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FROM COPENHAGEN TO KAMPALA

UNDERSTANDING SECURITIZATION THROUGH THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

No. 21

This Working Paper is available at: www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/publikationen/ccswp
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From Copenhagen to Kampala – Understanding Securitization through the Postcolonial Context

ABSTRACT

With their concept of securitization, the Copenhagen School has introduced an ontological, epistemological, and methodological turn in the academic field of security studies that produced a wide body of literature by broadening, widening, and deepening the discourse. Especially more sociological scholars have stressed the importance of social contexts and illustrated how the inclusion of those allows for a better understanding of securitizing processes. Yet, despite the enormous increase and prominence of postcolonial works, securitization scholars have failed to properly incorporate and adapt to this postcolonial turn. This article sets out to bridge this missing link between securitization, social contexts, and the concept of the postcolonial. Combining a wide range of secondary literature, this article proposes an analytical framework of the postcolonial context that functions as an intersectional site which encompasses the interconnectedness of discursive, material, and power structures (socio-linguistic and socio-political dimensions of context) and that includes a temporal (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independent) as well as spatial (local, national, regional, global) dimension. The securitization of homosexuality in Uganda functions as a helpful case to illustrate both the benefit and necessity of applying the underlying conceptualization of the postcolonial context to securitization theory. Not only does it help to better understand matters of homosexuality in the Ugandan context, but it also offers an innovative contribution to the general discourse on securitization and facilitates to extend its application to non-European settings.
Inhaltsverzeichnis

The Author I
Abstract III

1. Introduction 1

2. Securitization Theory and the Postcolonial Context 3
   2.1. Securitization and the Role of Context 3
   2.2. The Postcolonial Context 4

3. Homosexuality in Uganda: An illustrative Case 7
   3.1. Homosexuality in Uganda 7
   3.2. Securitization of Homosexuality in Uganda 8

4. The Socio-Linguistic Dimension of the Postcolonial Context 10
   4.1. Uganda as African 11
   4.2. Uganda as Christian 12
   4.3. Uganda as Independent 12
   4.4. Uganda as Postcolonial 13

5. The Socio-Political Dimension of the Postcolonial Context 15
   5.1. The Government of Uganda 15
   5.2. The Churches of Uganda 16
   5.3. American Faith-Based Organizations 18
   5.4. The Kabaka of Buganda 19
   5.5. The Media 20
   5.6. The Postcolonial Field of (In)Security Professionals 21

6. Implications, Limitations, and Concluding Thoughts 22

7. Bibliography 24
1. INTRODUCTION

“A nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war”

(Lippmann 1943: 51).

“[…] security means protecting fundamental freedoms […]. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that together give people the building block of survival”


Arguably, considerations of security and insecurity have always been constituent parts of social realities. Consequently, they have also been part of the academic engagement with these realities. However, as the two quotes above illustrate, what is meant by using the terms is far from clear. Indeed, conceptions of security “derive from different underlying understandings of the character and purpose of politics” (Booth 2007: 119, emphasis in original). Thus, as with other such ‘derivate concepts’, understandings of security depend on one’s political outlook and philosophical worldview (Booth 1997). Within the field of security studies, the realist conception of security, which is mirrored in Lippmann’s quote above, has long been the dominant paradigm and has fundamentally been shaped by the works of Hans Morgenthau (1948), Kenneth Waltz (1979), Stephen Walt (1987), and John Mearsheimer (2001). This paradigm was “derived from a combination of Anglo-American, statist, militarized, masculinized, top-down, methodologically positivist, and philosophically realist thinking” (Booth 2005: 13) and resulted in an academic field that mainly focused on strategic problem-solving approaches for the protection of the state from military threats. Since the 1990s, however, this traditional paradigm has increasingly faced criticisms from feminist, constructivist, postmodernist, and poststructuralist scholars. Despite being comprised of varying ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions themselves, these critical approaches to security studies have all claimed that the traditional narrow conception of security is neither philosophically nor practically tenable any longer (Krause/Williams 1997). Consequently, these critical scholars have proposed to widen the security agenda: on the one hand, they claimed that the state is and should not be the only referent object of security (deepening the agenda) and on the other hand, they demanded to move away from the narrow focus on the military sector and include other sectors, such as the economic, environmental, political, and societal spheres (broadening the agenda) (Wyn Jones 1999; Peoples/Vaughan-Williams 2010: 4). This wider agenda, reflected in the quote from the UN Commission, has increasingly informed political and academic discourses and was heavily shaped by works of Ken Booth (1991), Richard Wyn Jones (1999), and Steve Smith (1996), who are commonly
referred to as the Aberystwyth or Welsh School.

Within this particular discourse, it has especially been the works of Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde (Buzan et al. 1998), referred to as the Copenhagen School, that has introduced an “innovative, sophisticated, and productive research strategy” (Williams 2003: 528) which combines a constructivist notion of security with a traditional element of exceptionality and survival. Their concept of securitization introduced a specific logic of security and can best be understood as a strategic speech act performed by a securitizing actor, in which a given referent object is presented as being existentially threatened, thus legitimizing the implementation of extraordinary countermeasures. Indeed, their concept of securitization has been an important contribution to the field of security studies; due to the various critiques, modifications, and extensions, it has produced a broad body of literature. In particular, more sociological approaches have enriched the discourse by stressing and extending the role of social contexts in processes of securitization (Huysmans 2000; Balzacq 2005; Stritzel 2007; Williams 2003). This move has allowed to conduct more in-depth analyses of the relationships between the threat, the securitizing actors, and the relevant audiences in specific contexts (Canefe 2008; Jackson 2006; Sickinelgin et al. 2010). Additionally, it has allowed a move away from analyses of European cases and apply the theory to non-European settings (Caballero-Anthony et al. 2006; Wilkinson 2007; Olesker 2014; Vuori 2008). Yet, while these works have been an interesting and important contribution to the field of securitization theory, what seems to be missing is the incorporation of the postcolonial context. This is particularly surprising, given the increasing emergence of postcolonial studies literature and especially the “postcolonial moment in security studies” (Barkawi/Laffey 2006). In the light of these developments, the following paper aims at illustrating in how far the postcolonial context can help to understand processes of securitization in non-European settings.

First, the paper will briefly outline the concept of securitization theory, illustrate the missing link between securitization, social contexts, and postcolonialism and introduce the underlying conceptualization of the postcolonial context. Second, the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda will be illustrated before the third part of the paper will apply the analysis of the postcolonial context to this illustrative case. It will be argued that by combining the temporal and spatial dimensions with the socio-linguistic and socio-political dimensions, the analysis captures the complexity of discursive, material, and power structures that fundamentally shapes the relationship between the given threat, actors, and audiences. The analysis illustrates that securitization processes in such complex contexts can only be fully understood if one applies an equally complex framework. Instead of focusing on only some actors and their narratives as well as audiences, the proposed framework captures the interconnectedness of all relevant actors, narratives, and audiences. Further, it allows to show how different linguistic narratives are being strategically combined by this network of national and transnational actors to instrumentalize a variety of audiences for their own political, religious, and/or cultural means. Lastly, the paper will outline these benefits as well as the analysis’ limitations and conclude with thoughts on further research. Given that the analysis is based mainly on secondary literature and then enriched by a limited but relevant selection of primary material (public speeches and legislation), the paper’s generalizability is potentially
limited. By building on this limitation and conducting more systematic discourse analyses, however, the paper offers an innovative starting point for further research on securitization theory.

2. SECURITIZATION THEORY AND THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

2.1. SECURITIZATION AND THE ROLE OF CONTEXT

Securitization as a theoretical concept and analytical approach is mainly based on the works of Ole Waever (1990, 1995, 1998, 2000), Barry Buzan (1991) and cooperative work (Buzan et al. 1998; Buzan and Hansen 2009; Buzan and Waever 1997, 2003, 2009; Waever et al. 1993), commonly referred to as the Copenhagen School. While the Copenhagen School see their approach in the tradition of those critical security studies scholars that aimed at widening the conceptualization of security, they equally acknowledged that this academic move “endangered the intellectual coherence of security, putting so much into it that its essential meaning became void” (Buzan et al. 1998: 2). Rather than providing a fixed definition of security, the Copenhagen School have instead proposed a particular logic of security (ibid.: 4). According to the Copenhagen School, securitization can then best be understood as a strategic speech act performed by a securitizing actor, in which a given referent object is presented as being existentially threatened, resulting in the legitimated (i.e. accepted by the relevant audience) implementation of extra-ordinary countermeasures.

