# Church, State and Sex:
# How Africa's transnational churches shape human rights

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**Abstract**

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Why have East African mainline churches adopted select transnational rights agendas while opposing others, and what are the consequences of these politics for women and sexual minorities? This research examines mainlines' responses to three transnational agendas: eradicating gender-based violence, elevating female leaders, and advancing LGBTQ inclusion. It argues that mainlines face multilayered pressures that shape and limit church receptivity to rights agendas. Transnational influences coalesce with domestic religion-state relations to commission religious leaders to govern gender relations and sexual behavior. From here, mainline leaders' positional power, relative to state actors and other religious institutions, intervene to reinforce or disrupt church commitments to transnational rights. Specifically, mainline responses to an issue are shaped by that issue's level of global consensus, the challenges it poses to existing patriarchal institutions, and whether church adversaries can use the issue to undermine mainlines' domestic credibility. This analysis locates mainlines at the center of transnational efforts to diffuse international human-rights norms into grassroots practices. In doing so, it exposes the limited effects that transnational rights agendas have in challenging patriarchal domestic institutions and demonstrates that contemporary transnational religious politics variously advance and threaten to undermine movements to advance rights for East African women and sexual minorities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

## LIST OF TABLES

## ACRONYMS

AACC: All Africa Conference of Churches

AAWA: Addis Ababa Women's Association

AC: Anglican Communion

AFRICAN CHARTER: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

CAPA: Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

EECMY OR MEKANE YESUS: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

ELCA: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FECCLAHA: Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting

GBV: Gender-Based Violence; also referred to as Sexual or Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) or Violence Against Women (VAW)

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

HTPS: Harmful Traditional Practices

IRCE: Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia

IRCU: Inter-Religious Council of Uganda

LCMS: Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Individuals; similar acronyms also include people who identify as questioning, intersex, or asexual

LWF: Lutheran World Federation

MDGS: Millennium Development Goals

NCA: Norwegian Church Aid

NRM: National Resistance Movement (Uganda)

SDGS: Sustainable Development Goals

SOGI: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

UJCC: Uganda Joint Christian Council

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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## DEDICATION

to Loren for standing by me;
to Mom and Dad for the unwavering encouragement;
and to all the kind, powerful women in my life.

*Prologue*

I visited South Sudan in May 2012, less than a year after it gained independence from Sudan. At that time, the South Sudanese government was working to quell ethnic divisions—divisions which would later erupt into civil conflicts that devastated the new country's political and social institutions. As a representative of the U.S.-based Episcopal Church, I was traveling with a colleague to observe a faith-based anti-malaria effort. During our visit, we met the Most Reverend Daniel Deng Bul, Archbishop of Episcopal Church of Sudan. Archbishop Bul had been appointed by South Sudan's first president, Salva Kiir, to chair the 2012 Presidential Committee on Peace, Reconciliation, and Tolerance in Jongeli State, which had become a geographic hotbed for ethnic conflict. The Presidential Committee was meeting outside the city of Bor, where we were monitoring the malaria initiative. The Archbishop graciously stepped away from his reconciliation work to speak with us about our cross-national collaborative development projects. Before we began our meeting, however, he said to me: "First, I need your assurances that you will not impose your church's homosexual agenda upon the Episcopal Church of Sudan."

I sensed that the Archbishop's public concerns were not driven solely by conviction. Even so, I was surprised that the U.S. Episcopal Church's increasingly LGBTQ-friendly policies (which were neither imposed upon nor expected of the U.S. church's international partners) would dictate the terms of our tented meeting in Bor. I realized then that I personally held—and represented—two progressive commitments that appeared to come into direct, seemingly irreconcilable conflict: commitments to advancing LGBTQ rights and to reducing contemporary neocolonial dynamics. Meanwhile, the U.S. Episcopal Church was in the crosshairs of transnational debates that would define early-21st century social politics and, the week this dissertation was filed, threatened to forever divide the global United Methodist Church. This research seeks to understand if, when, and how my commitments can be reconciled in a world mired with stark and racialized inequality.

More broadly, my research is motivated by personal and professional experiences within faith-based organizations that span global North-South divides. I was exposed to cross-cultural church partnerships at an early age. Congregants from my parents' Lutheran church

in Minnesota returned from partnership mission trips to central Tanzania with stories of the Tanzanians' happiness and generosity amid the "unthinkable" poverty they faced. The returning travelers reflected upon the deeply meaningful expressions of faith they had shared with their Tanzanian sisters and brothers, despite the oceans and economic disparities that divided them. Much later in life, I began to develop the tools to understand that those well-intended mission trips reflected and recreated inequalities and damaging stereotypes that were born out of an extractive colonial era—a colonial era which set the stage for the bilateral partnerships on display in my Minnesota church.

In my early adult years, I served as a faith-based advocate in Washington, D.C., where I worked with organizations like the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion. The realities of those organizations' colonial histories were not lost on many of those working in the upper echelons of these and other transnational religious networks. I observed employees working to mitigate the inequalities that the global North's colonial endeavor solidified and working to reconcile the conflicting normative commitments I encountered that day in Bor. I met Geneva-based women from all over the world seeking to fight devastating mistreatments of women without imposing their way of doing things on others, without ignoring the patriarchy and violence against women that exists everywhere, without erroneously assuming that transnationalism offers women their best chance for equality, and without overlooking the power and agency of courageous women living in the global South. The topics examined in this analysis—gender-based violence, female leadership, and LGBTQ inclusion—bring these paradoxes between religion, human rights, colonial legacies, and global inequalities into harsh relief. The pages that follow employ political science frameworks in an effort to analytically understand these deeply complex, highly personal, ever political, often vexing, and hopefully emancipating dimensions of global Christianity.

# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

> *The world has become a global village, you cannot close your door, you cannot close your windows, you have to open your doors to other nations. We are the part of the nation, the world, we cannot escape from the rest of the world... We can keep our tradition, we can keep our identity, but without ignoring the situation of the world.* —Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

In the summer of 1998, Ugandan Archbishop Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo congregated at London's Lambeth Palace with more than 700 Anglican colleagues from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas to discuss their disagreements over homosexuality. Every ten years, the Archbishop of Canterbury convenes bishops from each of the global Anglican Communion's 45 autonomous church bodies. However, no meeting—before or since—attracted as much attention as did the 1998 convention. At this meeting, Nkoyoyo joined conservatives from the United States and elsewhere to mobilize a global Anglican movement against the U.S. Episcopal Church's increasingly LGBTQ-inclusive[1] policies. African leaders called it "evangelical suicide" to condone the same-sex practices that were widely rejected in their countries. They reported concern that their domestic constituents and colleagues would hold them "guilty by association" with the U.S. church (Thrall, 1998). Around the same time, leaders from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus pleaded that their fellow Lutheran World Federation members avoid ordaining gay and lesbian clergy, whom they thought violated Ethiopia's social and religious norms.

This conservative retrenchment alone offers an incomplete story of transnational church politics, however. The Anglican Church of Uganda responded differently to other deeply entrenched socio-religious norms. Ugandan church leaders worked with foreign partners to

[1] "LGBTQ inclusion" refers to church policies that allow gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (in some cases), and other queer-identifying people to be married and serve as clergy. This term does not imply that churches achieved widespread, meaningful, comprehensive inclusion. I exclude references to gender and sexual identities that have not been focal points of transnational church debates.

shift Ugandan government policies and constituent behaviors away from other widespread domestic practices and toward emerging transnational commitments to human rights and gender equality. For example, the Church of Uganda dismantled sexual stigmas surrounding the HIV/AIDS pandemic, championed national policies and grassroots interventions to fight gender-based violence, and stood at the forefront of transnational movements to ordain women as church leaders—thanks to grassroots movements from Ugandan women inspired by transnational women's-rights agendas. Yet the Church of Uganda launched a strong public stance against sexual minorities, despite harboring more nuanced, quieter attitudes toward gay and lesbian Ugandans ("They are in our compound, they're in our house, they're our brothers, they are our sisters," Interview 71[2]). Why did the Church of Uganda champion shifts toward some transnational human rights agendas, while renouncing others?

### *1.1 Research questions*

Most of East Africa's mainline churches began as European missions and gained independence in the second half of the twentieth century.[3] Today, African mainlines join their former-missionary institutions as members of transnational denominational networks that provide platforms for bilateral partnerships[4] and help fund global-South church operations and development efforts.[5] Like mainline churches throughout the region, the Anglican

[2]Interview 71 is an executive leader for the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. In this quote, he spoke on behalf of Uganda's religious leaders, including the Anglican Church of Uganda.

[3]Mainlines include Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches (Gifford, 2008, 276). They generally maintained European liturgies, theologies, and perspectives after gaining independence, although the staggering growth among Africa's Pentecostal movements inspired Renewalist transformations within mainlines (Kangwa, 2016, 573-75). Today, East Africa's now-independent mainline churches play crucial democratization and governance roles among their communities and nations (Gifford, 1995, 2008).

[4]American Lutheran synods (districts) manage forty-nine companion relationships with African Lutheran synods, many of which date back decades. These relationships express "communion and fellowship," facilitate bilateral "accompaniment," and expose participants to "global challenges and perspectives" (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2017*a*). U.S. Episcopal dioceses manage similar relationships with African Anglicans.

[5]Contemporary wealth inequalities among member churches continue the dependency of previously colonized churches on richer global North counterparts (Ward, 2006, 1-19). In 2015, Lutherans in Germany, Scandinavia, North America, and Australia contributed thirty-four percent of the LWF budget. Ninety percent (125 million Euros) of that overall 2015 expenditure funded humanitarian efforts to support poor and/or developing communities throughout the world (Lutheran World Federation, 2017). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in American annually contributes $15 million to LWF development programs and $4 million to its own development initiative (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2017*b*). Similarly, the

Church of Uganda is influential at every level of political analysis, from the sanctified halls of London's Lambeth Palace, to the elite All Saints Cathedral in Uganda's capital city of Kampala, to the far reaches of Uganda's rural communities. Mainlines manage flows of information, perspectives, and experiences between transnational affiliates, central-state government officials, and grassroots constituents. In doing so, mainlines serve as bridges between their global denominational affiliates and the everyday social, political, and spiritual experiences of East Africans (Figure 1.1). Mainline churches throughout the region share this unique characteristic in common, despite textured idiosyncrasies caused by variations in denominational affiliations, colonial missionary histories, post-colonial political experiences, and social identities.

Mainline churches mobilize these multiple layers of influence to be exceptionally muscular civil-society organizations. East African churches, in general, influence public policy, social attitudes, and local political behavior (Ellis and Haar, 2004; Jones and Lauterbach, 2005; McClendon and Riedl, 2015*b*; Riedl, 2012). Mainline churches' unique, multilayered positions allow them to become especially useful venues for diffusing transnational human-rights norms into their communities and countries.

Yet churches have made varying, and often limited, contributions to transnational rights efforts. In some issue areas, mainlines have effectively mobilized their transnational and domestic layers of influence to champion transnational rights-based agendas. For example, elite church leaders have partnered with their transnational colleagues and state actors to embrace and champion national efforts to eradicate gender-based violence. In other areas, mainlines have publicly repudiated transnational inclusionary agendas and absorbed considerable cost in doing so. This is the case in church responses to LGBTQ inclusion. Even as select church leaders hosted quiet spaces to protect sexual minorities within their communities, national figureheads strongly opposed the LGBTQ-inclusive policies adopted by their transnational counterparts. And in still other cases—like women's efforts to gain access to church-based leadership roles—mainlines have made limited and inconsistent strides toward

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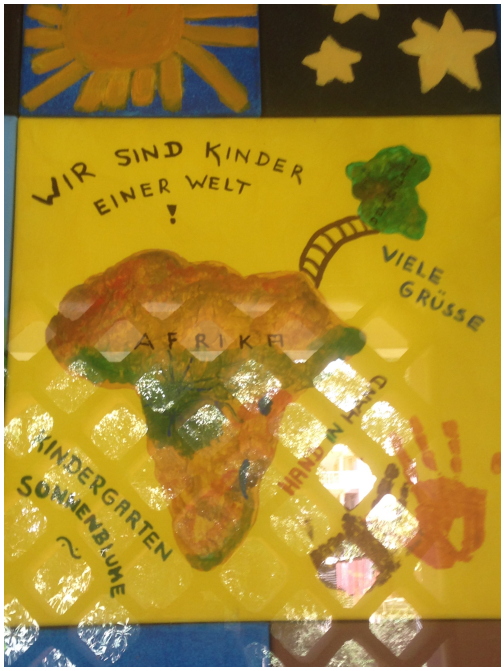
Episcopal Church represents fewer than three percent of the Anglican Communion's population but funds at least one third of its annual budget. U.S. Episcopalians contribute ten-of-millions of dollars additionally each year to Anglican churches in Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Goodstein and Banerjee, 2007).

gender equality.

What explains variations in church responses to these transnational rights agendas? In other words, why do national church leaders adopt, advance, and champion some transnational agendas, while publicly and vociferously opposing others? And why have churches that have committed to improving the lives of women achieved varying, and often limited, success at advancing those efforts?

Figure 1.1: Children's mural




Displayed at the entrance to the Kenyan Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) headquarters in Nairobi. The Swedish Lutheran Mission founded KELC in 1948.

The answer to these questions lies in the reality that a mainline church's autonomy is far more constricted than its official status would suggest. Churches officially enjoy autonomy from their transnational partners, their state governments, their domestic constituents, and the norms that govern their societies. In practice, however, a church's ability to arrive at, and advance, a human-rights agenda is limited by the pressures it simultaneously experiences from multiple transnational and domestic sources. These multiple pressures stymie a church's social influence and render its autonomy limited or even chimerical. The complexities of these multiple pressures explain why churches respond variously—and often anemically—to transnational human-rights agendas.

Alongside answering this study's central questions, this analysis explores answers to two additional questions: How and why do churches emerge as governors of gender- and sexuality-based state policies and constituent behaviors? And what are the consequences of these multilayered pressures for women and sexual minorities? This research explores these dynamics among churches throughout East Africa, with specific foci on mainline churches in Uganda and Ethiopia. In doing so, it identifies mainline churches as strong yet bounded civil-society organizations at the center of transnational efforts to diffuse international human-rights norms into grassroots practice.

### *1.2 Transnational "norm diffusion" processes*

A considerable body of scholarship examines the role of interlocutors, mediators, or translators who transport "global" human-rights norms into diverse socio-cultural contexts. Scholars of these transnational agendas typically begin with the premise that norms are developed in global North-based international institutions and transported to targeted countries for adoption or implementation. Elite lawyers, development practitioners, politicians, and activists gather in New York, Geneva, or the Hague. They identify a pressing social problem, establish a values-based framework to express the human gravity of that problem, and craft laws and political institutions to enforce solutions to that problem. Ideally, this would activate cross-cultural commitments to human rights (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, 199–201; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, 902–05; Clark, 2010, 124-27) and initiate processes in which countries update their domestic laws and policies accordingly.[6] Next, transnational activists identify national and local leaders who, if convinced and adequately outfitted, may work to shift grassroots behaviors toward greater human-rights protections in urban and rural communities throughout the world.

Much of the existing research therefore focuses on explicitly *foreign*, secular actors' delivery of ideals, policies, or services to *domestic* actors in the global South.[7] Norms and resulting laws are developed from Euro-American prototypes and reproduced through transnational institutions that reflect global (and often colonial) inequalities.[8] This foreign-import

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[6]Transnational human rights institutions pressure offending governments to improve their human-rights records (Risse-Kappen, Ropp and Sikkink, 1999) and to encourage and incentivize national elites to embrace, adopt, and enforce those rights in their countries (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004, 490). Indeed, transnational networks and standards have helped advance democratic ideals (Freyburg, 2015, 59), constrain state human-rights offenders (Simmons, 2009, 12-17), and strengthen local legal institutions (Lake, 2014, 515).

[7]Merry (2006*a*) traces how United Nations-centered human-rights law became translated into local responses to addressing gender-based violence throughout Asia Pacific. Lake (2018) examines international non-state actors' direction of sexual violence courts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Cloward (2016) tracks when international normative messages from transnational activists inspire "local" individuals in rural Kenya to reject female genital mutilation and early marriage. Tripp (2015) demonstrates that international norms and pressures interact with domestic conflict-driven shifts in gender relations to increase African women's political representation.

