

‘AFRICAN SEX IS DANGEROUS!’ RENEGOTIATING ‘RITUAL SEX’ IN CONTEMPORARY MASAKA DISTRICT

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HIV in sub-Saharan Africa is predominantly spread through unsafe heterosexual contact. For a long time, the culture of African peoples has been presented as the cause of the high prevalence and incidence of HIV/AIDS on the African continent. Examples include Caldwell *et al.* (1989) and several Caldwellians¹ who highlight traditional cultural practices, ‘the African system of sexuality’, and the values and attitudes of sub-Saharan Africans as responsible for the rampant spread of the pandemic.² This article contributes to a body of criticism (including Le Blanc *et al.* 1991; Ahlberg 1994; Heald 1995; Arnfred 2004) of the Caldwellians’ positivist, deterministic, homogenizing and ethnocentric view, which assumes that culture is a concept set in stone – fixed, rigid and static. Furthermore, a Caldwellian analytical framework assumes that while culture has drastic impacts on social phenomena such as health, sexuality and gender norms, these phenomena remain unchanging, dormant and stagnant. They neglect the two-way interaction between culture – in this case sexual culture³ – and health.

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¹This expression is adapted from Adebayo Olukoshi of the Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA), who carries the mantle of debunking ethnocentric approaches to the social science study of Africans. Because Caldwell was responsible for training many Africans studying demography at the Australian National University (ANU) and in research, he developed a corpus of scholars of sexual health who bought into his ‘African sexuality’ thesis. They continue to reproduce the received knowledge, without questioning or critical engagement with it (see Lauer 2006).

²Caldwell *et al.* (1989) proposed the infamous thesis that there is ‘a distinct and internally coherent African system embracing sexuality, marriage and much else’ (1989: 187) which differs from ‘a Eurasian sexual system’. This ‘African system of sexuality’ is characterized by some universals: ancestry, descent and the maintenance of lineage, lineal inheritance systems, female-dominated agriculture, and fertility. Of significance is ‘freedom of female sexuality in Africa’ due to ‘lack of moral and institutional limitations placed on sexual practices’. African women were reported to have ‘a fair degree of permissiveness towards premarital relations’, while ‘surreptitious extramarital relations are not the point of sin’ and therefore not punished. African women’s sexual networking patterns were blamed for the rampant spread of AIDS.

³Parker *et al.* (1991) define sexual culture as the system of meaning, knowledge, beliefs and practices that structure sexuality in different social contexts. They emphasize the significance of social, cultural, political, economic and religious factors in the construction of sexuality.

Based within a Caldwellian perspective, several behavioural interventions aimed at reducing further spread of HIV/AIDS have set out to change sexual practices emanating from this 'dangerous' African traditional culture. These attempts have yielded a growing body of scholarship uncritically chronicling 'harmful traditional and cultural practices' (for example Ssengendo and Ssekatawa 1999; Packer 2002). Uganda is rife with information, education and communication (IEC) messages channelled through diverse media, specifically addressing change from 'harmful' to 'safer' practices—mostly rooted within local culture. Thus Kiganda⁴ sexual culture is continuously challenged.

Airhihenbuwa (1995) criticizes mimicking Western biomedical blueprint theories in different contexts without *a priori* contextual consideration. Based within Airhihenbuwa's paradigmatic shift away from culturalist explanations that reify and ostracize an assumed homogeneous African culture (see also Ranger 1983; Adams and Markus 2001; Winthrop 2002), this article describes contemporary ritual sex⁵ practices among Baganda in Masaka District, Uganda. The article considers the interplay between sexual culture and HIV/AIDS in a context of diverse social, political and economic transformations.

Without wishing to exoticize the sexual practices under discussion, we choose the umbrella label 'ritual sex' to define sexual activity mandated by social expectation or cultural tradition rather than individual choice. This can vary from explicit mandates to engage in sex at specific times in prescribed positions with particular partners, to cultural events and ceremonies in which the normal code of sexual exchange and negotiation is altered, making sexual partnership easier. Kiganda sexual norms of labia elongation (*okusika enfuli*), stylized articulation and gesticulation for sex (*okusikina*) and hygiene in sex (*eby'ekikumbi*) are excluded from this definition because they are an unmarked, standard, taken-for-granted part of ordinary life (see Tamale 2005 for details). Ritual sex is marked behaviour focalizing

'Sexual culture' is a label for the general expression of cultural behaviour and not for individual expressions of sexuality. Individuals, however, cognizant of cultural ideals of sexuality, do express variations within parameters that are socially defined as normative (1991: 79–80). Implicit tensions between collective and individual expressions of sexuality can arise.

⁴Emic lexicon: Buganda is the Kingdom; the people are Baganda (*sing.* Muganda); the language is Luganda and Kiganda is a related adjective.

⁵A key word search for 'ritual sex' reveals its problematic nature (Kirby 1991) as a label for several phenomena ranging from bizarre sexual orgies involving child sacrifice, satanic worshippers indulging in sex with gendered devils, spiritual rites with symbolic phalluses, to tribal public performances of group sex. Perhaps this ambiguity originates from the historical metamorphosis of discourse surrounding ritual (see Roth 1995 for a detailed review), which is presently imbued with multiple layers of meaning associated with rites of passage, the rules and practices of co-mingling in face-to-face interactions, modern media events, or even calamities such as assassinations and mass exhumations. Furthermore, although the Western biomedical paradigm employs 'sex' as a label for a range of practices of bodily sexual intercourse, it is our submission that there are lay translations of sex which surpass the physical terrain.

transitions, key moments, turning points, and unusual occurrences such as the birth of twins.

When an association is made between the 'African system of sexuality' and the increasing HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is assumed that the persistence of inherent sexual practices has a direct impact on the spread of HIV. However, cultural practices by their very nature are subject to reinterpretation and change. The process of transformation may be faster in the case of ritual sex practices that have been under assault from several social-political institutions including religion, colonization and, more recently, concerted anti-HIV/AIDS efforts. Thus ritual sex offers unique insights into transformations of social-cultural norms in our study setting.

The study investigated the persistence and adaptation of ritual sex practices and the institutional contexts in which they occur in contemporary Masaka District. This article investigates how individuals and specific groups negotiate meanings and practices of culturally prescribed sexual customs, and the diverse influences shaping local nuances within Kiganda sexual culture. It also examines the role of HIV/AIDS in re-scripting contemporary sexual behaviour.

