually won legislative recognition. […] I think that is the biggest fear, that many of these homophobes, the religious leaders, and so on, that is their biggest fear, because they can see that the movement is gaining... is gaining credibility... it's gaining support, that is without any doubt […] that is why I think part of the backlash is because more and more people are coming out of the closet, very brave young people, especially young ones, so I think in the next, certainly the next generation, I think by the time our children are adults, these draconian laws will have been repelled, that is my... I really don't see how they can sustain this" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Tamale nevertheless also sees that there is currently a problem of not implementing ratified human rights legislation because of the lack of political will. As such, she believes that there *must* be a strong political will in favour for the human rights agenda:

> "It would take politicians with a very strong sense of human rights, and protection of marginalized groups, to stand up, you know, and say 'we cannot continue violating many of our international commitments, you know, treaties that we have ratified, our own constitution and repeal this stupid law'. It really would, that is what it would take. So, you know, very strong political will, in spite of the homophobic public, like happened in South Africa" (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

Our professional social work respondent however means that even though great policies can be legislated, they may not be in alignment with the attitudes of the community which may hinder the actual implementation process (Interview Social Worker). One of the activists similarly discusses the fact that the LGBT community in South Africa experienced a brutal backlash with their new progressive constitutional rights. Particularly lesbian women were targeted to numerous attacks of 'corrective rapes'. The social work respondent means that this is where the social worker comes in to ease the transition of policy change, implementation and sensitization; *"The policy is there within the law, you don't segregate, but how is it implemented? [...] That is a social workers' day to day"* (Interview Social Worker).

The Social Work Body

As mentioned, our practicing social work respondent believes that supporting sexual minorities is definitely part of the responsibilities of social workers. Hence he believes that more social workers need to join him in his work:

> "There is a lot of challenges within social working with the minority groups, and they suffer pain. They don't have the voice to go and speak for themselves, to go and carry on different things, so really... there is need for people to come and support this work" (Interview Social Worker).

Concerning the position of sexual rights within the profession of social work, several respondents however mean that before a strong organization of non-discriminatory social work is formed, the quest for sexual rights will depend on the initiatives and motivations of individual social workers, just like the enthusiasm of the professional social work respondent. According to one social work teacher, it will first take a strong leadership to mobilize professionals wanting to start advocating for sexual rights:

> "I think it will depend on individual willingness, individual way of looking at things, rather than like from picking one profession, like a body, like you know. Like I don't think even [...], I don't think even like our National Association of Social Workers can come out strongly to bring out non-discrimination. It is possible but it means very strong leadership to be able to mobilize even the social workers to be on their side" (Interview Teacher).

This respondent believes that the real potential lies within developing a strong association of social workers working to support sexual minorities while also placing pressure on Uganda from the international community to implement sexual rights (for instance from the international body of sexual workers); *"that would be the beginning of changing things"*. He means that a change has to come 'from above' (from associations and organizations) rather from individuals as it is very dangerous to change from below which is exactly why activists have to work underground; *"activists are usually killed"* (Interview Teacher).

Another teacher also means that there should be a dialogue with the international community concerning the protection of sexual rights. On the national level however it will be difficult for social workers to advocate for sexual rights. Instead he suggests that social workers start with promoting human rights generally:

> "at the international level, there can be continued dialogue [...] for the rights of sexual minorities to be protected, and there is a difference between protection and promotion, I am not talking about promotion of homosexuality, I am talking about protection of those on the practice. On the national level, at the national level, it even the atmosphere, currently, it might be a bit difficult social work, for the social work profession to come out and say we represent the rights for the sexual minorities and we want to promote them. What they can do as social workers, what we can do is to speak out for the promotion of human rights,

generally..." (Interview Teacher).

The complexity of this issue, which leads to a challenge in changing the situation over time, is articulated by a teacher respondent;

> "it takes long time for people to learn to tolerate certain things […] social workers are part of that change but it will also be gradually because in as much as we are aware of the hearts, and they are part of our cultural believes and traditions, our religion, our profession. You cannot start dissecting and putting different pillars. And each part of that influences the way we look at things" (Interview Teacher).

A Holistic Approach

One respondent believes that when it comes to supporting sexual minorities, social work should be linked to other related fields since a holistic approach to support is more effective. Social work should thus be connected to human rights, social development, policy awareness, the church (which can do good social work), culture (e.g. socializing in communities) and the law (Interview Social Worker). This respondent believes that social work and other related professions can complement each other when dealing with human rights issues, especially since there is currently a general lack of awareness concerning human rights; *I think there should be a strong, strong, strong league between social work and other professions […] I think we should league social working with all these issues of human rights"* (Interview Social Worker). The respondent further gives an example whereby lawyers may be good at advocating for new policies, but have a language too harsh for dialogues. Social workers on the other hand can be very effective in initiating dialogues with communities and creating awareness:

> "So I think social workers should also get involved in issues of that kind, creating awareness, speaking back to the community […] our approach is more friendly than what a lawyer will speak: a lawyer will say: 'We want to enforce', so that's why I say there should be a linkage, there should be networking" (Interview Social Worker).

