



The family and traditional values first seminar

February 2018 (Johannesburg)

GLOBAL INTERFAITH NETWORK on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression



GROUP 4

**National sovereignty:
LGBT+ rights and human rights
in general are then portrayed
as attacks to the national
interest and part of the
western neo-imperialist
agendas**

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Introduction

Since the 2000s there are some publications that make the issues more available, but we need to bring the issues to life.

But many of these books are not responding to the current debate; When they talk about the identities in Africa, discussions are often broader on sexualities.

We can always use the European narratives to describe the African contexts, but there are plurals for Africa, especially in times of unprecedented nationalisms raise around the globe, but more than elsewhere in African and Middle Eastern social-political contexts.

Thus, there is nowadays is a shift since the 2010s about homosexual and LGBT+ identities.

There are debates based on religion and sexuality, creating issues. Activists and academic sometimes defer in views and deep analysis of the context. When asked if there are « lesbians » for instance, the words and language were rejected, as same sex example in Southern Africa would not make sense. Are some individuals belonging to sexual minorities reinforcing also nationalistic ideologies?

I - Exploring right-wing messaging





a. What are the foundations of faith-based right-wing groups' messaging?

We can keep terminology but the consideration must be given to history.

What you are called in your culture, if it is not a “lesbian”, our identities are still not promoted. Being called lesbian gay bisexual transgender etc, is not the root of the problem, since minority identities are politicised as against the African cultures. Because the problem is not only that those identities would not conducive to the African understanding, the true problem is that they represent an alternative to the hegemonic patriarchal identity.

Gender theory is considered to be a threat for the same reason: *“men want to become women and vice versa. Women are taking our girls, while women are considered beauty for the benefit of men. Men are afraid that men would take women’s role. Political leaders are afraid that effeminate men would not defend the nation; if women are not making babies anymore there will be no more soldiers to defend the nation »*, etc. So many slogans you can hear here and there.

a. What are the foundations of faith-based right-wing groups' messaging?





b. What ‘theological’ (or other) sources do they use to support their messaging?

Sacred text - Bible, Quran etc.

But also civil codes and old pseudo-scientific resources (...).

c. What is the theological framing of right-wing groups’ messaging?

« Cultures » and « tradition », to be defined and addressed : there has been a distortion of culture through colonialism.

Destroying future of the nation (Children).

Pan Africanism and ideology, homosexuality would be « unafican ».

We don’t what is colonised by LGBT+ rights ; it was said that LGBT+ right would be a new form of colonialism.

Youth and Children, gays and lesbians would be threatening (our families), destroying future generations, and the nation.

In 2009 : The Anti-Homosexual Bill in Parliament in Uganda, (also similar legislations in Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria). « Save the nation » campaign.

d. Who are the right-wing organizations? (group mapping)

Religious:

Vatican/Roman Catholic

Anglican communion

Wahabism (Imams)

African independent Churches/Pentecostalism

It is sustaining pan Africanism with patriarchy and national identities

Non-Religious:

Even LGBT+ organisations don't always agree, homonationalism, is also reinforcing hegemonic identities.

For instance, in Nigeria LGBT+ were divided on the issues of language and what is culture, if enshrined in the law it would remove us from our culture.

We heard people saying : *“We don't need gay right, this is not our culture”*.

d. Who are the right-wing organizations? (group mapping)

Traditional and Spiritual leaders are being accosted to become anti-gay. This is to refute the acceptance by using the Bible etc., but too often have better examples from the history of the tradition. There is a confirmation and support of prejudices.

Traditional leaders are unconscious and their mind is colonised. Traditional Chiefs, Kings, Royal families are often co-opted to re-inforce nationalism. Instrumentalising religion to justify their patriarchy.

For example, “Mighty Men” and “Women of Worth” (South Africa), half a million men came to pray to be better national leaders and fix the nation’s issues (2014).

N.B. 1 - What is “homonationalism”?

Some previously described alliances (working as LGBT + with extreme parties like the *Front National* or *HezboAllah*) raise the issue of **Islamophobia** and **Judeophobia** of many activists who **call themselves "anti-Islamist"** but who boycott Muslims in general, or who **call themselves "anti-Zionists"** who are interested in colonialism only when Jews are concerned.

On the other hand, there can be no denying the fact that **war, colonization and terrorism** hinder advances in the **acquisition of rights, especially of minorities** who are the poor cousins of civil rights, especially **in times of crisis** (some historical exceptions but this remains a cross-cultural rule).