THE STUDY SETTING

Fieldwork was done between 2001 and 2003 in rural and urban Masaka District. Masaka District was the first area⁶ in Uganda to have HIV/AIDS cases (Ministry of Health 2003; Serwadda *et al.* 1985). Extending westwards from Lake Victoria, Masaka is predominantly a rural district whose population mainly depends upon subsistence agriculture. Historically, the area currently called Masaka District was *Essaza ly'eBuddu*—one of four counties comprising the Buganda Kingdom.⁷ Consequently, the majority of the population are Baganda—a Bantu-speaking ethnic group, who claim common ancestry and are socially organized in patrilineal clans which foster cultural identity and belonging (Roscoe 1911; Kagwa 1905). According to Kiganda custom, marriage is both exogamous to the clan and patrilocal, although wives maintain affiliation to their paternal clan. Polygyny is acceptable. Children belong to their father's clan (Kizekka 1972, 1976;

⁶ Before revision of district borders, Masaka included Rakai – where HIV was first reported.

⁷ Pre-colonial Buganda was a relatively well-established monarchy, with a Kabaka (king), *lukiiko* (parliament), an army for defence against neighbouring kingdoms like Bunyoro-Kitara and expansionist drives. During colonialism, the Buganda Kingdom was a British protectorate. Four years after independence, the kingdom was abolished by Prime Minister Obote during circumstances of civil strife, leading to the exile of the Kabaka (who earlier had been appointed ceremonial President of Uganda), and the deaths of several royalists. Things Kiganda went underground, in favour of public enactments of nationalism. The Buganda Kingdom was reinstated in 1995, with the Kabaka having titular political power over Baganda, and several Baganda trying to reclaim the traditions and customs of old. (For detailed discussions of Buganda's political history, see Reid 2002; Roscoe 1911; Mair 1934; Karlstrom 1996.)

Musisi 1991). Kiganda religion revolves around worship of ancestors, spirits and shades. Kiganda medicine and religion merge in belief and practice.

The main religion in Masaka is Roman Catholicism, followed by Islam and Protestantism. Uganda's colonial legacy is such that religion influences national and local politics, as well as social policy and reality. Religious affiliation determines social, political and economic outcomes at diverse levels; exclusion from and inclusion into a range of opportunities are often based on religious classification or identity. Historical legacies of religious animosities still persist in contemporary Uganda, in addition to segregation along tribal, racial, sectarian and gender lines.

METHODS

Professor James Whitworth⁸ seeded the idea of the study after reading Ntozi's (1997) work on remarriage and widowhood in Uganda. We initially set out to establish the prevalence of the custom of levirate marriage in Masaka District. However, in keeping with the grounded theory approach (Stewart 1998), our ethnographic study broadened in scope to explore new generic themes including ritual sex, death rituals, social policy, reconstructed tradition and institutional transformations.

Data collection triangulated mainly qualitative methods, namely ethnographic participant observation, case studies, individual in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, a mini-survey of cultural ceremonies occurring in the past year, and literature review. Participants were selected using purposive, snow-ball and theoretical sampling techniques from relevant social categories including traditional healers, Kiganda herbalists, elders, *mutuba* bark-cloth makers, Luganda language instructors, clan land owners called *abataka*, clan leaders, widows, widowers, Munno Mukabi burial society members, 'twin parents',⁹ religious authorities from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal and Islamic faiths, district administrators from the directorates of health, education and culture, and Buganda Kingdom representatives in Masaka District like the *Pokino* (a local stand-in for the Kabaka). We attended cultural ceremonies including last funeral rites and burials in order to observe behaviour, listen to conversations, and acquaint ourselves with more subtle nuances of cultural practice.

Formal interviews were recorded on audio tape in the participants' language of preference, transcribed verbatim, translated from Luganda into English where necessary, and stored on a computer. Together with field notes from participant observation and debriefing sessions, these data were subjected to discourse analysis using Atlas.ti (Scientific Software Development, Berlin).

⁸Medical Research Council programme director at the time of the study.

⁹'Twin parents' refers to the parents of twins in this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The joint science and ethics committee of the Medical Research Council/Uganda Virus Research Institute approved the study. Clan elders were asked for permission to attend ceremonies in their clans. Written informed consent was obtained from participants before conducting formal interviews. Participants were free to refuse to participate, withdraw at any time without giving a reason, or refrain from answering questions that made them uncomfortable. Names of participants and villages are changed in order to ensure anonymity.

FROM THE SPECIAL TO THE MUNDANE: A CONTINUUM OF SEX PRACTICES

Sex appeases the spirit of death

In the data, the most frequently mentioned cultural experience associated with ritual sex was *okwabya olumbe*¹⁰ (a literal translation is 'bursting the death'), which is a label for a series of rituals encompassed within last funeral rites. Sexual intercourse is mandated in three peculiar instances: namely *okumala kafisa* ('completing to be robbed by death'), *okumala olumbe* ('completing the death') and *eby'abakuza* (things of guardians/widow inheritors).

Okumala kafisa was discussed as a cultural requirement of sexual intercourse between two biological parents at the death of their offspring. Participants reported that this custom is particularly essential in cases where the dead child had not yet produced offspring. After the burial ceremony and an ensuing period of mourning,¹¹ the parents are supposed to have sexual intercourse in order to mark or celebrate the end of their public mourning for their child. Prior to the sexual act, the parents bathe with a herbal concoction of purification and preventive medicines obtained from traditional healers to spiritually insure their children, clan members and kin against another visit from death. This ritual culminates in sexual intercourse. After having fulfilled their spiritual, moral, cultural and kin obligation, the couple are free to proceed with their normal life. Several elders associated the rampant rates of death in the community with contemporary neglect by parents of a responsibility enshrined in Kiganda mores and values. Some participants reported that it was so important in the past that even in cases where parents were separated by different circumstances—including divorce, war or community service to the Kabaka—they would still come together for this ritual, in order to protect the wider kin group and clan from contagion and unnecessary

¹⁰ *Olumbe* – the vernacular word for death is a linguistic appropriation of a traditional legend of the origin of Baganda people, in which Walumbe – the name for death personified – is a brother to Nambi, the daughter of Gulu who owns the heavens. Nambi travels to earth to marry Kintu, the first Muganda man. Her brother Walumbe often visits the earth and carries off some of Nambi's offspring. Fatal illness is also called *olumbe*.

