Can we start the debate?
Homosexuality and Coloniality of Gender in Africa

Boris Bertolt

Abstract

Africa is still widely perceived as a homophobic continent. An image that stems from the massive penalization of homosexuality. To this end, 36 out of the 54 countries still consider homosexuality to be a crime. However, the growing visibility of homosexuals on the continent has resulted in the rise of homophobic rhetoric and acts of violence against this sexual minority. Heterosexuality is the dominant sexual norm, while sexuality and gender relations often govern interactions between men and women. Homosexuality is seen as a curse, a manifestation of Western imperialism. The aim of this paper is to discuss discourses on sexuality in Africa. We argue that the contemporary opposition of heterosexual and homosexual categories in Africa extend beyond the western hegemonic structures of power which are at the foundation of the colonial order. The African independence has rarely influenced representations of sex and body constructed during the colonial domination. Reproduction became at this time the matrix of sexuality. Representations about homosexuality in Africa and even the way in which homosexuals define themselves and construct their identities remain deeply rooted in the coloniality of the genre. This article will be divided into three parts: the first part will discuss the theoretical outlines around the coloniality of power and gender, the second part deals with the invention of homosexuality and heterosexuality in Africa, and the third part stresses the appropriation of heterosexual representations in the organization and definition of homosexual categories and social life of homosexuals.

Keywords: Coloniality; Gender; Homosexuality; Senegal; Africa.

Introduction

This article aims to capture the continuity of forms of oppression and domination of the West in the discourses on sexuality and more specifically homosexuality in Africa. Central to this domination is coloniality, which

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operates on several scales, consolidates the mechanisms of oppression, renders Africans incapable of thinking from their own categories and confines them continually to dominant Eurocentric thoughts. The illustration of this argument in this article will be done in three steps. The first lays the theoretical foundations of coloniality and its different variations. We will show how the process of slavery and colonization laid the foundation for the structural domination of Africans. This part also highlights the central role played by sexuality in subalternatization, infantilization, and the dehumanization of so-called inferior populations. If sexuality has been a key element in the expansion of capitalism and the birth of Western modernity, it has also strongly consecrated the institutionalization of sexual difference.

In the second part, we will describe how the imposition of sexual categories during the colonial period has profoundly changed the structures of sexuality and community organization. It was during this period that the heterosexual category and homosexuality appeared in Africa. A dynamic which occurred through a racialization of bodies and a biologization of gender relations. During this period, masculinity and gendered categories has been redefined. By presenting heterosexuality as the sexual norm rooted in African cultures, the African elite reproduces the colonial discourse on sexuality.

The final stage of this article examines how heterosexuality invests homosexual categories in Africa today. Thus, based on a fieldwork conducted between September 2015 and February 2016 in Dakar, it was revealed that in their identification process in the homosexual relationships, gays borrow heterosexual categories. A couple ‘normally’ connotes a man and a woman and it is only the absence of reproduction in the homosexual relation that delinietes the act of differentiation with respect to the heterosexual relation.

**Debating on Coloniality**

The starting point of this reflection is the notion of coloniality. It has its roots in the decolonial theory strongly inspired by Latin American intellectuals having studied the colonial experience of the Amerindian peoples with the Portuguese and Spanish (Mendoza, 2016: 111). It refers to a process of historicization of the forms of domination and oppression still existing in the former colonial territories despite the emergence since the early 1960s of the discourse on the end of colonialism. Colonization has not been a simple process of exploitation of people described as savage, but a global process of Europeanisation of the world.
Nelson Maldonado-Torres establishes a clear difference between coloniality and colonialism. For him:

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on another nation, thereby creating an empire out of that nation. Coloniality, instead, refers to longstanding patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243).

Coloniality is characterized today by the persistence in the imaginaries, culture, representations, production structures of knowledge, schemas of oppression inherited from colonization. It is all these power relations that consolidate the Euro-American hegemony across the planet, inherited from colonial order that is called ‘global coloniality’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Analyzing the development of capitalism on a planetary scale and the promotion of the neoliberal ideology, among whose consequences have been the increase of precariousness, the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano, situates coloniality at the center of the expansion of capitalism (Quijano, 2007). He goes back to the first developments of capitalism in the 15th century with the discovery of America, which was accompanied by the extermination of the Indians and the birth of slavery. For Quijano, imperialism is a continuity of capitalism. Inasmuch as the expansion of capitalism rhymes with oppression, domination and enslavement, coloniality will remain an extension of the forms of oppression rooted in the deployment of the capitalist system since the fifteenth century.