Concerning the legal profession, many people have told us that they are very prominent in the fight for sexual rights; repeatedly, we hear that the legal profession has more potential than social workers in the human rights movement for sexual minorities. Lawyers are and have been prominent in the fight; *"The legal profession has been very helpful in Uganda actually. They even help discuss the current bill and show how many loopholes it has, and how many violations of human rights it has"* (Interview Teacher). However, while most social workers have claimed that the potential lies within the legal profession, Tamale thinks there is still too much homophobia among lawyers; *"there are one or two more colleagues that will speak out publicly, otherwise all the rest are very*

quiet on this issue. Very, very quiet" (Interview Sylvia Tamale). Hence it seems that similar to the social work profession, the potential in the legal profession to work for sexual rights depends on the convictions and motivations of individual members of the department; *"So I think that is what it would take, not lawyers, cause the majority of them are very, very homophobic"* (Interview Sylvia Tamale).

The International Community

When talking to respondents about what they think of the efforts made by the international community to halt the negative development of sexual rights in Uganda, different opinions come across. One teacher welcomes the pressure put on Uganda. He thinks that the threats of cutting aid from e.g. IMF are a good strategy in trying to stop the 'anti-homosexuality bill' from being implemented. He therefore hopes that the international pressure will be persistent until the 'anti-homosexuality bill' is stopped once and for all (Interview Teacher). One of our activist respondents also claims that the government of Uganda is generally corrupted. As many politicians generally steal a share of the aid for themselves, he believes that they will be particularly concerned to save the inflow of aid;

> "The more the international community talks out against the bill, the more…cause, you know, not everyone in government is, is for loosing international aid […] In fact, the leading government really still wants the aid, you know, cause it eases. And most of them due to corruption, they earn a lot from that aid [laughs] so…yeah, so they see that it would be a loss on their behalf, so they are fighting the bill not to go through so that's there. The international community is doing a good job, a great job in fact. But still, there are things that, there are things that really have to be looked at" (Interview NGO Representative).

Other respondents however see these threats as contra productive as they believe that they will only further aggravate the marginalization of the LGBT community. Sexual minorities are thought to be generally blamed if such cuts are implemented and hence subjected to even more resentments. Many persons also believe that cuts in aid would be generally bad for the economic and social development of the whole country, affecting all citizens, but particularly those already financially underprivileged. As the LGBT community is often described as a 'financially poor' community by respondents, many are thus of the opinion that they will be affected the worst. Some respondents also think that the strong and fast foreign negative response to the bill is creating an idea among Ugandans that homosexuality must be foreign. One respondent therefore believes that instead of inflicting international sanctions, it would be preferable if the international

community worked with national actors to initiate a discussion in how to stop homophobia. As the respondent thinks that cutting aid is focusing on the symptoms of state-sponsored homophobia rather than its causes, he believes in initiating a dialogue between prominent international actors and national cultural and political leaders to raise the awareness about issues concerning sexual minorities and sexual rights.

Concerning the attitudes of the social work academics, one social work teacher thinks that exposure to the field of sexual rights is important. Thus the international exchange of ideas is described as important to raise the awareness of the academics and create an understanding about sexual minorities. He particularly talks about the strength in collaborations (e.g. exchange programs) between Ugandan universities and universities internationally (Interview Teacher).

In conclusion, our results exemplifies that dominant discourses prevail among our social work respondents, but evidently there is also space for expressing alternative viewpoints. Dominant discourses are as shown influenced by cultural as well as religious perspectives while alternative discourses are connected to the ideals of the universality of human rights regarding the LGBT population in Uganda. However, although the expression of alternative discourses can be detected among our respondents, it is important to note that these are voices expressed in the margin. In our analysis we will further examine the implications and meanings of making one's voice heard in an environment where dominant discourses are highly connected to power structures.

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In the previous chapters we systematically deconstruct the dominant and alternative discourses relating to LGBT rights in a Ugandan context. These deconstructions give us the opportunity to illustrate how discourses are interpretations of the world, and that there could possibly be other truth claims, in other words each *"discourse could have been constructed differently"* (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:81, our translation).

Social work is by definition a human rights profession, however the LGBT community is often excluded from the human rights discourse and social work does not seem to play a crucial role in the struggle for human rights of LGBTs in Uganda. Much points at the continuous discrimination and oppression against this population, whose human rights are systematically violated. The marginalization of sexual minorities is closely connected to highly normative beliefs; we have chosen to apply the concept 'discursive power' to highlight such viewpoints, as well as the power relations that the discourses create within the profession of social work. Our main purpose has been to take a closer look at the existing forms of resistance against those power relations, among teachers and students within the social work academia, and highlight alternative ways of acting and discussing in regard to these questions, as different from the dominant ways. By doing so, we first needed to grasp what signifies discursive power, how it manifests, and what its effects are in this context.