¹¹ Unlike other contexts in which a specific length of time is prescribed, our data revealed no specific period of mourning required before parents conducted this ritual.

death. The majority of youth participants were not even aware of the existence of this ritual, although a few had heard about it.

Julie: Okay. Let us imagine the man stays alone, and the woman also is somewhere else, or they have separated, and they do not meet at all. But this woman has a child by this man. Then the child dies. So what they could do in the past, they could count four days. And after those days both parents washed with some medicine. And then they have sex. So if the baby was still young—like still breast-feeding or a bit older—this means that the woman will have sex and conceive. So she will still be a member of this family again. And that is why there is sex at the weaning of babies. This is because they wanted to conceive again. Those were tricks. And we take them to be part of the culture. (Focus group discussion with widows)

As in the above example, a few female participants were critical of the role of this ritual because it ensured that women continued to play their reproductive role, thereby enhancing their male benefactors' clan.

During the last funeral rites ceremony (*okwabya olumbe*), the ritual known as *okumala olumbe* is mandated for the spouses of immediate family members. The most visible version of this ritual is the cultural prescription for widows which was mentioned in all the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Analysis reveals tensions between the recipients—widows—and those who uphold its necessity. Several participants provided anecdotes where in the past the widow was required 'to have sex' with a male agnate of her deceased husband. This was often authenticated as enshrined in 'true traditional Kiganda culture'. Further investigation, particularly among the widows, widowers, clan elders and the traditional healers about actual practice reveals that no one admitted actually experiencing or participating in a ritual involving penetrative sexual intercourse. Instead, we collected a range of symbolic sexual intercourse practices which different widows had undergone. Many of these widows reported that they were instructed to sit on the floor in the doorway of their main house with legs stretched outwards. Then a male agnate of their late spouse jumped once, twice or thrice over their extended legs to symbolize the sexual act. Some other widows reported that amidst much debate and crying, the clan leaders instructed them to provide an inner cloth-belt,¹² spread it on the floor in the doorway and have the male agnate jump over it. It was important that this belt was still warm with the body heat of the widow. A rarer version involved a young widow who was instructed to drink a lot of tea but refrain from urination prior to the ritual of *okumala olumbe*—which was not explained to her until the early hours of the morning, when she was instructed to urinate in a spot directly in front of the house. Thereafter she was

¹² Baganda have adopted a colonial creation in ladies' fashion called *gomesi* or *busuuti* as their traditional dress. It involves wrapping an inner cloth to create an impression of fat, and tying it up with an inner cloth-belt. The *gomesi* is then donned over this and also held with a wide flashy belt.

shoved away and to her amazement a younger unmarried brother-in-law was also instructed to urinate in exactly the same spot, just before her urine dissolved into the earth.

Reference was often made to the widow having to cope with imitating the sexual act with a male in-law during the last funeral rites ceremony. We often probed participants to further examine why this form of ritual sex had varying shapes. Many immediately referred to the fear of (re)infection with sexually transmitted infections (STI), specifically HIV/AIDS. Some widows in the discussions were open about their HIV sero-positive status and commented that even when the culture dictated sexual intercourse with them, the minute they were suspected of carrying the virus, it was important for the family and clan elders to renegotiate how the ritual could be conducted without necessarily having penetrative sexual intercourse. Several participants were aware of a recently introduced practice in traditional medicine which was a prophylactic against the effect of not undertaking the ritual. In this case, a traditional healer prepared medicines to be bathed with and fetishes for carrying so as to protect the wider kin group from more deaths. However, in cases where the cause of the spouse's death was not related to HIV/AIDS, some widows reported approaching the ceremony with a lot of apprehension because they were aware of the cultural expectations, but nobody had prepared or informed them about the procedures and requirements until the night of the ritual.

From our data, there were no similar cultural requirements for widowers—that is, there was no requirement for sororate marriage—although two widowers had in fact produced children with their late wives' sisters.

In patrilineal societies like Buganda, kinship ties are established through the male parent. At marriage, a bride fetches bride-wealth for her patrilineal kin when her husband's family take over her reproductive rights and functions. Consequently, at the husband's death, the institution of levirate marriage ensures that the ownership of the widow and her progeny remains within this family. Also known as widow inheritance, levirate marriage in East Africa has been the focus of other scholars (examples include Ntozi 1997; Heald 1995; Kizekka 1972; Roscoe 1911). For the older participants, the notion of 'taking over the widow' was necessary and discussed in terms of protecting her from seeking sexual relationships outside the clan in order to support herself and the orphans. Male participants were often quick to emphasize how it was extremely challenging to provide for a widow and her progeny without expecting sexual services from her. Three male participants admitted that they had actually married their dead brothers' widows when they became the *bakuza* (levirate guardians) of the children. All were aged more than sixty years. Furthermore, even though each of these participants was interviewed separately, there was a common insistence about how the 'marriage' was a mutual agreement in which the widow was not coerced to have sexual relations with these *bakuza*. However, we were not able to obtain access to these remarried widows because one had died before the study, one lived outside the

study area, and the one we located declined to be identified as a remarried widow, but preferred to participate as a traditional herbalist.

Some men discussed levirate marriage in relation to HIV infection and looming poverty, describing the practice as potentially dangerous for male guardians' physical bodies and their financial pockets. Others emphasized the added social responsibility of guiding the widow and orphans – catering for their food, shelter, education, health, well-being and social character – and stressed that it was too demanding to be taken lightly. The male participants tended to be more tolerant, seeking to adjust the stereotypical image of *bakuza* portrayed by the *vox populi*, feminists, human rights advocates, and empowerment lawyers like the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), where the *bakuza* eventually fail in their responsibility of catering for their dead brothers' families. Many male participants argued that the demands upon the *bakuza* could be overwhelming. While the older participants associated the opportunity to be *bakuza* with high esteem, honour and respectability, the youths in the study expressed outright rejection of the idea by arguing that there were too many deaths in the present generation for the institution to be relevant any more: economic hardship was more severe, and there is the risk of getting an HIV-infected widow and orphans whose upkeep is more expensive because of potentially greater need for healthcare services when illnesses occur. In addition the youth participants believed HIV-infected widows and orphans were more dependent because of the assumption that they were less able to undertake or sustain hard productive wage labour or profitable income-generating activities owing to weakness related to HIV/AIDS. There was a general claim about breakdown in kin bonds and cultural ties that previously enhanced the value of committing to an extended-family system.