By introducing the concept of securitization, the Copenhagen School has indeed formulated an “innovative, sophisticated, and productive research strategy” and framework for analysis (Williams 2003: 528). Especially due to their combination of constructivist and realist elements, Buzan et al. (1998) provided an approach that resulted in the emergence of a broad body of academic literature. Yet, it is also exactly this constructivist-realist notion of the approach that resulted in a wide range of criticism: for proponents of the traditional understanding of security, the approach was too broad and constructivist, whereas scholars aiming at widening the agenda perceived it as too narrow and traditional. This range of critiques is equally true for the degree to which the theory has been criticized: On the one hand, scholars have asserted the Copenhagen School to be “sociologically untenable” (McSweeny 1996: 199), to be “encapsulating several questionable assumptions” (Knudsen 2001: 358), or to be generally and morally ambivalent as well as politically irresponsible (Erikson 1999). On the other hand, a variety of scholars have formulated more nuanced and constructive critiques which aim at specific concepts used by the Copenhagen School. These critiques were concerned with specific elements of the theory and have mainly organized around the existential threat (Abrahamsen 2005; Coker 2002; Huysmans 2000, 2006; McDonald 2008; Rasmussen 2001; Stritzel 2007; Vuori 2008; Wilkinson 2007), extra-ordinary measures (Amoore and De Goede 2008; Basaran 2011; Bigo 2005, 2006; C.A.S.E. 2006; Ciuta 2010; Huysmans 2006; Olesker 2014; Roe 2012), speech acts (Stritzel 2007; Hansen 2011; Olesker 2014; Williams 2003), and the role of contexts and audiences (Balzacq 2005, 2011; Salter 2008; Stritzel 2007; Williams 2003).

The most productive criticism has been put forward by more sociological approaches to securitization and has centered on the role of the context in such processes. In stark contrast to the internalist view of context provided by the Copenhagen School – “what is decisive for security is what language constructs and, as a consequence, what is
‘out there’ is thus irrelevant” (Balzacq 2005: 181) – critics have pointed out the “deep embeddedness of security articulations in social relations of power” (Stritzel 2007: 365). Indeed, understanding securitization as intersubjective processes, it is important to analyze the specific settings in which securitizing actors and audiences interact. With the introduction of the theoretical component of facilitating conditions, the Copenhagen School has attempted to stress the importance of the securitizing actors’ social capital. While this is certainly true, it does not properly capture the complexity of social realities because it misses two crucial points: For one, given that securitization is only successful if it is being accepted by the relevant audience, Buzan et al. (1998) have said very little about these audiences (Balzacq 2005). It has been correctly pointed out that in most cases, there is a multitude of different relevant audiences who are receptive to different arguments, and have specific types of resources and powers (Balzacq 2011: 7). In fact, these audiences are not limited to the public alone; rather, there is a network of social groups, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, or officials that must be convinced about a given referent object being threatened and that the proposed countermeasures are appropriate (Salter 2008: 328). For another, and very closely linked to this point, the success of a securitization also depends on the “particular history, dominant narrative, constitutive characters, and the structure of the setting itself” (ibid.: 330). Indeed, different settings function according to their own languages and logics to which the securitizing actors need to be sensitive. Since securitization processes are relational rather than self-actional (Emirbayer 1997), different settings produce specific mutually constitutive relations between securitizing actors and audiences. Therefore, securitization is not only context-shaping, but also highly context-dependent: without understanding the context in which these processes take place, neither the securitizing actors, nor the audiences, referent objects, or securitizing moves as such can be properly understood (Williams 2003: 514).

Particularly the critiques regarding the role of context have both fundamentally strengthened and broadened securitization theory. It has allowed for the emergence of a diverse body of scholarly work that has focused on specific kinds of context, for instance the regional context (Canefe 2008), international context (Jackson 2006), political-historical context (Huysmans 2000), or gendered context (Sickinelgin et al. 2010). Similarly, there have been many important contributions that applied the theory to non-European settings (Caballero-Anthony et al. 2006; Wilkinson 2007; Abrahamsen 2005; Vuori 2008; Olesker 2014; and Karlström 2012). Yet, taking these developments into account, it is surprising that the analysis of the postcolonial context has not yet been applied to securitization theory: not only has there been an increased interest in postcolonial thought more generally (Reuter/Villa 2010) – also indicated by the emergence of academic journals on postcolonialism and a rise in academic institutes for postcolonial studies – but also a “postcolonial moment in security studies” more specifically (Barkawi/Laffey 2006). Thus, this paper aims at approaching this innovative endeavor by examining in how far the postcolonial context can help to understand processes of securitization in non-European settings.

2.2. THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

First, however, it is essential to specify the conceptualization of the ‘postcolonial context’, because for one, a clear conception of the term will provide a structured framework for the following analysis. For another, it will help to point out what the
paper does not mean when talking about 'postcolonial context'. Although it might seem rather tautological, this is particularly important: the term ‘postcolonial’ has increasingly been used and applied in the studies of international relations (Barkawi/Laffey 2006), but its widespread usage is problematic, because the term is often not properly specified, or – if it is – contains a variety of different meanings. For instance, ‘postcolonial’ often refers to a field of study (postcolonial studies), implies a mode of resistance (synonymous with ‘anti-colonial’), or is used as a merely temporal term (synonymous with ‘post-independent’) (Ashcroft et al. 2007: 170). Therefore, this section will outline the underlying conceptualization of the postcolonial context to properly illustrate the aim and scope of the following analysis.

First and foremost, it needs to be stressed that the aim of this paper is neither to apply a postcolonial perspective nor to conduct a postcolonial analysis: although this would be an interesting attempt, the following analysis will, for instance, not deconstruct the discourse on securitization theory in the sense of critically assessing how the concept is fundamentally Eurocentric and is thus reinforcing given power asymmetries within and outside of academia (Reuter/Villa 2010). Rather, ‘postcolonial’ will be thought of and used as an analytical category that is, in its core logic, quite similar to Crouch’s (2004) usage of the prefix ‘post’ in his concept of ‘post-democracy’. Crouch proposes the image of an historical parabola through which a concept that is attached to the prefix ‘post’ can be understood as moving. In rather abstract terms, Crouch (2004: 20) explains how

"[T]ime period 1 is pre-X, and will have certain characteristics associated with lack of X. Time period 2 is the high tide of X, when many things are touched by it and changed from their state in time 1. Time period 3 is post-

X. This implies that something new has come into existence to reduce the importance of X by going beyond it in some sense; some things will therefore look different from both time 1 and time 2. However, X will still have left its mark; there will be strong traces of it still around; while some things start to look like they did in time 1 again."

Therefore, postcolonial is a category that is distinct from both the pre-colonial and the colonial. Yet at the same time, it is a category which is characterized by the combination of certain discursive, material, and power structures that can each be found in the pre-colonial and colonial, respectively. As such, it describes current power and dominance relations but these can only be understood as a result of historical and global developments (Quijano 2008). Therefore, the postcolonial encompasses a temporal dimension, because it can only be understood as appearing after both the pre-colonial and the colonial. It should not, however, be understood as a synonym for 'post-independent': while post-independent describes a merely temporal category (the time that followed the independence from colonial rule), the postcolonial stresses the interconnectedness and junction of specific structures. As such, it does not just mean an ‘after’ the colonial, but also a ‘beyond’ (Hall 2002). It needs to be noted that this temporal dimension does not imply a linear historical development (Varela/Dhawan 2015: 288). Rather, the postcolonial highlights the “entangled histories” of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independent realities (Conrad/Randeria 2002: 17). Thus, the postcolonial acknowledges that each of these categories has structural effects on the one that follows and that each category can only be understood in relation to the preceding ones (Varela/Dhawan 2015: 16). The fact that certain structures can be traced back to particular historical settings
(pre-colonial or colonial) but are still in effect today (in combination with other structures) also implies a spatial dimension, because different social structures are then prevalent on different levels: some structures (political, social, economic, cultural, discursive etc.) can be found on the local level, others on the national, regional, or global level, respectively. These different levels can be understood as “ontological referents” that enable one to locate particular actors, processes, values, discourses and so on (Buzan et al. 1998: 5-6). As such, it mirrors what Quijano (2000) termed “coloniality”: in contrast to the mere temporal term “colonial”, he describes coloniality as a specific mode that structures all fundamental aspects (political, social, economic, cultural, religious, academic) of social life without which modernity is unthinkable. Therefore, by merging the temporal and spatial dimensions, the postcolonial functions as a category that captures both the complexities and peculiarities of social realities (Crouch 2002: 20; Demmers 2012: 21).