[8]Indeed, laws and approaches to addressing human-rights abuses that are common across countries "are not parallel inventions but the product of transnational flows of knowledge, actors, programs, and funds. Mechanisms such as UN conferences foster circulation and exchange, drawing people from different countries together to learn about activities in other countries. The circulation is never free, however, but

model makes it difficult to obtain domestic compliance. Grassroots communities often experience international human-rights principles as either incomprehensible, incompatible with their local practices, and/or iterations of global-North imperialism. Furthermore, local community leaders often resist norms they believe threaten to usurp their cultural identities. This is the fundamental tension human-rights activists face as they seek to avoid dismantling a community's cultural tradition while promoting transnationally developed commitments to equality and rights (Merry, 2006*a*, 131).

To surmount this problem of cultural incompatibility and to mitigate accusations of imposition, foreign actors must either partner with locally trusted leaders (Cloward, 2016) or commission national or local interlocutors to translate or vernacularize secular principles into locally legible ideas and practices. Merry (2006*a*) demonstrates how implementors tailor international human-rights norms against gender-based violence to specific contexts and employ locally relevant cultural symbols in doing so. The aim is to develop a "locally controlled program that recognizes the complexity of local cultural ideas but allows local groups to tailor the program to the power dynamics and symbolic resources of the situation in which they work" (164). For example, an implementor encourages a woman to adopt a rights framework—which positions the woman as an autonomous individual protected by the state—alongside her kinship obligations (180-81). Figure 1.2 maps this ideal process of secular transnational norm diffusion alongside a faith-based approach.

According to the secular framework Merry develops, if human rights are to retain their radical emancipatory potential, they must not be fully integrated ("indigenized") into existing practices. They must instead "retain their fundamental grounding in transnational human rights concepts of autonomy, individualism, and equality." Rights that blend fully with a specific social context risk losing their radical possibilities and failing to dismantle existing power relations (Merry, 2006*a*, 177-78).

Unfortunately, actors working to translate human rights into local contexts still face considerable barriers to, and limitations in, their ability to facilitate long-term, widespread normative change. Absent a common ethical framework or shared identity between foreign

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always *channeled by global inequalities in wealth and power*" (Merry, 2006*a*, 177, emphasis added).

importers and local recipients, these norms can be incompletely implemented, ignored, subverted, or overturned. As vernacularized international rights frameworks, secular transnational womens' movements have yielded highly circumscribed effects. Scholars demonstrate how these secular approaches insufficiently alter informal gender-based power imbalances (Lake, 2018), revert to more patriarchal practices over longer-term periods (Cronin-Furman, N.d.), or remain governed and limited by powerful male actors (Pierotti, Lake and Lewis, 2018; see also: Berry, 2018; Hughes and Tripp, 2015; Tripp, 2015). Could mainline interlocutors more successfully overcome these challenges?

### *1.3 Mainline churches at the center of transnational diffusion processes*

This analysis adopts and builds upon transnational secular norm-diffusion literature by examining parallel processes within religious networks. It suggests that mainline churches represent a middle ground between transnational secular rights and local cultural commitments. Mainlines can authentically claim both ownership over the transnational rights agendas and moral leadership over the communities targeted for implementation. These strong identity-based footholds in both transnational and domestic terrains may allow mainlines to present transnational rights-based agendas as existing within—rather than beyond—the parameters of local identities and normative frameworks (Figure 1.2). Although religious elites, too, encounter cultural barriers between themselves and their rural grassroots communities, religious appeals often supersede cultural attachments. In fact, one Nairobi-based secular development practitioner situates her community-based interventions within a community's religious doctrines, because people tend to attach more weight to religiously condoned behaviors than to cultural practices.[9] As avenues for more authoritative and effective indigenization, mainline churches may therefore alleviate the challenges that Merry (2006*a*) and others identify within secular diffusion efforts. In short, scholars seeking to understand how East African civil society may evolve alongside transnational forces are likely to see the strongest effects within mainline venues.

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[9] "We find that, when people believe that whatever they are doing is supported by religion, they are less likely to want to give it up than if it was culture" (Interview 66).

Figure 1.2: Flowchart: Transnational diffusion processes

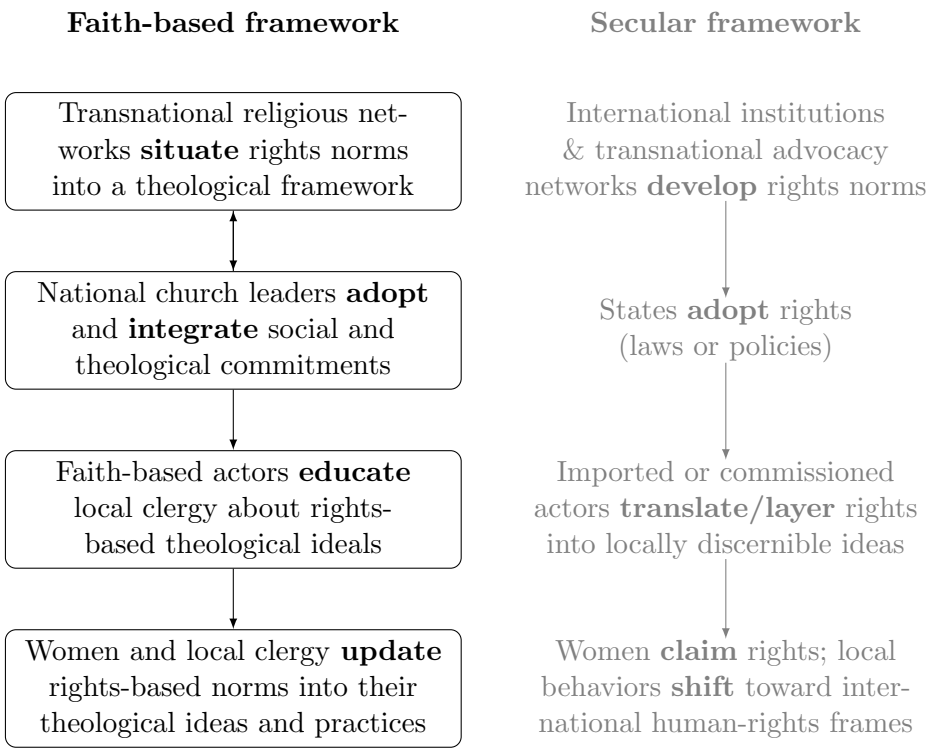
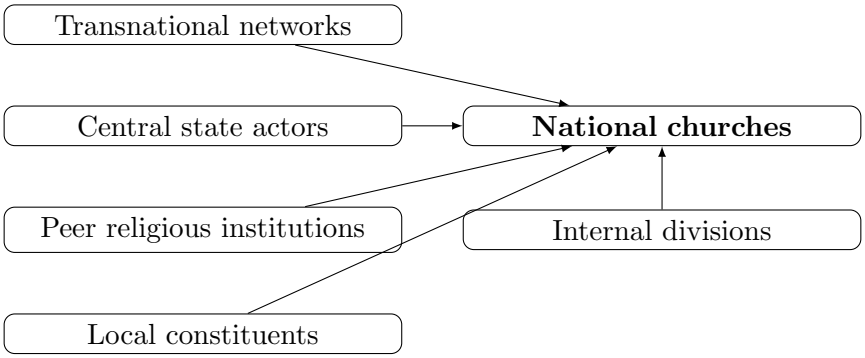


Figure 1.3: Multiple sources of pressure on mainline churches (IVs)




*Variations in church responses*

Despite mainlines' promise as "ideal" faith-based norm-diffusion venues, mainlines exhibit different levels of engagement from one transnational rights-base agenda to another. This variation can only be fully understood by examining the pressures churches encounter from multiple (and often competing) sources. These sources of pressure include: 1) mainlines' transnational networks and partners, 2) their central state's actors, 3) their peer domestic religious institutions, 4) internally disputing factions within their institutions, and 5) their local clergy leaders and constituents (Figure 1.3). In deciding upon and implementing new policy positions, national church leaders must consider and weigh each of these influences (Table 1.1). Together, these pressures considerably limit a church's autonomy and ability to exact behavioral changes.

Table 1.1: Multiple sources of pressure (IVs) that limit church autonomy

| **Source** | **Pressure** | **Example** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Transnational networks, development agencies | Provide churches resources and incentives to adopt and implement transnational human-rights agendas | Lutheran World Federation, Anglican Communion, UNDP |
| 2. Central state actors | Seek to leverage and limit churches' political and social influence | Federal, regional, or local government officials |
| 3. Peer religious institutions | Maintain shared socio-religious commitments, attract constituencies away from mainlines | Pentecostal Movements |
| 4. Internal divisions | Represent divisions and disagreements about church policy positions, objectives, and priorities | Women's Desk officers, those opposed to female leaders |
| 5. Local constituents | Misunderstand and/or oppose national church priorities (urban / rural divides) | Local clergy |

There are three interrelated conditions through which these sources of pressure influence variation in church responses to transnational norms. The first condition is the extent to which a given norm has acquired global consensus as an uncontroversially important commitment. Unsurprisingly, norms that enjoy cross-cultural agreement or can be easily framed in locally compatible terms will be more easily diffused into local practices (Acharya, 2004, 244; Cortell and Davis Jr, 2000, 66). National religious elites that champion these uncontroversial practices will expend little domestic social capital while appealing to a large coalition of transnational donors and supporters. More contentious topics, on the other hand, generate transnational coalitions that compete over policy positions and domestic allies (Bob, 2012; Dorf and Tarrow, 2014; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005). The global agenda to fight gender-based violence has attracted a strong transnational consensus with few (if any) prominent players opposing its normative value. Mainline church efforts to eradicate gender-based violence therefore demonstrate the unique promise churches offer as diffusers of transnational human rights.

Beyond this, condition two highlights the extent to which a given transnational agenda challenges existing power structures, especially those that underpin church leaders' positional power. Each of the rights-based agendas studied here disrupt existing patriarchal structures that underlie traditional family units and religious mores. Each requires individual elite leaders to defend marginalized communities (here, women or sexual minorities) against colleagues who may remain strongly committed (for either ideological or instrumental reasons) to maintaining the *status quo*. Women's efforts to obtain roles as clergy, bishops, or voting church-council members most clearly demonstrate these tensions between rights-based agendas and internal church efforts to maintain patriarchal hierarchies. Even among churches which allow women to serve as ordained clergy, women encounter strong informal barriers to their abilities to access or influence the upper echelons of church leadership.[10]

The third condition is whether domestic religious counterparts can use a given issue to undermine a church's domestic credibility. Churches in a given domestic "religious mar-

[10]This dynamic parallels women's experience as legislators, who often become "token" leaders without substantive power or encounter gender-based barriers that prevent them from accessing higher leadership positions. See, for example, Clayton, Josefsson and Wang (2014) and other comparative research on legislative gender quotas (Hughes, Krook and Paxton, 2015; Krook, 2006).

ketplace" compete with one another for constituents and other resources.[11] Churches also maintain and reinforce certain shared normative standards upon which they all agree (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). If a church violates these parameters, it risks losing constituents and surrendering its religious credibility. LGBTQ inclusion appears to have emerged as a transnational agenda that mainlines' peer religious institutions can mobilize to challenge mainlines' credibility. Sexual minorities often lack social visibility[12] and become accused of being "foreign imposters" who threaten national narratives (Ayoub, 2014, 345-56)[13] with secular transnational values.[14] Well-aware that international legal and political institutions represent global racial hierarchies (McCann and Lovell, 2019; Merry, 2006*b*; Silbey, 1997) which marginalize actors from the global South (Acharya, 2011, 100-01),[15] religious actors leverage anti-colonial narratives to hold themselves and one another accountable to their religious marketplace's parameters. The case of transnational LGBTQ rights provides the clearest example of this dynamic. Nevertheless, women's leadership agendas also attract similar criticism of illegitimate foreign contamination.

In short, LGBTQ politics provides a powerful platform—buttressed by grievances against colonial histories and racialized global inequalities—through which adversaries can undermine mainline churches' social credibility. Meanwhile, as the chapters that follow will demonstrate, agendas advancing women's leadership or fighting gender-based violence do not provide as direct a venue for opposition. As a result, mainline churches have emerged as either full or periodic partners in the venacularization and indigenization of transnational women's-rights agendas while shying away from LGBTQ politics. Table 1.2 presents these

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[11] A rich body of literature examines the political economy of religious institutions (Bellin, 2008; Gill, 2001, 2008; Gill and Pfaff, 2010; Kalyvas, 1996; Rubin, 2017; Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; Stark and Finke, 2002; Warner, 2000; Witham, 2010).

[12] Sexual minorities live dispersed throughout "all walks of life" but largely "invisible" (Campbell, 2014; Mwachiro, 2014). They face criminalization from colonial-era laws (Carroll and Mendos, 2017, 81-107) and experience exclusion from colonial religious mores (Jenkins, 2002, 247-54).

[13] Similarly, opponents to LGBTQ- and immigrant-rights movements in the United States cast sexual minorities and immigrants as threats to American boundaries (Adam, 2017, 142-49).

[14] In the African context, scholars have observed that, "Homophobia has become the latest way for some African leaders to reassert a claimed 'authentic' culture and morality and to articulate independence from the West and its perceived secular, neo-colonial and individualized values" (Valentine et al., 2013, 170).

[15] Indeed, "this [colonial] Europe does not dialogue, it soliloquizes" (Diagne, 2011, 141).

three conditions and how each shapes church responses to transnational rights agendas.

Table 1.2: Conditions that shape church responses to transnational norms

| | Gender-Based Violence | Female Leadership | LGBTQ Rights |
|---|---|---|---|
| Global Consensus | Strong consensus | Weak consensus | No consensus |
| Challenges Patriarchal Institutions | Indirect | Direct | Indirect |
| Helps Adversaries Undermine Social Clout | No | Slightly | Yes |
| **Church response** | **Adoption** | **Subtle Resistance** | **Strong Opposition** |

*Setting the Stage: Dual registers of religion-state relations*

How and why do churches (in general, and specifically in East Africa) emerge as political guardians of gender relations and sexual behavior in the first place? Until now, this introduction has focused on mainline churches' unique position between their transnational affiliates and their constituents. However, these dynamics cannot be fully understood without considering how mainline leaders and institutions interact with their own state governments.

States and their mainline churches manage allied and adversarial relationships with one another. Mainlines hold prominent public positions as service providers, moral leaders, policy educators, and public advocates. State governments often rely on churches to perform crucial social services, inform communities about state laws and political activities, and model policy-mandated shifts in social behavior. However, mainline leaders can also become public adversaries against state corruption, oppression, or failures of "good governance." Indeed, mainline church leaders speaking out against abuses perpetrated by Uganda's Idi Amin or Ethiopia's Derg regime attracted international accolades and solicited violent government backlashes.[16] Today, church leaders throughout the region remain invested in publicly critiquing government corruption, lacks of transparency, and other undemocratic trends. Meanwhile, states seek to reduce these voices of criticism.

[16]Gudina Tumsa was General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus during the early stages of the Derg's reign of "Red Terror." Tumsa spoke domestically and internationally against the regime's human-rights abuses. The Derg abducted and killed him in July 1979 (Eide, 1996, 69-70; Eide, 2001). Two years earlier in Uganda, Janani Jakaliya Luwum, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Uganda and outspoken critic of Idi Amin's excessively violent regime, was arrested and killed by Amin's government (N.A., 1977).

Issue-based differentiations among religion-state relations emerge from these allied and adversarial relationships. State actors generally promote a seemingly integrated, cohesive secular narrative—an image of the state (Migdal, 2001, 15-23)—that excludes churches from publicly addressing explicitly political dynamics, including those related to bad governance practices or state violations of political rights. At the same time, state actors anoint church leaders to dictate state public policies that govern contentious social practices related to gender roles or sexuality. "Dual registers" of religion-state relations emerge from this differentiation. These dual registers impose different expectations on churches' political behavior—expectations which vary according to the political issue or topic at hand.

This dual-register configuration elevates (Migdal, 2001, 17) or emancipates (Marx, 1844) state actors from entering the contentious terrain of "private" behavior, even as state policies to govern gender and sexuality are formulated, codified, and implemented. Meanwhile, these dual registers restrict church leaders from speaking against anti-democratic or bad-governance trends. In fact, some interview evidence suggests that states commission churches to govern gender roles and sexuality as a consolation to divert churches from engaging in advocacy agendas that hold state actors accountable to anti-corruption standards. However, the dual registers do not necessarily emerge at the intentional hand of specific state or religious actors. In any event, once these differentiations are established, mainlines' roles as governors of gender roles and sexuality become reinforced by transnational denominational politics, which encourage and outfit mainlines to focus on women's empowerment and prompt them to respond to LGBTQ-rights movements.