For the female participants, levirate marriage was discussed as a highly ambivalent issue. On the one hand, it was presented as a socio-cultural evil perpetuating female subjugation and abuse of women's rights. At the other extreme, it was also a possible solution for dealing with the problems that come with transitioning and adjusting to widowhood. Women participants tended to collectively euphoricize the past successful implementation of levirate marriage. They claimed that it was a solution in the past before poverty and economic hardship introduced phenomena like land wrangles, inheritance rivalries, discrediting a deceased's will, the overt greed and profligacy of *bakuza*, the over-commodification of sex, and the need for reciprocation. The younger widows found tales of responsible *bakuza* – those who catered for the needs of their newly inherited family (of widow and orphans) without expecting sexual services from the widow – rather incredible (see Nyanzi 2004 for details). Instead, their narratives reveal how the transition into widowhood was also a time for negotiating issues of ownership, sexuality and reproduction with their in-laws.

A much more invisible requirement of *okumala olumbe* involves the married family members of the deceased. When a wife

lost family—including parents, grandparents, siblings, nieces or nephews—after returning from the last funeral rites, she was expected to sleep apart from the husband (and preferably on the floor). When he was ready to renew conjugal relations with her, the husband would have to buy his mourning wife a new traditional dress called *gomesi*. He would then present it to her and invite her to bed in order to *kumala olumbe*, which is also variously called *okumunaazako olumbe* (to wash off death from her), *okumunaazako amaziga* (to wash off tears from her). Many of the elders and older study participants reported performing this ritual several times. Money was required to buy a new *gomesi*, and participants revealed that, when money was hard to come by, they sometimes bought or received cheaper items like a second-hand headscarf, a new handkerchief, or a half-slip, or an inner cloth-belt. The sexual act was a mark of the end of the mourning period.

Of sex and birth

The social script for ritual sex in Kiganda culture, as presented by the study participants, vividly marks out two distinct events associated with birth, and necessitating specific performances of sex. These are *okumala ekizadde* (to complete a birth) and *emikolo gy'abalongo* (the ceremonies of twins). Participants revealed that after a child is born, custom demands that the parents have sexual intercourse in order to ensure that the child lives well. Varying durations between delivery and the ritual sex were mentioned, including 'four days', 'one week', 'when the woman has healed', 'after the bad blood stops dripping'. Many participants reported that the ritual mandated penetrative sexual intercourse between the parents. Others described another symbolic performance which involved simulation of the sexual act, but with the baby lying in between the parents. In situations where the parents had severed their sexual relationship at the time of the baby's birth, then the alternative method of jumping over the woman's legs could be appropriated in combination with bathing in herbal preventive medicines. Participants believed it was necessary to undertake at least one of these measures, otherwise the infant would suffer a culture-bound syndrome called *obusobe*¹³—characterized by deteriorating appetite, weight loss, and even eventual death.

Twin ceremonies have been the focus of several discourses about sexuality in Buganda (Musisi 1991; Roscoe 1911; Kagwa 1905). This attention arose particularly because the colonial missionaries openly condemned twin ceremonies as satanic and barbaric celebrations, involving traditional ancestral worship and characterized by filthy obscenity as well as over-indulgence in promiscuity. Thus they lured colonial anthropologists to produce ethnographic accounts. Legacies of this current prevailed in the data from twin parents, called *Ssalongo* and *Nnalongo* for 'twin father' and 'twin mother' respectively. Noteworthy

¹³ *Obusobe* comes from the root word *kusoba*, which means 'to go wrong' or 'to fail'.

in the data analysis was the thematic repetition of renouncing twin ceremonies as a prerequisite for religious affiliation to diverse Christian denominations.

Suuna: I will give you the example of twins. People just say that they will treat twins in the modern way just because white people have led us astray, going away from our culture.

Moses: But you look here, when you go to confess in church, the priest advises you not to follow the culture. So that is why I said that religions have contributed much towards undermining the culture.

Katerega: Yes, we must confess the sin of performing twin ceremonies or even observing twin rites in the family. (Focus group discussion)

It is important to examine critically the stigma surrounding Kiganda twin ceremonies. By renouncing everything to do with cultural twin ceremonies, during the Christian ritual of confession either to a priest or to a fellowship of brethren, what are Baganda twin parents denying themselves?

Twin ceremonies are one socio-cultural space in Buganda society where adherence to sex prohibition taboos between in-laws is lifted. In everyday reality, physical contact between in-laws separated by generation and gender is taboo. For example it is believed that when a man touches his mother-in-law, either one or both of them could get struck by *obuko*¹⁴ – an incurable condition in which the sufferer perpetually shakes, akin to Parkinson's syndrome. During twin ceremonies, physical contact barriers enshrined within *obuko* observances are broken. The twin parents in our study narrated the thrill of body-to-body contact with their in-laws. Amidst animated ribaldry, the few twin parents who had conducted these twin ceremonies stressed the significance of the protective power of twins because none of those present had developed *obuko*.

Participants reported that after this ceremony, both *Ssalongo* and *Nnalongo* symbolically and rhetorically lose their marital status. Thus the saying, *Ssalongo tabeera mwami* ('*Ssalongo* can never be a *Mwami*'). Similar to the title 'Mister', *Mwami* is a Luganda label reserved for married men. *Mwami* also means 'husband'. After boldly getting intimate with their in-laws, these twin parents are rhetorically elevated to an estate above marriage.

Twin ceremonies were also reported as a space that provided licence to use relatively obscene language with deep sexual images and metaphors. Cultural songs for celebrating twin ceremonies are noted for their explicit employment of sexual innuendoes. In a society where open public talk about sex and sexuality was taboo, particularly across generations (Kinsman *et al.* 2000; Muyinda *et al.* 2004; Kizekka

¹⁴The word *obuko* is rooted in *omuko*, which is the Luganda word for 'in-law'. Thus the condition is named for the belief that its cause is rooted in breaking *obuko* observances.

1976), the boldness of these songs is indeed a noteworthy celebration of sexuality.