As defined by Anibal Quijano:

Coloniality is one of the specific and constitutive elements of global model of capitalist power. It is based on the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of global population as the cornerstone of that model of power, and it operates on every level, in every arena and dimension (both material and subjective) of everyday social existence, and does so on a societal scale (Quijano 2002: 342).
If coloniality allows us to grasp the mechanisms of the oppression hidden behind capitalist ideology, through the production and consolidation of cultures and colonial structures, Quijano introduces the concept of "coloniality of power" to describe the ideological structure permitting the subordination of peripheral societies to world imperialism (Grosfoguel, 2011). The concept of coloniality of power aims to account for the way in which the process of Europeanisation of the planet has been elaborated, thought out and instituted. The cornerstone of this process is the racial codification of the world's population, making Europe and America the centers of knowledge and modernity, naming and humiliating the lifestyles of other peoples, while giving them negative descriptions (Quijano 2007, Mignolo 1995, Mignolo 2000).

One of the consequences of this process among Africans has been beyond alienation and dehumanization, a dispossession of their soul and their history. For that reason, Jack Goody defines the coloniality of power as ‘a theft of the history of Africans’ who have found themselves defining the world now through categories, speeches and representations imposed by the West (Goody, 2006: 1).

The process of racialization of the human population is thus at the heart of the system of coloniality of power. Race has been the basis for both the hegemonic expansion of Europeans and the enslavement of Africans. From the end of the 15th century, it became the main instrument of social stratification, differentiation and identification. It is a cultural and historical pillar of the development of capitalism (Wallerstein, 1995: 80). In this perspective, it returned to the civilized people to transmit modernity to the savage people. This is why coloniality remains the dark side of modernity (Mignolo, 2007).

The notion of modernity is important, because in the African context, it still refers to the acceptance of European values considered as vectors of development while traditions are seen as pervasive for the progress of African societies. But modernity rhymes with the appearance of race, exploitation, oppression, dehumanization and enslavement of the African man (Mbembe, 2013: 88). Following Quijano’s perspective, we can therefore conclude that modernity and coloniality constitute the same face of a system. Hence, we can refer to the term "modern/colonial system" for explaining the consolidation of Western hegemony across the planet (Mignolo, 2000).

To reflect on and discuss the notion of modernity in the African context is also to think about the deployment of the capitalist system in Africa with the aim of exploring how capitalism interacts with the rhetoric around modernity
and the logic of coloniality. Quijano explains this using his four main axes defined as the colonial matrix of power (Quijano, 2002).

The colonial matrix of power can be articulated as: (a) the appropriation of land and the exploitation of labor force. The plantation was the founding moment of the making of the negro subject through slavery and colonialism. At the origin of the racial difference, consecrating the process of dehumanization, is the gaze upon the negro. Not as a person like everyone else, but a separate subject, deportable, reduced to body, flesh, and physical strength. It is ‘the Negro slave, the very first subject of race’ (Mbembe, 2013: 257). (b) Control of the authority. Thus, by the creation of colonial states in which the military power exercised all forms of control over the masses. The colony was a space of ensauvage of the body and the spirits. Authority is exercised by violence which is consubstantial with the imperial project. This is why Frantz Fanon saw no other way out in the liberation of the colonized than retaliation of violence against the oppressor (Fanon, 1961). In other words, it is a ‘fight to the death’ (Mbembe, 2007: 38). (c) The control of gender categories and sexuality. By the imposition of family values, gender and sex regulation. Reproduction is a key element in the manufacture of manpower. (d) Finally, the control of the negro’s subjectivity. It is an investment in the body and mind of the negro subject, for example with Christianity as a matrix of this strategy. Added to this, the takeover of the knowledge production structures that must ultimately enable the manufacture of citizens.

Beyond the coloniality of power, other forms of coloniality have been described, for example the coloniality of knowledge. This aspect raises the epistemological problem of the way in which the ideology of modernity has competed with other local knowledge, imaginaries, ways of seeing, thinking, producing knowledge (Escobar, 2007). On this basis, Western modernity takes the form of universalism without integrating the local realities of colonised peoples.