The configuration outline here represents a state's deferral of responsibility for personal normative systems to private religious authority. Such codified distinctions between political rights and personal legal systems are reminiscent of the hybrid nature of colonial-era legal systems (Comaroff, 1997; Lazarus-Black and Hirsch, 2012; Merry, 2003*a*). Importantly, these hybrid distinctions do not move "private" matters beyond the jurisdiction of the state. Instead, they exonerate state actors from having to take responsibility for managing such culturally contentious issues. At the same time, this differentiation allows the state to promote itself as reflecting—and abiding by—the global North's images of what a "modern" and "secular" state *looks like*. It is relevant here that several interviewees

from countries throughout East Africa reminded me that their legal and political systems maintain a "separation of church and state."[17]

*Implications for women and sexual minorities*

Together, domestic religion-state politics and transnational politics coalesce to elevate mainline churches as guardians of gender roles and sexual behavior. The pages that follow demonstrate areas in which these politics offer some limited promise for addressing gender-based violence and empowering female leaders. In these cases, a mainline's unique location at the transnational–domestic nexus positions it to implant and integrate transnational rights agendas into national policies and local attitudes. Armed with exposure and funding support from transnational colleagues, mainlines can champion shifts in gender relations.

However, this issue-based differentiation of religion-state relations can severely limit—and even disempower—women and sexual minorities in at least three specific ways. First, this differentiation relegates gender- and sexuality-related rights to the sphere of "private" policies rather than political rights. This weakens rights' radical potential. If negotiated and adjudicated as a political rights-related issue, ideas about human rights for women and sexual minorities would "provide a radically different [and therefore powerful] frame for thinking about the relations of power and inequality in society" (Merry, 2006*a*, 180).[18] In the absence of this radical break from existing power structures, the potency of women's-rights agendas may be weakened. Second, this differentiation anoints traditionally conservative, patriarchal institutions to govern gender-related norms and policies. Powerful male leaders are motivated—and even constituted—by both their gendered attitudes and their own interests to circumscribe women's access to political rights and leadership roles.

Third, this differentiation exposes mainlines to critiques from other domestic actors and their own constituents that mainlines are kowtowing to the foreign ideas of their more powerful (even neocolonial) transnational partners. Competing stakeholders (including states)

[17] I thank Michael McCann for identifying the connection between contemporary religion-state configurations and the colonial legal regimes from which they were born.

[18] "In the area of violence against women, human rights ideas are powerful precisely because they offer a radical break from the view that violence is natural and inevitable in intimate relations between men and women" (Merry, 2006*a*, 180).

may seek to exploit the incongruence between existing domestic norms and global agendas to undermine mainlines' social credibility. To avoid such accusations of neocolonialism, mainlines may delimit and restrict their adoption of transnational rights agendas. Thus, women, sexual minorities, and their allies who struggle for rights encounter what McCann (2014, 265) calls the "unbearable lightness" of transnational rights agendas: "The possibilities continue to multiply, but those promises are often resisted or co-opted by the weighty realities of instrumental, institutional, and ideological power."

*Argument synopsis*

In sum, East African state actors elevate religious leaders as governors of "private" issues like gender roles and sexual behavior. This sets the stage for transnational–domestic church politics. State deference to religious authorities on issues of social governance affords mainline churches considerable power in shaping public opinion, state policies, and community practices towards transnational gender- and sexuality-related norms. From here, three factors explain why different issues attract variation in church responses to transnational agendas: 1) an issue's level of global consensus, 2) the challenges the issue poses to existing patriarchal institutions, and 3) the extent to which an issue may be used by a church's adversary to undermine its domestic social credibility. Unsurprisingly, agendas that enjoy a stronger global consensus will be more likely to attract collaborative local engagement. Beyond that, church leaders' positional power, relative to their states and other religious institutions, can intervene to reinforce or disrupt church commitments to transnational rights agendas. Each empirical chapter of this analysis explicitly engages how mainline churches respond to a given transnational agenda to support or disempower women and sexual minorities.

*Situating transnational women's rights efforts*

This research builds upon the preliminary premise that global-North dominated transnational rights-based movements represent agendas which, if adopted, could improve the lives of East Africa's women and sexual minorities. This premise does not imply that gender relations are more egalitarian in the global North, relative to those in the post-colonial world.

Such a conclusion would be historically inaccurate and empirically misleading. In reality, egalitarian gender norms do not have global North origins (Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn, 2013) and are not necessarily more advanced there than in the global South. In fact, many African scholars credibly attribute existing inegalitarian gender norms in their countries to the Victorian attitudes peddled by colonial missionaries (Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, 1997). Furthermore, on some metrics, African countries far exceed accomplishments in the United States and much of Europe. For example, women are transforming Africa's political landscape (Tripp et al., 2009); several African countries lead the world in their proportion of women represented in parliament (Bauer and Britton, 2006; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017; see also: Figure A.1).[19]

Meanwhile, religious institutions and their countries around the world remain roiled in contentious debates over whether and how best to protect women and sexual minorities. Russia partially decriminalized domestic violence in 2017 (Spring, 2018) and the U.S. Congress appears poised to fail to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act for the first time since it was enacted in 1994 (McPherson, 2018). Even as American women decry rampant sexual assault (#MeToo) and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops faces allegations of widespread, decades-long predatory pedophilia, American politicians and judges undermine efforts to address sexual violence on social, moral, and theological grounds. In short, we are far from a global consensus about whether or how to restrict the threat of bodily harm too many women face in their domestic and public lives. Debates about ordaining women or celebrating sexual minorities in church spaces is even less resolved.[20]

Caveats notwithstanding, transnational agendas represent promising rights-based agendas that have emerged from collections of advocates from around the world. These transnational agendas have the potential to represent changes that improve the lives of women and

[19]In 2017, Rwanda lead the world with sixty-one percent of its national parliamentary seats held by women. Eleven of the thirty-six countries in the world for which women held at least one-third of national parliamentarian seats in 2017 were African: Rwanda (61 percent), South Africa (42), Senegal (42), Namibia (41), Mozambique (40), Ethiopia (39), Angola (38), Tanzania (36), Burundi (36), Uganda (34), and Zimbabwe (33). Meanwhile, women of the 116th U.S. Congress compose a record-breaking twenty-three percent of seats (Hansen, 2018; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018; World Bank, 2019).

[20]Anglican churches in Uganda and Kenya ordained women before many European churches. Meanwhile, Protestant churches throughout the United States, Europe and Africa remain opposed to ordaining women.

sexual minorities, many of whom experience daily threats of discrimination, excommunication, and violence. Shifting these practices, however, requires widespread changes to postcolonial social practices and often attracts opposition from local constituents—opposition which many mainline interviewees identified as driven by faulty "traditional practices" or "culture."[21] Examining the role East African mainline religious leaders play in advancing and circumventing shifts in gender relations will help inform rights activists and development practitioners working in East Africa and throughout the global South. This analysis is also informative for—and perhaps emblematic of—how religious ideas and institutions dictate gender norms in a variety of unfolding, unresolved contexts.

### *1.4 Research design*

*Case selection*

The three cases examined are transnational agendas 1) to fight gender-based violence; 2) to enable women as empowered church leaders; and 3) to expand LGBTQ rights and inclusion. Comparing these three cases allows for the theoretical development and examination of how churches function as interlocutors between transnational norms and their domestic contexts. East African states have commissioned or deferred to churches to govern policies and attitudes related to each of these three agendas. Each agenda requires significant shifts in social norms and behavior among church constituents. Each has forced East African church leaders to manage competing expectations from their transnational partners and their domestic environments. Yet mainlines have responded with varying levels of adoption, compliance, and resistance to each case. Comparing the collaborative and contentious outcomes that emerge in each of these issues exposes how national church leaders manage their unique role at the transnational–domestic nexus and identifies the implications of these political dynamics for vulnerable or marginalized communities.

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[21] Semi-structured interviews did not prompt interviewees to identify "culture" or "tradition" as an aid or a barrier to addressing social gender-based issues. Nevertheless, interviewees routinely cited and blamed "culture" for facilitating disempowering gender-based norms.

*Church of Uganda and Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus*

This analysis examines East African region-wide trends and then focuses on how each case developed within national mainline churches in Ethiopia and Uganda. There are three reasons why Ethiopia and Uganda are ideal for this study. First, governments in both countries display strong authoritarian tendencies. State efforts to constrain or control mainline institutions can be documented relatively easily without relying upon—and therefore endangering—interviewed leaders. Second, both countries' constitutions codify progressive women's-rights protections, yet their national trends exhibit strong patriarchal norms and high rates of gender-based violence and exclusion.

Third, mainline institutions in both countries emerged as domestic and continental leaders that variously championed and rejected transnational rights-based agendas. With 12.5 million members, the Anglican Church of Uganda represents roughly thirty percent of Ugandans. The church is the largest autonomous mainline church in Uganda, is the second-largest African church in the Anglican Communion, and enjoys a prominent role in Uganda's political origins and contemporary politics. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is considerably smaller than the powerful Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. However, with more than eight million members, Mekane Yesus is the second-largest Christian church and the predominant mainline institution in Ethiopia. Mekane Yesus is also the largest and fastest growing church within the Lutheran World Federation. Both the Anglican Church of Uganda and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus work with their respective transnational networks to fight gender-based violence in their communities, with relatively little controversy (Chapter 3). Both the Church of Uganda and Mekane Yesus were among the first African institutions in their respective transnational denominations to champion women's leadership roles, but female leaders in both churches experience notable barriers (Chapter 4). Both churches also led continental movements against transnational LGBTQ-inclusive policies (Chapter 5). These countries and churches therefore house the variation in responses to issue-based cases this research seeks to understand.

*Methodology*

This analysis employs mixed methods and a variety of data sources. It focuses on original elite interview data conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Kampala, Uganda. Interviews focused on regional religious leaders (based in Nairobi and Addis Ababa) and on national religious leaders from Ethiopia (based in Addis Ababa) and Uganda (based in Kampala). In-country research included more than fifty semi-structured interviews with regional or national religious leaders, identified using snowball sampling, and an additional thirty informal background interviews. Interviews and other research were conducted over the course of six months in 2015-16. I supplement these interview data with official and informal conversations with non-government actors, with public documentation of policies and debates, and with cross-national and sub-national demographic data.

Interview questions focused on institutional policies and motivations. The interview protocol did not ask interviewees to share personal opinions. Some interviewees requested to remain anonymous. I did not record their identities or any other interview detail. All others consented to attaching their names, titles, and affiliations to some or all of their responses. This study omits all names and professional titles to provide additional protection to interviewees while the debates discussed here remain ongoing. I elected to additionally omit affiliation information from particularly sensitive interviewee quotes. Table A.10 provides basic information about select cited interviews. To further protect female clergy interviewees, many of whom are identifiable at the vanguard of their institutions' female-ordination movements, I also removed institutional and country affiliation from parts of Chapter 4.

Semi-structured interview questions sought to deductively assess the relative influences of transnational networks, state governments, religious competitors, and local constituents in church responses to transnational norms. This approach allowed me to deductively evaluate and inductively develop this research's theories. The purpose of this research is not to identify or infer clear causal linkages between the various transnational and domestic relationships, on one hand, and mainline church responses to transnational rights agendas, on the other. Instead, this research seeks to understand connective mechanisms and to "analyze how social organization and power condition experience and meaning construction

in complex, varying ways" (McCann, 2012, 484). In doing so, it identifies both the direct linkages between sources of influence (Table 1.1) and church behavioral outcomes, as well as the indirect ways in which these influences shape subtle church behaviors and cultures. This approach seeks to understand the complexity of East African mainline churches' positions at several paradoxical intersections: as both transnational and domestic institutions; as both religious and socio-political actors; and as both patriarchal institutions that can mobilize internal shifts toward greater gender equality. Furthermore, this research attempts to understand how multiple forms of identity and influence might support or undermine rights for vulnerable populations. In doing so, this research lays the groundwork for future case studies and quantitative analyses that causally isolate and examine the relationships between these variables.

*Research positionality*

This research is motivated by my personal background and my professional experience working within Lutheran and Anglican organizations that span global North-South divides. Between 2011 and 2013, I worked in the Washington, D.C., advocacy offices of the U.S.-based Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In that position, I worked with Lutheran and Anglican partners in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa. These experiences exposed me to churches' social and political prominence throughout East Africa and to the ways in which transnational denominational networks both support and strain their global-South members. My knowledge of, and appreciation for, the central political, social, and spiritual importance of religion allowed me to locate and ask research questions that other scholars of transnational norm diffusion typically overlook. This background increased my knowledge and credibility as an informed researcher who would try not to misunderstand or misrepresent the complexities and nuances of religious politics. This likely contributed to my successful efforts to generate a snowball-sampled interview roster.

I took several steps to ensure that this background did not compromise my research independence. I gathered all of the data presented here as an independent researcher unaffiliated with any religious organization. Where relevant, and whenever asked, I shared my

personal and professional background but reiterated that my current work was independent of, and unrelated to, my previous professional background. In a few cases, I sensed that interviewees began treating me as a faith-based colleague rather than as a researcher. In those cases, I reminded them that our conversation was contributing to my independent scholarly research. These experiences prompted me to provide interviewees an additional layer of protection by avoiding publishing their names and detailed professional titles.

### *1.5 Project outline*

This analysis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 outlines religion-state interactions in East Africa and elaborates the theory of the dual registers of religion-state relations. It demonstrates that East African states and their mainline Christian churches manage uniquely collaborative, co-dependent, and contentious relationships. Dual, competing registers of religion-state relations emerge from these allied and adversarial relationships. States relegate churches to the domain of governing "private" social policies (specifically policies and practices related to governing gender roles and sexual behavior). Meanwhile, states aim to discourage or even prohibit churches from using rights-based vernacular or addressing more explicitly political dynamics.

Chapter 3 demonstrates that, among some issues (e.g., addressing gender-based violence), the commitments of mainline churches, their states, and their transnational networks align. This convergence can create conditions to shift attitudes and behaviors. These dynamics provide the space for mainline institutions—in partnership with their transnational networks—to help change state policies and local practices that govern gender relations. This convergence enables mainlines to help reduce gender-based violence and begin improving women's empowerment within their families, churches, and communities. Therefore, efforts to fight gender-based violence reveal how transnational partners and state governments rely upon domestic religious institutions and their national religious leaders as critical allies in fostering social change.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that this arrangement presents significant limits to the promise for women's comprehensive empowerment, especially in leadership roles. Religious institutions remain traditionally male-dominated institutions that represent and blend spiritual,

cultural, and political norms into their teaching and social activity. The limited and disempowering outcomes of these politics are particularly notable at the vanguard of shifting gender roles, including efforts to increase female church leadership. This chapter explores the advances of, and limitations to, these efforts. In doing so, it begins to expose the ways in which global power differentials and neocolonial undertones percolate within transnational denominations to limit women's equal access to leadership roles.

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the ways in which religion-state dynamics threaten to prevent progress in other rights-related issues, as evidenced by LGBTQ politics throughout the region. Deferring to religious leaders emancipates states from the burden of addressing minority rights and undermines the possibility of progressive policy action.[22] Meanwhile, existing hostilities toward sexual minorities coalesce with anti-colonial sentiments to drive mainline leaders toward harsher anti-LGBTQ rhetoric than they may be otherwise predisposed to take. Here, the liabilities that transnational networks introduce to mainline institutions come into harsher relief and are exacerbated by Pentecostal movements[23] that challenge mainline's domestic credibility. These interconnected networks of influence run the risk of pressuring churches to over-emphasize and solidify exclusionary attitudes.

It is not surprising that issues that are less resolved on the global stage are also less resolved among East African religious communities. What is surprising, however, is that even among those globally less-resolved issues (e.g., female leadership and LGBTQ politics), African-based leaders who resist or oppose those issues frame that resistance as opposition to neocolonial foreign interventions. Foreign interventionism, then, becomes the conduit through which actors resist even those norms that are globally unresolved. This analysis—particularly its culminating focus on church responses to LGBTQ rights—sheds light on how African mainline church leaders manage their prominent but tenuous position as transnationally networked churches in an ever-changing African domestic context.

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[22] Some interview evidence suggests that states have intentionally deferred to—and accordingly limited its progressive action regarding—LGBTQ rights at the suggestion of religious institutions.

[23] "Pentecostal" refers to the interconnected Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Independent Christian movements which the World Christian Database categorizes as "Renewalist Christianity." African Pentecostalism grew exponentially in the twentieth century and will double again by 2020 (Johnson et al., 2013, 8).