But we can not deny that some LGBT + are at least **as motivated by a humanism as by fascistic and partisan ideologies** of the type "them" against "us". This is called "**dysphoria**": a form of ethico-political schizophrenia tinged with militant opportunism, acting on two **representations of the world that are supposed to be opposed**, and doing so at the same time.

N.B. 2 - An all inclusive and non partisan definition of our struggles

Thus, the definitions that we develop of pinkwashings are themselves conditioned by this inclusive or partisan postulate of our citizen struggles.

For example, Jasbir **Puar** (a queer activist of Pakistani origin, a teacher at Rutgers University in the UK) **defines homonationalism as:**

*“the proliferation, occupation, and **suppression of queernesses** in relation to patriotism, war, torture, security, death, terror, terrorism, detention, and deportation, themes usually imagined as devoid of connection to sexual politics in general and queer politics in particular”.*



As for some other intellectuals, we ought to add that our definition of homonationalism **must include all opportunistic use of struggles for LGBT + human rights, for partisan ideological purposes.**
Not only those we disagree with.



II - Developing our counter-messages

e. **What are possible sources of inclusive counter-messages?
(in Christianity, Islam and African spiritualities, traditions and
culture)**

Discrimination of any minority is higher in times of crisis
(see “Infrahumanisation” next slide).

Ethical Schizophrenia (Dysphoria),
when they prolong old missionary discourse or propaganda
dominating other African (tribes)
community cultures but this time it fulfilled on the back of sexual,
ethnical, linguistic...

Many other types of minorities.

N.B. 3 - *Infrahumanization* as a response to fear of your « tribe » being destroyed

In times of crisis (economical, identity, then political), **uncontrollable phobias** are at their peak, and minorities are the target of a dehumanizing **ideologies & propagandas**: the **unconscious belief** that a social group is "**more human**" than another; it's an **animal instinct**



Social groups who feel in danger thus **reinforce their exo-group boundaries**, by applying a catharsis on scapegoats.

It is an **uncontrollable phenomenon**, but one that we can act on in the long term through education and awareness of our phobias.

It is a perceptive **illusion produced by an individual or a group of individuals**; This is the "ideal" recipe to ostracize an individual, ***without feeling guilt !***

A FATAL SOCIAL ILLUSION

"The denial of humanity associated with extreme intra-group violence, can lead to genocide "

N.B. 4 - post-identity *hybridity* against all fascist categories

These underlying **infrachumanization mechanisms** are the same **trans-geographically and trans-historically**: to bet on those who hold power and to ally with them in order to survive, even if it means sacrificing the weakest.

It is the basis of "tribalism", in the psychoanalytical sense of the term, which has its roots in **the most animal unconsciousness**, within each of us.

In the field, some **strategies have recently been identified** to get out of these partisan and ultimately infrachumanizing dynamics towards "subordinates":

- « **disidentification** »
- Economical and intellectual emancipation
- Etc.



Le raciste, c'est l'autre!

For example:

- Sovereignty has been used by politics. Too often they never have a better understanding of LGBT, is it the bible or colonial influence, the bible has been use to contradict.
- We can use African LGBT identities not necessary western.
- Sociological within Africanism, storytelling, Two- Spirits, Dysphoria. Are we producing the African nationalities in disguise of western ideologies. It is possible that
- Missionary account of Africa, for example *Buganda* culture, the King was considered to be the husband of all men. Christian Uganda Martyr considered to be traitors to the Uganda nations due to their conversion to foreign religion, which alter their same sex compliance to sexual intercourses with their king.
- *Hausa* cultures, *Yan daudu*, African spiritualities : separation of boys and girls, men and women. Until 1938, there are marriages of men to men,
- 2007, *Nnewi* Coronation of the king, in Nigeria, some witnessed a transgender dancer in the coronation dance presentation.
- Actors - Storytelling, traditional leaders (*Venda*, *Shona*, Zimbabwe, South Africa).

f. How do we map out inclusive faith-based messages for religious and non-religious actors?

See E above.

g. What is the reality of « the » family today in different countries and communities of Africa? (We have data from Southern Africa.)

We can find a middle way between colonial identities and pan African partriarchical ideology, by rediscovering African agency in defining renewed/prevaling hybrid intersectional ones.

For example:

- Change of names if you convert to Christianity.
- Change of family name if European administration is taking over our archives.
- Mutation from matriarchical to partriarchical lineage.