In addition to this, the coloniality of being that refers to the damnés of Frantz Fanon analyzes the process of depersonalization and dehumanization of the former colonized (Fanon, 1961, Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The colonized world is a world of violence, war, rape, disease, death and mourning. All their humanity has been denied and they have been reduced to animals within the underworld of coloniality (Mignolo 2007, Quijano 2007, Grosfoguel 2007, Maldano-Torres 2007, Escobar 2007).

Our main focus in this paper is the place of sexuality and gender relations in the global reproduction process of oppression. As we can see, although
Quijano places gender relations in the development of the modern/colonial system, he does not make it a central element and fundamental as much as race. But the invention of the race has had significant consequences on the diffusion of death within peripheral societies, so much as the institutionalization of sexual categories and gender relations is an integral part of the expansion of capitalism and European modernity. To this end, one can describe "empire" or "invisible government" as racialized, colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, hierarchical, heteronormative, neo-liberal hegemonic and Euro-American (Mignolo 1995, Mignolo 2000, Quijano 2002, Grosfoguel 2007; Grosfoguel 2011;).

**Sexuality and Coloniality of Gender**

Homophobic rhetoric and the exclusion of homosexuals from the public sphere in many African societies are based on heterosexual ideology. Sexuality is mainly considered in the context of interactions between men and women. However, the problem posed by this conception is that it does not take into account the historical dimension of the cultural and societal transformations introduced in African societies by colonization. In the analysis of colonization, homophobic discourse tends to establish a separation between the racial factor and sexuality. However, it is difficult to separate race, gender and sex in the construction of imperial domination (Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). The expansion of capitalism is first and foremost the project of the white and heterosexual bourgeois patriarchy of a European society in which women occupied a secondary position (McClintock, 1995). If the historical development of modernity cannot be envisaged without coloniality, examining the process of institutionalization of racialized identities on a global scale means taking into account the question of gender. Thenceforth, inequalities of gender, class and racism are one of the facets of liberalism.

In his book *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault analyzes sexuality under the prism of a system of control, discipline and regulation of people's way of life. It makes it possible to determine what is allowed, defended, prescribed or illegal (Foucault, 1976). Sexuality is a social construction, an invention at the service of the dynamics of power. To understand sexuality is to analyze the discourses that are produced, but also the social norms enacted to regulate behavior. On this basis, the homophobic discourse in Africa and the laws criminalizing homosexuality must be seen in a more global framework of a desire to manage the lives of peoples. This is what Foucault refers to as
"biopower" (Foucault, 1976: 184). It is a technology of control of the bodies, the spirits, the life of the individuals. Disciplining the bodies of individuals and regulating the lives of human populations on a global scale are two poles around which the organization of power over the lives of individuals has been deployed in the Eurocentric vision.

Foucault continues his analysis of sexuality by identifying four central factors, which organize technologies around sexuality: the hysterization of the body of women; pedagogical expertise applied to children’s sexuality; socialization to the procreative life; and the psychiatric analysis of forms of pleasure considered perverse among which is homosexuality (Foucault, 1976). These four principles show that the woman's body and heterosexuality are essential in the device of sexuality which itself is part of a technology of power.

The problem with Foucault’s analysis is that it goes back to the emergence of the device of sexuality in the 18th century. However, the body of the woman and the frame of the reproduction were part of the matrix of the imagination of the white man from the beginning of the expansion. In a letter to his family in 1492, Christopher Columbus pointed out that former sailors who had gone off to discover the world had made a mistake in thinking that the earth was round. Instead, he points out that the earth has a woman’s chest, with a protuberance on its summit in the unmistakable form of a nipple - to which it slowly navigated (McClintock, 1995). This image of the woman developed by Christopher Columbus in the 15th century reflects her infantilization, the biologization of her body and at the same time a desire for appropriation by the male subject. But there is also a mystification, making the woman the frontier of a universe to cross, and to explore.

Sexism and patriarchy are constitutive elements of capitalism and imperialism as much as race. bell hooks (1981) demonstrates that the biologization of the body of the black man and woman in a eugenic perspective originated during the crossing by a separation between white men and slaves in slave ships, but also black men and black women (hooks, 1981: 30). This separation continued on American soil through the institutionalization of a racial hierarchy combined with sexual differentiation. For example, in 1664, the state of Maryland in the United States introduced the first law prohibiting the mixing of race with an emphasis on gender. The text states:

whatsoever freeborn woman shall intermarry with any slave, from and after the last day of the present assembly, shall serve the masters of such slaves
during the life of her husband; and that all of them, as well as their fathers were (ibid., 31).