### *1.6 Contributions*

This project makes three main contributions to advancing scholarly knowledge and equipping transnational rights advocates. First, it demonstrates the crucial role that mainline actors play in formulating and implementing social policies at all layers of political analysis. Religious organizations can be powerful venues for advancing transnational rights efforts while potentially side-stepping the barriers secular activists encounter. Transnational norm-diffusion scholars and advocates overlook a crucial political arena when they ignore religious organizations.

Second, this study joins a relatively new cohort of transnationalism scholars who expose the limited effects that transnational women's-rights agendas have in challenging patriarchal domestic institutions. Rights are always "contingent, unstable, context-specific" tools and ideologies that can both alter and reinforce hegemonic power relations (McCann, 2012, 485-86). Despite meaningful, measurable improvements for some women's-rights objectives—most notably in post-conflict societies (Berry, 2018; Hughes and Tripp, 2015; Lake, 2018; Tripp, 2015)—these changes are highly circumscribed by powerful patriarchal domestic institutions. Thus, contrary to predictions from initial transnational norm-diffusion scholars, diffusion and implementation of emerging gender norms can yield unintended consequences and negative externalities for women's-rights movements in sub-Saharan Africa and throughout the global South. This study provides new context and evidence of such circumscribed outcomes.

Finally, this analysis demonstrates that enduring legacies of missionary colonialism, including racialized economic dependencies and inequalities, undergird the contemporary transnational religious networks in which past-colonizers and their historically racialized subjects join together as apparent equals. Yet despite denominational claims of equality in a post-imperialist era, these Christian networks represent and recreate extreme economic inequality and dependency. Topics like LGBTQ rights have unveiled the ever-present, deeply felt divisions that continue to percolate within global religious networks. A U.S. bishop described the 1998 meeting at Lambeth Palace as "worse than liberal vs. Conservative; it was Black vs. White, Imperialist vs. The natives, North vs. South. It was raw [sic]"

(Hassett, 2009, 78, quoting a bishop participant). Not only do debates about women's leadership or LGBTQ inclusion introduce venues for global-South actors to resist, and claim theological superiority over, the global North. But their continued economic vulnerabilities and dependencies also position East Africa's mainline churches as the veritable battleground for the global North's warring conservative and progressive movements, each competing to entrench their religious ethics around the world. By taking these racial politics seriously, this analysis highlights the expected and unintended, the empowering and repressive consequences that transnational actors and development agendas can have on the status of rights and empowerment for vulnerable people within the communities they wish to serve.

Chapter 2

# THE FALLACY OF SECULARISM: AUTHORIZING AND EXCLUDING RELIGION FROM POLITICS IN SECULAR EAST AFRICA

> *At any time, politics actually can just get a hold of the church, just override the church, even though actually when it backfires, it is actually the image of the church which suffers.* —East African faith-based development practitioner

This research raises an initial, fundamental question: Why locate research about churches in the study of politics, and why frame church policies in terms of "rights" rather than ideology? In short, why talk about churches and rights? This question presumes the operation of a specific interpretation of religion-state relations which designates separate religious and governance spheres. The pages that follow complicate these assumptions. They suggest that states—be they in East Africa or the world's industrialized democracies—disseminate a legal fallacy that these distinctions exist. Meanwhile, states constantly and variously activate and exclude religious actors from politics.

## *2.1 Separating religion from the state*

The state constitutions governing Ethiopia's semi-authoritarian parliamentary regime[1] and Uganda's semi-authoritarian presidential republic[2] each protect basic individual liberties. Specifically relevant here, they each prohibit religious discrimination, protect religious freedom, and prohibit a state-established religion (U.S. Department of State, 2017). Uganda's constitution mandates that it "shall not adopt a State religion" (Government of Uganda,

[1]The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) political coalition has been in power in Ethiopia since it overthrew the Derg's violent military regime (1987) and the Derg authorities who remained in power until 1991. Researchers classify Ethiopia as an authoritarian regime (Economist, 2019).

[2]President Yoweri Museveni has been in power since 1986 despite regular presidential elections. Researchers consider Uganda a semi-authoritarian regime which has elements of both democratic processes and authoritarian control (Tripp, 2010).

1995, Chapter 2:7). Ethiopia goes a step farther by articulating an explicit separation between religious institutions and the state: "State and religion are separate. There shall be no state religion. The state shall not interfere in religious matters and religion shall not interfere in state affairs" (Government of Ethiopia, 1994, Article 11).

These provisions mirror the Universal Declaration of Human Rights's pronouncement that every human has the right to freely select, express, and observe her religion as she sees fit (United Nations, 1948, Article 18). By prohibiting a state-sponsored religion, the constitutions in Ethiopia and Uganda additionally prohibit their governments from privileging a given religious institution or identity over others. As demonstrated below, this prohibition generates a legal narrative among elite Ethiopian and Ugandan citizens that their government's promise to avoid establishing a state-sponsored religion constitutes "a wall of separation between Church & State" (Jefferson, 1802). Such narratives about religion-state separations pervade citizens' legal consciousness with assumptions that religious institutions do not shape state laws and political outcomes. In practice, however, states and their religious institutions are far more intertwined than these narratives imply.

In Ethiopia and Uganda, elite religious interviewees experienced fairly clear expectations from their state actors that churches exclude themselves from the political terrain. Representatives from across Ethiopia's Christian churches report: "No church is allowed to talk about politics" (Catholic leader, Interview 28); "We have not involved ourselves in politics at all... We are completely separate from politics, from political issues (Protestant Kale Hiwot leader, Interview 32); "We're a church, we don't do politics" (Protestant Mekane Yesus leader, Interview 42). Meanwhile, long-time faith-based professionals in Uganda report that churches have received government mandates to remain apolitical: "The church was being told [by the state], 'Your job is to preach, not to engage in politics'... The government keeps repeating that your job is to preach, your job is not to get political, you are supposed to be apolitical" (Interview 70); "Museveni clearly said... 'The church should focus o[n] the Bible.' So for them, the church should preach the Bible and let him do the politics" (Interview 74).

It is worth noting that, in both countries, these constitutional provisions followed the overturn of oppressive authoritarian regimes that exerted violence over outspoken religious leaders. Ethiopia's communist Derg regime closed churches throughout the country and

detained swaths of religious dissenters. Tellingly, an Ethiopian Orthodox patriarch said (disparagingly) that "non-religious ideologies are communist" (Interview 20). In this context, the guarantee that the "state shall not interfere in religious matters" promises a level of freedom from coercive violence that churches did not previously enjoy. As one Protestant leader said, "Because the government ha[s] separated the religious issues to run itself freely, doctrinal issues, everything, the government is not intervening... *This government ha[s] given us freedom.* We have our own line, line of ministry, line of doing our ministry" (Interview 32, emphasis added). These recent histories notwithstanding, the quotes above demonstrate that churches absorb an expectation from politicians that they restrict themselves from entering state politics.

Ethiopia's more specific religion-state restrictions are governed by a variety of administrative laws. The government closely monitors religious organizations' constitutions, activities, budgets, and rhetoric. Religious institutions must register their worship-related entities with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and further register and align their charitable social work with Ethiopia's Charities and Societies Proclamation (2009). Under those regulations, only Ethiopian charities—those "wholly controlled by Ethiopians" that receive no more than ten percent of their budgets from foreign sources—are permitted to conduct projects that advance "human and democratic rights" or promote other rights- or justice-based agendas (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2009, 4528-4530, 4522). These restrictions prohibit the mainline Mekane Yesus church and other religious organizations from framing any of their social and development work in terms of "rights."

Regional church leaders are concerned that governments in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and elsewhere have proposed or taken steps to similarly limit churches' involvement in social discourse or access to foreign resources (Interviews 58, 59, 60). They fear these civil-society limitations would cripple church development efforts, reduce their institutional reach, and disrupt their social and political influence (Interview 59, 60).[3] Politicians justify these implemented or proposed policies as enforcing religion-state separations and safeguarding

[3]A minority of religious interviewees indicated an appreciation for government efforts to restrict foreign funding streams. They suggested that foreign donors destabilize local economies, disempower local leaders, undermine local capacity-building efforts, and claim disproportionate influence over domestic norms and practices (Interviews 60, 62).

their national boundaries from foreign-interest infiltration. However, most religious and academic observers believe these actions restrict the scope and independence of churches and other civil-society organizations.[4]

Taken together, the laws, policies, and political attitudes presented here reveal East African states' interests in establishing a relatively strict separation between themselves and their religious institutions. Through constitutional provisions, civil-society restrictions, and narratives of clear religion-state separations, state actors seek to establish "secular" norms that restrict churches from political spaces. This elevates a nomos of separation: Churches work within the terrain of understanding God's ethereal realm. Meanwhile, the state governs the contractual obligations between itself and its people: safeguarding national stability; providing social services; maintaining the autonomy and integrity of its borders, people, and cultures; upholding the rights of its citizens; and enforcing laws that protect people from one another.

### *2.2 The fallacy of religion-state separations*

*Churches fill governance gaps*

In reality, however, distinctions between East African states and religious institutions are far less clear. On a directly apparent level, religious institutions—particularly mainline churches—"fill in" for under-resourced states. The continent is peppered with countries which scholars characterize as "weak," "fragile," or "failed" states unable to enforce laws, control populations, provide services, or support human rights for the people within their territories (Bloom et al., 1998; Collier, 2007; Collier and Gunning, 1999; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982). In 2018, the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index categorized no African country as stable. It ranked Ethiopia and Uganda in the 92nd and 87th percentiles (respectively) of the world's most-fragile states. At the 64th percentile (a "warning" level), Tanzania was designated as the most stable country in East Africa (Fund for Peace, 2018). Despite resiliently

[4]In some cases, these actions also threaten to inhibit protections for sexual minorities. In 2016, Tanzanian President John Magufuli banned foreign-funded HIV/AIDS programs under the guise of reducing Tanzania's reliance on foreign assistance. These actions were widely regarded as a part of his punitive crackdown against LGBTQ Tanzanians (Sieff, 2016).

maintaining state authority (Englebert, 2009) or security functions (Meagher, 2012), states throughout East Africa are considered incapable or uneven in their ability to serve other basic internal state functions. In other words, under the guise of a cohesive state "image," East African states' practical abilities to serve these functions varies dramatically.[5] State services and coercive forces may be present in certain sectors or in some areas (e.g., urban sprawls) but weak or absent in other sectors, more rural areas, or municipalities that are particularly far from a state's central hubs (Herbst, 1989, 1997).

In fragile states, strong civil-society organizations—including religious groups—often assume basic state-governance functions (Lake, 2014, 519; Migdal, 1988). In fact, following Jean-François Bayart (Bayart, 2009; Bayart, Ellis and Hibou, 1999), many scholars, journalists, and church leaders have suggested that Africa's churches are the "only civil society organizations that enjoy relative autonomy from the postcolonial hegemony" and have levels of legitimacy and institutional capacity necessary to "resist or even rival the state" (Phiri, 2001, 169). One Ugandan-based journalist called religion "the most dependable institution" outside the state:

> Among the greatest challenges many African democracies face today are the continued existence of one-party states and the lack of strong civil institutions. And, in this vacuum, the Church is the most established institution outside the hallowed halls of party and state. (Essa, 2014)

Mainline churches are particularly well-equipped to fill critical governance roles. This can be partially attributed to the social institutions their colonial-era missionaries built. According to one Kenyan global ecumenical leader, the region's missionaries penetrated rural communities more extensively than did colonial administrators, who entered much later (Interview 64). As missionaries did so, they built social services like schools and hospitals alongside churches:

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[5]This state-in-society approach takes seriously the paradoxically unified, singular image of the state and its practical conglomeration of disjunctured, disparate fragments (Migdal, 2001, 22). For evidence of sub-national variation, see World Bank data on decentralization and governance.

> The Church really is the body that was first and has been first in entrenching education in the country, and particularly the very key institutions that we call government institutions today as national institutions, [a] majority of them were started and initiated by different church bodies. (Interview 62)

Even in uncolonized Ethiopia, "missionaries... built the hospitals, they were funding the hospitals. All the medications and all the nurses [and] doctors came from oversees and they also trained nurses" (Interview 32). According to one Ugandan church officer, "The missionaries—whenever they come to a place, they make sure there's a school, there is a church... there is a hospital" (Interview 80). These church-run service institutions have yielded positive long-term educational (Nunn, 2014) and democratic outcomes (Woodberry, 2012). In some cases today, governments rely upon the educational and medical facilities that the now-independent East African mainline churches own and operate. In other cases, post-colonial governments co-opted[6] or nationalized those institutions. For example, Uganda's first post-independence prime minister, Milton Obote, nationalized the country's missionary-era church-funded schools (Alava and Ssentongo, 2016, 680).

In any event, these missionary histories left mainline institutions well-positioned as strong civil-society organizations. Mainline churches often manage extensive national networks which connect metropolitan strongholds to some of the continent's most remote, rural areas.[7] Missionary histories also provided mainlines a stock of well-educated leaders and loyal supporters:

> When the missionaries were here, they tended to focus on—they invested a lot in raising leaders. You will find that many, many people who are probably currently in leadership right now are all products of Anglican schools, they have gone through those structures. They are carrying some sense of culture of Anglicanism. Therefore, because they have gone to the same schools, they know each

[6] "Sometimes we've had a situation where the government just simply wants to record all of [the church-run social service institutions] as public institutions and throw[] out the sponsorship of the Church" (Interview 62).

[7] See Nunn (2010, 2014) for documentation of these networks.

> other, they've been part of the culture, the Anglican tradition. There's a sense therefore in which they are comrades and colleagues, and therefore recognize the place of the Anglican Church in their lives as persons because it contributed to their education. (Interview 59)

Finally, these missionary histories laid the groundwork for mainlines' long-term, stable access to non-governmental foreign donor relationships, to strong bilateral partners, and to transnational denominational networks and information flows.[8] As a result, a continent-wide Anglican leader suggested that this missionary work elevated the strategic relevance of mainline churches. Even in places (like Uganda) where church-originated schools were eventually incorporated by the state, these missionary legacies "left the Anglican Church in a strategic position in... all those countries where the British had influence. Therefore, these churches continue to have a strategic positioning within society" (Interview 59).

Building from this ready-made infrastructure, post-colonial mainline churches and their transnational funders provide a host of critical development services, including: HIV/AIDS awareness, Malaria prevention, water and sanitation services, women's literacy programs, peace and reconciliation work, community investment systems, income-generating trainings, and reproductive health services. Mainline leaders gained particular attention for their contributions to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic that ripped through their communities in the early twenty-first century (Catholic News Agency, 2014; Patterson, 2011; Trinitapoli and Weinreb, 2012). The AIDS crisis highlighted not only church leaders' broad reach but also the moral credibility they command. According one Ethiopian theological educator:

> HIV/AIDS was becoming a big problem in Ethiopia, and many, many people were dying. It was nothing similar to what was happening in South Africa or Uganda, but we were very concerned about our country's demographic change, and the work force we were going to lose, and the social implications that it was going to leave us with, and so on. And we were concerned about the future for our country, as well. (Interview 19)

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[8]See Chapter 1, Footnotes 4 and 5 for detailed information about these transnational connections and resources.

