

PLS 343

# Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 3, Lecture 2:  
Colonialism in Africa—effects of colonialism

# Recap

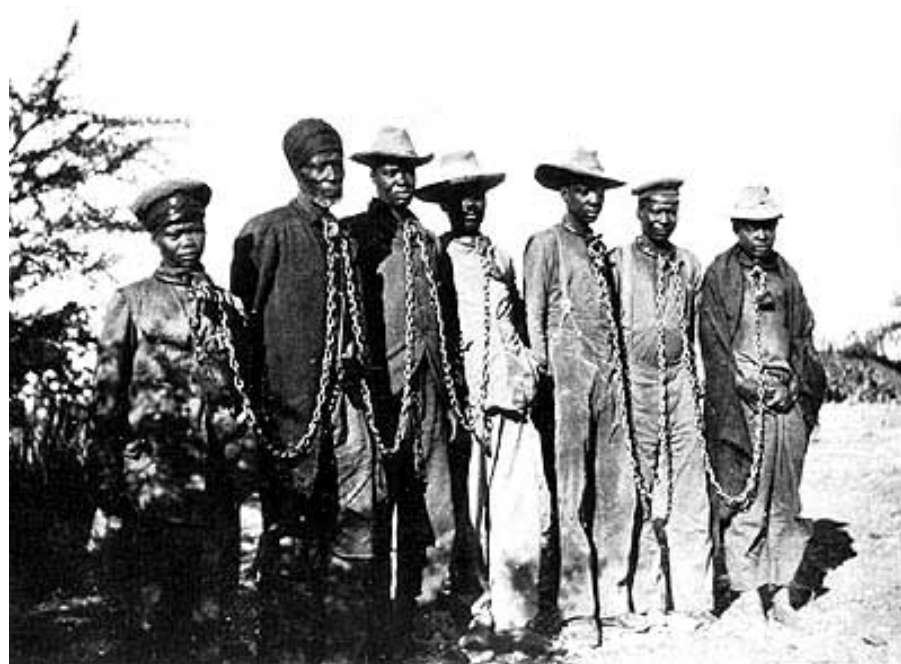
- Early colonization and the Scramble for Africa
- Colonial states:
  - Variation
  - Contending perspectives

# Plan for today

- Impacts of colonialism in Africa:
  - Death
  - Extraction
  - Public goods provision
  - Creation of new polities and elites
  - Decentralized despotism and ethnicization
  - States-system
  - Social norms

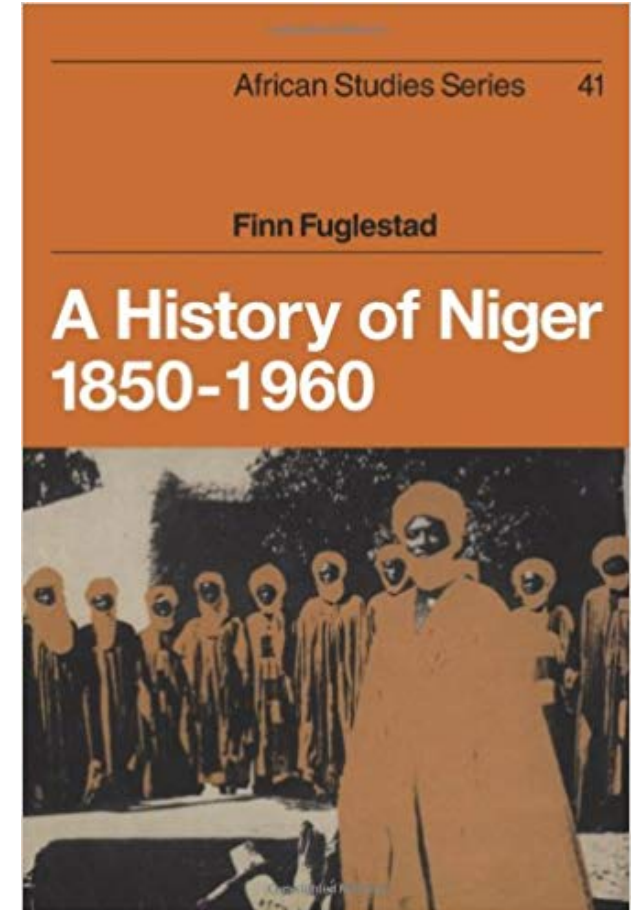
# Effects of colonialism: death

- Congo Free State / Belgian Congo:
  - ~ 10 million dead
- Herero and Nama genocide in German South West Africa (—> Namibia)