Twakedde kumakya kuzina balongo – Be chwi
 We woke this morning to dance/fuck twins – *be chwi*
Akantu kanuma kanjwi-jwiya – Be chwi
 My little thing/sex organ is hurting me, it's aching – *be chwi*
Nnalongo baamuyisayo akeeyo – Be chwi
 The twin mother had some little broom/penis swept through her – *be chwi*
 (Excerpt from a twin song)¹⁵

Performance of ritual sex in twin ceremonies was reported to involve more than the twin parents. At the birth of the twins, one of the necessary rituals is for the parents' families to provide a sibling to the twin parents. These (often younger siblings) are called *Ssalongo omukulu* and *Nnalongo omukulu*, translated as 'more significant twin father' and 'more significant twin mother' respectively. They are responsible for acting on behalf of the twins and are symbolically responsible for their well-being, lest they 'kill the whole clan'. Their role is to ensure that twin rituals and observances do occur. In the ritual sex act specifically called *okuzina*¹⁶ *abalongo* (dancing the twins), participants reported that amidst cultural dancing and jubilation, *Nnalongo* lies on her back with legs spread and the young of a banana fruit (*empumumpu*) is planted on top of her genitalia. Then *Ssalongo Omukulu* kneels between her legs and knocks this baby-banana-fruit off her with either his penis, or another of his body parts. Thereafter, the drums beat loudest, leading into another ritual which involves eating specific food ingredients cooked without salt and more violation of taboo: stepping into the food. Four nights after the twin ceremony, the twin parents must perform ritual sex called *okumala emikolo gyabalongo* (completing the ceremonies of the twins).

Therefore, when contemporary Baganda Christians renounce twin ceremonies, in essence they join in the Judeo-Christian discourse which condemns a customary celebration of the birth of twins. They deny themselves and their kin the authentic Kiganda savour of a heightened awareness of sexuality, or cultural licence to articulate passion, lust, love, desire and desirability. They stifle the power of collective affirmation of sexual performances in this setting. Several participants indeed admitted they had not conducted the twin ceremonies in the cultural way, but instead 'tied the twins' using traditional medicines and later took the twins for baptism. 'Tying the twins' (*okusiba abalongo*) was discussed as a new variant of traditional medicine necessitated by the condemnation of twin ceremonies, which led many to publicly

¹⁵We asked elders, twin parents, clan leaders and traditional healers to sing us the twin songs they knew. Future research will involve content analysis of the words, meanings, symbolism and power of these songs.

¹⁶The word *okuzina* has multiple meanings including 'to dance' but also vulgarly 'to have sex'.

denounce it and yet privately seek the protection of cultural gods and ancestors against the wrath unleashed by defiance of twin observances. *Lubanga* – the name for specialist traditional healers who work only with twins – were reported to provide new herbal concoctions and fetishes which would facilitate and protect those twin parents who declined to conduct the elaborate twin ceremonies but rather preferred to baptize the children. Several participants were quick to point out the hypocrisy involved in the religious acts of public confession and denial of what culture dictated.

Performances of sex to mark rites of passage

Parents have customary mandates for ritual sex to celebrate other significant rites of passage for their children, in addition to birth and death. In this regard, participants' narratives focused on *okumala amabeere*¹⁷ (to complete breast milk), *okumala amabega* (to complete the menarche of a daughter), and *okumala obufumbo* (to complete marriage). During the process of weaning an infant from breast milk to food supplements, and eventual termination of breastfeeding, the biological parents must have penetrative sexual intercourse. Related to the *obusobe* observances associated with birth, our study participants reported that failure of parents to perform *okumala amabeere* results in the breast milk turning sour, choking the baby, and laying it open to the ultimate possibility of death from malnutrition. Deeper interrogation about infants whose parents are separated, or dead, or remarried, revealed that many participants believed this particular practice was one of the few occasions that necessitated a genuine attempt at reuniting for the sake of protecting the infant from harm. Some youths and urban-based discussants were totally unaware of this ritual sex practice.

In the event that the parents cannot perform *okumala amabeere* for their infant, prophylactic fetishes or charms to be worn round the baby's waist are obtained from traditional healers specializing in children. Female herbalists stressed that the sexual act was the only guaranteed protection for the infant, often recounting scenarios where fetishes failed to protect babies who went on to develop illness at weaning. This perhaps elucidates the deep-seated belief in the preventive power of this sexual custom.

Okumenya amabega (meaning to break the buttocks) is one among several euphemisms locally employed in the vernacular to mean 'starting menstruation'. As part of the rites surrounding menarche, participants reported that the biological parents must have ritual sex before the last day of their daughter's menstrual flow, in order to ensure her healthy menstruation, fertility and reproduction, and the well-being of her children.

Some female elders attributed the current increases in dysmenorrhoea, infertility and caesarean section to modern parents

¹⁷ *Amabeere* refers to breasts or breast milk.

neglecting this duty to protect their daughters. One male shrine-priest of the god Mukasa associated increases in sexual health problems, particularly HIV/AIDS and a culture-bound syndrome called *akasagazi* in which one is driven to have repetitive sexual intercourse with diverse multiple partners, to the 'present generation's shunning of this custom. Therefore women get *akasagazi* after crossing a junction¹⁸ and the men who have sex with them also catch it.' Many participants learnt about this ritual sex practice during the study, illuminating general low levels of awareness. Several reasons for this disparity were discussed, including separation of parents due to divorce, remarriage, migration for employment, or death; the current education system whereby children are sent to boarding school where their menarche often occurs; dysfunctional extended families, in which children are raised by guardians from other tribes; and modern departures from the traditional institution in which the *ssenga* (paternal aunt) provided sexual and reproductive education to her nieces and nephews (see Muyinda *et al.* 2000). Various participants pointed to the traditional taboo on the discussion of sexual topics between parents and children as the overriding factor: even when daughters know about the necessity of this ritual sex practice, they fear to talk about menarche with their parents, and would rather tell their friends or peers, or even their teacher. Yet without knowing that menarche has occurred, they reasoned, it is unlikely that the parents will *okumala amabega*.

Parents are also mandated to have ritual sex called *okumala obufumbo* (to complete marriage) when their children marry. The bride is collected from her father's household. Prior to leaving for her husband's locale, she must undergo customary symbolic rites of farewell with different members of her clan. Customarily, on the day when the groom's family or entourage pay dowry and collect their bride, the two sets of parents must perform ritual sex before the newly married couple consummate their marriage. The father can jump over the mother's legs if they are unable to have actual penetrative sexual intercourse.