Regarding the understanding of social contexts, scholars have increasingly stressed the relationality of agents, structures, and texts (Stritzel 2007:369; see also Hay 2002: 89-134; Demmers 2012: 118-122; Halperin/Heath 2012: 92-94). Indeed, as Skinner (1978: xii-xiii) has highlighted for language as one kind of structure,

“[…] the problem facing an agent who wishes to legitimate what he is doing at the same time as gaining what he wants cannot simply be the instrumental problem of tailoring his normative language in order to fit his projects. It must in part be the problem of tailoring his projects in order to fit the available normative language.”

Based on such a broadly defined structurationist understanding of social contexts, Stritzel (2007) makes a useful distinction between a socio-linguistic dimension and a socio-political dimension of context, thus capturing both discursive and extra-discursive elements. The socio-linguistic dimension of context refers to the narratives and linguistic reference points which actors can exploit in order to frame and legitimate their particular (speech) acts: “We can therefore often observe that securitizing actors speak to and from a broader linguistic context by framing their arguments in terms of the distinct linguistic reservoir that is available at a particular point in time” (ibid.: 369). This dimension is a rather fluid aspect of sociality, which essentially helps to understand and contextualize a given speech act. In contrast, the socio-political dimension of context “concerns the often more sedimented social and political structures that put actors in positions of power to influence the processes of constructing meaning” (ibid.). It includes material, discursive, and power structures that help to explain both the asymmetric access to political agency and the ability to construct collectively held meanings. While it is analytically helpful to distinguish these dimensions, any analysis of context will have to take into account how these dimensions are mutually constitutive and thus “not reducible to the sum of structural, agential or textual factors treated separately” (ibid.).

Therefore, the postcolonial context can best be understood as an intersectional site that encompasses the interconnectedness of discursive, material, and power structures (socio-linguistic and socio-political dimensions of context) and that includes a temporal (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independent) as well as spatial (local, national, regional, global) dimension. The following analysis thus aims at illustrating that this conceptualization of the postcolonial context offers an analytical framework for extending securitization...
theory to non-European contexts and for better understanding securitization processes in such settings.

3. HOMOSEXUALITY IN UGANDA: AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Essentially, the focus of this paper is a theoretical argument, namely that the analysis of the postcolonial context is a helpful tool for extending securitization theory to non-European settings. Yet, the paper aims at illustrating this argument by applying it to an empirical case. Using the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda as an illustrative case has been chosen for a variety of reasons. These reasons will be outlined in the following sub-section before a brief overview of the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda will be provided.

3.1. HOMOSEXUALITY IN UGANDA

When extending analyses, including securitization theory, to non-European settings, one is often confronted with post-independent nation states, both as important actors and as a unit of analysis. In such settings, decision-making powers are increasingly shifting from the political (the state) to the economic (neoliberal and globalized market) sphere. As a result, political elites tend to experience a decrease in agency and, subsequently, legitimacy: consequently, it is increasingly culture that becomes the main reference point for political constituency building which thus “opens a ‘market’ for identity-based politics” (Demmers 2012: 68). Indeed, post-independent states and their conditions for sovereignty are increasingly structured by questions around ethnicity, gender, and notably sexuality (Wahab 2016: 694). Sexuality becomes more important because its normative dimension is deeply rooted in historical conceptions of kinship, lineage, and community (Boyd 2013: 704). It is particularly homosexuality that creates a spatial and temporal boundary which places the “homophobic Other” in opposition to “Western modernity” on the historical (Western) path of progress (Puar 2007). Indeed, as scholars such as Tamale (2013), Coly (2013), Nyong’o (2012), and Oliver (2013) have illustrated, it is homosexuality and its condemnation that is being used by post-independent nation-states as a political strategy: Firstly, targeting nonconforming sexualities as scapegoats functions as a means to divert attention from socio-economic deficits, thus shifting the reference point for national anxieties (Bosia/Weiss 2013: 3). Secondly, it “performs a ceremonial of state protectionism that secures the [...] state’s image of legitimacy [...] and political stability” (Wahab 2016: 704). It offers the government a means to publicly enforce its self-presentation as the legitimate and forceful protector of the state. And lastly, it is being used as a site of resistance to Western cultural, political, and economic supremacy (Kahlina/Ristivojevic 2015). Equally, concepts such as the “gay conditionality” – conditioning aid and donations on ending the legal bans on homosexuality (Rao 2012) – illustrate how homosexuality has also become important for political and economic considerations of Western states. What is at play, therefore, is the logic of using homosexuality as a cultural standard to differentiate, categorize, and rank countries in global political contexts (Stivachtis 2015; Puar 2007). As Kahlina/Ristivojevic (2015) have thus rightly concluded, “[...] the interplay between LGBT rights and geopolitics implies that LGBT rights have been turned into an important site where the on-going restructuring of symbolic and geopolitical hierarchies at the global level has been played out.” This is particularly true for the
African context (Hodes 2012).

Focusing on an African case for the analysis of the postcolonial context makes further sense, both because of Africa’s history under colonial rule as well as – and closely linked to – the importance of religion across the continent. Philosophical as well as empirical research suggests that there is a strong relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards homosexuality (Jäckle/Wenzelburger 2015: 220). Indeed, especially “[…] in sub-Saharan Africa, at least nine-in-ten […] believe homosexuality should not be accepted by society” (PRC 2014: 3). Equally, countries in sub-Saharan Africa generally have harsh legal provisions regarding same-sex acts, a result of colonial regulations that have been adopted by the post-independent states and implemented in their constitutions (Johnson 2015: 710).

Regarding all three aspects – religiosity, attitudes, and legality – Uganda stands out: indeed, “[…] perhaps more than any other country, Uganda is legally and socially hostile to homosexuals” (Jjuuko 2013: 388). According to the National Population and Housing Census of 2014, only 0.2 per cent of the population is listed as practicing ‘No Religion’ (UBS 2016: 19). Additionally, representative studies have shown that Uganda scores particularly high in negative attitudes towards homosexuality: 96 per cent of the population believe that homosexuality should not be accepted by society (PRC 2014: 2), 97.2 per cent do not believe that homosexuality can be justified, and 75 per cent do not want homosexuals as neighbors (Jäckle/Wenzelburger 2015: 238). Furthermore, the proposition of the Anti-Homosexuality-Bill (AHB) in 2009 (which included the death penalty for certain same-sex acts) and the implementation of the revised Anti-Homosexuality-Act (AHA) in 2014 (which replaced the death penalty with life imprisonment) recriminalized same-sex conduct and established particularly harsh penalties for newly framed aspects of homosexuality (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 26). Consequently, Uganda has gained massive international media coverage and has become the site for transnational activism, both for proponents and opponents of this legislation. As Johnson (2015: 709) has pointed out: “Few statutes enacted by national legislatures generate the scale of global attention and debate that has resulted from the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) 2014 passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda.”

Lastly, from a more analytical point of view, the case of Uganda is helpful in that the processes of securitization are relatively clear: the main securitizing moves have been clearly and publicly articulated, the referent objects are explicitly expressed, and related countermeasures have been proposed (Karlström 2012: 7). Therefore, the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda will provide a fitting case to illustrate the importance of analyzing the postcolonial context to better understand the securitization processes in non-European settings.

3.2. SECURITIZATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN UGANDA

The following section will illustrate the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda. Yet, it will not provide an in-depth analysis of the process as such; rather, it will briefly outline why and in how far one can talk about this case as a securitization process in the first place. Before doing so, however, two terminological issues should be noted, namely the problematic nature of the terms ‘homosexuality’ and ‘homophobia’. The usage of the term ‘homosexuality’ is problematic in this specific context because it ignores the diversity of the effectively targeted individuals; it homogenizes and reduces all non-heteronormative gender identities and sexual orientations to the
misleading category of ‘the homosexual’. While fully acknowledging this problem, the term will nevertheless be used in this paper because it is helpful for understanding the process of securitization as such. It is argued that rather than simply applying the term, the securitizing actors deliberately construct this homogenizing category: First, it allows to distinctly and visibly present ‘the threat’ to the relevant audiences. Second, it enables the securitizing actors to strategically apply the term to any individual that even slightly deviates from the equally constructed ‘norm’. Third, talking of only homosexuality permits to deny or disregard the existence of other non-heteronormative gender identities and sexual orientations. As such, the term ‘homosexuality’ becomes an integral part of the securitization discourse because it is the term itself – comprised of whatever elements are strategically useful – that is being securitized. Equally problematic is the term ‘homophobia’ because it reduces and transforms a complex socio-psychological and socio-political phenomenon to a sheer psychological condition (i.e. a phobia). Since this paper aims at illustrating the complexity of this phenomenon, the term “anti-queer animus”¹ (Thoreson 2014) is regarded more appropriate and will be used instead.