In this chapter we apply the chosen theories of power and resistance, as well as other relevant concepts highlighted in the previous research and theory chapters, onto the results in order to answer the research questions that remain to be answered.

8.1 RELATIONS OF POWER

Concerning power, we have actively chosen to narrow down our analytical scope to examine the production and reproduction of discursive power within the academics and profession of social work. We have nonetheless (without going into depth), showed how political and religious structural power in Uganda *is* directly linked to discursive forms of power.

It can be argued that although the regime of Uganda is no longer a dictatorship, the current governmentality includes traits of distinctly repressive forms of power. Examples

of these are reported cases of state-sanctioned human rights violations, including the torture and arbitrary arrests of citizens critical to the government or in other ways deemed as inappropriate (Landguiden Uganda, Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2012, web; HRW 2012:2). The current as well as the proposed anti-gay legislation is a further example of repressive rule. Undoubtedly, pastoral power can also be said to effectively function through its original forms as the religious leaders of Uganda has a very prominent role in society. Most citizens in Uganda are religious in some form, and they turn to these leaders for guidance and salvation (Landguiden Uganda, Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2012, web). Nevertheless, we can see that disciplinary power exists *alongside* other forms of power in Uganda. As in most societies (if not all) the major social institutions of Uganda produce and reproduce highly normative perceptions that supports a certain set of discourses while dismissing the relevance of others. Normative beliefs are hence strong forces regulating the behaviors and beliefs in societies around the world, creating and recreating specific discourses in the process. And even though pastoral power may be exercised through its original religious aims and goals, it is *also* exercised by professionals like social workers.

Concerning the normative beliefs about sexual minorities in Uganda, we have shown that heteronormativity, with strong elements of homophobia, is the most dominant discourse in society. Fear that homosexual pedophiles force or manipulate children into having sex and to become homosexuals is not understood as a vague belief among some citizens of society; it is in a sense a widespread institutionalized 'fact' permeating the beliefs of the general population of Uganda as well as the academic institutions. The opinions of respondents representing more dominant viewpoints reflect local political and cultural discourses; non-normative sexuality is being depicted as sinful and related to different forms of exploitation (e.g. pedophilia, prostitution, and imperialism). In this context, no separation is usually made between homosexuality and non-normative gender identity; in fact, alternative gender identity is simply seen as another expression of homosexuality. As discussed, there is a kinship between this discourse and the sexualized and gendered dichotomies enforced in many African countries by colonial rulers. As binary models of men/women and heterosexuality/homosexuality was introduced, the qualities of women were seen as inferior to those of men, and heterosexuality was clearly separated from homosexuality by creating specific categories (Divani 2011, web; Rosenberg 2002:30). While heterosexuality was made normative, homosexuality was made deviant. However

it is important to note that discourses of sexuality are not created through some evolutionary logic, nor are they ever static; they are adaptations of historical, social, and global processes influenced by many different factors (including resistance) which shape and reshape them continuously. Thus, discursive forms of power has no essence *by itself* as it rather works through a constant transformative weave of different factors and forces affecting each other (Foucault 1980:120). As mentioned, Foucault thought that knowledge throughout history has always been influenced by different power interests through processes whereby the interests of persons are being lifted by the discourse itself (Gustavsson 2008:36).

There is a common rationale between the binary model of sexuality introduced by the colonial powers, and the current patriarchic and homophobic structures and discourses of many African countries. This rationale, depicting heterosexuality (as normal) and homosexuality (as abnormal) are as shown often expressed to an extreme in Uganda, which severely stigmatizes LGBT persons in the society.

The dominant discourses within social work concerning sexual minorities are clearly attached to the wider cultural and political beliefs and attitudes of the Ugandan society. As professionals with the authority to both to define and to claim the best solutions for 'social problems', social workers also have their own discourses and truth regimes which are further connected to a wider international social work knowledge base (Swärd & Starrin 2006:253). As such, respondents holding dominant viewpoints often express that even if homosexuality is considered a 'sin' people 'engaging' in these acts should not be punished or condemned, but rather supported to change their behaviors according to the norms of society, which is an idea central to the concept of pastoral power (Foucault 1980:96; Svensson 2001:44).