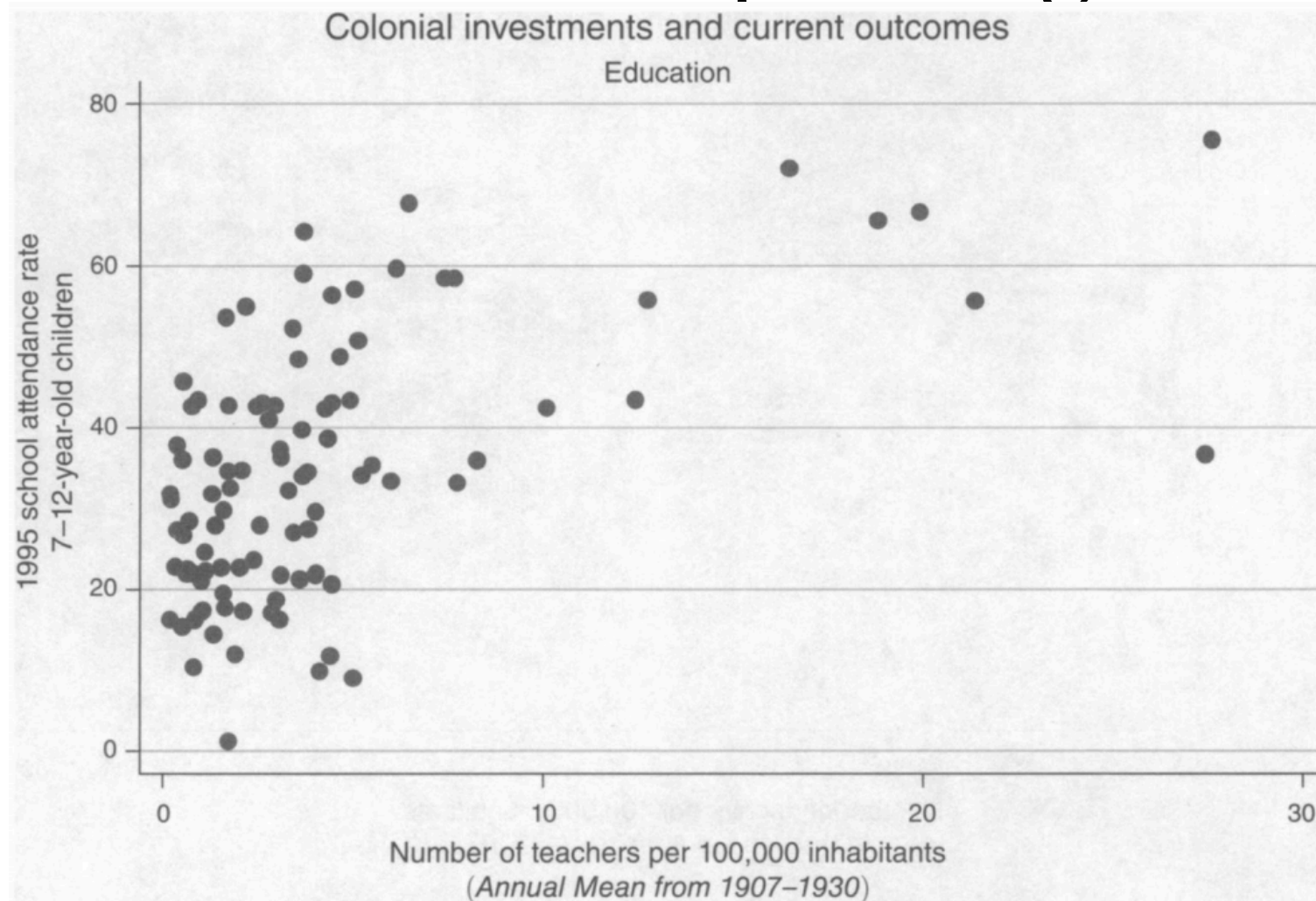


# Effects of colonialism: extraction

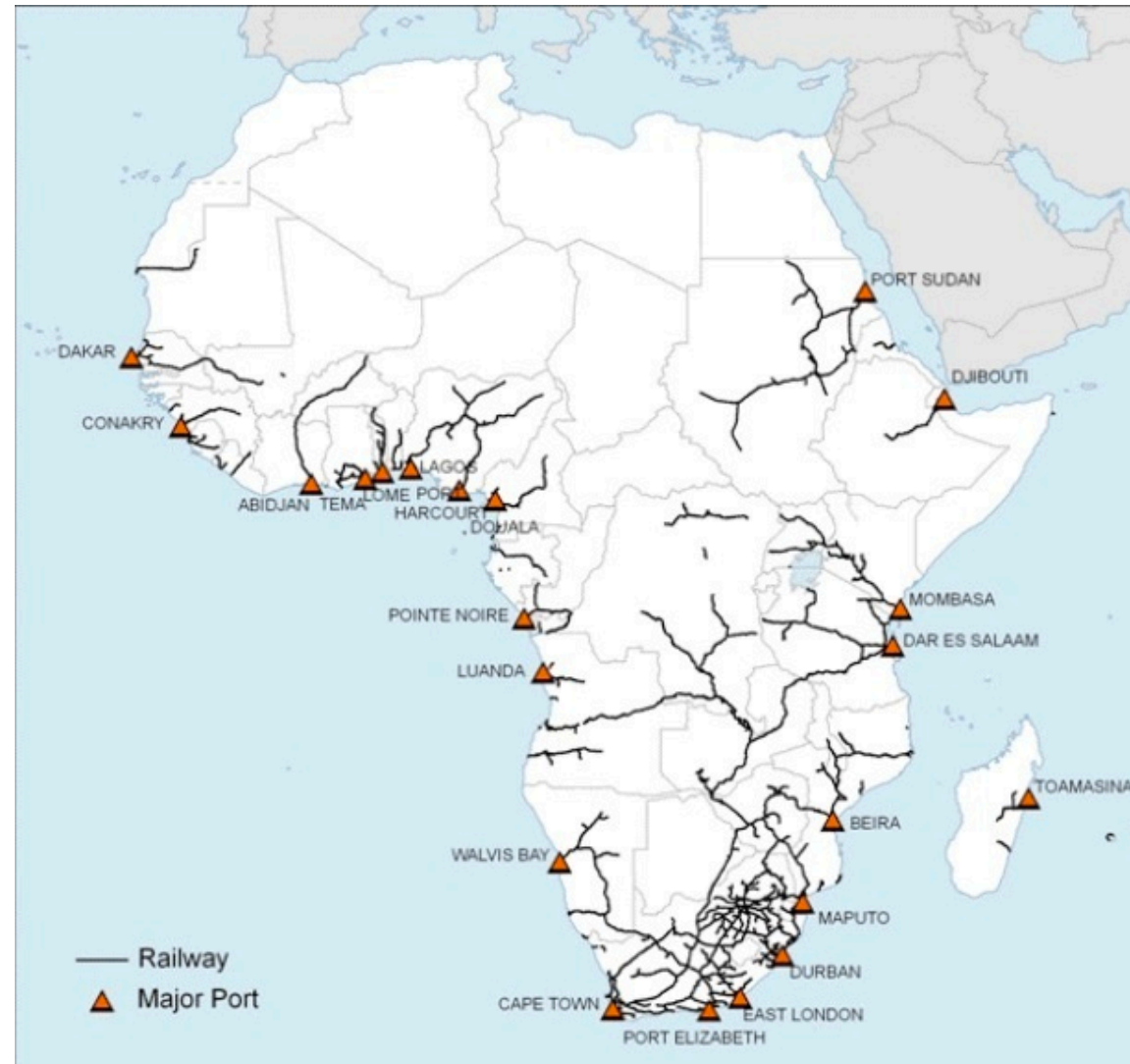
- Finn Fuglestad:
  - “The fact that the French were able to squeeze more than a million francs out of the impoverished and hunger-stricken peoples of Niger can only be described as a major performance.”
    - Fuglestad, Finn. 2008. *A History of Niger, 1850-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