Our literature review and the *vox populi* reveal incidents where the *ssenga* instructed newly married Baganda couples in sexual intercourse (Kilbride and Kilbride 1990). Some authors claim she went to the extent of witnessing the first consummation, and physically illustrating intercourse to her virgin niece by having sex with the new groom (Ssendendo and Ssekatawa 1999). Driven to link Kiganda sexual culture to HIV incidence, these authors discuss the age and assumed consequent sexual experience of the *ssenga* as a potential source of infection to the groom and eventually to the bride. We explored occurrence of this practice among our study participants. Many of the older participants explained that the *ssenga* played a significant role in

¹⁸The junction symbolically means a place where different things meet, and is variously used as a site for disposing of polluting substances after therapeutic ministrations from traditional healers and shrine priests. When undergoing healing, patients are often forbidden to cross junctions without protective charms.

marriages in Buganda in the past. However, they also stressed that this role no longer made sense because of generational estrangement within the extended families due to migration, education, employment, poverty, intermarriages across tribes, nations or continents, and the sale of clan land. Thus *ssengas* presently play commercialized or symbolic roles in current marriages; receiving material benefits of the *gomesi* as dictated by custom, without necessarily instructing the newly married couple in sexual matters or reproduction. Participants reported it was rare to find virgins at marriage. Since sexual debut was no longer simultaneous with marriage, there is the possibility that the newly married couple are more sexually experienced than the *ssenga*, and thus not in need of instruction. Due to public sexual health education, the mystery and novelty of sex have been tamed in Masaka, further negating the *ssenga's* educational role. None of the married youths in the study had received any sexual training from their *ssenga*.

Weddings, like burials and last funeral rites, were discussed as cultural ceremonies in which the usual prohibitions against sexual interaction are loosened. Participants reported several conditions that favour sex at wedding ceremonies, including the collective presence of several relatives, friends and villagers from near and far, general merriment – drinking, feasting, laughter and dancing, and dressing up in which beauty and desirability are unusually enhanced – and the feelings of love and expressions of sexuality invoked by the marrying couple. Spontaneous and casual sex encounters were presented as common occurrences at weddings.

Following marriage, it was expected of a man to build a house for his wife and progeny. Customary Kiganda practice prescribed ritual sex called *okumala enju* (to complete the house) prior to occupying a new house, particularly if it was personal property, in order to ensure the benign cooperation of the ancestral shades of that lineage (*empewo z'abajajja*: ('the winds of our grannies')).¹⁹ Thus on completion of building a house, a man invited his kinsmen and friends for ancestral worship and jubilation. Later on during the first night in the house he would engage in penetrative sex with his wife (or the spouse who owned that space in cases of polygyny). This in effect symbolically stamped ownership by the ancestry over the household, property and lands, allowing the ancestral spirits access to oversee and protect members' prosperity. The elderly men, clan leaders and most clan-land owners reported that they had conducted this practice. Some urban land owners had also performed it, on the insistence of their older kinsmen. However several other urban participants, particularly immigrants into

¹⁹ *Empewo*, which means wind, is the name given to spirits. Rather than being interpreted as either hot or cold wind, in the case of *empewo z'abajajja* – the winds of our grannies – it is associated with a mystical force that can either harm or protect, bless or curse, depending on the circumstance or behaviour of the individual(s). In traditional Kiganda worship, *empewo* can be called upon to intervene in bad situations, to cause harm or to vindicate, to reveal the unknown, or to foretell the future. *Empewo* can also come upon diviners or healers and transform them into mediums between the physical and spiritual worlds.

the district, reported that they rented houses and often shifted without necessarily engaging in this ritual sex practice of *okumala enyumba*. A few others claimed that they had built their houses prior to marriage, and thus had no spouse with whom to perform this ritual. The frequent rejoinder of Kiganda tradition adherents to such arguments was to link the 'current turmoil in Buganda'²⁰ to this apparent neglect of tradition.

LOCAL VIEWS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Contrary to a homogeneous and static 'African sexuality', this article exposes the multi-layered and shifting scripts for customary sexual practices within one district, Masaka, out of the several that comprise the Buganda Kingdom. From our ethnographic data, it is meaningless to generalize patterns to a particular generation, gender, religion, or location. Depending on the context, there is constantly negotiated difference and performance within the same individual, group, or community. The fluidity of meaning, and variations within this small setting – a tiny portion of Africa – problematizes Westernized universal conceptualizations of a bounded African 'Other'.

Documenting this change should perhaps have been a history project, because the processes of transformation and negotiation were certainly gradual and complex. Adaptation to the AIDS scare is only the latest phase in a long history of flexible reinterpretations. A limitation of the study was that our situatedness as researchers was unable to facilitate a scholarly recreation of this history. Our strength as ethnographers, however, is that we could focus on our participants' own sense of history, their conscious positioning in relation to 'tradition', 'true Kiganda culture', and their own sense of what has changed and why, in their own words.

Analysis revealed a myriad of forms of ritual sex practice ranging from everyday customary sexual practice in the mundane order of life, to the more unusual and occasional practices designed for specific estates in the life cycles of individuals, couples and the wider kin group. Participants reported that 'proper tradition' or 'true Kiganda custom' necessitated penetrative sexual intercourse to 'complete' cultural rites in 'the past'. This past was presented as a period located somewhere in the far distance and not quite specifiable. However, several influences facilitated a departure from 'pure Kiganda culture', subsequently yielding diverse forms of symbolic sex: jumping over legs, skipping over warm belts, sitting on laps, urinating in the same spot, mimicking the sex act but with clothes on – performances of sex which bypass the exchange of bodily fluids within a penis-and-vagina interaction. Thus not all customary sex is necessarily dangerous for HIV infection. In addition, we have seen that participants discussed an innovation in Kiganda traditional medicine, in the form of prophylactic charms to

²⁰ An umbrella term used to cover the high rates of HIV/AIDS, death, poverty, lack, political impotence of the Kabaka, departure from Kiganda customs, inter-tribal marriages, etcetera.

'tie' the adverse effects of not having sex – even though these parents have denounced Kiganda ethos and turned instead to other cultures for protective rituals such as baptism. Given the likelihood of HIV-infection, Kiganda custom has evolved fast enough to provide culturally accepted mechanisms for still performing the ritual but eliminating the possibility of contagion.