The 'soft discipline' of pastoral power is central to residual forms of social work, as it is based on dealing with social problems on an individualized level, instead of on a structural level where causes of oppressions and inequalities could be addressed (Chitereka 2009:149-152). By merely focusing on individuals, the causes of social problems are explained by the deviant behaviors of minorities, unavoidably placing the solutions for social problems on clients' ability to change their own behaviors. Typically for the exertion of pastoral power/caring power, a lot of emphasis is placed on showing kindness, tolerance and respect for the individual while at the same time making sure that

the client understands that she/he will only be granted any necessary resources once she/he changes according to the demands of the professional (Svensson 2001:44-45). It is however absolutely necessary that the change is a result of the clients *own* willingness, and not by any form of coercion, or as Elisabeth Fry said: *"prisoners are ruled by kindness, chains are therefore unnecessary"* (Svensson 2001:44). One teacher similarly means that in order to help the individual to 'become heterosexual', or adapt to a rightful gender behaviour, the individual first need to truly *understand* that her/his behaviour is problematic; *"It is very difficult to go to someone who has not known, who has not acknowledged that there is a problem, it's very difficult"* (Interview Teacher). Following this logic, these persons first must acknowledge that they are *"patients in need of help"* before they will be able to receive support and successfully change (Interview Teacher). The same teacher stresses that it is very important to first listen to the life story of the client in order to understand the "nature of the problem": *"...talk to them, find out: why did it start? When did it start? Eh? What is the nature of the problem?* (Interview Teacher). Thus the client is encouraged to talk openly and intimately about her/his private feelings and thoughts. Consistent with the ritual of the confession in modern exertions of pastoral power, the clients own perceptions and 'truths' are of most importance (Foucault 1980:76). As this information is not objectively received, the relationship is however highly hierarchical as social worker constantly evaluates what is being said and has the power to steer the conversation towards what is considered normal and desirable (Foucault 1980:96).

The normative influence of disciplinary power hence has to be internalized into the cognition of the client in order to work. The disguise of care makes this form of power extremely effective, although certainly not absolute or impossible to resist. A friendly relationship between the client and the social worker is important for the 'reintegration process': *"If you want them to achieve this then let them, let us become their friends. Okay? And we work together and we see how we rehabilitate them and modify their behaviour and their attitudes"* (Interview Teacher).

Social work in Uganda is not a strong institution, but as an academic and professional discipline it does contribute to the production and reproduction of very specific discourses through research as well as through its everyday practices. As such, social work can take part in defining what is considered normal and deviant also in a Ugandan

context. Further, needless to say, the relationship between social worker and client is hierarchical everywhere, as the client always depends on the resources which social workers possess in various degrees. This means that social workers have great influential power over clients. Hence, this can be considered part of constructing the powerful discourse of LGBT as a social problem.

However, social workers also have the ability to genuinely support clients, advocate for their rights, and work to change the social structures disempowering and oppressing them. Currently, several of our social work respondents holding alternative viewpoints mean that the task is to first challenge these social structures within their own profession.

8.2 ACTS OF RESISTANCE

The word 'resistance' brings forth thoughts of organized confrontations with ruling elites, collective efforts with great incentives, violent revolutions, and maybe terrorism of different kinds. However our social work respondents appear completely unorganized. Their efforts are not collective and their incentives do not appear large. On the contrary, they are small-scaled, hidden, and relatively silent; then is it really resistance?

Resistance against certain discourses and their truth regimes is vital to our study (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:14). Lilja and Vinthagen (2009) actually discusses two concepts demonstrating two forms of resistance that are relevant in regard to our research; the acts of resistance against dominant discourses among our respondents show good examples of what they refer to as 'solidarity resistance' and 'everyday resistance', respectively. These kinds of resistance are different from the organized form of resistance exemplified by NGO representatives and 'informal social work actors', who can be considered political activists and who works for LGBT rights on a daily basis.

First, 'solidarity resistance' ('ställföreträdande motstånd', our translation) is mainly found among social work academicians who make a conscious choice to stand on the side of the oppressed group, in this case sexual minorities, which is in fact corresponding with the definition of the social work profession (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:51). In our research we have found that the human rights discourse in the social work department excludes the rights of LGBT persons from the official agenda. Any existing social work initiatives in working to support sexual minorities are hence individual. LGBT respondents often claim that individual initiatives are crucial and they repeatedly informally refer to 'LGBT

allies', i.e. persons that are not necessarily LGBT themselves but sympathize with and stand up for the rights of sexual minorities and include sexual rights in the human rights discourse. In a society where certain (sexual) practices/orientations and (gender) identities are criminalized the meaning and importance of such 'allies' increase as the community itself has less voice. A professional like (for instance) a social worker can potentially more easily renegotiate the status of LGBT persons. While the platform for activism is being limited, the discretion of other groups to take action hence appears crucial; 'allies' might have more potential to break the silence and help to spread and lift the words of oppressed groups and can thus be active in societal dialogues. Nevertheless, the discretion to do so is experienced differently among our social work respondents.