# Effects of colonialism: public goods

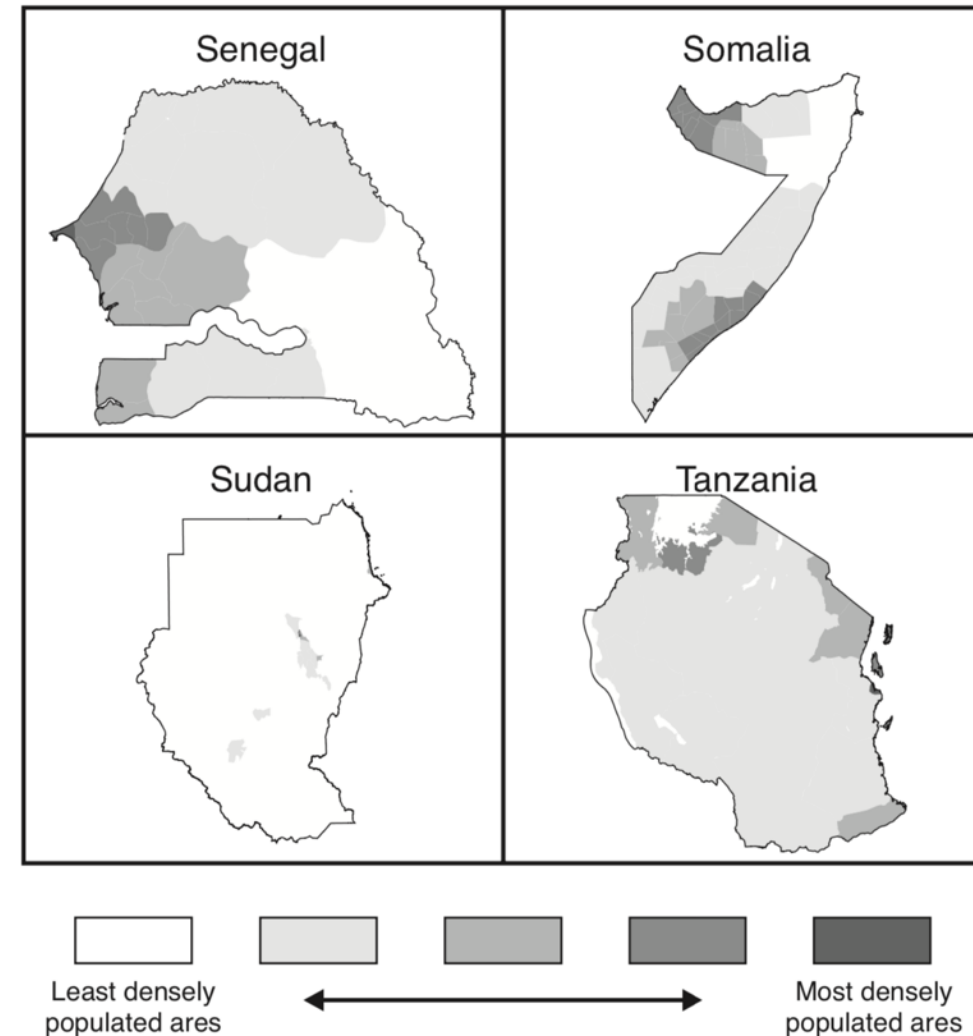


# Effects of colonialism: public goods



# Effects of colonialism: creation of new polities

- Artificial states and artificial borders:
  - 80% of non-coastal African borders follow latitudinal and longitudinal lines —>
- Communities divided by national borders
- Irredentist movements
- Divided societies and internal ethnic competition
- Lack of resources or market access