But what should be pointed out is that the subordination of black men to white men did not change the social position of black women or give them preferential status. Although downgraded by white men, black men retained their masculinity. Thus, black women in the plantation economy in slave society suffered from three forms of oppression: the oppression of white men, of white women, and finally of black men. This leads us to think that the contemporary discourse in Africa on the woman and the superiority of the man fits in the continuation of gender relations partially initiated since the slavery. On the other hand, the repression of forms of sexuality other than heterosexuality, like homosexuality, has continued during the imperial project through the codification of gender relations in colonial society and the production of a discourse on sexuality sacralizing reproduction, eroticizing the body of the colonized and repressing certain forms of desire such as homosexuality (Stoler, 1995).

Racism and sexuality are therefore two variables of biopower. One cannot speak of coloniality or the expansion of capitalism without integrating the processes of racialization and sexualization of the society. It is on this basis that Maria Lugones' criticism of Anibal Quijano's notion of coloniality of power is based. She believes that the concept of Quijano's gender is still determined by biological determinism and naturalizes heterosexuality (Lugones, 2007). She concludes that the conception of Quijano's gender is Eurocentric. It is from this perspective that she developed the notion of coloniality of gender.

Lugones also places gender at the center of the analysis of relations of domination in colonial contexts as well as race. In a first formulation of his approach, gender is at the heart of colonial construction, as was race (Mendoza, 116). Colonization will have led to racialization and sexualization of the body of man and woman. Men's and women roles are related to the will of European settlers. The new hierarchies have profoundly disrupted the old social structures and production systems in which relations between men and women were based much more on complementarity rather than male dominance.

To show that gender in colonized societies is a colonial import, Lugones draws on the work of Nigerian sociologist Oyéwumi Oyeronke who demonstrates that the dynamics of power and superiority within Yoruba society in Nigeria did not rest on gender roles, but on the principle of seniority (Oyewumi, 2002). The appellations girls or boys were absent from this society.
In contrast to gender roles that are static and rigid, seniority was dynamic and fluid (Ibid, p5).

This reflection leads us directly into the debate around the definition of the family and the differences between the precolonial African context and the European context. It follows that colonization has altered family structures by introducing a gendered conception of the family. The nuclear family is a family built on a conjugal basis in the sense that it is a man and a woman. In West Africa, it is the lineage that is considered as the family.

The institutionalization of the heterosexual family in Africa have had three main consequences. First, the woman's body has become the testing ground for the survival of black natives in a colonial context (Mendoza, 2016: 116). The colonial imagination in Africa was based on a Freudian conception that 'Africa is a woman to be conquered'. In Freud's view, women are simply little men or castrated men with a common mark of natural inferiority. Freud did not only see women as inferior beings, because they did not have a penis, he also claims that they are in the core sense, something less than boys.

As with Christopher Columbus in the 15th century, from the 18th century in Africa, women have become the field of experimentation of power dynamics in colonial society. The domestication of this Eurocentric logic in Africa reinforced the oppression of women by colonized men themselves in their quest of recognition among white men (Kisang'ani, 2004: 20). Systemic sexual violence against women in contemporary African societies has its roots in this infantilization, subalternisation and biologization of the female body during the colonial period.

The second aspect of the colonial system of gender in Africa has been the invention of homosexuality. Before the arrival of European settlers, same-sex relations were recognized in several African societies (Hoad, 2007). The binary conception of sexuality was practically non-existent. The prohibition of homosexuality stemmed from a desire to normalize heterosexuality. The mechanics of power claiming to repress homosexuals has rather given relations between people of the same sex a meaning, signification and a name. Homosexuality has become an analytical reality, visible and permanent (Foucault, 1976: 60).

Many studies have shown that same-sex sexual practices existed in Africa during the colonial period and existed in many forms but did not rely on an egalitarian model (Murray 1998, Amaduime 1987). For example, in a descriptive way, the single men of the military companies of the royal court provisionally took as "wives" young boys in when they had difficult access to
women, while in the second case, women of polygamous homes have clandestine relations, sometimes under friendship (Broqua, 2012).

The technology of power within the colonial system labelled a sexual practice present in African societies, but whose symbolism and meanings were completely different from the Eurocentric perspective. Homosexuality in Africa can thus be perceived as a colonial creation. Unlike in Europe where its definition was limited to sodomy, in some African societies, it was a part of the social organization and participated in the maintenance of balance in gender relations.