Second, it is important to highlight 'everyday resistance' as it is by far the most comprehensive form of resistance; the definition of 'everyday resistance' entails being effective without the practices and actions being noticed as resistance per se, and without representing a certain resistance movement (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:14). Most notably, this form of resistance is hidden and unorganized (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:75). A teacher's individual initiative to discuss certain issues in class is one example. Another example is teachers taking the opportunity to react and discuss the issue when someone else brings it up, in other words giving voice to alternative opinions within the faculty (i.e. to teach 'outside' the curriculum). One respondent mentions that it is easier to discuss these issues online by commenting on posts in social networks. This is a platform where it is possible to criticize the society and react on oppression more explicitly. Other examples of everyday resistance in our findings are students choosing to learn about sexual minorities and their situation in the spare-time, and students indirectly advocating for sexual rights through exam-papers. We have seen examples of students that have chosen to study this issue due to their own individual initiatives, which have been encouraged by teachers in the department of social work. Yet again, individual interests and initiatives seem to be more significant than the notion of social workers' professional 'responsibilities'; the motivations of the social worker, reflected in his/her attitudes and actions, is to a larger degree dependent on her/his own personal values and morals.

Everyday resistance among teachers and students may to a certain extent challenge the heteronormative agenda of the social work department/faculty, i.e. the 'discursive power over the agenda' ('dagordningsmakt', our translation). Nevertheless, certain power

relations and the ways in which individuals can practice resistance are experienced different among the respondents. While social work teachers must relate to a highly normative academic institution, regulating their discretion in accordance to the curriculum and limiting their freedom to express alternative viewpoints among colleagues and students, the setting for social work students is restricting in a somewhat different way. As the Ugandan educational system is highly stratified and hierarchical, the discretion of students to express alternative viewpoints (for instance in the classroom) may be completely dependent on the willingness of the teacher holding the lecture to facilitate for open discussions and allowing for alternative viewpoints to come across (without at the same time ridiculing these or undermining their validity).

In analyzing the potential acts of resistance, among our social work respondents, we have good reason to reconnect to our findings regarding alternative discourses in social work. In a context where NGOs lose their licenses, and therefore have to go underground, the academic world might be an alternative platform for discussing controversial issues. One reason to arrange seminars and workshops is to initiate a discussion; in order to understand controversial issues you need to talk about them. The university workshops that we have attended are examples of how this can be performed. An open climate is still considered essential for arranging educational discussions and academic advances. As Tamale points out, the persons holding alternative viewpoints are in minority, which is also something we have observed when attending two academic workshops.

In our findings we have shown that alternative viewpoints are often expressed through somewhat 'liberal' statements, in which sexual rights are part of the human rights discourse. We argue that such 'liberal' statements can be seen as acts of resistance as they in this context may be considered a 'discursive' questioning of the norm. Moreover, during the time we spent in Uganda we have observed that it was possible to express alternative viewpoints in organized settings, however with a risk of being ridiculed and criticized. Nonetheless, Tamale openly discusses these issues and claims that she is not afraid of being ostracized. Her practices are perhaps the most obvious examples of solidarity resistance in our research.

In resisting powerful discourses there is potential for social change (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). To understand the processes of resistance it becomes crucial to look at the discursive opposition against certain truth claims. In light of human rights legislation

Tamale for instance effectively and repeatedly highlights actualities in arguing against homophobic beliefs; this can be considered 'discursive resistance'. The repetition of alternative representations is crucial in this process (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). To constantly resist and question societal norms, e.g. heteronormativity and normative gender expressions, is one way to go.

In the process of empowerment agency is crucial. Thus in understanding empowerment and resistance it is important to look at collective agents (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). We have found that there is a lack of collective resistance and joint incentives however individual social work respondents express a willingness to make a change. One certain respondent expresses the need for good leadership in creating a supportive climate within the social work department and the social work profession at large. This is in fact to ask for organized resistance and a discursive questioning of the dominant views and norms, as they are currently expressed and constructed. However this respondent does not consider himself as being capable to take such initiatives as he believes it requires a person who is already in a powerful position and who can influence others in the profession.

Looking at the communal position of Ugandan social workers, based on official statements made by NASWU, hopes of finding potential in supporting the rights of LGBT persons within the profession appear bleak. Not only is the statement of NASWU homophobic, it also directly favors the implementation of the 'anti-homosexuality bill' with a few minor suggested alterations. Moreover, nothing appears in the statements to oppose the proposed death penalty for certain homosexual acts. In fact we have found no *collective* efforts at all to support sexual minorities among Ugandan social workers. Many interviews with social work academicians reflect views that are in favor of the bill. The dominant discourses appear to be fairly strong also within academic settings. Such strong normative position makes it extremely hard for the individual to act in opposition as there are high risks of being ostracized. In order to organize resistance collectively, a mutual identity is crucial for constructing and shaping the strategies used in the resistance. Nevertheless, and as we have shown, voices of the opposition do exist, and even though most of these may appear relatively insignificant on the surface they should not be undermined. We believe that these voices must be regarded as a form of *individual* action with the potential of influencing social change and the undermining of strong power

symmetries in the long run (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:47).