Baganda in Masaka have varied social cultural allegiances: to multiple religions, their ethnic group, dictates from their clan, 'modern' thinking, Westernization, traditionalism, and the options created by generational cleaving. Participants' narratives and experiences reveal that as individuals, they are constantly playing out diverse notions of personhood and sexuality to the varied audiences in these social groupings. The multiple social scripts for 'legitimate' sexual behaviour demand different (and sometimes contradictory) roles from the acting individuals. This perhaps explains the general theme of hypocrisy which permeated the discussions of Kiganda tradition diehards.

Even though we were academically conscious of the need for a departure from the reification of culture, our analysis of the narratives reveals that participants believed that the present practice of ritual sex in Masaka District is changing from various forms of set traditional sexual culture that they claim were socially scripted in the past, presumably prior to cultural contamination from outside influences. Although we focus on transformations within ritual sex practices in this article, study participants generally discussed this change in association with – and within the context of – broader social, cultural, economic and political changes. There are several emic explanations for the changes in Kiganda ritual sex. 'Departure from tradition' was a recurrent theme. The older generation blamed youths for admiring other cultures, particularly a reified notion of 'Western culture of the *Bazungu*' ('white men'), and thereby looking down upon anything deemed 'true Kiganda culture'. Several elders argued that the linear model of development had brainwashed the present generation into aspiring to be and live like the West – as a model of progressive advancement – such that Kiganda values, mores and practices were interpreted as idioms of backwardness or underdevelopment. The youths, while acknowledging this departure, instead cast the blame on the older generation who, they claimed, were failing to transmit Kiganda heritage in its fullness. Various participants emphasized disintegration in the social organization of Buganda society. In the past the lineage (*olunyiriri*) lived together in a homestead (*olujja*) where various households (*enju*) linked through patrilineal ties cohesively provided the environment of a visible extended-family structure which had the responsibility of socializing Baganda children. However, the post-modern Kiganda family in Masaka District is so removed from that pre-colonial organization that it is a mimicry of the individualistic capitalist nuclear family of husband, wife and children. Grannies, aunts, uncles, cousins and wider kin are so busy eking out their own livings that they no longer hold the responsibility of instructing children in the extended family; in any case, many children are in

boarding schools or employment far away. Migration (for education, employment, marriage, business or development) has a general impact upon the rift between observing and departing from tradition.

Several participants also discussed the role of national politics in disrupting Kiganda cultural observances. Apart from introducing Western influences of Christianity, education, 'modern lifestyle', British law and rule into Buganda, the colonizers of Uganda sought to break the spirit of the tribes when they bunched up different tribal political entities (kingdoms, chiefdoms and segmentary societies) into one nation with one physical geographical border. The blindness to the multiple social political boundaries and rifts within the nation sustained the calculated system of indirect rule. The colonial legacy of nation building calls for the death of the tribe and its values in favour of nationalizing philosophies and practices which aim at uniting or homogenizing the 54 Ugandan tribes into one person. Other scholars of Buganda (Tamale 2005; Musisi 2002; Schiller 1990; Mair 1934) and elsewhere (Cooper and Stoler 1997; Young 1995; McClintock 1995; Stoler 1995) discuss colonial control of the sexuality and reproductive lives of the colonized.

Perhaps this explains the contradiction between reinstalling the Buganda Kingdom, together with the Kabaka, and the continued departure(s) from Kiganda traditional practices. One would expect Baganda to re-embrace Kiganda culture, because the Kabaka's exile of 1966 and the subsequent dissolution of the kingdom were seen as major political processes disrupting individual-group and private-public relations, and fostering non-compliance with Kiganda tradition. Christianity and Islam were discussed as strong deterrents to observing Kiganda sexual culture and practice: participants claimed that inner debate and conflict often tore at a religious Muganda because of contradictory requirements.

The most frequently mentioned factor responsible for changing Kiganda ritual sex in Masaka was the impact of HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge, and the reality of the disease within the lives of the participants, either as carriers of the virus, sufferers of AIDS, or carers of infected relatives, friends or wider village members. All our participants had witnessed HIV/AIDS in their immediate households. If they were not living with the virus, they claimed that they were bombarded from all fronts by awareness-raising anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns transmitted over popular FM radio stations, television, village health educators, condom promoters, religious leaders, and political administrators (Nyanzi *et al.* 2005). Brandishing 'safe sex' was a socio-political and economic strategy for population groups as diverse as constituent assembly contestants, flea-market vendors, burial society members, sermon preachers, disco rappers and school pupils. Sometimes the campaign messages directly confronted aspects of ritual sex, particularly widow inheritance, polygyny, early sexual debut or sex with high-risk groups like the *ssenga*. However, the knowledge also created notions of contagion from sex and sexuality, introducing an

association of danger into Kiganda sexual culture. By appealing for a reduction or termination of both concurrent and serial multiple sexual partnerships, anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns tainted customary sexual practices with potential for contamination. Several participants believed that HIV/AIDS was responsible for the social invention of the symbolic ritual sex performances discussed above. However, literature published prior to the advent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic reveals that the symbolic custom of jumping over the legs of a spouse, or jumping over a husband's walking stick or hunting spear, were used in pre-colonial Buganda by warriors and hunters during times of collective abstinence while on duty (see Roscoe 1911). Our submission is that HIV/AIDS has transformed the meaning of symbolic ritual sex performances such that they are now potent options for sexual rites. They are no longer simply stand-ins for penetrative sexual intercourse, which was previously only postponed until the constraining events had passed. Instead, they are viable options in and of themselves that actually do complete cultural customs. Other East Africanists (Heald 1995) interrogate and unpack nuances in the meanings of how sex 'completes' customary social processes. Furthermore, these symbolic acts of sex are shifting from mere inferior and impotent performances to powerful media of empowerment and negotiation, such that individuals who are not agreeable to conforming to customary demands of penetrative ritual sex can now renegotiate by employing the idiom of HIV/AIDS contagion to opt for symbolic performance. Thus the fear of HIV (re)infection gives currency to otherwise redundant cultural sexual performances, and enables the agency of previously weaker social entities—women, widows, men opposed to clan dictates—to wield a measure of power.