Critical here is not only this religious leader's concerns for the potential long-term social ramifications of the AIDS crisis, but also the sense of responsibility religious institutions felt in light of state weakness:

> There was so much at stake, that we couldn't just sit back and see what would happen... *The government wouldn't have the capacity... And the government officials are not in a position to teach issues, how to teach about morality, those kind of moral issues.* And also, I think, when it comes to HIV counseling, church projects kind-of perform better, are more trusted, people are more attracted to them, interested to come to those projects more. (Interview 19, emphasis added)

Beyond providing social services that states are unable to provide, mainline churches also disseminate legal knowledge and activate political engagement when states are ill-equipped to do so. One politician from Kenya's Kajidado County said he relies on religious spaces to inform his constituents about political activities and legally mandated shifts in behavior:

> I work very closely with them. We use, I actually use religious organizations like churches and mosques as one of the channels for public participation where we [as government officials] appreciate that we are not as advanced in terms of information technology so we use religious institutions to pass messages. Like when we require that the public participates, or we need an opinion on a bill, like a finance bill, we ask them, the religious leaders, to announce in the churches on Sunday, [i]n the mosque on Friday, so that the public gets to know that the assembly is finalizing the bill whose content would require you to behave this way and not that way. So we work with them very, very closely. (Interview 02)

Regional Lutheran and Anglican leaders similarly reported that government officials seek partnership with local religious leaders to implement development programs (Interview 03), disseminate policy information, and enforce existing laws:

> But that was aimed at creating awareness and capacity enhancement because in most cases the state—we can have the good laws on paper but again it becomes

> a very big challenge for the government to train the enforcement officers. So as a church, as [a] civil-society organization, we come in to help to bridge the gap because it is for the good for the people. (Interview 58)

Churches also become involved in educating both voters during election cycles and the new government officials who take office after an election:

> In the election process... Mekane Yesus was very much involved at that time in educating people [about] their right[s] and all the obligations of the people in electing their leaders. We produced teaching materials, syllab[i] that would help to train even the cabinet members of the government as well as the general population. (Interview 42)

These are some of the ways in which East Africa's highly trusted[9] religious leaders "stand in" to fulfill governance functions when their states are inadequately positioned to do so. They enter these state governance spaces to provide social services, shape social attitudes, and catalyze political behavior (Haynes, 2004; Jones and Lauterbach, 2005; McClendon and Riedl, 2015*b*; Riedl, 2012). Mainline churches—partially due to their missionary origins and contemporary transnational connections—are particularly well-poised to serve these political functions (Interview 02) and to address constituents and state leaders with significant national authority (Interview 64, 59).[10] From here, many social scientists conclude that it is this state incapacity that makes religious institutions politically relevant throughout East Africa. The accident of post-colonial state fragility necessitates that religious institutions enter the political domain. Churches traverse the legal wall that separates themselves from the state in these exceptional cases. In short, East African churches' political relevance

[9]One Ugandan interviewee explained, "You see, people respect the church here so much (Interview 77). Indeed, Africans trust religious leaders more than any other social or political leaders. Forty-eight percent of Afrobarometer respondents (2016) reported trusting religious leaders "a lot." This is almost double the percentage of people who imbue high levels of trust in other state or social leaders (26 percent).

[10]Far from an endorsement of colonialism, these sentiments represent mainline leaders' interpretations of their own institutional strengths, advantages, and abilities to make unique contributions, relative to other religious and secular leaders in their countries. The erstwhile exploitative colonial project laid the groundwork for transnational and sub-national networks that have become productive sources of social services and credibility.

marks an exception to the rule of church-state separation—an exception born out of low state capacity.

This understanding that mainlines simply fill governance gaps overlooks the extensive ways in which religion is historically and institutionally engrained in the state complex. In reality, religious and state institutions are deeply interdependent. East African churches' interrelated, interactive, multilayered relationships with their state actors are far more complex and contentious than simply filling in holes amid state weakness. Instead, politicians constantly and simultaneously invoke religious ideas, recruit religious leaders into active political roles, and block religious leaders from adopting politically adversarial positions. They politicize some church functions (like human-rights promotion in Ethiopia) in order to restrict churches from working in those spaces. Meanwhile, they "religionize" politically contentious social issues so that government actors may abdicate responsibility to churches and thereby avoid wading into divisive social wars. The following subsections identify, first, how religion is intertwined with state histories and national narratives; and second, the dual registers of religion-state relations that states impose on contemporary religious institutions.

*Religion and national narratives*

Religion is deeply intertwined with both Ethiopia's and Uganda's historical origin narratives and national symbols. Ethiopia champions itself as housing one of the oldest Christian traditions in the world (the Orthodox Tewahedo Church) and one of very few Christian churches that predated colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa. In the fourth century, Ethiopia became the world's second country to establish Christianity as its state religion. Nearly three centuries later, the first generation of Muslims sought refuge in Abyssinia (now northern Ethiopia) after fleeing persecution in Mecca. Contemporary leaders proudly announce that Ethiopia hosted the first peaceful Christian-Muslim relations. Today, Ethiopia's Orthodox Church is widely regarded as the symbol of the Ethiopian nation, especially given its ancient, indigenous origins. One Ethiopian-based leader relayed the narrative that Ethiopia's history was defined by "one emperor, one nation, one [Orthodox] church" (Interview 28). According to an Orthodox leader:

> In the Orthodox point of view, our heritage or our alphabets or calendars or cultures or language and so on—all those belong to the Orthodox Church. The historical places, monasteries, and holy places—all of them. . . belong to the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church, I can say, is the treasure of the country. (Interview 20)

Meanwhile, Ugandan converts-turned-martyrs symbolize a beginning of the country's Christian roots. Forty-five Ugandans converted to Anglicanism and Catholicism and were subsequently executed by the King of Buganda between 1885-87. Today, they are lauded as the "Ugandan Martyrs." An Anglican shrine to the to the martyrs enjoys a prominent location in Kampala's outskirts at Namugongo.[11] The martyrs have come to represent the disintegration of pre-colonial Ugandan identities, a crystalization of Christian Uganda at the time that Uganda's colonial borders were demarcated, and early church-state engagement in Uganda. A continent-wide Anglican leader said: the "Ugandan Martyrs—the people who stood up against government. If you are talking about Christian engagement, that is where it would start" (Interview 59).

In Uganda and throughout colonized East Africa, mainline churches also played central roles in political decolonization movements. Mainlines achieved independence from their European missionary founders in approximate tandem with their states' decolonization movements (Table A.1). They often served as sites for mobilizing those political independence movements (Interview 64). Once their states achieved independence, mainlines played foundational roles in early post-colonial state-building (Gifford, 1995, 2015) and political party formation.[12] Later, when terror reigned under Ethiopia's Derg (1974-1987/1991) and Uganda's Idi Amin (1971-1979) regimes, church leaders emerged as catalyzing figures of protest. Tellingly, the preamble to Uganda's 1995 Constitution closes with the words, "For God and my Country." Today, contemporary politicians proudly pronounce their religious

[11] When I was in Kampala in Fall 2015, Roman Catholic Pope Francis visited the Namugongo shrine and paid public tribute to the Uganda Martyrs (New Vision, 2016).

[12] "Political parties that were formed to fight for independence were formed on the basis of religion because every faith tradition wanted to have an influence in the post-independent Uganda. The Catholics formed what they called the Democratic Party (DP), The Anglicans formed The Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) and those turned out to be very influential political parties in post-independent Uganda" (Interview 71).

affiliations and populate the iconic Saint George's Orthodox Cathedral in Addis Ababa and Kampala's elite All Saints Anglican Cathedral on Sunday mornings. The region's churches and their governments thus share deeply intertwined histories. Based on these histories, religious institutions can claim to be both drivers ("the church is older than the government," Interview 84) and privileged guardians of their country's national narratives.[13]

*Dual registers of religion-state relations*

Under the guise of these intertwined religion-state narratives, state actors also actively recruit religious leaders and institutions into political and governance roles. They commission faith leaders as figurehead leaders of policy task-forces, peacekeeping missions, social development initiatives, and national dialogues. They allow or seek religious leaders' involvement and advice on an array of policy issues. But even as government actors elevate—or abdicate responsibility to—churches as moral leaders, they are also actively involved in restricting church voices from other political spheres. In other words, state actors apply distinct interpretations of how states and religious institutions should interact to different registers of politics. As a result, East African churches absorb two distinct sets of rules that govern the extent to which they may wade into political waters.

Church interviewees enumerated a variety of political issues they wish to publicly address. Chief among those were issues related to advancing democratic principles, promoting good governance, advocating for liberal rights frameworks, and speaking out against government corruption: "We try to be of support in terms of promoting democracy" (Ethiopian Mekane Yesus leader, Interview 42); we advocate for "freedom, democracy [because we are] the light of the world and the salt of the earth" (Nairobi-based regional Lutheran leader, Interview 05);

> As [a] Church, as [a] mosque, we believe in freedom of expression. We believe in the space that people need to express their opinion. That we also look at political parties as gatekeepers of democracy. We want to see political parties engaged in

[13]Fabbe (2013) provides a similar example of how religious identities assumed an "almost untouchable" privileged position in Greek and Turkish national narratives.

> activities of civic education... When you restrict that, then you are... infringing on people's freedom of expression and assembly. (Inter-Religious Council of Uganda executive, Interview 71)

However, these topics threaten to undermine state actors' authority, credibility, or personal access to financial or political benefits. In response, state actors use a variety of tactics to exclude mainlines from these political spaces. They may uplift and reassert constitutional narratives of religion-state separation to exclude religious leaders from being considered legitimate arbiters of legal or political rights (i.e., President Museveni's edicts that churches restrict themselves to talking about theology). State actors may also buttress this nomos of constitutional separation with legal or extralegal coercive tactics (Cover, 1986), offering bribes or leveraging threats of state violence to silence, corrupt, or undermine religious leaders. Doing so offers politicians the added benefit that government-corrupted church leaders and institutions "lose the moral authority to speak" against government ills (Interview 79). Indeed, interviewees suggested that, when successful, these government tactics undermine mainline churches' credibility as trustworthy, independent, morally oriented leaders poised to advocate against government corruption (Interview 59). This threat of coercion may explain why Ethiopia's religious leaders were quick to assure outsiders (such as myself) that they steer clear of politics.

At the same time that state actors exclude religious leaders from certain political spaces, they allow and encourage religious leaders to play prominent roles in governing other policy agendas, specifically those that govern familial or sexual behavior. Those issues include: gender-based violence, female leadership roles, marriage and divorce, reproductive health, and sexual orientation. These are contentious social issues that must be legally adjudicated but have the potential to ignite controversy between and among citizens, civil-society organizations, and foreign donors. Framed as issues of private morality (rather than public policy), politicians may abdicate discretion to religious leaders without appearing to compromise the secular narratives that justify state efforts to exclude churches from other political arenas.

These "private" matters are, however, issues of state policy. Indeed, by deferring these

issues to religious leaders, states give religious leaders wide discretion to shape, implement, and veto government policy. Religious leaders also have the power to govern and limit the legal boundaries of these norms. In abdicating the responsibility of shaping these policies to religious leaders, politicians may channel church attention away from other political topics (i.e., state corruption) and avoid taking responsibility for contentious positions. The dual registers of religion-state relations discussed here are reinforced by transnational networks and donor partnerships, which encourage mainlines to prioritize women's-rights development agendas.

Thus, issues related to gender and sexuality emerge as areas in which mainlines are free, enabled, and encouraged to dictate policies and govern social behavior. Indeed, when asked what issues African governments generally allow religious leaders to address, one continental Christian leader's first answer was gender: "The government encourages the church when it doesn't feel threatened, basically. This is almost across the board" cross-nationally (Interview 60). He stressed that this dynamic does not invalidate the importance of church-based efforts to increase gender justice. The issue of gender is

> not necessarily a distraction because it is something that needs to be addressed and it is for good. But it is not all that needs to be done or what some may say the most urgent thing that needs to be done. (Interview 60)

However, he said that gender and sexuality are not the only political arenas religious leaders wish to enter. He expressed concern that churches' gender-related advocacy remains a consolation:

> In this day and age with democracy and everyone leading themselves, you have people saying, 'Yes, but I say my priorities is this: it's gender-based violence. Forget about my natural resources, forget about the manufactured rebel conflict I have in my country.' (Interview 60)

Religious institutions are not entirely powerless, however. States are indebted to religious institutions, particularly those that fill holes left by a state's weakness or fragility. Meanwhile, as prominent, trusted service providers and political mobilizers, religious institutions

threaten to become powerful, unwieldy social actors that states find difficult to contain. The flip side to this indebtedness is that religious and state actors can become so intertwined that individual religious (or state) leaders can become easily subjected to pressure, corruption, or coercion.[14] To mitigate against these concerns, religious institutions have increasingly invested resources into national inter-religious councils, which they hope will increase the safety and effectiveness of faith-based advocacy platforms.[15] In response, state actors reportedly seek to undermine these inter-religious spaces or drive wedges between religious institutions to weaken their ability to speak against the government (Interview 60).

### *2.3 Secular fallacies in post-colonial and global-North contexts*

This chapter has argued that states operationalize inconsistent definitions of religion-state relations. Employing dual registers of religion-state relations, states commission religious leaders as political actors in certain arenas and exclude them from others. In other words, the state authorizes religious institutions to govern state policies that address matters of gender, sexuality, and family relations. Meanwhile, the state invokes a constitutional nomos of strict religion-state separation to exclude religious leaders from critiquing government behavior.

Some readers may suggest that this differentiation simply reflects, and conforms to, the natural boundaries between religion and government. They may argue that gender and sexuality do, in fact, belong under the control of religious leaders. After all, religious institutions have long been the sites in which communities sanctify sexual relationships

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[14]Political scientists have sought to identify generalizable trends for when mainlines corroborate or challenge their states. For example, Haynes (2004, 76) concludes that it is "relatively unusual... for mainline Christian churches to express political opposition to the authoritarian regimes in Africa" because mainlines remain both compromised by their colonial lineage and vulnerable to the state's power of control (see also Gifford, 2009). Other scholars argue that mainline churches' transnational networks and long-standing domestic credibility make them less reliant upon state support and less vulnerable to state threats. This has allowed churches in Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for examples, to critique states' violations of individual rights, democratic processes, or other rule-of-law standards (Cheyeka 2008).

[15]Inter-religious advocacy bodies are particularly effective in South Africa (where they were unified in their anti-Apartheid efforts) and Tanzania (which lacks strong denominational divisions along ethnic lines): "I would say [church organizations in South Africa] are the greatest champions against extractive industries. They're very, very organized. I really wish we could imitate them" (Interview 60).

as marriage, commemorate the births of children, uphold the integrity of family units, and mourn the deaths of loved ones. However, this argument provides a practical and a theoretical response to these assumptions. Practically, norms and guidelines for gender roles, family functions, and sexual orientation are integrated into, adjudicated by, and enforced by state legal and political institutions. The extent to which they reside in a quasi-legal realm is dwindling. They reside decidedly within the bounds of state politics.

Theologically, Christian institutions' responsibility for governing gender and sexuality is far less clear that these presumptions allow.[16] Scriptural representations of the life of Jesus Christ—the Christian church's *raison d'être*—elevated an ethic which demanded economic redistribution, cared for social welfare, repudiated self-interested government officials, and disregarded nationality-based divisions between people. On gender and sexuality, however, Jesus commanded only that followers love one another. He was conspicuously silent on the question of homosexuality, avoided reprimanding sexually "deviant" behavior, and demanded (rhetorically) that only "those without sin" may help punish women for promiscuity. Based on Biblical evidence, Christian leaders' fixation on gender and sexuality—rather than economic justice or good governance—was far from inevitable.

The Victorian Christianity of the colonial era is undoubtedly one origin of this particular differentiation. The dual registers of religion-state rules described in this chapter mirror what other scholars have identified as the hybrid legal orders that emerged in many post-colonial regimes. Victorian colonial patterns commissioned missionaries to regulate sexual behavior, relegated wives to private spheres, and adopted property rights as the anchor of "modern" legal order (Comaroff, 1997). Upon gaining independence, hybrid legal orders emerged to maintain a separation between these "secular" and "personal" law systems. They relegated personal matters to quasi-legal orders and commissioned religious leaders to govern those orders. In all likelihood, this colonial history helped lay the groundwork for the dual registers of religion-state relations which operate throughout East Africa today.

The dual registers of religion-state relations outlined in this chapter are far from limited to East African contexts. These state-enforced distinctions between political and personal

[16] I specifically discuss Christianity because mainline Christian churches are the focus of this project's analysis.

orders are reminiscent of British colonialism's hybrid legal systems (Comaroff, 1997), and they live on in the legal pluralism that scholars observe throughout the contemporary post-colonial world (Comaroff, 1997; Lazarus-Black and Hirsch, 2012; Merry, 2003*a*). I join these and other scholars to identify contexts in which post-colonial states authorize religious institutions to manage "private" affairs while excluding them from interfering in other public-policy issues (Hussin, 2016; Sezgin, 2013).

Nor are these dual registers limited to post-colonial contexts. Instead, they represent a much broader condition of neo-liberal political orders, which variously defer political responsibilities to non-state institutions[17] while excluding those institutions from being recognized or emboldened as cornerstones of the state complex. Indeed, these dynamics continue to drive American politics and governance, even under the proverbial flag of Thomas Jefferson's separation of church and state. This project's concluding chapter revisits the dual registers of religion-state relations that shape neo-liberal political dynamics in post-colonial and global-North countries. It speculates about the potentially damaging consequences these dynamics can have on women, sexual minorities, religious minorities, and religious institutions alike.