Importantly, NASWU's statement has not only been criticized internationally but also regionally, by the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa, which suggests that there is room for criticism within the social work sphere on the continent of Africa. Ugandan LGBT persons and more liberal social workers point out that social work has a role to play in the struggle for sexual rights. Voices from within are crucial for a sustainable change, appropriate to local contexts and in relation to international laws. This is also the motivation why Tamale refers to Ubuntu when combating homophobia; it is an *African* philosophy developed in an *African* context. While discriminatory practices, such as enforcement of a stronger anti-homosexuality legislation, are legitimized by perceptions of western imperialism and influence, local voices thus illustrate that this is a phenomena that is not imported to Africa but are rather discursive expressions of sexuality and identity common to mankind through history.

The discretion of professionally practicing social workers is completely dependent on the ideological position of the organization they work for. Thus, a first premise for social workers to support the rights of sexual minorities is to be employed in a setting that legitimizes the rights-based discourse of sexual minorities and that resists dominant discourses on an organizational level. Within such a setting the social worker's discretion to support individual members of the LGBT community can be reasonably high, although the policies, legislation and the overall normative system of society can act as very restricting barriers in the fulfillment of (group) rights of their clients on a societal level. As such, current developments where NGOs are losing their licenses due to the alleged 'promotion of homosexuality' are indeed worrying.

Unfortunately social workers experience a barrier in organizing academic discussions about LGBT rights and claim that representatives from the legal professions have more capability to do so. This is a question of 'agency', i.e. the possibility to act/take action, and the question is if there is room for the subject to critically relate to the truth regimes within the discourse (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009:53). This is connected to the experienced limitation in regard to the discretion of social work. Individual members of the legal department may have more power to actually influence the application of the current law (as well as affect future policy developments) since they are experts in the law. In a sense, the legal profession is considered influential and strong while the social work profession

is regarded weak. Hence, with more legal knowledge social workers might advocate better for sexual minorities and organize community work. Repeatedly we hear that the law has to come first. One specific NGO illustrates how Ugandan social workers and lawyers can work together to find holistic solutions on a structural level as well as on a community level. Nevertheless, while many respondents claim that there are more potential to make a change within the legal profession, Tamale problematizes the homophobia she sees within her professional field.

We now want to reconnect to the argument that African social workers need to make political statements and thus take an active part in political processes and debates (Mmatli 2008). One example from our research is the NGO with social workers and lawyers working side by side and consciously struggling for the human rights of marginalized groups (Interview Social Worker and Observations). The motivation of political involvement is strong, and Mmatli claims that

> "[t]he structural and political nature of these issues points to the need for political solutions
> […] African social workers need to be overtly active in the political processes and debates
> in their respective countries. It outlines the ineffectiveness of the dominant social work
> intervention methods of casework and community development currently used in Africa"
> (Mmatli 2008:297-298).

Nonetheless, there are barriers to political engagement being a Ugandan social worker. As pointed out, the influences of the British power during colonization has shaped Ugandan social work in a way that put focus on social problems as if they concern individuals rather than communities. This further has slowed down the process of social development (Chitereka 2009; Rwormire & Radithlokwa 1996; Payne & Askeland 2008). Engaging in political processes demands taking active decision, but in this post-colonial system social workers are forced to be passive. Furthermore, political corruption and human rights violations systematically committed by the Ugandan state discourage political movements of most kinds in order to secure the power of the elites. As such it restricts more critical forms of social work practice as they challenge any power structures oppressing vulnerable groups in society. The profession has a problematic relationship to the state in terms of autonomy as the licenses of NGOs are easily withdrawn if their agendas are in any way deemed inconvenient or politically problematic; NGOs have to deregister on a yearly basis in order to renew their licenses. Other implications involve the fact that there is not a strong professional body of social work in Uganda. The profession lacks unity as well as clear guidelines and regulations for professional

certification, which means that social work positions are sometimes filled by persons lacking professional training. NGOs in Uganda are further highly dependent on external funding for programs and projects which threatens their autonomy, as well as their sustainability. Part of the problem with the lack of resources within the profession is also connected to neo-liberal forces strengthening post-colonialism in Uganda. The structural adjustment program, enforced by the IMF, has for instance resulted in huge cut backs in the state-provided welfare.

8.3 SEXUAL RIGHTS AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

As we have shown the 'anti-homosexuality bill' and the current 'anti-sodomy law' in Uganda hinder people from their full enjoyment of human rights in regard to e.g. privacy, health, and sexuality. Csete and Cohen (2010) discuss the 'health benefits' that currently criminalized populations would possibly enjoy through legal services. This lack is repeatedly problematized by our respondents in support of sexual rights, most apparently by activists themselves, in discussions of the current situation and in regard to the future if the 'anti-homosexuality bill' passes, or if state-sponsored homophobia would take other forms of expression. The lack of human rights for LGTB persons are further reflected in the absence of legislation prohibiting discrimination and hate-crimes due to sexual orientation.