# Effects of colonialism: creation of new elites

- European:
  - Colonial officials
  - Settlers
- Indigenous:
  - Warrant chiefs in British colonies in Africa
  - 'Bureaucratic bourgeoisie' —>
- Transformation into state elites —>
- Neopatrimonialism

# Effects of colonialism: ethnicization

- Mahmood Mamdani:
  - “More than any other colonial subject, the African was containerized, not as a native, but as a tribesperson.”
- Terence Ranger: ‘invention of tradition’

# Effects of colonialism: decentralized despotism

- Mamdani:
  - Continuation of decentralized despotism after independence —>
  - Ethnicization: rural and urban popular resistance to decentralized despotism inevitably took an ethnic form as 'tribal' political organization —>
  - Government response to resistance: either continuation of decentralized despotism or attempt to reform it through centralization, resulting in centralized despotism —>
  - No democratization

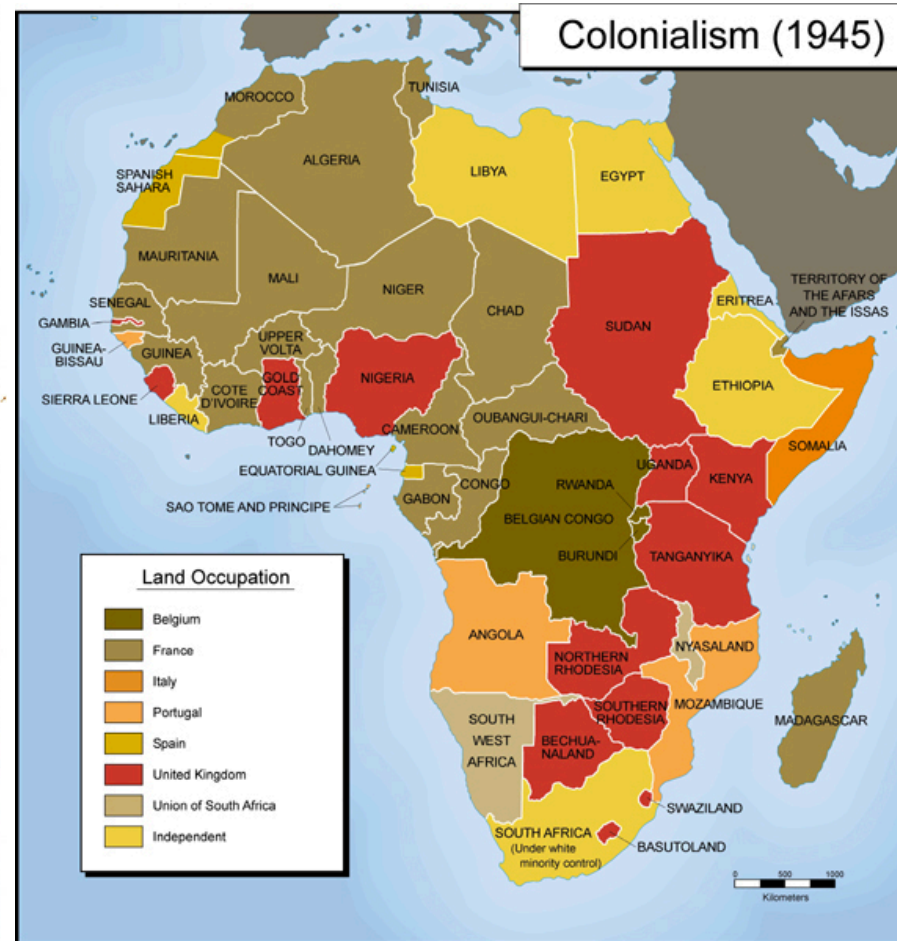
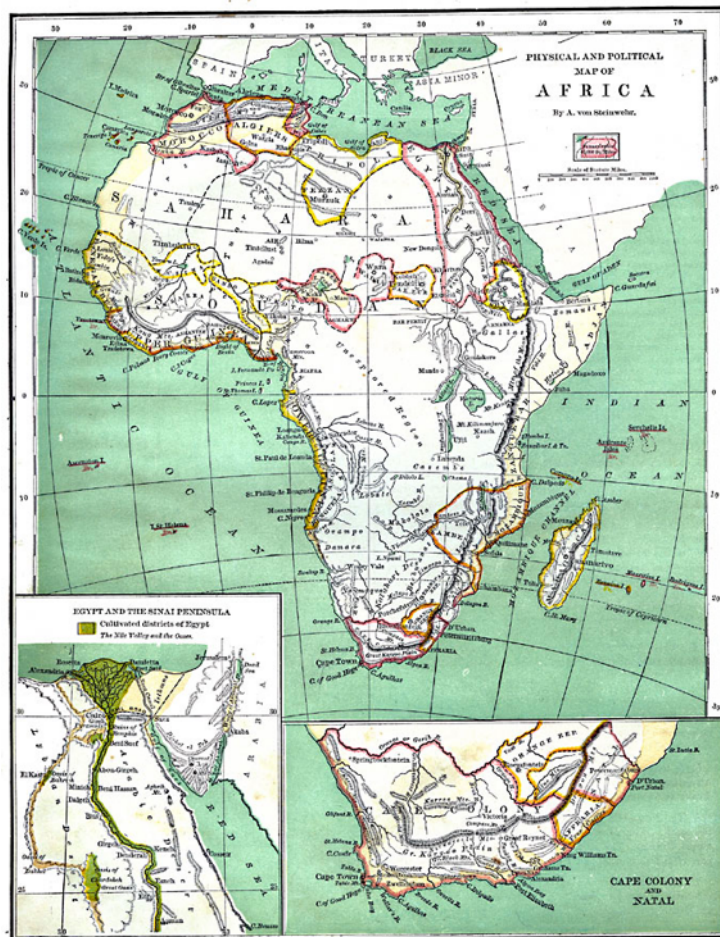
# Effects of colonialism: decentralized despotism