The ambivalence of how the HIV/AIDS metaphor is used is revealed when one considers the imperialistic undertones shared by colonial, Christian missionary, colonial medical, Western educational and the current anti-HIV/AIDS discourses. The colonizers criticized Kiganda sexual culture in ethnocentric, moralizing propaganda. The missionaries campaigned to displace polygyny and replace it with monogamy, and to curtail premarital and extra-marital pregnancy by introducing the notion of illegitimacy. They also condemned African worship of ancestors or spirits by demonizing Kiganda rites which include ritual sex. Colonial medical discourse and practice in Buganda mistook yaws for syphilis (Vaughan 1991), demanding dehumanizing medical tests and treatments for locals, and thereby heightening associations of danger of infection with Kiganda sexual culture. Western education necessitated delay of marriage and extension of the socially acceptable age of pregnancy, and severed the sexual realm from reproduction—necessitating sexually active Baganda to obtain and maintain contraceptives, or undergo illegal abortion, or suffer social stigma at 'early parenthood'. The most recent social policeman of 'illegitimate sex' in Masaka is anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns: 'Postpone sexual debut', 'Reduce multiple sexual partners', 'Abstain!' 'Use condoms', 'Don't remarry', 'You mess: you die!' 'Zero graze'...

The social-political contexts may have changed; but policing African sexuality, as represented by the Baganda of Masaka in this case, continues to thrive through the vehicle of anti-HIV/AIDS politics.

CONCLUSION

Tradition is not frozen and homogeneous, but adaptive. Local people have the resources and ingenuity to modify rituals when these become unsuited to their outlook and way of life. They do not need heavy-handed health campaigners to denounce their whole sexual culture: they can devise their own ways of enacting ritual sex symbolically rather than performing real sex acts when the latter become dangerous or unacceptable. Much more than the component sexual acts, it is the meanings of the rituals that are important to individuals and society.

Ritual sex signifies 'completion' among these contemporary Baganda. It announces completion of mourning after the death of a child, and the death of a wife's relative; completion of the process of childbirth, completion of suckling a baby, completion of a daughter's pre-puberty years, completion of a child's unmarried status, and completion of a husband's task of constructing a new house after marriage. To the performers, the meaning of ritual sex here is both closure on the preceding state (mourning, childhood, unmarried status, and so on) and an opening of future production. It mainly occurs between husband and wife, or between the biological parents of a child even if they are no longer together. The impact upon HIV-infection of this kind of ritual sex would be no different from marital sex, unless the spouses are living with other partners at the time of sex. The requirement that a widow must have sex with an agnate of her dead husband also signifies closure and reopening. This is the only form of ritual sex that carries an enhanced risk of HIV-infection. The twin ceremonies add a different dimension to the meanings of ritual sex; it is perhaps not so much about closure as it is about dealing with the extraordinary. Twins are perceived as anomalous, dangerous, and also empowering. The excess, ribaldry, and licence with in-laws mark and affirm this foray into the extraordinary—to acknowledge and celebrate it. The rituals signify containment of the potential danger from the twins. The flux and negotiatedness of these diverse forms of ritual sex among contemporary Baganda confirm the malleability and potential for transformation within customs in response to looming danger.

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ABSTRACT

The sexual culture of sub-Saharan African peoples is variously utilized as an explanation for the high incidence of HIV in Africa. Thus it has been the target of behaviour change campaigns championed by massive public health education. Based on ethnographic fieldwork (using participant observation, individual interviews, focus group discussions, and a survey) in Masaka District, this article contests a reified, homogeneous and ethnocentric sexualizing of Africans. It engages with how prescribed ritual sex practices are (re)negotiated, contested, affirmed, policed, revised and given meaning within the context of a society living with HIV/AIDS. Among Baganda, sex is customarily a vital component for 'completing' individual prosperity, kin-group equilibrium and social cohesion. Various forms of prescribed customary sexual activities range from penetrative sex interaction between penis and vagina, to symbolic performances such as (male) jumping over women's legs or (female) wearing of special belts. Unlike portrayals of customary sex activities in anti-HIV/AIDS discourse, the notion of 'dangerous sex' and the fear of contagion are not typical of all ritual sex practices in Masaka. Akin to Christianity, colonialism, colonial medicine and modernizing discourses, anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns are the contemporary social policemen for sex, sexuality and sexual behaviour. In this regard, public health discourse in Uganda is pathologizing the mundane aspects of customary practices. The HIV/AIDS metaphor is variously utilized by Baganda to negotiate whether or not to engage in specific ritual sex activities.

RÉSUMÉ

La culture sexuelle des peuples d'Afrique subsaharienne est diversement utilisée pour expliquer la forte incidence du VIH en Afrique. C'est pourquoi elle a été la cible de campagnes de changement de comportement dans le cadre de grands programmes d'éducation de santé publique. Basé sur des travaux ethnographiques (utilisant des observations participantes, des entretiens individuels, des discussions de groupes de réflexion et une enquête) menés sur le terrain dans le district de Masaka, cet article s'oppose à une sexualisation ethnocentrique, homogène et réifiée des Africains. Il s'intéresse à la manière dont les pratiques sexuelles rituelles prescrites sont (re)négociées, contestées, affirmées, policées, révisées et interprétées dans le contexte d'une société qui vit avec le VIH/SIDA. Chez les Baganda, le sexe est coutumièrement un composant essentiel pour « compléter » la prospérité individuelle, l'équilibre du groupe de parenté et la cohésion sociale. Les formes d'activités sexuelles coutumières prescrites sont diverses et variées, de l'interaction sexuelle pénétrative entre le pénis et le vagin aux actes symboliques comme le fait pour l'homme de sauter sur les jambes de la femme, ou pour la femme de porter des ceintures particulières. Contrairement aux descriptions faites des activités sexuelles coutumières dans le discours anti-VIH/SIDA, la notion de « sexualité à risque » et la peur de la contagion ne sont pas typiques des pratiques sexuelles rituelles de Masaka. Comme les discours de la chrétienté, du colonialisme, de la médecine coloniale et de la modernisation, les campagnes anti-VIH/SIDA sont les instruments contemporains de police sociale en matière de sexe, de sexualité et de comportement sexuel. À cet égard, le discours de santé publique en Ouganda pathologise les aspects prosaïques des pratiques coutumières. La métaphore du VIH/SIDA est diversement utilisée par les Baganda pour négocier le fait de participer ou pas à des activités sexuelles rituelles spécifiques.