Now, as Karlström (2012) has correctly pointed out, homosexuality in Uganda is a classic example of securitization in the societal sector. According to Buzan et al. (1998: 119), "societal insecurity exists when communities of whatever kind define a development or potentiality as a threat to their survival as a community.” In such cases, the referent object is usually the identity of the community, which in itself is constituted partially by presenting it as being threatened (ibid.: 120). Furthermore, they have pointed out that “if national identity is tied to specific cultural habits, a homogenizing ‘global’ culture […] will be threatening” (ibid.: 124). Indeed, this can be clearly observed regarding homosexuality in Uganda. Although same-sex sexual conduct has been illegal in Uganda ever since the establishment of the British Protectorate of Uganda in 1894 (Johnson 2015: 710), the current public discourse has been shaped by the intensified construction of homosexuality as a serious threat to Uganda. Presenting Uganda as a God-fearing, politically and culturally independent as well as morally superior African nation-state, political and religious leaders have constructed the ‘homosexual Other’ as a neo-imperialist Western import that is fundamentally threatening the Ugandan state, its citizens, and its values, in short: its national identity (Karlström 2012; Sadgrove et al. 2012; Bahati 2009; Boyd 2013; Nyanci/Karamagi 2015; Wahab 2016; Sharlet 2010). Within this discourse, Uganda has been positively linked to Christianity and ‘Africanness’, while homosexuality is constructed as a two-fold threat: For one, it is a cultural threat because it imposes an un-African culture that aims at destroying Uganda’s traditional and Christian culture. For another, it is a physical threat because homosexuals are presented as recruiting children and youths for same-sex sexual offences (Karlström 2012: 18). The proposition of the Anti-Homosexuality-Bill (AHB) and the implementation of the Anti-Homosexuality-Act (AHA) in 2009 and 2014, respectively, can be seen as the major securitizing moves: they reinforced the “[...] mantra of safeguarding Uganda’s sovereignty from neo-imperialism symbolized by the imposed Western decadence of homosexuality” (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 33), and introduced respective countermeasures.

¹ The term animus refers to “a usually prejudiced and often spiteful or malevolent ill will” (Merriam-Webster) and to a “hostility or ill feeling” (Oxford Dictionaries).
In 2009, David Bahati (Member of Parliament) introduced the Anti-Homosexuality-Bill as a private-member bill into parliament. The bill aimed at “strengthening the nation’s capacity to deal with emerging internal and external threats” (Bahati 2009: MM) and was designed to fill the gaps in the provisions of existing laws. The AHB has made no progress by the time the parliament was dissolved in May 2011, but was reintroduced to the new parliament where it received a first reading in February 2012 (Johnson 2015: 717). Due to some national and especially international pressure, the bill was partially changed – most notably by substituting the death penalty with life imprisonment (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015) – and the revised version “proceeded through Second Reading, Committee of the Whole House, Report stage and Third Reading in less than one hour” (Johnson 2015: 721). With the parliament passing the revised bill in December 2013 and President Museveni signing it in February 2014, it entered into force as the Anti-Homosexuality Act as from March 2014 (ibid.: 722). Although the Constitutional Court of Uganda declared the AHA unconstitutional and ineffective on 1 August 2014, it can still be regarded as a successful securitization: For one, the Court’s decision was based on the grounds that there had been no quorum in parliament at the time the legislation was passed. Thus, rather than declaring the content of the law unconstitutional, the decision was merely opposing the technicalities of the enactment (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 31). Additionally, although some members of the respective parliamentary committee published a minority report in which they call for an end of interfering with private relationships, it still shares the negative presentation of homosexuals (Johnson 2015: 719). Similarly, most of those religious leaders opposing the AHB and AHA did so because of the gravity of the proposed measures and not because of the intent and motivation behind them (Anderson 2011: 1596).

Although there has also been strong opposition by individuals, groups, and international actors to the legislation, these objections have successfully been instrumentalized by the securitizing actors: For instance, “[…] the withdrawal of foreign aid from public budget also had the unforeseen effect of transferring blame for public financing deficits onto already stigmatized LGBTIQ Ugandans” (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 36), thus supporting the idea that homosexuality is a Western-sponsored concept (Wahab 2016: 711). The consequences for these Ugandans have been devastating: not only have they experienced a decrease in access to social services (Oliver 2013: 85) but also “beatings, disappearances, ‘corrective’ rapes of lesbians, blacklists in a national tabloid, vigilante squads and church crusades […]” (Sharlet 2010: 36). According to a report by Sexual Minorities Uganda, there has been an increase of 750 to 1,900 per cent of such violent anti-queer animus between 2012 and mid-2014 (Bowcott 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that these securitizing moves have created a “culture of extreme and violent homophobia” (ibid.), in which the construction of homosexuality as a serious threat for Uganda’s national identity has generally been accepted by the relevant audiences. Yet, the question remains: In how far can the postcolonial context help to understand these processes and what are the benefits of analyzing it?

4. THE SOCIO-LINGUISTIC DIMENSION OF THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

There are three grand narratives that function as linguistic resources for the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda, namely ‘Uganda as African’, ‘Uganda as Christian’, and ‘Uganda as Independent’. 
Based on secondary literature on both homosexuality and the role of religion in Uganda, these narratives were inductively derived. Additionally, they were deductively tested against a limited but relevant selection of primary sources, including legislation, public speeches/interviews, and publicly accessible self-presentations (websites) of the actors involved. The following section will outline these narratives and illustrate how they are being used – individually as well as combined – to construct homosexuality as a threat to Uganda’s national identity.

4.1. Uganda as African

In the ‘Uganda as African’ narrative, Uganda’s deep-rooted traditional and cultural legacy is presented as the main characteristic of national identity; therefore, it has its main point of reference in the pre-colonial. It is mainly based on an “Afro-communitarian theory” on morality called Ubuntu (Metz/Gaie 2010: 273). Ubuntu stresses the ontological priority of society over the individual and conceptualizes personhood, identity, and humanness as essentially relational (Menkiti 2004). It is the aspect of belonging to the extended family and the community that gives meaning to the individual’s existence: “One becomes a person solely ‘through other persons’, which means that one cannot realize one’s true self in opposition to others or even in isolation from them” (Metz/Gaie 2010: 275; Van Zyl 2011: 338). According to this thinking, the appropriate way to relate to others is through a combination of solidarity and identity with one’s community (Gyekye 2004: 16). Only through the submission of individuals to networks of kinship can important concepts such as ekitiibwa (honor) and empisa (good manners) be practiced (Boyd 2013: 705). Thus, honoring one’s community through marriage and procreation becomes an essential duty and ensures the future of humanity and culture (Mbiti 1969: 133; Metz/Gaie 2010: 279).

Consequently, homosexuality is presented as unnatural “within an essential, pure, and timeless ‘African’ culture” (Wahab 2016: 698). It poses a threat that exceeds the individual, because it brings shame to the individual and its family and it undermines traditional social relationships and obligations (Boyd 2013: 711). Homosexual relationships are constructed in opposition to the duty to marry and procreate; further, they alter traditional gender roles and question the social and cultural power invested in these roles (Otiso 2006: 93). There are, however, well-documented instances where the physical aspects of traditional Ugandan homosociality (men who hug, kiss, hold hands, or have sex) were acknowledged and accepted (Epprecht 2013: 59). Yet, current same-sex acts are either problematized because they imply the claim for a universal right: although they existed, same-sex acts have traditionally indicated “freedom from cultural norms, the selective access to which marked social status [the king] or distinction [foreigners]” (Boyd 2013: 706). Or, they are problematized because they imply a non-heteronormative identity: homosexuals define themselves not through an act but through an identity, which promotes a lifestyle that opposes traditional moral duties (Sadgrove et al. 2012: 120).

This narrative functions as a linguistic resource in instances where homosexuality is presented as “barbaric acts which are dehumanizing” (Mutebi in New Vision 1999, emphasis added), “unnatural offences” and “a threat to the traditional family” (Bahati 2009: MM). Indeed, when the AHB claimed that “there is a need to protect the children and youths of Uganda who are made vulnerable […] as a result of cultural changes” (ibid., emphasis added), it is particularly the cultural dimension of the anti-queer animus that is highlighted.
4.2. Uganda as Christian

The ‘Uganda as Christian’ narrative, in contrast, stresses Uganda’s embeddedness in Christian teachings which have been spreading in Uganda alongside colonialism; as such, it has its main point of reference in the colonial. Indeed, within colonial Uganda, both the Anglican and Catholic church developed into “quasi-establishments” and by the time of independence in 1962, Christianity had become an integral part of Ugandan society (Ward 2015: 129). In this highly protracted “enculturation of the Gospel in African society” (ibid.: 141), social life in Uganda has increasingly been equated with Christian teachings and vice versa. Further, according to Christian teachings, God created humans as either males or females who are supposed to live in heterosexual relationships aimed at marriage, procreation, and worship; thus, any form of premarital, extramarital, or non-heteronormative intercourse is against the will of God (Sivertsen 2016: 15). By living in accordance with such Christian morals, values, and customs, a “morally upright and spiritually-inclined Uganda” is presented as the most “God-fearing society” (New Vision in Sadgrove et al. 2012: 113-114).