In its deconstruction of the labeling of sexual relations between women in Africa, the contribution of Ife Amaduime, a Nigerian sociologist seems to be of great help. In her research, she emphasizes that women's marriages among Igbo women in Nigeria cannot be assimilated to lesbianism (Amaduime, 1987: 7). She also criticizes the fact that black lesbians have deliberately accepted this label that does not reflect the reality of same-sex sexuality on the African continent. Amaduime raises the issue of naming categories. The question of naming same-sex practices and their categorization is central to understanding the debate about homosexuality in Africa.

The third consequence of the racialization of colonial society, followed by a normalization of gender relations, has been the dehumanization of homosexuals and the exclusion of other forms of sexuality such as homosexuality. Reproductive function has become central in the organization of colonial society. Sex and its use corresponded to a logic of control and discipline. In colonial society, the status of civilized belonged to those who were considered as human (Mendoza, 2016: 117) but humanity was socially included in the gender relations within the family. Thus, those who chose a sexual orientation that blurred gendered identities were dehumanized (Lugones, 2010). This approach makes possible to understand a certain discourse on homosexuality in Africa which emphasizes that homosexuals are not human.

One might think that Lugones' discourse on non-gendered African societies is somewhat exaggerated because the Yoruba society case cannot be applied to all pre-colonial African societies, but also because there was a gender system that was certainly less hierarchical and more egalitarian (Segato, 2001). However, this does not exclude the fact that the racialization of colonial society with biologization of the female body has strengthened patriarchal structures, reconfigured representations of sexuality and to some extent
legitimize the oppression of women and homosexuals as in the European societies.

The coloniality of gender allows us to grasp the continuity of gender relations and representation of sexuality in Africa. The contemporary binary conception of sex and the hierarchy of gender relations is nothing but an extension of Eurocentric thought. The contestation of the use of the term postcolonial makes sense here and would simply be a myth (Grosfoguel 2007: 219). This is why Gayatri Chakravorti prefers the use of the term ‘neo-colonized post-colonial world’ to better capture the extension of the capitalist system of power and domination (Spivak, 1990: 166).

**Heterosexualization of Homosexuality**

By heterosexualization of homosexuality, we refer not only to the use of homosexual practice and representations borrowed from heterosexuality imaginary but also how homosexuals represent their own sexual and social world. We want to show that the binarization of sexuality around the masculine and feminine is also anchored among homosexuals’ weltanschauung in Africa and have a very important impact on their social life. We choose the case of Senegal where we conducted from September 2015 to February 2016 works on representations of homosexuality among students of the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar.

It is possible to challenge this argument by pointing out that the binarization of sexuality around men and women in homosexual relationships is not specific to the African context and cannot be considered as an aspect of coloniality. We defend here the idea that coloniality has not only affected the dominated societies, but also the Western societies (Fanon, 1961). In parallel with the Fanonian perspective, we emphasize here that the heterosexualization of inferior societies in the Western imperial project also happened in Europe with the repression of same-sex relationships and the establishment of sexual control mechanisms. We have to keep in mind that colonization was a project of the white class, bourgeois, and heterosexual (McClintock, 1995).

The difference with Africa is that this mechanism of repression and control gave meaning and a name to a sexual practice that existed long before colonization and had its own codes (Murray, 1998). Contrary to the discourse of same-sex relationship as an import phenomenon, we can find many evidences which show that before colonization what is referred today as
Homosexuality existed in several societies (Hoad, 2007). I can therefore argue that in Africa, the appropriation of heterosexual categories by homosexuals to describe their sexual practices is an extension of the institutionalization of heteronormativity in the colonial society.

As in many countries on the African continent, homosexuality is condemned by law and also suffers from social illegitimacy in Senegal. The homophobic discourse stems mainly from the religious factor and the idea that homosexuality is a Western import. However, the existence of same-sex relationships prior to the colonial period in Senegal is now evidenced by a great deal of research, as we have summarized above (Niang, 2002; Epprecht, 2010).

In Senegal, Goorjigeen in the Wolof language is used in the public sphere to refer to people of the same sex who have sex. Among heterosexuals, this expression is a process of identification, categorization, discrimination and even stigmatization. Goorjigeen takes on both social and sexual significance. Yet this has not always been the case in Senegalese society. In the traditional sense, Goorjigeen means effeminate without referring to a sexual connotation. But this term is also used to designate transvestites.