Even if the 'anti-homosexuality bill' has still not passed (October 2012) there has been an effective raid against a large number of Ugandan human rights NGOs because they 'promote' homosexuality, which is backed by the fear of 'recruitment' of children and the argument that homosexuality is 'against' Ugandan culture. The argumentation is comparable to the cultural relativist claims that we have heard in many interviews with respondents holding dominant discourses. This development affects the potential to work for the rights of LGBT persons immensely, regarding both human rights activists and social workers. Consequently, the discretion of social workers in Uganda to resist dominant discourses relate to dominant cultural understandings. Influential persons in Ugandan society, who make cultural relativist claims, not only tend to exclude LGBT persons from the human rights discourse but also from their own cultural identity, which in our research is best reflected in the rhetorical question: *"Aren't we Ugandans too?"* (Interview NGO Representative).

Postmodernism certainly confronts the legitimacy of any knowledge base claiming to be 'universal'. As societies are founded on assumptions based on very specific cultural and social understandings, different cultural understandings and social needs hence call for different forms of social work. Nonetheless, international definitions, guidelines and principles *can* be useful tools as they may provide a framework for social work settings which are fragile and in need of guidance. As such Payne and Askeland (2008) mean that local standards can be strengthened by global guidelines. They may also serve to increase the solidarity between social workers by uniting them globally. A strong global professional body can furthermore provide for the sharing of responsibilities for social justice and equality among social workers worldwide. However, a global social work view would only be really authentic if also encompassed perceptions from non-western parts of the world. This would certainly also make it richer for western social workers.

Comparable to the archetypical conflict between the universalism of human rights and cultural relativism, the dilemma of the clashes in opinions between IFSW and NASWU is not easily resolved. Although Ugandan social workers need the space to practice according to the perceptions of their own cultural and social context, it is hard to disregard the idea that social workers have a responsibility to advocate particularly for the equal rights of marginalized and stigmatized groups, stated in the core principles of social work encompassing social justice for all. Importantly, this is not merely an ethnocentric idea of western social workers, as it has also created a separation of opinions among social workers in Uganda. Moreover, this is the view of the LGBT activists we have interviewed.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Dominant discourses have lately been fueled by the 'anti-homosexuality bill' which, if it becomes a law in the future, reconstitutes state-sponsored homophobia in Uganda. Nevertheless, there are already harsh impacts of 'criminalization' of sexuality. Marginalization of LGBT persons put them at risk of being exposed to a variety of human rights violations. As shown, criminalization also has a negative effect on the discretion of helping professions and limits social workers and other professionals in taking action.

International as well as Ugandan organizations, promoting human rights in general and sexual rights in particular, have long challenged and fought the state-sponsored homophobia and the structural discrimination against sexual minorities. This is a time of change and thus professionals, within different sectors and with alternative viewpoints, might have to speak out now before the 'anti-homosexuality bill' potentially passes into law, whereby any support will be considered illegal promotion.

Social work is a profession with a responsibility to support oppressed groups and to work in line with international human rights standards. Nevertheless, we have shown that activists often serve as 'informal social work actors' in their support of others within the LGBT community, through empowerment and advocacy. There is a lack of educated, trained, and professional social workers involved in the struggle for human rights of sexual minorities and the LGBT community cries out: *"We are our own social workers!"* Other areas of human rights, for instance the rights of women and children respectively, have been prioritized in Ugandan social work contexts.

One of our understandings is that social work as a profession is rather weak and vague in Uganda. This is exemplified by the fact that it has been difficult to find good information about the significance of African social work in general and Ugandan social work in specific. This is also reflected in our interviews with many of our social work respondents and can be used as an explanation why moral judgments and cultural values take up a lot of space in the implementation of social work and in the conception of what the responsibilities are of social work professionals.

Despite the fact that the social work profession in itself has a responsibility, individual interests and initiatives appear much more important. International support and involvement is invaluable but a sustainable change must come from within, appropriate to

the local context. In the discussion of human rights and cultural relativism it is important to note that the Ugandan LGBT community, with its diverse members, is obviously also part of the Ugandan culture, which is something that cannot be diminished. They also have a right to culture. We are positive to the fact that our respondents have not been alien to discuss these questions; by talking about these issues they are in a sense 'breaking the silence'. Since human rights violations hinder collective action, individual initiatives and everyday resistance are crucial for the process of social change for the LGBT community in Uganda of today. If the 'anti-homosexuality bill' is implemented, these initiatives will be very difficult. However, many respondents have expressed that the empowerment of sexual minorities on all societal levels is a process in which more social workers can potentially take an active and essential part, if not currently then in the future. As we have shown, some of these initiatives already exist among social workers through the advocacy and activism within NGOs. Even though those initiatives are currently affected by recent negative developments, they still bring hope for the future.