Homosexuality is then viewed as “in breach of Christian teaching” (Anderson 2011: 1597). Homosexuals are depicted as practicing sodomy and living a promiscuous lifestyle that is violating and therefore threatening these teachings, particularly regarding Christian family values (ibid.: 1598). Consequently, homosexuality, along with other societal ills, is presented as a sin to God (Ward 2015: 132). Since the Christian values are seen to be “subverted by a rich and amoral ‘gay lobby’”, Uganda is presented as the most important battleground for preserving these values (ibid.: 137; Sadgrove et al. 2012: 124).

This narrative is clearly resorted to when homosexuality is presented as a threat which needs to be countered, for instance to assure that “the most Christian country in Africa not take the wrong ideological direction” (Hunter in Sharlet 2010: 43). It becomes equally apparent in cases where MP David Bahati claimed that “we should kill them because the wages of sin is death. Whether it is the state to kill them, or we use any other way, they should die” (Bahati in Dada 2014). Thus, homosexuals are understood as a symptom of an even bigger threat, namely a government by the people and not by God: “if we had an opportunity to implement what is in the Bible, that would be a perfect position” (Bahati in Sharlet 2010: 48). It is particularly the religious dimension of the anti-queer animus that is being highlighted in this narrative.

4.3. Uganda as Independent

Thirdly, the ‘Uganda as Independent’ narrative highlights the image of a cultural, economic, and particularly political independence that has followed the fight against colonial rule and has resulted in the formation of the Ugandan nation-state; therefore, the main point of reference is the post-independent identity and sovereignty. Ever since its independence, the Ugandan state has presented itself “as an agent of modernity in terms of economic and cultural progress and as the custodian of tradition and morality” (Oliver 2013: 97, emphasis added). As such, it claims the legitimacy and capacity to provide and defend the nation’s socio-economic prosperity and political stability (Wahab 2016: 704). This notion of a national collective identity, then, needs to be protected by an independent government that naturalizes a rhetoric of national security (Bosia/Weiss 2013: 3). In this post-independent identity and sovereignty, it is especially the discourse on sexuality that functions as an expression of ideological independence from the West (Oliver 2013:...
Thus, opposing Western values can be understood as an anti-imperial move of resistance to Western supremacy that is both an opportunity and a necessity for reworking the conditions for Uganda’s post-independent sovereignty (Wahab 2016: 694; Kahlina/Ristivojevic 2015).

By equating homosexuality with Western norms, any attempts to grant people their sexual rights are seen as Western impositions (Kaoma 2013: 76). Therefore, homosexuality is constructed as a threat to Uganda’s independence, particularly due to funding from Western donor agencies and the suspension of international aid. Ideologically, this is regarded as a form of social imperialism that stresses the “colonial nature” of foreign media, Western agents, and Western concepts of humanity and society (Nagarajan 2014). Economically, these international fundings are presented as preying upon young people’s economic vulnerabilities to separate them from their families (Boyd 2013: 710). This poses both an existential and symbolic threat because it redirects economic resources into new networks and ignores established and meaningful channels of inheritance and social cohesion; it challenges the nation’s capacity to uphold its independent organization of domestic socio-economic relations (ibid.: 122-124). Lastly, homosexuality is a threat to Uganda’s independence because it is presented as threatening the nation’s physical existence as such: homosexuality is understood as a Western strategy to stop procreation, thus slowly reducing the population of Uganda (ibid.: 118).

The ‘Uganda as Independent’ narrative is utilized, for instance, when homosexuality is described as a “remnant of imperial colonialism” (Archbishop Orombi in Anderson 2011: 1592) or when MP David Bahati claims that “the homos use UNICEF – this is true! – to attempt to colonize Uganda” (in Sharlet 2010: 42). Hence, when former Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity James Nsaba Buturo stated that Western donors “can keep their money and their homosexuality because it is not about charity at the expense of our […] destruction” (in Sadgrove et al. 2012: 105), it is the political dimension of the anti-queer animus that is being highlighted.

4.4. Uganda as Postcolonial

Individually, these three narratives function as prominent linguistic resources in the discourse on homosexuality in Uganda. Yet, what makes the securitization of homosexuality especially successful is the strategic combination of these narratives to a single ‘postcolonial narrative’.

Of course, the individual narratives each provide an idealized version of social realities: Firstly, presenting homosexuality as un-African ignores the sexual pluralism and diversity that comprise Ugandan culture and tradition (Oliver 2013: 99; Kaoma 2013: 76). Secondly, promoting an image of the Christianity not only homogenizes the heterogeneity of Uganda’s Christian denominations and their teachings, but also ignores all the non-Christian religions and worldviews that exist in Uganda (UBS 2016). Thirdly, constructing Uganda as absolutely independent ignores the fact that the state is heavily dependent on foreign aid, particularly regarding the health and educational sectors (Bompani 2011). Additionally, the combination of the three narratives ignores how certain elements contradict and mutually exclude each other. For instance, Christianity is a colonial product that has been imposed on Uganda, which is equally true for the notion of the nation-state itself (Oliver 2013: 99).

Similarly, Christian teachings of monogamy have never been accepted as the only available form of marriage in Uganda: “The churches have, in fact, always struggled to
persuade their congregations that specific Christian understandings of marriage are either practical or desirable” (Ward 2015: 134). Yet, the securitizing actors involved were successful in constructing a narrative which strategically combines selected elements of African tradition, Christian morality, and notions of political independence (Thoreson 2014: 29). Consequently, this process has constructed an essentialist understanding of Ugandan identity and Christianity as a mutually constituting site, promoting an idealized image of an independent, African, and Christian Uganda.

As a result of “denialism [...] and national forgetting” (Wahab 2016: 698), this postcolonial narrative functions as a resource for both narrow and broad kinds of securitizing moves. For instance, in the Memorandum of the Anti-Homosexuality-Bill, Bahati (2009: MM) explains that

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

This is but one example of how securitizing actors strategically intertwine the three narratives to approach multiple audiences at once. Additionally, an example from the wider discourse on homosexuality is the commemoration of the ‘Ugandan Martyrs’. Rao (2015) has exhaustively illustrated how traditional narratives of the massacre of 1886 – when Mwanga II, then-ruling King of Buganda, ordered the execution of 31 young Christians after they had refused to renounce their alliance to the Christian missions – have been increasingly sexualized by stressing the “sodomitical” dimension of the story (the Martyrs refused to have sex with Mwanga II) in public memory. He considerably outlines how this relatively recent narrative intentionally ignores the political circumstances as well as historically and culturally defined conceptions of gender and sexuality in Uganda at that time to fit current agendas (ibid.: 3). For instance, it ignores that Mwanga II’s physical intimacies had different social meanings for 19th-century Baganda compared to those of the missionaries and current commentators (Hoad 2007); equally, it disregards how gender was intertwined with political power and space rather than sex, which means that same-sex conduct might not have been understood as such by the Baganda (Nannyonga-Tamasuza 2005). Therefore, this usage of a “rhetoric that is politically salient rather than historically accurate” (Rao 2015: 13) becomes apparent in cases such as President Museveni linking Mwanga’s rule to the political tyranny of his predecessors Amin and Obote, as well as Archbishop Orombi asserting that “we will never be shaken by any immoral teachings infiltrating our country. They [martyrs] never compromised their faith, we will not compromise ourselves” (in Rao 2015: 7).

Thus, the postcolonial narrative offers such powerful resources not only because it combines references to the pre-colonial (African tradition), the colonial (Christianity), and the post-independent (independence), but also because it provides references for the cultural, religious, and political dimensions of the anti-queer animus apparent in the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda.
5. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

As has been illustrated above, the postcolonial narrative provides the linguistic resources for the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda. Yet, it is the particular organization of social relations between the securitizing actors and their audiences that explains whether securitizing moves are salient enough to be successfully accepted. Thus, the following section will analyze the socio-political dimension of the postcolonial context and will organize around the securitizing actors. As Buzan et al. (1998: 40) have pointed out, it is both difficult and shortsighted to disaggregate actors into individuals, because collective actors need to be understood as more than the sum of its members. Therefore, in part understood as collective actors, these are (1) the Ugandan government, (2) the Churches of Uganda, (3) American faith-based organizations, (4) the Kabaka2 of Buganda, and (5) the media. Additionally, a last sub-section will then highlight how these actors form what can be understood as a postcolonial “field of (in) security professionals” (Bigo 2006).