In the past and even nowadays, goorjigeen could marry a man. This marriage did not mean that the couple had to live in the same house, unless one of the partners wanted to live isolated from the community. But Goorgigeen weddings were festive occasions, opportunities to meet people in a community (Niang, 2003: 118). Authors who were interested in the colonial period in Senegal, for example, described in their work men who dressed as women or men who danced like women in the Senegalese cities of Dakar or Saint-Louis (Crowder, 1959; Teunis, 1996). Even after independence, Goorjigeen played an important role in the Senegalese society, including politically. For this purpose, they participated in the election campaigns of the first president of the Republic of Senegal, Abdou Diouf (Niang, 2003).

If one is interested in the evolution of the historical meanings of the term Goorjigeen in Senegal, it is evident that it was from the end of the 1990s that the status of Goorjigeen has gradually deteriorated in the Senegalese society. Two factors can, from my point of view, help to understand this situation. First, HIV / AIDS programs have resulted in increasing visibility of homosexuals. One of the consequences has been the production of a discourse making homosexuals the vectors of AIDS in Africa. They have since appeared as a threat.
But, there is one aspect that seems important to me: the crisis of masculinity. The economic crisis marks a chaotic disruption of relations between women and men. In a context in which masculinity is often signified through a man's ability to take care of women (meals, bills, women's beauty care), economic precariousness has gradually been reduced to men's control over women. Achille Mbembe (2010: 214) identified a nascent process in which the status of women. All this leads to the proliferation of micro-strategies from social actors. Thus, the context of precariousness makes men fear the loss of benefits conferred by masculinity (Irigaray, 1977). Since then, the Goorjigeen with feminine traits have seen their status regress. On what describe above, it can be emphasized that the notion of Goorjigeen in Senegalese has undergone a process of resignification over time (Broqua, 2012).

The homophobic violence expresses violence against women and everything that is feminine. The goorjigeen, whose femininity is made visible by the interpretation of bodily manners, are those who are hunted, beaten or harassed by the crowds and the police. One of the consequences of introducing the Eurocentric conception of patriarchy into Senegalese society has been to make sexual identities and the feminization of homosexuality static. In this conception of sexuality, having a penis does not make you a man. What confers the status of man is his use. In a context of heterosexism, it is the different sex partner that builds gender identity. In the sexual arrangement, a woman is defined through a man and vice versa. This is also evident from this interview with Hakim, a 3rd year student in history:

To be a man is to be masculine, to have the sex of a man, to have a desire to have sex with a woman and not with a man. A man must have love with a woman and not a man. Those who have a contrary desire I do not consider them like men. Even clothing is important. A woman is one who has love for a man and not for a girl. A woman can marry and have children. Lesbians cannot get married and have children so they are not women.

From these remarks, it emerges that masculinity is associated with sex and sexual desire. In the heterosexual imaginary, the male sexual organ is destined for women, and it is only in this relation that a man retains his status as a man. The Goorjigeen are no longer men because in the imaginary, the use of their sex is no longer part of the dominant norm. They lose all social legitimacy. Finally, clothing. The codification of clothing also makes it possible to establish a difference between a man and a woman. Men have a specific dress code, as well as women. ‘A man cannot wear women's clothes and women's bags is
acceptable. I do not agree’ (Interview with Amadou, 4th year linguistics student, January 21, 2016).

If heterosexuals systematically place homosexuals in the category of Goorjigeen, homosexuals do not put themselves in the same register. The challenge for heterosexuals is to remove from male homosexuals their status as men and put them in the category more inferior that women. Apprehended under this prism, homosexuals have the impression of losing both their authority, but also their manhood. Homosexual identity is in permanent negotiation.

Given the negative connotation of the concept of goorjigeen, homosexuals in Senegal have developed expressions to designate themselves. The particularity of these names is that they describe in the homosexual relation, the roles and significations allowing to reproduce the heterosexual relation. Thus we have: Ubbi and Yoss.

The term Ubbi means in Wolof "open". As in the sentence: ubbil buntu bi (opens the door). Lu ubbéku means what is open. In a symbolic way, he designates in the male homosexual environment, the one who "opens" himself to the other during the sexual relation. This is the one that absorbs the partner's penis in the image of the vagina as part of the heterosexual relationship. It's a passive identity. On the social level, they are assimilated to effeminate. From the field observations, they do a lot of manners, are shy, use skin depigmentation products. Their way of speaking, acting clearly shows that in the relationship, they are in the position of subordinates. The other MSM also denote them the expression xaleeyi folle yi.