As a suggestion for future research it would be interesting to study how to utilize sexual rights standards for LGBT populations in Ugandan social work practice. Researchers with the possibility to build more extensive networks with social workers employed in this field would potentially be able to make more comprehensive studies on the important work already conducted by these social workers. A lot can be learned from a practical social work setting that is constricted by many human right violations, for instance in terms of empowerment and anti-oppressive strategies. If the 'anti-homosexuality bill' is being implemented it would further be interesting to look into the resources of social workers together with legal professionals in Uganda to advocate for a change in policies, aiming to improve the situation of LGBTs.

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APPENDIX 1
Interview Guide for Social Workers (example)

- We understand that you are a social worker employed within an NGO; can you please describe the work and nature of the NGO?

- For how long have you been involved in the work of the organization? Describe your involvement and role.

- What is your idea of what the social work profession stands for?

- Do you have a particular field of interest?

- Which populations/groups of people do you address in your work?

- Can you tell us how and why you started working with these populations?

- One of the themes of our thesis concerns human rights, and more specifically sexual rights, what are your reflections about this? How do you perceive the correlation between human rights and sexual rights?

Sexual Minorities and Human Rights

- How would you describe the current public and academic debate concerning sexual minorities?
- Are there conflicting views?
- Can you describe the current situation of sexual minorities (LGBTI) in Uganda? What are the challenges involved?
- Are there differences between rural and urban areas (attitudes, situation)?
- Is the situation different for homosexual men and homosexual women? For transgender persons? For bisexual persons?
- Are there human rights violations?
- How are human rights issues addressed by social workers? What rights are generally emphasized and prioritized?
- Do you cooperate with other Human Rights organization in Uganda and Internationally?
- What are the barriers? Are there barriers to healthcare, education, employment, housing?
- Do you know of members of the LGBT community who has been arrested on the basis of their sexuality or/and involvement in activism?

- Since we are interested in the social work profession *and* education, we are interested in how you perceive the quality of education in relation to human rights in general and sexual rights in specific?

The Public Debate and the Law

- What do you perceive as the general opinion/idea/attitude(s) concerning homosexuality?

- How would you describe the public and academic opinion regarding sexual minorities and human rights?

- What are your reflections about this debate?

- What do you think about the current Penal Code in regards to homosexuality?

- Do you perceive that there has been a shift/change in attitudes since the introduction of the legal proposal in 2009 (in the media, politically, generally)? How is the LGBTI population affected?

- Has the anti-homosexuality bill affected the work of your organization? In what way(s)?

- Has the anti-homosexuality bill affected the situation of sexual minorities? In what ways(s)?

- What is the role of religion in the perception of sexual minorities in the Ugandan context? And what is the role of culture?

Social Work and Advocacy

- How would you describe the relationship between your organization and the state?

- What is the role of the civil society concerning these issues?

- What is the discretion of your organization?

- What is the current discretion of social workers in general?

- How do you envision this discretion in the future?

- How can social workers act as change agents?

- Is there room for mobilization?

- What methods and interventions do you recommend?

- What is the potential within the profession of social work to work for the rights of sexual minorities? (strengths/ weaknesses)

- How would you describe the professional challenges involved in your work? Which are the barriers?

- Which responsibilities do you think that social workers have to support and advocate for the rights of sexual minorities? And how?

- Which are the leading discourses concerning sexual minorities within the profession?

- Is there room for an open discussion?

- How do you feel that social workers supporting and advocating for sexual minorities can contribute to a change in attitudes within the profession?

- How freely can you talk about your position and role with social work colleagues working in other fields? What are the general reactions to your position from other colleagues? Are there risks involved?

- Do you know of other social workers working to support and advocate for sexual minorities?

- What are the most common perceptions about sexual minorities among social workers?

- How do you envision the potential role of social workers in the future?

- How would you describe the internal and external pressure on the government?

- Who, if any, supports sexual minorities in the Ugandan society? In what way(s)?

- Who, if any, works to advocate for the rights of sexual minorities in the Ugandan society? In what way(s)?

- Do you know of any other social workers being involved in such work?

- In what ways can social workers potentially help? In your opinion, what should be their role(s)?

- Is there potential within any other specific profession(s) to make a change?

- What are the risks involved in such work?

The International Community

- How do you perceive the reactions from the international community concerning the legal proposal from 2009?

- How do you perceive international sanctions and critique for instance from President Obama and the UN (in relation to the legal proposal in 2009)?

- IMF has recently threatened to contract aid to Uganda if the anti-homosexuality bill reaches consensus in the parliament, what is your thoughts and opinions about this?

- In what ways have the reactions possibly affected the situation of sexual minorities?

- In what ways have these reactions possibly had an impact on the work of your organization?

- Do you perceive that members of the international community have supported/assisted your work, in that case how (any particular interventions/methods)?

- How do you perceive the quality of the support?

- Do you have suggestions?

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill and the Future

- What do you think will happen if the anti-homosexuality bill passes (and do you think it will pass)?

- In your opinion, what is the way forward in order to make a consistent change?