5.1. THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA

Although the AHB was introduced as a private-member bill, both MP David Bahati and former Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity James Nsaba Buturo have highlighted that the bill had been a collective party-wide product (Sharlet 2010). This is hardly surprising, given that the National Resistance Movement (NRM) led by President Yoweri Museveni has held power since 1986, providing the government with a robust parliamentary majority that allows for an extensive control over policymaking (Thoreson 2014: 28). This parliamentary majority is continuously presented as an indicator for national unity and is particularly successful in the light of Uganda’s problematic history of nationalism: Before Uganda’s independence, there had already been a long-standing tradition of local nationalisms which organized around ethnicities and traditional kingdoms and when Uganda became independent in 1962, it was still fractured, and divided by ethnic, linguistic, and regional cleavages (Lancaster 2012). Consequently, President Milton Obote (1966-1971 and 1980-1985) and President Idi Amin (1971-1979) attempted to enforce a sense of nationalism, for instance by executing thousands of intellectuals and political opponents, exiling the Kabaka of Buganda and abolishing the traditional kingdoms in 1967, restricting the churches’ power through the secularization of educational institutions, and ordering the expulsion of all Asian Ugandans to create an “all-black Uganda” (ibid.). Thus, with the NRM gaining power and announcing Museveni President of Uganda in 1986, the constantly repeated narrative of Museveni liberating and uniting the Ugandan people was born. Indeed, Museveni and the NRM were quite successful in promoting this image: firstly, Ugandan churches and their members were re-empowered and re-integrated (Ward 2015: 130). Secondly, the five traditional kingdoms were restored in the constitution in 1993 (Kalyegira 2013). Thirdly, through his “democratic rhetoric” (Sharlet 2010: 37), Museveni managed to open the country for the neo-liberal global market, promising economic growth for Uganda. Due to his successful reception by the elites, he managed to consolidate his power, for example by removing the presidential term limits from

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2 Kabaka is the royal title assigned to the king of Buganda, one of five pre-colonial kingdoms in Uganda that remain constitutional status in Uganda today (Kalyegira 2013).

Yet, this image was increasingly threatened by domestic social protests which criticized Museveni’s inability to counter-act the “deepening inequalities accompanying global neoliberalism” (Oliver 2013: 100; Boyd 2013: 701). Indeed, according to the National Population and Housing Census 2014, the country is facing serious socio-economic challenges (UBS 2016). Museveni and his government have long used the scapegoating of others to drive processes of state-building, national unity, and retrenchment (Bosia/Weiss 2013: 2). As Sharlet (2010: 43) provocatively put it:

“Still, he [Museveni] is a dictator and dictators need enemies. For years, the enemy was a vicious rebel group called the Lord’s Resistance Army, but the LRA has been reduced to a few hundred child fighters. Enter the homosexual: singular, an archetype – a bogeyman.”

Thus, this form of state-sponsored anti-queer animus can be seen as a “political resource” (Wahab 2016: 703), which, given Uganda’s socio-economic situation, is particularly successful, since “people who are fighting to survive are generally less tolerant of minority groups” (Jäckle/Wenzelburger 2015: 216; Kelley 2016; Štulhofer/Rimac 2009). Within this process, however, Museveni was increasingly facing the challenge to balance his national support of local Ugandans, the globalized protest community, as well as power struggles within the NRM (Karlström 2012: 19). This explains both his clear support for the motivation behind the AHB and his mixed position on the proposed countermeasures. From the start, he promoted the fight against homosexuality to boost his popularity among Ugandan voters and to build solidarity networks with other anti-imperialist opponents of homosexuality in the region (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 33). Yet, facing increased opposition from international partners who threatened to cut their aid budget, Museveni articulated a critical stance on the proposed measures, particularly the death penalty. This, however, allowed both Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi and Speaker of the House Rebecca Kadaga to publicly voice their unconditional support for the bill; given that both politicians intended to challenge Museveni in upcoming elections, it provided them with a strategic move to gain public support (Dada 2014). By misrepresenting scientific findings on homosexuality, Museveni successfully postponed his decision on the death penalty and managed to push and sign the revised AHA that excluded the death penalty. Consequently, he managed to maintain his public support while equally mitigating international pressure. As for the internal disputes, Museveni accomplished to discredit Kadaga on the grounds of her procedural failures in the legislative process of the AHA and to un-ceremonially remove Mbabazi from office in September 2014 (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015: 34).

Thus, through the strategic balancing of internal, national, and international concerns, Museveni appropriated the anti-homosexuality legislation as a political bargaining resource and successfully made the securitizing moves fully tailored to the normative languages of the relevant audiences (Karlström 2012: 24).

5.2. THE CHURCHES OF UGANDA

With the first British and French missionaries arriving in Uganda in the late 19th century, both the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church began to spread in the region alongside colonialism. As “the two traditional pillars of Ugandan Christian Life”, both churches have become deeply established in colonial Uganda (Ward 2015: 128). Since the regulation of familial, gender, and sexual relations has been central to
colonial rule, the arrival of the British in the 1890s has helped to assure the political dominance of Anglicanism (Oliver 2013: 92). After Uganda’s independence in 1962, both churches were able to resort to older theological and missionary connections and structures (Anderson 2011: 1601). Consequently, they were the most important provider of education and their members occupied important positions in political parties, governmental institutions, the judiciary, and civil service (Ward 2015: 129). While the churches lost some of their influence under the regimes of Amin and Obote in the 1970s and early 1980s, they regained their influence when Museveni took over power in 1986. Today, the two churches together comprise more than 70 per cent of the Ugandan population, with the Catholic Church encompassing 39.3 per cent of the population and 32 per cent being affiliated with the Anglican Church (UBS 2016: 19). Both churches regard themselves as national churches; as such, they claim that their voices should be heard in national debates, believing that they are “expressing the deep-seated sense of propriety of Ugandans as a whole” (Ward 2015: 141). In addition to the two traditional churches in Uganda, there is a continuous growth in the number of renewal churches, especially Pentecostal and charismatic ones (Sivertsen 2016: 14). After these churches had been banned by President Amin as “religious sects” in the 1970s, Pentecostalism was able to flourish again from the late 1980s onwards (Ward 2015: 128). Through their celebration of “acquisition and prosperity”, their teachings of the “gospel of health and wealth”, and their use of modern technology, the Pentecostal churches have become particularly popular among the young and educated Ugandans (Sadgrove et al. 2012:117). While in 2002, roughly 4.5 per cent of the population affiliated themselves with Pentecostal churches, their number increased to 11.1 per cent in 2014 (UBS 2016: 19). This high level of religiosity, especially when it is extrinsically instigated, partly explains the high degree of anti-queer animus (Jäckle/Wenzelburger 2015: 225). Yet, the increasing hostility has to be understood also in the light of domestic and global developments. Domestically, Ugandan churches face severe competition to retain or attract new members (Oliver 2013: 94). This competition does not only stem from the increasing popularity of Pentecostalism, but equally from the spread of Islam in the region, with the number of Ugandan Muslims increasing from 12.4 per cent in 2002 to 13.7 per cent in 2014 (UBS 2016: 19). Globally, Christianity is increasingly shaped by both demographic developments and globalization (Anderson 2011: 1591): With more governments and media of the Global North developing positive attitudes towards homosexuality, religious leaders, especially in the Global South, see their values threatened. Comprising more than one third of the Anglican Church’s members worldwide, African bishops, for instance, have become “prominent players in Anglican Communions politics, especially in defending biblical orthodoxy on matters of human sexuality” (Oliver 2013: 90). Given these domestic and global developments, the churches’ combination of performative displays of power and “antigay rhetoric is one way for religious leaders to build their public standing by demonstrating their commitment to biblical morality and their refusal to submit to perceived Western sexual norms” (ibid., 94); these spectacles are not just aimed at members of their national churches but also at regional and global partners (Anderson 2011: 1590). The religious leaders in Uganda are particularly successful in doing so because of their ability to draw on culturally specific discourses, histories, and concerns (Boyd 2013: 702). Taking all denominations together, 85 per cent of Uganda’s population are self-reported Christians. Due to Christianity’s
strong presence throughout the nation, Ugandan churches constitute important and powerful securitizing actors: they “both mediate local perceptions on national events and issues of ethical concern, and also serve to articulate the received traditions of their church” (Ward 2015: 131).