The Yoss appears as the opposite of the Ubbi. Here is the active subject or the penetrator in the anal relationship. The one who dominates and controls the sexual relationship. In a heterosexual relation they are people who play the role of men. In their daily behaviors they are less effeminate than Ubbi. We can also call them goor – tigguy.

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<tr>
<th>Goor</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiggy</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
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<td>Goor tiggy</td>
<td>A real man</td>
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This term fits in a common language which means in Wolof "little fish". This rare marine species is very popular because of its tender flesh and taste. The Yoss are less visible than the Ubbi, whether in public space or in homosexual circles. They tend to fully affirm their masculinity and blur in the public space their true sexual identity.
However, it is important to emphasize that the fracture between Yoos and Ubbi is very fine. The different postures can crumble depending on the situations and contingencies. The profile of the actors may change depending on the partner or neighborhood. But in the context of this work, what is striking here is the fact that there exists in the homosexual relation both a hierarchical system, but a sexual practice which is part of the schema of the heterosexual relationship with a dominant (man) and a dominated (woman). Masculinity, symbolized partly in the heterosexual imaginary by the act of penetration, does not disappear within homosexual practices.

Beyond the heterosexual categories existing in their sexual practices, in social terms, the heterosexism of the Senegalese society also impacts on the way in which young homosexuals represent their existence in society. Thus, most interviewees have women and want to get married. This aspect is mainly due to the strong social pressure exerted on men and the place of marriage in the definition of masculinity. Added to this, the way society looks at them. Because they don’t want to be perceive as sexual deviant, many homosexuals do not hide the fact that they have female sexual partners.

I am seduced by women. I love women. Besides, I have a daughter. It’s going well. She does not know that I am Men who have sex with men (MSM). We meet when I’m in Fadik. I intend to marry her. Even if I am with another man it does not cause me any problems because I manage both. When I am with my partner MSM, I discuss with him, I speak with him, even he knows that I have a partner, he also encourages me because he is married. When I’m with my girlfriend we discuss together about everything. I do not send her money. She knows I’m a student and I have nothing. She is the one who often calls me when I have problems. she is the one who sends me money. That's not embarrassing. I like them both at 50 per cent. But to tell the truth I really like my MSM partner compared to her. I like my partner MSM. I do not feel 100 per cent girls that’s why I stay with my MSM partner (interview, Abdou, 21, January 6, 2016).

For young homosexuals, the woman is a necessity in order to continue to benefit from family support. Marriage helps to maintain and build relationships and networks not only within the family but also outside. That's why it's important to show the family that marriage is an aspiration. This demonstration can only be done by giving the impression of having a relationship with a woman.

I also have my girlfriend who comes to visit me. She does not know that I am MSM. It does not matter that I have a girlfriend because I intend to
marry her one day, to have my own family. I am MSM but that does not mean that I will not get married. She does a lot of things and spends money for me. I am not attracted to other girls. I slept with her once. She is still a virgin and I have not continued. I do not want to destroy her. It’s going very well between us.
(Interview, Aziz, 22, January 6, 2016).

These reactions lead to the conclusion that in the field of sexuality, homosexuals have not only sex with men, but also with women, even though they are not married. This work is partly in line with that conducted in Senegal in 2008, which showed that many adult men who had sex with other men were married (Larmarange, 2009). On this point we conclude that one of the effects of the static conception of gender identities and the binairization of sexuality is bisexuality among Senegalese homosexuals.

**Conclusion**

Finally, the analysis of the discourse in Africa on homosexuality reveals that it is deeply in line with the colonial discourse on sexuality. Sex as well as race and gender are keys to understanding European expansion in the world. This domination was not only political, economic or spiritual, but also subjective. Gender relations and social interactions between black slaves and subsequently in African societies were modified by slavery and later colonization. Colonization in Africa gave a name to a sexual practice that existed in some societies but whose meaning was different from the Eurocentric conception. The settlers have institutionalized the exclusion of men who have sex with men. This process took place concomitantly with the spread of heterosexism. Heterosexuality has become a hegemonic sexual norm whose influence extends to the way homosexuals organize their sexuality to the extent that they introduce binary categories to construct representations of man and woman. Therefore, to leave the homophobic discourse in Africa is to also include sexuality in the field of decoloniality.
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