- Recent empirical evidence from a natural experiment in Namibia:
  - “[I]ndividuals in indirectly ruled areas are less likely to support democracy and turn out at elections.”
  - Mechanism: “the greater influence of traditional leaders in indirectly ruled areas has socialized individuals to accept nonelectoral bases of political authority.”
    - Lechler, Marie, and Lachlan McNamee. 2018. “Indirect Colonial Rule Undermines Support for Democracy: Evidence From a Natural Experiment in Namibia.” *Comparative Political Studies* 51 (14): 1858–98.

# Effects of colonialism: other institutions

- Non-hegemonic states:
  - Concentration of state power in strategic and profitable areas
  - Inability to project state power
- Weak links between the state and society —> weak accountability and legitimacy
- Weak political institutions
- Imposition of 'unambiguous' sovereignty (Herbst)

# Effects of colonialism: states-system



<https://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/7300/7338/7338.htm> / <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/afpolitically.htm> / <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/colonial-exploration-and-conquest-in-africa-explore/>

# Effects of colonialism: social norms

- Divergent attitudes towards homosexuality in precolonial Africa
- Christianity and colonial legislation
- The use of anti-homosexuality legislation and policies (esp. the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014 in Uganda) by elites to manipulate social anxieties
  - Rao, Rahul. 2015. "Re-membling Mwanga: Same-Sex Intimacy, Memory and Belonging in Postcolonial Uganda." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9 (1): 1–19.
  - Sadgrove, Joanna, Robert M. Vanderbeck, Johan Andersson, Gill Valentine, and Kevin Ward. 2012. "Morality Plays and Money Matters: Towards a Situated Understanding of the Politics of Homosexuality in Uganda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50 (01): 103–29.

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Uganda

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## Ugandan MPs press for death penalty for homosexual acts

Parliamentarians seek to resubmit bill to introduce capital sentences for gay sex



▲ Anti-gay rights protesters in Uganda. On most of the African continent, homosexuality is illegal. Photograph: Benedicte Desrus/Alamy

Jason Burke and Samuel Okiror in Kampala

Tue 15 Oct 2019 10:42 EDT

# Takeaways

- Deep imprint of colonialism on Africa's contemporary politics and society