5.3. AMERICAN FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have expanded and proliferated alongside economic neo-liberalism and their charitable contributions remain a critical source of welfare (Bompani 2011). Particularly in Africa, FBOs attempt to compensate for the governments’ inability to provide basic social services: astonishing 50 per cent of health and education services in sub-Saharan Africa are provided by FBOs (World Bank 2008). Many of these organizations are U.S.-American, which is particularly true for the ones active in Uganda (Bompani 2011). Although these FBOs have a long tradition of religion-driven activism in Uganda, it is especially developments in U.S. politics and global Christianity that increased the American FBOs’ involvement in Uganda (Wahab 2016: 692): While these FBOs, often promoting conservative Christian values, had enormous influence on world politics due to their well-established relationship to the Bush administration, especially regarding domestic politics in Uganda, the more liberal stance of the Obama administration limited this channel of power (Thoreson 2014: 28-29). Indeed, the Obama administration legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, strengthened rights for the transgender community, and implemented national health care, all of which challenged conservative Christian understandings of gender, sexuality, family, and morality (Oliver 2013: 89). Additionally, globalization and developments within the global Christian community have led to more liberal attitudes towards sex and sexuality in many congregations of the Global North (ibid.: 91). Given their formerly established ties to Uganda, the Christian Right in the U.S. increasingly used their FBOs to move their financial, physical, political, and ideological resources directly to Uganda (Kaoma 2009, 2012). Focusing mainly on morality and homosexuality, these organizations “began to see Uganda as an important battleground for the preservation of Christian values on a worldwide scale” (Ward 2015: 136). They managed to successfully use social structures in both the U.S. and Uganda to provide a “morally responsible materialism” and to globalize the “U.S. ‘culture wars’” with Uganda as a proxy (Wahab 2016: 692, 705).

When Kapya Kaoma (2013: 76) claims that “U.S. religious conservatives’ ideologies and activism are behind the growing violent homophobia in Christian Africa”, he mainly refers to a network of U.S.-Americans that organize around FBOs such as the International House of Prayer and The Fellowship (often referred to as The Family) (Anderson 2011: 1595). This network organizes around prominent individuals, such as the pastors Scott Lively, Rick Warren, and Lou Engle, as well as self-proclaimed ex-gay activists Don Schmierer and Lee Brundidge (Dada 2014; God Loves Uganda 2013). By combining their ideological and material resources and networks, they send “money, missionaries, and ideas”: Indeed, in the past 15 years, these FBOs have poured millions of dollars into “leadership development”, schools, and churches in Uganda (Sharlet 2010: 37). They send hundreds of young missionaries, organize workshops on “Homosexuality and the Homosexuals’ Agenda”, or bring together tens of thousands of believers to pray against sexual sin (Oliver 2013: 88; God Loves Uganda 2013). Additionally, they distribute propaganda through institutions such as the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), a program that aims at “preparing the nations
of the World for the coming of Jesus Christ through mass media” (CBN in Oliver 2013: 89). Although they carefully distanced themselves from the proposed death penalty, they supported the intent and motivation behind the AHB; this can be seen as a strategic move to maneuver between their religious followers in the U.S. and the wider, arguably more liberal, general U.S. public.

Thus, (particularly U.S.-based) FBOs and their networks are important and powerful securitizing actors who use their resources to securitize homosexuality in Uganda. They are successful in doing so by strategically instrumentalizing both national and transnational structures and audiences in their religio-political fight against homosexuality.

5.4. The Kabaka of Buganda

In the Republic of Uganda, the five traditional pre-colonial kingdoms Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, and Tooro have constitutional status. As the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2016: 4) explains, “some cultural groupings are headed by traditional kings or chiefs who are not politically elected but have an indirect role in community governance and moral build up.” With 5.5 million people (16.5 per cent of the national population), the Baganda – belonging to the kingdom of Buganda – are the biggest and most influential ethnicity in today’s Uganda (ibid.: 20). As Boyd (2013: 705) has illustrated, despite the dramatic social changes due to the introduction of Christianity and colonial rule, the demonstration of traditional values still defines proper personhood and appropriate behavior. In addition to its constitutional status, it is the kingdom and its Kabaka (king) that represents the institutionalization of these values. Thus, given his still prevailing importance and the history of his kingdom, it is surprising that little scholarly work has focused on Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, the current Kabaka of Buganda, as a securitizing actor in Uganda.

Historically, the relationship between Buganda and the central government (both, of the British Protectorate and the Republic of Uganda) has always been tense. As the biggest of the traditional kingdoms, it was able to claim special representation at consultative meetings and councils (Kalyegira 2013). In the early years of Uganda’s independence, Buganda managed to sustain its position of prevalence: it was granted federal status and the Kabaka became the President of Uganda (Lancaster 2012). This, however, soon led to power struggles between the President and Prime Minister Milton Obote, who highlighted the President’s conflict of allegiance (the nation vs. Buganda). Obote decided to enforce the ideal of national unity upon Buganda by gradually dismantling its institutions and position of advantage (ibid.). These struggles amounted to a military assault on the Kabaka’s Palace in 1966, the exile of the Kabaka and the abolishment of the traditional kingdoms in 1967 (Kalyegira 2013). Directly after Yoweri Museveni succeeded in his coup in 1986, the Baganda showered him with their ideological and political support (ibid.). Consequently, Museveni allowed the return of Crown Prince Mutebi II in 1986 and, after consolidating his own hold on power, restored the traditional kingdoms in 1992 (Lancaster 2012). With the coronation of Mutebi II in 1993, the Buganda kingdom was completely and officially re-established in the Republic of Uganda.

Being very aware of its limited room for political agency, the Mutebi monarchy has used both subtle political support as well as subtle withholding of support to restore “glory and viability” (Kalyegira 2013). Thus, when Mutebi II, for instance, equates homosexuality with defilement and rape and claims that he “strongly condemn[s] such barbaric acts which are dehumanizing and
they must be stopped forthwith” (Mutebi in New Vision 1999), he actively participates in the securitization of homosexuality. Equally, by attending the Martyrs’ Day celebrations as a guest of honor, he publicly supports a narrative that condemns homosexuality (Rao 2015: 11). At other times, however, Mutebi has been careful to be neutral on that matter in public. His motivation for doing so is thus a strategic balance of intentions: on the one hand, his neutrality on the topic can be seen as an attempt to not divide the Baganda in order to strengthen the community's cohesion and, subsequently, its political and cultural strength and relevance. On the one hand, his participation in the securitization is to be understood as a move to present himself not as a threat but a source of support to the central government.

Thus, due to his representative function of traditional Ugandan life, and despite his limited political agency, the Kabaka of Buganda needs to be understood as an important securitizing actor regarding homosexuality in Uganda.

### 5.5. The Media

Buzan et al. (1998: 124) explain that “with its attraction to simple stories, the media will often tell the news in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ [...]. When ethnic or religious categories are established as the interpretative instruments for understanding a situation, the media has often played a role in this.” This is both very true for the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda. Particularly in the colonial period, Christian churches played a vital role in introducing, controlling, and shaping Ugandan media. Yet, by the 1950s “a vigorous newspaper industry was beginning to make the churches’ role abundant, as far as providing information on national affairs” (Ward 2015: 131). Today, Uganda has almost 200 private radio stations and dozens of television stations and print outlets (Freedom House 2017). Despite this amount of media outlets, freedom of press is not fully granted: Uganda is considered only “partly-free” (ibid.) and ranked 112th (out of 180) countries in 2017 (and even ranked 139th in 2012) (RSF 2017). Indeed, since Yoweri Museveni began his rule in 1986, many journalists who opposed the government line have faced assaults, which included being suspended, stripped of their equipment, or violently attacked by politicians and security forces (ibid.). Additionally, Museveni is favoring and exploiting the state-run media and implicitly encouraging self-censorship among journalists (Freedom House 2017). Despite the notable influence of state-run media and the restrictions by the government, and influenced by the competition with transnational news agencies, Uganda’s print media environment has become increasingly competitive (Oliver 2013: 89). Consequently, their “publications have become competitively sensationalist in their attempts to survive” (Sadgrove et al. 2012: 111), resulting in “media-constructed moral panics” to “make home and social affairs newsworthy” (McRobbie/Thornton 1995: 560). Indeed, newspapers such as New Vision, Rolling Stone, and Red Pepper have increasingly reproduced and emphasized the postcolonial narrative by claiming Uganda’s moral decay, Western neo-imperialism, and the dangers of homosexuality (Sadgrove et al. 2012: 105). These moves included publishing personal details of alleged homosexual individuals and instructions to physically, psychologically, and economically harm them (Oliver 2013: 85; God Loves Uganda 2013).