### *2.4 Summary and implications*

This complex, interrelated, and inconsistent relationship between state and religious actors sheds new light on the "religion-state separation" nomos presented in the Ethiopian and Ugandan constitutions. In practice, these constitutional provisions serve a function beyond their purported aim of cultivating religious freedom. They allow state actors to place restrictive boundaries around a religious institution's political functions, authorize religious leaders to address certain political issues, and exclude religious leaders from other political terrain.

There are at least three implications of these dual registers of religion-state relations. First, state actors free themselves from contentious private politics while maintaining and wielding coercive control—and threats of violence—over church leaders who stray into other

[17]See, for example, Marx (1844)'s discussion of a state's effort to emancipate itself from taking responsibility for addressing political contentions over religious diversity.

political spaces. Second, religious leaders suffer the consequences when the issues they govern become divisive. Over time, this runs the risk of chipping away at religious leaders' moral—and therefore political—-credibility. Powerful state actors are not likely to bemoan this loss of religious authority. Third, as a result of these political dynamics, churches command an exceptional degree of control over gender and sexual politics, how people behave, and who becomes excluded. Ultimately, this relegates gender- and sexuality-related social issues to traditionally patriarchal institutions. These political dynamics also limit the extent to which religious leaders discuss gender- and sexuality-based justice within the context of "rights." As a result, the gender- and sexuality-based issues that states authorize mainlines to advance are significantly limited. The remainder of this project explores the limited contributions religious institutions make, and the barriers they introduce, to efforts to advance rights for women and sexual minorities.

Chapter 3

# FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: AN IDEAL CASE OF TRANSNATIONAL–DOMESTIC CHURCH POLITICS

> *It is widely recognized that patriarchal values and negative cultural attitudes towards women are so entrenched that it would require not only having policies, strategies and program but also practically implementing them. Because of unequal power relationship between men and women, having and implementing affirmative actions have [to be] a priority.* —Addis Ababa Women's Association, on implementing women's rights in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa Women's Association, 2015)

The African Union and East African state governments codify strong prohibitions against gender-based violence (GBV). Nevertheless, violations remain rampant throughout the region, including among religious communities and leaders. At times, perpetrators—often ignorant that their behaviors are harmful or illegal—justify violent practices as components of their cultural or religious traditions. In this context, national mainline churches have emerged as champions of anti-GBV efforts, poised and prompted to challenge pervasive norms that condone violence. What factors coalesced to commission national church leaders to this role, and what effects have church leaders had on anti-GBV efforts within their communities?

This research positions mainline Christian churches at the center of transnational and domestic rights-based politics. It argues that transnational denominational networks provide spaces in which international human-rights norms (like prohibiting gender-based violence) become integrated into theological frameworks and diffused throughout the world. Through these transnational networks, East Africa's mainline church leaders inform cross-national colleagues about their constituents' needs and experiences, attach these needs to international human-rights principles, integrate human-rights principles into their theological frameworks, and receive foreign funding to infuse updated theological approaches into their communities. Meanwhile, these transnational influences coalesce with the dual registers

of religion-state relations—which relegate religious leaders to govern gender roles and sexual behavior—to elevate mainline church leaders as domestic champions of gender-related rights.

Mainlines' adoption of anti-GBV agendas reveals the potential effectiveness of these church-centered transnational processes. The pages that follow demonstrate how religious institutions in general, and mainline churches in particular, serve as particularly effective venues (relative to secular approaches) for diffusing transnational commitments to eradicating gender-based violence. East African mainline leaders work with transnational colleagues, state leaders, and local clergy to curtail practices that are physically harmful to women and girls. For example, the Women's Coordinator at the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa serves as a liaison between Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation donors and Lutheran communities throughout East Africa to educate women about their legal rights and rescue and protect women from violence.[1] In short, mainline leaders and development practitioners become interlocutors between the anti-GBV global consensus and their grassroots constituents.

As a result of this transnational–domestic position, mainlines have yielded promising observable outcomes. These outcomes include public anti-GBV church positions and church programs to educate constituents about the harmfulness and illegality of gender-based violence.[2] Church response to gender-based violence therefore provides as an exemplary demonstration—an "ideal" case—of how mainline churches channel multiple, complementary influences to diffuse transnational human-rights norms into urban and rural communities. This effectiveness is rooted in the fact that mainlines represent institutions to which constituents belong, ideologies constituents already embrace, and social leaders constituents trust.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section One introduces the global consensus against gender-based violence. Section Two examines faith-based efforts to eradicate gender-based

[1] "We were supposed to do [this work] and report to Geneva, then we have our deadline. So... they [national churches and local congregations] can report back to me, and then I can send all the reports to Geneva" (Interview 04).

[2] Other peripheral outcomes (not detailed extensively here) include anti-GBV state policies informed by religious leaders.

violence. This section elaborates why East African religious institutions—particularly those that are members of transnational denominational networks—may be particularly effective venues for channeling anti-GBV transnational norms into their communities. Next, this section examines churches' collaboration with transnational partners to establish federal-level church policies that prohibit gender-based violence. It then demonstrates how churches and their transnational partners work to channel these national policies into local implementation strategies. This section closes by providing preliminary evidence that mainline churches (which enjoy strong transnational affiliations) are uniquely effective at integrating transnational norms within their communities.

This empirical analysis gives particular attention to Ethiopia's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation (FGM). Ethiopia's Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus emerges as a central figure in these efforts. Mekeane Yesus is considerably smaller than the powerful Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, which claims as many as 50 million members—nearly half of the country's estimated 105 million people. However, with more than eight million members, Mekane Yesus is the second-largest Christian church and predominant mainline institution in Ethiopia. Mekane Yesus is also the largest and fastest growing church within the Lutheran World Federation. Mekane Yesus's missionary connections to Scandinavian Lutheran churches made the Ethiopian church a center point of contemporary European-funded anti-GBV initiatives in Ethiopia. Furthermore, Mekane Yesus has historically served as a prominent civil-society voice (Eide, 2000) and venue for women's empowerment in Ethiopia (Chapter 4). In fact, this church's incorporation of female leadership appears to have prompted changes even among Orthodox gender relations. Mekane Yesus therefore occupies a central role—disproportionate to its size—in shaping national religious life in Ethiopia. Evidence of similar trends (despite political and cultural idiosyncrasies) of church efforts to fight gender-based violence in Uganda supplement this focus on Ethiopia.

However, even among this ideal case of mainline's transnational–domestic human-rights work, anti-GBV church efforts have encountered notable limitations. Section Three discusses the ways in which (predominantly male) church leaders and religious frameworks circumscribe rights-based approaches to gender equity, even in this ideal case. Most notably, national leaders often encounter resistance from their local clergy members. This

resistance represents tensions between national and international identities, on one hand, and local customs and practices, on the other. These tensions come into harsher relief as women seek prestigious national positions typically controlled by men (Chapter 4). Section Four closes this chapter by discussing the broader limitations marginalized communities (like women or sexual minorities) can expect to encounter when transnational–domestic politics designate churches as the arena for their rights struggles. Despite these limitations, this chapter demonstrates the unique ways in which mainline churches can productively bridge gaps between transnational ideas and local practices to fight gender-based violence.

### *3.1 The global consensus to eradicate gender-based violence*

In 1993, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution that called for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence. The resolution defined gender-based violence as any form of violence against women or girls "that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (United Nations, 1993, Article 1).[3] Today, gender-based violence continues to threaten the lives, safety, and wellbeing of women in every country; it is "one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world." An estimated one-third of all women will experience physical or sexual violence at least once in her lifetime. Although gender-based violence "knows no social, economic or national boundaries," it is reinforced by women's disempowerment, poverty, and underdevelopment. Women living in poorer communities therefore suffer gender-based violence at particularly high rates (United Nations, 2018*c*).

In countries throughout East Africa, between twenty and thirty-three percent of women are estimated to experience physical and/or sexual violence in a given year.[4] International

[3]Forms of gender-based violence include, but are not limited to, battering; rape; sexual abuse; dowry-related violence; female genital mutilation; sexual harassment or workplace intimidation; trafficking; forced prostitution; or any other form of violence against women or girls perpetrated by spouses, family members, community members, workplace relations, or state actors (United Nations, 1993, Article 2). Some analysts and service providers use the term "sexual and gender-based violence" (SGBV). My use of the term "gender-based violence" includes these various forms of sexual and physical violence.

[4]Among East African countries for which these data are available, percentages of women (ages 15-49) subjected to violence are as follows: Kenya, 25.5 percent (2014); Mozambique, 27.7 percent (2011); Rwanda, 20.7 percent (2015); Tanzania, 29.6 percent (2016); Uganda, 33.3 percent (2011); Zambia, 26.7 percent

development agencies specifically identify female genital mutilation (hereafter FGM),[5] child marriage, and domestic violence as particularly widespread forms of violence in countries throughout Africa (United Nations, 2017). This abuse is accompanied by norms that condone gender-based violence. In 2016, roughly sixty-five percent of young women (ages 15-24) in Ethiopia, sixty-one percent of women in Uganda, and forty-two percent of women in Kenya reported believing that wife beating can be justified (United Nations, 2018*c*). Between sixty-five and ninety-eight percent of women in East Africa's Horn region are subject to some form of FGM.[6] Rates of FGM are lower along East Africa's Swahili coast, where twenty-one percent of women in Kenya, fifteen percent of women in Tanzania, and one percent of women in Uganda experienced FGM (United Nations, 2016).

The agenda to eliminate FGM and other forms of gender-based violence enjoys a strong global consensus. Actors from multiple sectors and levels of governance have established legal, political, social, and religious institutions to enforce this consensus. The anti-GBV agenda has attracted support from international and regional governing bodies (e.g., the United Nations and the African Union), from transnational and continental religious denominational networks (e.g., the World Council of Churches and the All African Conference of Churches), and from secular and faith-based development agencies alike. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which the U.N. General Assembly adopted in 1979, defines violent or harmful practices against women, including FGM, as human-rights violations. Ten years later, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) similarly prohibited FGM. Between 1990 and 2013, a variety of regional and international institutions issued statements or protocols demanding an end to

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(2014); and Zimbabwe, 19.9 percent (2015) (World Bank, 2019). These rates appear higher than the most comparable estimates in the United States, where 5.5 percent of women reported experiencing sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner over a one-year period. One-third of U.S. women experience such violence in her lifetime (Smith et al., 2018, 2).

[5]Female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons" (World Health Oorganization, 2008, 4). FGM is sometimes referred to as "female genital cutting" or "female circumcision." The procedure can cause life-long pain and life-threatening damage but offers no medical or sensual benefits. I follow the World Health Organization's designation of this practice as "mutilation."

[6]An estimated sixty-five percent of women (ages 15-49) in Ethiopia, eighty-three percent of women in Eritrea, ninety-three percent of women in Djibouti, and ninety-eight percent of women in Somalia have undergone FGM (United Nations, 2018*a*).

FGM (United Nations, 2013, 10-13).

When the United Nations outlined its poverty-focused Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015, it included a resolution to "combat all forms of violence against women." The MDGs also acknowledged the "special needs of Africa" in its efforts to prohibit gender-based violence, to consolidate general democratic rights and principles, to eradicate poverty, and to develop sustainable economies (United Nations 2000, Sections 25, 27). After 2015, experts acknowledged they could not achieve gender equality in education (Goal Three) without targeted efforts to address violence against women and girls (MDG Monitor, 2016).[7]

Meanwhile, transnational African institutions similarly codify anti-GBV standards. The African Union and its member states issued its Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in 2004. The Solomn Declaration reaffirmed commitments to gender equality enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union (Article 4), CEDAW, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and other global women's-rights institutions. The declaration expressed deep concern about the prevalence of gender-based violence in African countries. Through the declaration, countries committed to promulgating, enforcing, and publicizing laws and standards against gender-based violence. Relevant here, the declaration explicitly acknowledged concern that "religion and culture are often erroneously used as a justification and an excuse for perpetrating and perpetuating discrimination against women" (African Union, 2004).

The African Union subsequently declared 2010-2020 the "African Women's Decade" in order to "re-invigorate commitments to accelerated implementation of agreed global and regional commitments of gender equality and women empowerment." Its goals included alleviating violence against women. The African Union's longer-term comprehensive post-MDG framework, "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want" also sought to achieve gender equality by empowering women and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination. In its first decade, the agenda aims to reduce levels of violence against women and girls by twenty percent, including reducing by fifty percent all harmful social norms and customary

[7]Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council's Resolutions 1820 and 1888 demanded that states and other parties engaged in armed conflicts cease all use of civilian-targeted sexual violence in war and protect civilian women and girls from wartime sexual violence (United Nations, 2008, 2009).

practices, including FGM, that promote violence and discrimination against women and girls (African Union, 2015, 78).

Several of Africa's prominent continental religious councils and faith-based organizations played critical advocacy and advisory roles in the development of Agenda 2063, often using the All African Conference of Churches (AACC)'s Ethiopia-based policy office as a venue for this advocacy. Africa's leading religious institutions also identify eradicating gender-based violence as a primary social priority; see, for example, the AACC's Gender Justice programme commitments: "Being the only institution which has roots in African heritage, the family is to be inspired by African values and enlightened by the Gospel. This [objective] will address concerns that undermine family values specifically Gender Based Violence" (All Africa Conference of Churches, 2019). At the same time, Africa's religious leaders participate in developing their transnational denominational networks' anti-GBV perspectives and agendas. African theologian and World Council of Churches Deputy General Secretary Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri indicated concern for the global phenomenon of "gender-based violence... happening in our own churches and homes." She commissioned the world's church leaders to break the silent injustices of gender-based violence in Christian communities:

> Sexual and any form of violence against minorities and marginalized groups of people is about power and control... We are now leading by example by protecting those who are not able to speak for themselves or those whose voices are not listened to. Let your voices be heard in your countries and in international spaces as you speak out for justice. (World Council of Churches, 2017)

Together, these transnational legal precedents and development commitments represent a strong global consensus—shared among state, religious, and civil-society experts—around the need to eradicate gender-based violence. Many human-rights activists and scholars argue that these international human rights standards have emancipatory power because they force a "break" from domestic policies and practices:

> In the area of violence against women, human rights ideas are powerful precisely because they offer a radical break from the view that violence is natural and

> inevitable in intimate relations between men and women. . . [H]uman rights ideas are appealing because they provide a radically different frame for thinking about the relations of power and inequality in society. (Merry, 2006*a*, 180)

Meanwhile, organizations like the All African Conference of Churches are both adopting these standards and integrating them into their existing social and political frameworks.

This does not suggest that efforts to eradicate gender-based violence have no adversaries, in East Africa or elsewhere. Indeed, while not explicitly condoning gender-based violence, legislatures from the United States to Russia have recently limited or undermined policy-based approaches to fighting gender-based violence (McPherson, 2018; Spring, 2018). As in any social agenda (Tarrow and McAdam, 2005), East Africa's religious actors undoubtedly adopt varying degrees of commitments to fighting gender-based violence. Indeed, not all religious leaders or institutions have publicly named or championed this agenda.[8] For those that remain silent, eradicating GBV may simply not be a priority. Others may fear that adopting the agenda would alienate constituents who perpetrate violence or who disagree that gender-based violence should be eradicated. Nevertheless, few if any prominent global actors publicly oppose anti-GBV development agendas. In this sense, eradicating gender-based violence enjoys a relatively unchallenged global consensus.

### *3.2 Transnational–domestic church interventions to fight gender-based violence*

How do these global agendas become implemented? Recall that foreign development professionals often commission, or coordinate with, local leaders to shift behavior in compliance with a global rights-based agenda (Cloward, 2016; Merry, 2006*a*). However, these processes can attract suspicion that rights are foreign and incompatible with local values and practices. In the case of fighting gender-based violence, development practitioners regularly work through East Africa's religious leaders, who can authenticate these agendas for their communities. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s

[8]For example, an executive with the Uganda Joint Christian Council said that Pentecostal leaders have dedicated very little effort toward addressing social issues, including gender-based violence, relative to mainline Christian leaders (Interview 75).

gender-based violence initiatives recognize that

> [R]eligious communities and, in particular, religious leaders, are often key catalysts for positive social change. Religious leaders are key stakeholders in responding to health and social issues and can play an influential role in validating and promoting best practices for preventing and reducing GBV and related vulnerability to HIV in their communities. (Herstad, 2009, vi)[9]

In accordance with the church-based transnational–domestic integration framework (developed in Chapter 1), religious leaders interviewed for this research named three specific reasons why their institutions can be particularly promising conduits for eradicating gender-based violence. First, their sub-national networks of trusted, deeply embedded clergy have the local-level access needed to help shift behavior away from violence. The Norwegian Church Aid humanitarian organization observed, "Religious institutions have significant influence over community members and have strong grassroots structures, credibility, and capacity in mobilizing their constituents for abandonment of harmful traditional practices" (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 10). Without religious leaders' support, international norms and state laws may be "viewed as punitive" or irrelevant (Interview 69, a Kenyan professional working for an foreign development organization). See Table A.4 for select, detailed interview-based evidence of this perspective.[10]

Second, religious leaders model and govern social behavior. They are "the main opinion shapers in the community" (Interview 69), particularly in private or family domains. According to one Ugandan Anglican professional:

> If you talk about gender-based violence, especially when it comes to domestic violence, the church is very keen on that because the church's realm of operation

[9]When the U.N. Security Council demanded an end to sexual violence in conflict zones (Footnote 7), it similarly recognized religious leaders' roles in helping to overturn norms that condone gender-based violence. Resolution 1888 called on religious leaders to "play a more active role in sensitizing communities on sexual violence to avoid marginalization and stigmatization of victims, to assist with their social reintegration, and to combat a culture of impunity for these crimes" (United Nations, 2009).