We should be defending many models of families while they are all against emancipation of minorities, and alternative identities, which proves, the root of this problematic is about sharing power and not about spirituality.

For example:

- Colonialism and pan Africanism destroy female inheritance cultures.
- Colonialism also destroys an inherent sexual diversity and alternative identities.
- Families are attached to national state decisions in order for the patriarchal elite to control “Children of the Nation”.

They are defending two different agendas (nuclear family, extended family: both exclusive towards sexual minorities), so we have to unify with allies to defend the representation of spirituality and sexuality as factors of emancipation for all.

III - Developing strategies





a. Who are allies, people/organizations already doing work?

- To LGBT+ and feminist: Help members “reconciling spirituality and sexuality and we all intersectional by nature ; (homo)nationalism is not part of this solution

(e.i. Global Interfaith Network, for example: Al-Fitrah, IAM, INERELA, Other Foundation, House of Rainbow, Local Church Councils, Ujaama, PEMA, TFAM, PFLAG, Queer Mothers of Benoni, Women’s Network)

- To Religious leaders: Helping lay/ ordained, spiritual leaders to take care of all community members without falling into xenophobic propaganda, pretending to defend “children to the nation” but indeed sending them towards more trauma.

(e.i. WCC, local/parishes Churches, Individual clergy (but with limits).

a. Who are allies, people/organizations already doing work?

- To anti-racist NGOs: Help them build more intersectional perspective, understanding better the roots of all discrimination/infracumanisation

(European Network Against racism, Black Lives Matter).

- To Schools and Doctors and families: Contributing to more grass-root advocacy, early in our co-citizens lives especially in nations where children's rights are advanced.

b. What are some possible channels for working in that space?

Since we presented our message here dealing with the broadness of our societies' diversity, channel to work in that space topics such as:

- Community development
- Emancipation/ Democracy
- Health/care/awareness

By producing for example:

- Toolkits
- Appropriate Workshops
- Storytelling/translation/interviews online
- Fliers with GIN's logo and punchlines, easy to share by youth
- Share our materials using APP and social media handles, such as facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, linkIn, snapchat!!!

c. How can we support work already being done? And what more can we do?

We should be thinking of:

- Catalogues of GIN member organisation
- Good Practices published on GIN webpage
- Include and encourage more Youth to be more active on social with their own work about GIN's materials
- Sharing visibility and materials between GIN and organisations that support Parents of LGBT+, facing both xenophobia and internalised LGBT phobias, not finding inclusive religious leaders to ease their own pain.
- Working with academic and helping them to be more practical, helping us to be more precise (more seminars on intersectional topics).
- It is important to create a programme that also addresses the concern of the conservatives.

Conclusion

Nationalisms are reinforcing one another, on the back on very different types of « minorities » and/or « subaltern » individuals:

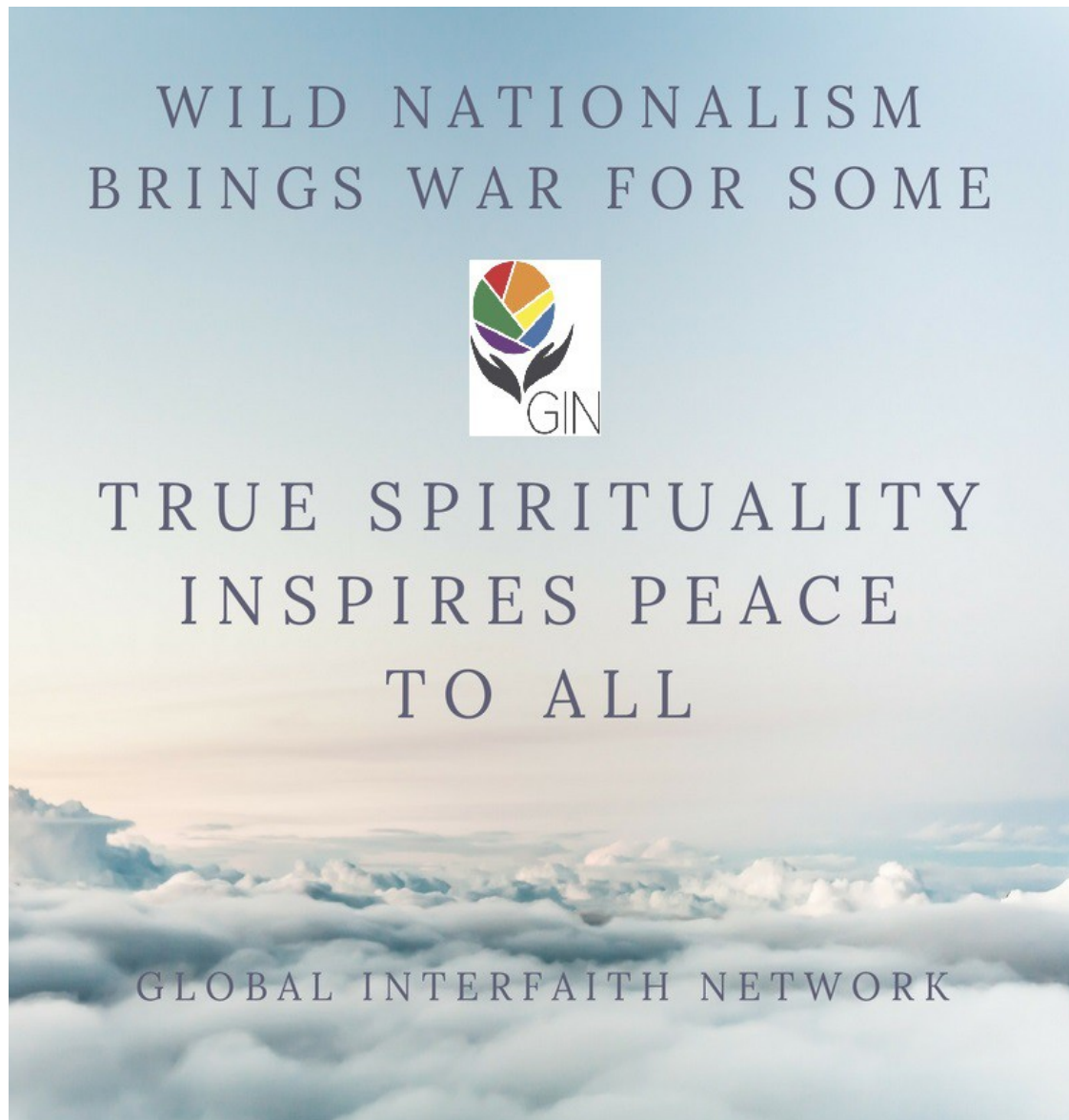
« *It is disturbing to **compare the current legal offensive of several Arab and Muslim** countries against homosexuality with concomitant - **decriminalization and the acquisition of a legal status for homosexuals in many Western countries** (offensive in contradiction with the commonly held Idea of the Muslim societies' tolerance for these sexual practices) »*
(2005 - <http://mohammed.mezziane.free.fr/>) »

- It has to do with sharing power, or not, and not about humanistic spiritualities neither with « child of the nation » protection.
- « Infrhumanization » of minorities, and the raise of xenophobic « tribalism » / »nationalism » / »fascism »... many other « isms », have a high probability of appearing in any given under crisis society.
- It has nothing to do with a given culture/religion/gender, and « hybrid » / intersectionnal identities are meant to help the entire human species to reflect upon our true nature.
- Intersectionnal identities, from that perspective, are a blessing from the Divine.

IV - Appendices



Examples of flyers to share on social media



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GLOBAL INTERFAITH NETWORK on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

Examples of very short videos to be shared on SM :

Jide



Andi



Ishmael



Kapya



Belinda

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2. *“Homosexuality in Islam: critical reflection on gay lesbian and transgender Muslim”* (2010, Kugle); *“Allah Made Us”* (2009, Gaudio); *“Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa: rethinking homophobia and forging resistance”* (2013, Epprecht); *“Unspoken Facts”* (2008, Epprecht).
3. *“Terrorist Assemblage, Queer Politics after 9/11”* (Puar 2007), *“Desiring Arabs”* (Massad, 2007), « LGBT Musulman : face aux obscurantismes, aux homonationalismes » (Zahed, 2015).
4. *“From Infrahumanisation to Discrimination”* (Legeus, 2003).
5. *“The Location of Culture”* (1994, Homi Bhabha).
6. Same sex families, grand-parents, single fathers, single mothers, co habiting, husband of many women... Africa did not have to defend man woman and child as it does not fit in the African context, the words sound the same, there are two different things. David Kato funeral, father opposed to LGBT, but the church also used this to abuse him but the father defended his child in death as a family.
7. Zahed, « LGBT Musulman-es : face aux homonationalismes et aux obscurantismes » (2016)
8. Kapya, « Christianity, Globalization, and Protective Homophobia » (2017)



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