Thus, in their attempt to survive the competition and the governmental restrictions and penalties, the media have become an important securitizing actor that successfully constructed homosexuality as a Western threat to Uganda’s national identity.
5.6. The Postcolonial Field of (In) Security Professionals

Individually, these securitizing actors have contributed to the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda. Yet again, it is the combination of these actors to a network of securitizing actors that has made this securitization particularly successful. The Paris School, particularly Bigo (2000: 195), has pointed out that fields of (in)security are “constituted by groups and institutions that authorize themselves and that are authorized to state what security is.” Indeed, this network of actors that attempts to “monopolize the truth about danger and unease through the power–knowledge nexus” (C.A.S.E. 2006: 457) becomes fairly visible in Uganda. As Ward (2015: 135) has illustrated, the emergence of homosexuality as a problematic issue in modern Ugandan life can be traced back to 1997, when American FBOs organized and facilitated a series of study conferences for African bishops to instruct them on matters of homosexuality for the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1998. Equally, the churches in Uganda have become important “spiritual homes” for many conservative U.S.-Christians and have consolidated strong personal relationships between U.S.-activists like Rick Warren or Lou Engle and Ugandan pastors like Julius Oyet or Martin Ssempa (who studied in the U.S. and splits his time between homes in Kampala and Las Vegas) (Dada 2014; Oliver 2013: 91; God Loves Uganda 2013). The FBOs also have strong connections to Ugandan politicians: Regarding the timing of the AHB, for instance, it was just introduced months after Scott Lively, Don Schmierer, and Lee Brundidge led a seminar for politicians in Kampala on “Exposing the Truth about Homosexuality and the Homosexuals’ Agenda” (Oliver 2013: 88). As Sharlet (2010: 41) has pointed out, the bill followed the talking points of these three activists “with remarkable precision”. Additionally, American representatives of mainly Evangelical FBOs have given a multitude of talks, distributing quasi-scientific ‘facts’ about homosexuality to African political audiences, most notably Scott Lively’s five hour talk in the Ugandan Parliament in March 2009 (Walker 2014). Furthermore, the FBO The Fellowship/The Family has found its way into the Ugandan Parliament in order to directly shape legislation: headed by MP David Bahati and closely linked to its American model, it was precisely this parliamentary group that was behind the drafting of the AHB (Karlström 2012: 17; Sharlet 2010: 37). The organization has close ties to President Museveni and his wife and continuously strengthens other personal relationships, for instance between David Bahati and Bishop Julius Oyet (Anderson 2011: 1595; Dada 2014). These strong connections between Ugandan politicians, religious leaders, and American FBOs are intentionally made very transparent. Media outlets, especially New Vision, routinely makes alliances between the state and religious leaders visible to strengthen the narrative of Uganda as a God-fearing nation (Sadgrove et al. 2012: 113). These bonds – and with it the success of the postcolonial narrative – also become evident at public events, such as the Martyrs’ Day celebrations, where religious leaders welcome political and cultural leaders, such as Members of Parliament and the Kabaka of Buganda, as guests of honor (Rao 2015: 11). In line with Boyd (2013), it is true that these actors may aspire to the same goal; their motives and moral frameworks, however, are not interchangeable. It follows that it is through this postcolonial field of (in)security professionals that the securitization of homosexuality becomes such a complex and powerful process.
6. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As the analysis has illustrated, both the socio-linguistic and the socio-political dimension of the postcolonial context help to explain the securitization of homosexuality. Although they were analyzed separately, it needs to be stressed that they are mutually constitutive. The securitizing move is only successful because of the positional power of the securitizing actors and their ability to access existing and prevalent discourses. These discourses are constructed, modified, and amplified by actors according to their interests. In turn, actors often rely on existing discourses to establish and/or maintain their position within given social structures. Equally, audiences’ support relies heavily on both socio-linguistic and socio-political structures; a change in either of these dimensions, however, can also lead to the emergence of new actors (e.g. the Kabaka) and audiences (e.g. U.S.-Evangelicals). In short, securitization processes can only be fully understood by the mutually reinforcing combination of “the performative force of articulated threat texts”, “their embeddedness in existing discourses”, and “the positional power of actors who influence the process of defining meaning” (Stritzel 2007: 370). As Nyanci/Karamagi (2015: 36) have correctly claimed, the securitization of homosexuality in Uganda is “really about nationalism, sovereignty, morality, propriety, control, political expediency, politicking before voters, foreign relations, bilateral aid, neo-imperial power, human rights, and piety.” Similarly, Thoreson (2011: 36) has pointed out that analyses of anti-queer animus need to include “language, the relevance and intensity of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous traditions, the legacy of colonialism and relationships with the North, the stability, transparency, and diversity of political systems, the presence of factionalism, [and] the freedom and integrity of the press [...].” By applying the postcolonial context as an analytical category, this analysis has illustrated how it is precisely the interaction of all these factors that construct this highly complex process of securitization. It has shown how different linguistic narratives have been strategically combined by a network of national and transnational actors to instrumentalize a variety of audiences for their own political, religious, or cultural means. As such, the analysis has provided an important contribution to a better understanding of the complex anti-queer animus in Uganda. Of course, this analysis has faced certain limitations that need to be acknowledged: For one, given the limited space, the paper was only able to provide an overview. Indeed, much more could and should be said about both the socio-linguistic dimension and especially about the socio-political dimension; this is particularly true for the relationships between the securitizing actors and the audiences they address. For another, the analysis focused on the securitizing actors, their motivations and resources. Very little, however, has been said about the people targeted by the securitization, such as the Ugandan queer individuals, activists, and their transnational allies. This would have been an interesting addition to the analysis, because they often resort to the very same linguistic resources used by the securitizing actors, and because it would shed light on the power asymmetries and the “silenced” voices within these discourses (Hansen 2000). Analyzing the opponents of the securitizing actors would additionally prove helpful because their activism can be seen as influencing and shaping the securitizing actors’ space for agency and vice versa; thus, the dynamics of the securitization
processes can only be fully understood by examining how the interactions of securitizing actors and securitized actors mutually reinforce each other.

One might further claim that the underlying conceptualization of the postcolonial context is only helpful because it was modelled after the illustrative case. While it is true to some extent that the postcolonial context was conceptualized with the case of Uganda in mind, I would strongly argue that it provides an analytical tool that is helpful for other cases of securitization in non-European settings: With its inclusion of the temporal dimension (pre-colonial, colonial, post-independent), it acknowledges the “entangled histories” of postcolonial realities – something all post-independent states experience – while also giving room to the specific histories of the respective cases. Further, its inclusion of the spatial dimension highlights the glocal momentum that increasingly characterizes political realities; it includes local, national, regional, and transnational structures and highlights their mutual constitution. Additionally, it illustrates both discursive and extra-discursive elements of securitization processes and acknowledges the diverse means of political communication. Especially regarding the securitizing actors, it further captures the complex nature of agency: while scholars, for instance in the case of Uganda, have either blamed transnational actors (Oliver 2013, Kaoma 2009, 2012, 2013) or national actors (Nyanci/Karamagi 2015; Ward 2015; Johnson 2015) for the securitization, the analysis of the postcolonial context allows to highlight not only the influence of transnational (often Western) actors without denying national (often non-Western) actors their agency, but also that it is their interaction that makes certain securitizing moves salient enough. Lastly, and closely related to the actors, applying the postcolonial context illustrates the diversity of audiences; given that securitization processes are intersubjective and thus highly audience-centered, the postcolonial context provides the necessary awareness of such audiences, including their embeddedness in structures, their concerns and needs. Here, further research could apply the analysis of the postcolonial context to the targeted queer individuals: it can be argued that the queer community in Uganda and their allies themselves securitize the Ugandan state as a serious threat to their queer Ugandan identity. Examining how these two processes of securitization are then mutually reinforcing would further enrich the discourse on homosexuality in Uganda. While the conceptualization of the postcolonial context has been formulated narrowly enough to function as an analytical framework, it is equally broad enough to be applied to other cases in non-European settings where securitization is increasingly used for state-building and strengthening the state’s political legitimacy.

Whether it indeed proves helpful in other cases, only further analyses can tell. Thus, this analysis can best be understood as a starting point for further scholarly investigation. Regardless of whether one follows the Copenhagen School in their goal to “desecuritize politics” or the Welsh School in their attempt to “politicize security” (Bilgin 2013: 103), what is essential to any critical approach to security is to properly understand the underlying processes, structures, and agents of given security phenomena. As this analysis has illustrated, the suggested conceptualization of the postcolonial context provides an innovative and helpful analytical framework to capture the complex nature of securitization processes. As such, it indeed offers a contribution to the discourse on securitization theory and helps to extend its application to non-European settings.
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Die Reihe erscheint in unregelmäßiger Folge und wird online mit ISS-Nummer publiziert.

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