[10]It is unsurprising that faith-based organizations and church leaders would identify religion as a productive conduit for development initiatives. However, USAID, U.N. agencies, and other secular development organizations similarly acknowledge religious leaders as crucial interlocutors.

> is a family. When there is a problem there, they are very concerned. (Interview 85)

Following the HIV/AIDS pandemic—in which religious leaders raised critical awareness (Catholic News Agency, 2014; Patterson, 2011; Trinitapoli and Weinreb, 2012)—religious leaders are particularly well-positioned to talk about social issues related to gender and sexuality. Another Anglican leader in Uganda recalled a bishop who used his position to publicly discuss the issue of HIV/AIDS:

> *What prompted the churches to take on the issue of HIV/AIDS?* Again, it was because the bishop became the champion of advocacy. I think if it had been somebody who wasn't a church leader, it would have taken longer. But the traction was because he happened to be the bishop and he spoke out and said, 'I am affected because my son died of it.' That owning up in terms of owning the scourge enabled people to identify and be able to talk openly, because they didn't feel ostracized by the church. (Interview 70)

The same interviewee later said that, by taking responsibility to publicly discuss HIV/AIDS awareness, religious leaders entered into the terrain of discussing private sexual practices. The pandemic therefore "provided a platform for domestic violence, rape, all those issues to pop up. But it also opened up discussions around who makes decisions about sexual choices, even including family planning" (Interview 70). For example, the Anglican Church of Uganda dedicated "a full-fledged department [to] dealing with HIV/AIDS and all those related issues, including: How do you empower a woman to be able to say, 'No'?" (Interview 70).[11] In short, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Uganda provided religious leaders with both the personal experiences and the institutional platforms needed to help them address issues

[11]This interviewee proceeded to connect church responses to HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and women's economic empowerment. She explained why these issues cannot be compartmentalized: "Because some [women] said, 'Well, we accept [our husbands] to sleep around because the men give us money, or they pay us, or they finance us, or they pay tuition for our children,' so how do they do that? That's where the income generation angle comes into the same discussion, because the HIV/AIDS provides a platform which then covers all those other needs. Economic vulnerabilities of women, but also decision making, knowledge gaps, cultural and socialization which is very, very strong because there are cultures here that say you cannot refuse a man" (Interview 70).

at the intersection of public health and private sexual behavior. The HIV/AIDS pandemic therefore positioned religious leaders to discuss gender-based violence.

Third, religious narratives and patriarchal norms are often deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. These associations are most problematic in cases in which religious leaders are involved in perpetuating gender-based violence.[12] Even more commonly, theological interpretations reinforce gender roles which disadvantage or disempower women. Actors must dismantle these culturally entrenched associations between religion and patriarchal norms before shifts in gender relations may be possible. A female Anglican leader in Uganda said that addressing gender-based violence required shifting theological narratives away from emphasizing a wife's "biblical responsibility" to be a "good" wife to her husband, toward a biblical mandate that she be "wise as [a] serpent" in looking out for herself and asserting her right to live free of violence (Interview 70).[13] In order to yield sustainable reductions in rates of gender-based violence, religious institutions must therefore help facilitate this process of theological reinterpretation. For these reasons, national religious institutions have the potential to help integrate transnational anti-GBV norms into domestically authenticated theological principles and social practices.

*Authenticating anti-GBV norms at the federal level*

In 1991, the now-ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) removed from office the remaining elements of Ethiopia's oppressive Derg military regime. A transitional government ushered the country from that ouster to the new parliamentary regime, whose constitution came into effect in 1995. During that process, the transitional government implemented a National Policy on Women (1993), which institutionalized women's empowerment within federal, regional, and subregional government structures (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1993; United Nations, 2014, 20). A few years later, Ethiopia's new constitution codified these commitments (World Bank, 1998) by prohibiting

[12]For example, in places (like Somalia), that are "highly religious... there has been a misconception that FGM is actually viewed by a number of people as a religious obligation. Therefore [Norwegian Church Aid is] working with the clergy to try and demystify that" (Interview 69).

[13]Female leaders similarly work to shift and reinterpret theological narratives in their efforts to access church-based leadership roles (Chapter 4).

gender-based discrimination; affording women equal political rights and protections; and prohibiting practices that cause women bodily or mental harm (Government of Ethiopia, 1994).

In 1997, Ethiopia established a National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia, which targeted the rampant customs that prevented women from realizing these constitutional protections.[14] The committee identified more than 80 forms of harmful traditional practices (HTPs) which "violate and negatively affect the physical, sexual, psychological well-being, human rights and socio-economic participation of women and children."[15] The committee underscored "the need to abolish all forms of harmful traditional practices" (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2013, 14-19), many of which problematically uphold "the idea of male supremacy"(Addis Ababa Women's Association, 2015, 18). The committee identified FGM, child abduction and marriage, and wife beating among Ethiopia's most widely practiced HTPs (Mitik and Hailu, 2012). However, little was known of these federal policies outside urban areas.[16] Indeed, one authority interviewed for this research said that an estimated seventy-three percent of Ethiopian women at that time had experienced some form of FGM (Interview 56).

Nearly a decade after the National Committee on Traditional Practices' original study, Ethiopia revised its criminal code to explicitly criminalize several HTPs, including domestic violence and FGM (Articles 564-65).[17] Yet by 2015, "no criminal prosecutions ha[d] ever been sought regarding FGM" (Addis Ababa Women's Association, 2015, 21-22). Meanwhile, development practitioners still encounter substantial barriers in their efforts both to dissem-

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[14]One interviewee familiar with these events said that the United Nations recommended that Ethiopia establish this National Committee. The committee contributed to the broader U.N. goal of understanding "what is the reason behind, for example, mortality and mobility of these women and children in Africa" (Interview 56).

[15]The government of Ethiopia endorsed this definition of HTPs in 2013. Its Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs collaborated with development partners to develop this definition (United Nations, 2015*a*).

[16]Research conducted the following year concluded that, "while the central level of government promoted gender-sensitive policies and development interventions, very little was known about the constraints and issues at the regional levels" (World Bank, 1998).

[17]Meanwhile, in the early 2000s, Ethiopian policymakers revised labor laws, federal civil servants laws, land administration laws, and family laws to protect women's equal access to employment rights, property, and marriage and divorce rights.

inate knowledge about the harms caused by FGM and to ensure compliance with Ethiopian law, particularly in rural areas. Sixty-six percent of Ethiopian women surveyed between 2004 and 2016—including 68.4 percent of rural-dwelling women—had still undergone some form of FGM (Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency and ICF, 2016).[18] Strong patriarchal norms intertwine with religious justifications to prevent compliance with Ethiopia's anti-FGM laws. According to senior male officials from the Addis Ababa Women's Association, women still face considerable violence and oppression (Interview 44):

> Overall, Ethiopia still remains as one of Africa's most tradition-bound societies. Despite recently introduced policy instruments and legislative commitments serving women's interests, a vast majority of Ethiopian women, particularly in rural areas, are far from being well-off, independent and direct beneficiaries of development initiatives. Following traditional socio-cultural installations and practices, women are considered inferior to men, both in family life and in society at large. Although the situation of GBV/VAW [violence against women] looks better in Addis Ababa compared to rural areas of the country, the problem [is still] persistent and pervasive. (Addis Ababa Women's Association, 2015, 22)

International development agencies and faith-based transnational organizations identified Ethiopia's religious leaders as critical mechanisms for generating local compliance with international human-rights norms and federal laws that prohibited FGM and other forms of gender-based violence. The Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE) represents Ethiopia's seven largest religious institutions. According to an IRCE executive, the council has two over-arching social agendas: 1) negotiating peaceful resolutions to inter-religious conflict, and 2) advancing women's safety and equality. The Ethiopian government commissioned the IRCE to adopt the former agenda, which IRCE member-institutions fund. The latter "women's agenda," on the other hand, was driven by international donors:

> *How did that [gender] priority come to be? Did the government come to the IRCE and say, 'We should work on this?' Or did you come to the government?*

[18] According to UNICEF's 2018 global database estimates (based on various nationally representative and clustered surveys), this rate is decreasing among girls who are younger than fifteen years old.

> No, this idea came from the international organizations. . . Like, UNFPA, United Nations Development Program. UNDP, UNFPA and we are working and partnering with Norwegian Church Aid. . . Also we are working with the different embassies like your embassy in Ethiopia, [the] U.S. Embassy. The idea came from the international organizations. (Interview 27)

Demonstrating this research's placement of churches at the center of transnational–domestic human-rights efforts, the IRCE executive elaborated that transnational organizations sought to catalyze religious institutions' reach and credibility to fight gender-based violence:

> We [religious organizations] have good structure. This country, 97.3 [percent are] religious followers, so they are Christians or Muslims. It is good to have this kind of organization to reach the grassroot level. The idea came from the international organizations then we shared with our government. For example, maybe we have organized events, we invite the government, they will advise and we always do. We are collaborating in that area. (Interview 27)

Meanwhile, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), the Norwegian Embassy, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) coordinated a national effort to educate and activate Ethiopia's religious leaders as public opponents of FGM. Ramping up around 2009, the NCA hosted, funded, and facilitated educational forums and planning sessions for national religious leaders about the harms associated with FGM and the scale of its prevalence throughout Ethiopia (Figure 3.1). These forums educated leaders about "the scale of the problem with facts and allow[ed] reflection, role and responsibility" (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 56). Ultimately, these NCA-hosted dialogues sought to convince and activate the "top leadership" of each of Ethiopia's religious institutions to formulate and declare its own "institutional commitment for change" (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 56):

> NCA together with its faith partners started the mobilization of the faith-based organizations towards abandoning FGM by engaging high profile religious leaders by working with individual FBOs [faith-based organizations]. Series of dialogue, consultation meetings and sensitization workshops were conducted to

> *let them take [a] position on female genital mutilation.* As a result, most of the faith-based organizations *formulated their positions* and declared that FGM is a crime against girls and women, a violation of human rights, harmful, and does not have religious justification. . . Once convinced, the top faith leaders endorsed strategic interventions to address the issues of female genital mutilation and other forms of violence against women. (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 55, emphases added)

After being primed by these foreign-initiated forums, Ethiopia's religious leaders integrated transnational human-rights norms into their theological frameworks. Following these transnational interventions, the IRCE issued a joint statement: "We religious fathers and leaders will teach that female genital mutilation. . . ha[s] severe consequences on the lives of our daughters, sisters, and mothers. Such practices have no support in any religious teaching" (September 2011).[19] Most of Ethiopia's largest Christian institutions also followed these NCA-facilitated dialogues by developing a policy or declaration calling for the eradication of FGM on religious and social grounds (Table A.3; see, for example, Figure 3.2).[20] In each case, the church bases its justification for prohibiting FGM in its own theological frameworks. None referenced international law or transnational norms against gender-based violence.

Foreign development professionals familiar with these processes stressed that Ethiopian religious leaders claimed autonomy over their conclusions and resulting statements (Interview 50, background interviews). Nevertheless, transnational partners funded, initiated, and shaped the forums that led Ethiopian religious leaders to take a position against FGM. These transnational partners educated and activated Ethiopia's national religious leaders to join the fight against FGM and other forms of gender-based violence. Transnational collaborators therefore clearly influenced Ethiopia's religious institutions to adopt these public

[19] This statement is part of the IRCE's broader gender-related agenda, which is also funded by transnational partners (Interview 27).

[20] Although the Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency stated that Islam forbade abduction and forced marriage (Table A.3), the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council did not issue a statement condemning FGM or gender-based violence more generally.

declarations against FGM.

As they do in Ethiopia, women in Uganda encounter gender-based violence in troublingly high rates. Although rates of FGM are very low, Ugandan women face other forms of domestic and gender-based violence. An executive with the secular National Association of Women Organization in Uganda reported that violence is among the most pressing concerns facing Ugandan women today: "Physical, emotional, sexual, there is a lot of sexual abuse and it keeps on increasing and it's affecting the oldest woman up to the youngest one... All forms of violence against women [are] occurring in our communities" (Interview 82).[21]

In 2008, the Government of Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development ("Ministry of Gender") released the Uganda Action Plan to eradicate war-time sexual and gender-based violence.[22] This national Action Plan both identified that religious beliefs are used to inhibit women's access to progressive laws[23] and commissioned religious leaders as key actors for fighting sexual and gender-based violence.[24] Recognizing religion as a promising venue for grassroots change, the plan calls on international donor organizations to fund trainings for religious leaders to position themselves as anti-GBV advocates.[25]

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) accordingly partnered with the Irish Embassy and the Government of Uganda's Ministry of Gender to implement a comprehensive interfaith GBV-prevention program, which "focuses on building the capacity of the religious leaders and institutions to respond to and prevent gender-based violence as well as mitigate its effects" (Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, 2018). The IRCU's resulting *Training*

[21]This interviewee added that women running for elected public office are also targeted with violence. See Chapter 4 for more details.

[22]The Uganda Action Plan responded to UN Security Council Resolutions 1820.

[23]It identified "several cultural inhibitions and religious beliefs that contribute to the failure of women to use the existing progressive laws to assert their legal status and defend their human rights" (Government of Uganda, 2008, 16).

[24]Religious leaders can help increase victims of sexual and gender-based violence's "access to appropriate health services and psychosocial services," strengthen "collaboration, linkages and joint initiatives among the various actors responding to SGBV health related issues," and "build community and institutional capacity to ensure the prevention... [and] elimination of GBV in society" (Government of Uganda, 2008, 30-33, 37, 65-67).

[25]"With the assistance of the UN," the plan seeks to "facilitate regional consultations on the fight against SGBV for traditional, religious and women leaders" (Government of Uganda, 2008, 79).

*Manual for Religious Leaders in Gender-Based Violence Prevention* commissions religious leaders to work to eradicate gender-based violence, based on the unique principles of their own faith traditions:

> We, Religious Leaders and the Institutions under our charge have no kind words for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence in our faith communities. Our commitment to end violence in homes of our faith communities is based on the teachings of our faiths... We would like to see and hear more and more religious leaders addressing GBV. We would like to see and hear more and more religious teachings and sermons with positive messages that enhance peace... We would like to use religious spaces to advocate for peace, good governance in homes and for generally good health... We should find zero tolerance to violence against children, women and men in this world. (Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, N.d., vi-vii)

The IRCU acknowledged that the handbook "would not have been possible without the partnership from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development in addition to the generous financial support from IRISH AID in Uganda" (Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, N.d., v).

The Anglican Church of Uganda published its own UNFPA-funded gender-policy handbook in 2012. The Anglican handbook buttresses international human-rights institutional standards against gender-based violence from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Development Goals with biblical mandates and responsibilities (Church of Uganda, 2017, 24-25). Crucial to this chapter's argument, an Anglican church leader said the work of drafting these policies and handbooks required interlocutors like her, who could integrate global frameworks with religious principles:

> Yes, [I was working for] for UNDP. I also doubled up with the work I was doing at the time as the Vice President of the All Africa Conference of Churches. They felt that I had an understanding of the two entities. Therefore, I could give together a paper which combines the values of the church and the principles of

> the church and the understanding and interpretation of what should be informed as a sustainable development goal. (Interview 70)

In sum, transnational actors funded and encouraged religious leaders in both Ethiopia and Uganda to champion anti-GBV agendas. As a result, national religious institutions adopted public anti-GBV stances and used their own religious frameworks as the groundwork for those positions. However, unlike non-religious approaches to diffusing international human rights principles (Merry, 2006*a*,*c*), religious leaders claim theological ownership over their statements against violence. This religious authentication safeguards against local perceptions that anti-GBV positions are imported (and therefore irrelevant) foreign standards. Meanwhile, national religious leaders, particularly women, credited these transnational "information flows" for advancing women's safety and position within their institutions. According to a senior executive with the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, transnational church networks provide critical "exposure" to help advance women's empowerment:

> That's part of the information flow. That's part of the experience-sharing. And of course, we know that Europe has, is ahead of some of our countries, in terms of level of appreciation and support to women. I want to imagine that it [transnational networks] contributes positively to the change. (Interview 58)

A national leader for Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus church similarly credited transnational networks for exposing his church to transnational human-rights norms:

> Whatever we learn through ecumenical engagements, we can also share it and it goes out in a local and international level. . . Global issues. . . have local foundation[s] which also have to be treated locally rather than [at] a global level. (Interview 42)

As this sub-section has demonstrated, national church leaders catalyze transnational networks to produce a clear outcome: strong policy positions against gender-based violence.

But how effective are churches at, in the words of Interview 42, treating these issues locally? The next sub-section examines the ways in which religious institutions infuse these transnational anti-violence norms into their communities. In doing so, this sub-section provides evidence of the models religious practitioners use in their efforts to both educate local clergy leaders and women about the harms caused by gender-based violence and to shift local behaviors toward transnational rights-based prohibitions of violence.

*Channeling national policies into local implementation*

How do religious institutions' national policies become implemented within communities at the local level? In Ethiopia, the first task is to inform local clergy leaders that both Ethiopian law and their own religious institutions prohibit practices like FGM. Under-educated clergy perpetuate gender-based violence, either unknowingly (or even intentionally) against the edicts of their national religious institutions (Interview 44). A secular leader with the Addis Ababa Women's Association reported that, despite religious institutions' national anti-FGM policies, clergy from "almost all" religions in Ethiopia have been involved in enabling FGM, in misusing religion to justify gender-based violent behavior, in leading constituents to believe that FGM is religiously mandated,[26] or in challenging organizations' efforts to eliminate the practice.[27] Meanwhile, women take cues from clergy and other local leaders to resist anti-FGM efforts and uphold strong local norms that position women as subservient to men:

> The resistance is... from the mothers, grandmothers, the women themselves. Because they believe that this circumcision is really good for their children. They believe that they have to do it. But really we make good conversations they are doing for men, not for them. They want to [conduct circumcision to] make... perfect woman for the man... They have a lot of wrong understanding.

[26] "This [FGM] is a very sensitive issue and people have the understanding that God will punish them if they don't do that and if they are not cutting the genital of the girl" (Interview 44).

[27] A civil society leader dedicated to eliminating Ethiopia's harmful traditional practices said local clergy challenge anti-FGM interventions: "Yes, they challenge us. They say that—they assume that it is in the Quran and in the Bible" (Interview 56). This leader also said priests rely on debatable interpretations of religious texts to justify child marriage.

> So for me, generally, it's misunderstanding, lack of knowledge. The women—they don't have knowledge. (Interview 39)

Because these practices are often justified in religious terms, anti-FGM activists identify religion as a crucial avenue for disseminating behavioral change. Secular civil-society leaders say anti-violence advocates must work with local-level religious leaders:

> We will discuss with the religious leaders [and explain to them] that is not the case that this has come from God and you should tell the people that this does not have any association with the issue of God... In such cases you need to understand the religion of the religious people. (Interview 44)

Meanwhile, the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia executive (featured above) similarly elevated religious leaders as guardians of national narratives who can shift attitudes:

> If you change in this nation—if you change the attitude of religious leaders—the society will change... because they respect their religious fathers. If things came from the religious father, that is acceptable in the society. The main challenge is to change the mind of the religious fathers. If you do that part [well], things will go very smooth[ly]. (Interview 27)

Therefore, once a religious institution has committed to eradicating FGM, the Norwegian Church Aid works with Ethiopian's churches to infuse ("cascade") these commitments into the churches' grassroots communities, beginning with the local clergy:

> The first thing is to cascade what the church has really committed [at the national level]. In [Ethiopia's] Amhara region, some of the priests were also involved in the circumcising. We had to inform them, "This is the church's position." Some were grateful, rather than resistant. They were grateful to be informed. They are more committed to go house-to-house. If a woman has given birth, if it is a girl, the priests say, 'Make sure you don't circumcise your girl. If you do this, you won't get these services.' Next stage is going even

> more down, [encouraging] deacans [to] say that they don't marry uncircumsised girls.[28] (Interview 50)

This "cascading" approach has reportedly met notable success; some evidence suggests considerable reductions in FGM prevalence in areas targeted with these interventions (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017).[29]

Ethiopian religious institutions report adopting implementation strategies similar to the NCA model described above. Most of these efforts were reportedly funded primarily, if not exclusively, by European, American, or international development sources (Interviews 27, 32, 39). The IRCE provides educational "presentations" in rural-dwelling communities to implement gender-related international development objectives. They train local clergy, who are the primary governors of local behavior:

> [W]e are trying to give an awareness for religious leaders. Then if the religious leaders understand the issue, then they'll go to the church or the mosque then they'll teach. Then if anything came from the religious father, that is acceptable in the society. (Interview 27)

Given that Ethiopian society has not traditionally "given good attention [to] Mothers," the IRCE reportedly also works to teach rural-dwelling women about their legal rights-based entitlements with regard to gender-based violence, and to educate and resource them to increase their own maternal health (Interview 27).[30]

Interviewees from women's development efforts at Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus church report more involved processes of channeling their national church policies into local implementation strategies. Working with local government officials, they conduct trainings for women

[28] This approach, intended to dissuade families from circumcising their daughters, also runs the risk of ostracizing those women or girls who have undergone the process of FGM. One Ethiopian women interviewed for this research reported concern about the fate of circumcised women and girls amid social transition.

[29] Using Ethiopian religious institutions' statements as entry points, the NCA trained 16,455 grassroots community members and reach nearly 2.7 million Ethiopians with anti-FGM messages between 2010 and 2016 (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 44-45).

[30] "Now we are trying to teach, especially in the countryside, when the women right and to keep the woman right. Also we are giving awareness creation about health issue and mothers should go to the hospital to give a birth. That is our culture, so this is that we have a focus... [Our background culture] does not allow and it does not give enough space for our mothers and sisters. That is the challenge" (Interview 27).

and local clergy, who can then disseminate their knowledge of church and state policies to their communities. They focus on both alleviating FGM and strengthening women's leadership capacity:

> We try very hard to work with local government's offices or agencies, and our projects are really known to the government at the district level, and at the locality, and in the community. Before we go into [a] community, we make baseline study, we communicate to the district officers, to the local one, like present association leader, or something like that, and then we talk with the community, introduce our work. Seeing from the neighbors, or from other projects they hear news about other projects, how people are benefitting, how women are benefitting, so the rumors are circulated. And our organization has a very good reputation in the community, and even at the government level, and with some other NGOs also, so women feel secure [to participate]. (Interview 35)

These meetings (described above) help train local Mekane Yesus clergy about the medical and social harms of FGM:

> *Are there some Mekane Yesus clergy who are helping to eliminate FGM?* I think so because during the meetings they tell us that they're educating people that FGM is harmful, and it affects the health of women. In every occasion, we and also the clergies talk about it. (Interview 35)

This interviewee denied encountering a situation in which local Mekane Yesus clergy were unwilling to discuss and help eliminate FGM after receiving training.[31] However, she and others observed that, even though the prevalence of FGM is reducing overall, the practice is still a "serious" issue in rural areas.[32]

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[31] Local clergy may not be forthcoming with this national implementor.

[32] "We say it is reducing, but sometimes when we go out to the countryside, it's serious. Some people have accepted that and then stopped it and others [are] still seeing it is necessary" (Interview 35). Another interviewee similarly reported that national leaders continue to "struggl[e] to change the mindset, to change the culture" in the "countryside" (Interview 27).

Interviewees from throughout East Africa report similar methods of leveraging churches' social prominence to initiate grassroots campaigns to educate local clergy, local government officials,[33] and women about state laws and church policies that prohibit gender-based violence (Interview 69, 35). Religious institutions equip grassroots communities with skills and knowledge, expose them to "alternative ways of thinking, alternative mode[s] of doing things," and help "avoid the instrumentalization of religion" by forces—like local clergy—that are against the anti-GBV agenda (Interview 69).

In Uganda, national denominational leaders (Interviews 84, 71), development professionals (Interview 74), and national women's leaders (Interview 91) encourage local church clergy to preach against gender-based violence and to initiate conversations among their communities about how to shift attitudes and practices. An official with the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda said that local Ugandan leaders are ill-equipped to implement these commitments: "We are training our religious leaders to understand how to deal with this" (Interview 71).[34] Meanwhile, organizations like the Dutch faith-based development organization (ICCO Cooperation) facilitate conversations about gender-based violence within Christian women's groups:

> And how this works—Actually, it's all within their women's groups, and where they try to find a biblical explanation to educate and raise awareness on SGBV... One also particular thing about Uganda, why it's working so well with the church is that statistics shows that eighty-six percent of Ugandans are active Christians—an active Christian or some religion of some form. (Interview 74)

This sub-section demonstrated how church leaders utilize local church venues to disseminate knowledge about national church institutions' prohibitions against FGM and other forms of gender-based violence. Transnational partners provided critical spaces for national church leaders to develop anti-GBV policies, as well as funding for efforts to inte-

[33] "Even when you do put in laws, if you do not get the buy-in of these critical groups," like local law-enforcement agents (Interview 69).

[34] This leader also stressed that peoples' decisions should not be entirely dictated by the church. Instead, "I should be able to look at my faith but also my own interest as a human being, and then I make my choice" (Interview 71).

grate updated theological ideas into local communities. Secular and religious interviewees alike stressed the importance of grounding these interventions in a community's religious ideas and institutions. In this process, religious leaders become informants about not only transnational agendas and national church policies, but also about women's state-guaranteed rights to live free from violence.

*Variation among religious institutions*

Until now, this section has treated religious institutions as a monolithic group, any member of which may coordinate with transnational partners and state actors to become interlocutors between global rights-based agendas and grassroots communities. This treatment overlooks variation among religious institutions' responses to these transnational norms. In reality, religious institutions embrace and accept these national policies at varying rates. One source of variation is likely to be the extent to which national and local leaders view their church's newly-crafted anti-GBV policies as having authentic religious origins, rather than being a thinly veiled foreign idea. Indeed, Østebø and Østebø (2014) urge against assuming that religious leaders can be the "silver bullet" against Ethiopia's FGM practices when grassroots communities view implementors as instruments of global actors.[35]

Following the theory advanced in this project, mainline churches, which participate as active members of transnational spaces, should be more likely to welcome anti-GBV norms as meaningful in their own religious and social contexts, relative to their counterparts without such pre-existing transnational connections. As participating members of Lutheran World Federation or Anglican Communion proceedings (for example), national leaders of mainline churches will be not only more familiar with global-consensus ideas in general, but potentially more involved in shaping their transnational denominations' responses to those ideas. Meanwhile, local-level constituents of mainline churches share a denominational affiliation with communities around the world. As a result, they may be less likely to perceive messages with transnational contours as foreign to their own community. If this is the case,

[35] "The issue of FGM is best addressed when it is based on transformative processes truly generated from within. If religious leaders are to be true agents of change in such processes, they need to appear as more than instruments in the hands of national and global actors: they need to prove their independent and committed involvement" (Østebø and Østebø, 2014, 98).

national leaders of mainline churches will be more effective conduits of anti-GBV norms than their denominationally unaffiliated Christian or Muslim counterparts.

Interviews with national religious and secular leaders in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya provide preliminary anecdotal support for this hypothesis. In Ethiopia, the Mekane Yesus church—the largest church in Ethiopia with a transnational denominational affiliation—appears to generate stronger national-level commitments and greater local-level shifts in behavior, relative to counterparts like the Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, or other protestant churches.[36] A foreign development practitioner involved in Ethiopia's anti-FGM work indicated that Mekane Yesus was particularly effective in leading these efforts: "In terms of taking the issue seriously and showing fast change, Mekane Yesus takes the lead" (background interviews).

Meanwhile, interviewees from the larger, indigenous Orthodox church overlooked or avoided topics related to FGM, gender-based violence, or social development more generally.[37] Despite reporting concern about the prevalence of gender-based violence in their communities, interviewees from the transnationally unaffiliated Kale Hiwot church similarly reported little local-level investment. Interviewees reported having only one, "very much limited... very small" project dedicated to educating local clergy and community members about FGM (Interview 32) and suggested that their national anti-FGM policy alone sufficiently reduced incidents of violence among their members.[38] Development practitioners said that Ethiopia Muslims join Orthodox communities as prominent perpetrators and reticent opponents of FGM.[39]

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[36]The protestant Kale Hiwot is unique in this regard. Kale Hiwot began as a European missionary affiliate but is now a member of no transnational denominational network.

[37]When asked about whether Orthodox priests educated local leaders on FGM, Interview 20 evaded the question. He reported that the Orthodox Church's most important social task was to maintain its own identity, morality, and approach to "ethical life" amid threats of globalization.

[38]"Well, in our church, you don't—we don't accept that sort of harassment and oppression at all. Husbands are not that type harsh any more. All over the church and once they are believers, they are regulated... In our churches, we don't hear that kind of oppression any more. Oppression, beatings and things like that is not there openly" (Interview 32). Another development leader suggested that Kale Hiwot's women's empowerment programs indirectly reduce incidents of domestic violence (Interview 53).

[39]One foreign development practitioner interviewed as background research reported attempting to engage with the Ethiopia Islamic Affairs Supreme Council but gained limited traction. That professional reported that Muslims and southern-dwelling evangelicals practiced FGM at particularly high rates. Oth-

Similarly, the Anglican Church of Uganda—one of the country's largest and leading transnationally affiliated churches—emerged as a leader in the fight against gender-based violence. Development implementors like UNFPA identified the Church of Uganda as a key implementing agency on gender-based violence and FGM:

> UNFPA established formal partnerships with a national-level network, which covers the spectrum of religious orientations, and the [Anglican] Church of Uganda as a key implementing agency on gender-based violence and FGM. (United Nations, 2018*b*, 53)

Meanwhile, interviewees indicated that Uganda's non-denominational churches were less invested in addressing gender-based violence (Interview 79). An executive with the Ugandan Joint Christian Council said that, relative to mainline churches, Pentecostals make few contributions to social issues (gender-related otherwise): "No, actually Pentecostals have nothing to do with the social issues. They have nothing to do with education, they have nothing to do with health, they have nothing to do with—they're not there" (Interview 75). A 2018 UNFPA report also suggested that Pentecostals' independent, diffuse network offers challenges to efforts to address gender-based violence:

> At the national level, garnering the support of the churches and other religious groups has been key. The challenge had been the numerous pentecostal and evangelical churches, which lack a central authority, may be led by independents, but are particularly exigent on the role of women. (United Nations, 2018*b*, 49)

Any relationship between a religious institution's transnational affiliations and its commitments to global anti-GBV agendas will be confounded by other socio-religious factors. Existing research associates Islam with gender-based violence in a variety of contexts. Muslim communities exhibit higher rates of child marriage throughout Africa (Gemignani and

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ers indicated that some leaders within the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council opposed anti-FGM messages (Interview 56). I was not successful at securing any interviews with Ethiopian Muslims for this research. Other church bodies were either considerably smaller and/or similarly provided little evidence of investment in addressing and alleviating FGM.

Wodon, 2015, 42).[40] In Ethiopia, Muslim women register greater support for FGM, relative to Ethiopian Catholics or Protestants (Masho and Matthews, 2009),[41] and research suggests that Muslim leaders have been ineffectual in intervening to reduce its prevalence (Østebø and Østebø, 2014).[42] The Orthodox Church maintains a hierarchical, patriarchal structure which is similar to some Muslim traditions. It is unsurprising that more patriarchal religious institutions—like the Orthodox Church or Ethiopia's Muslim communities—may be less responsive to transnational anti-GBV efforts.

The preliminary anecdotal evidence provided in this section is far from conclusive. However, this preliminary evidence suggests that transnationally affiliated churches may more effectively adopt and integrate transnational global rights-based agendas, relative to religious institutions with less established transnational partnerships. Future research should seek to isolate the specific relationships between patriarchal religious structures, indigenous origins, transnational connections, and openness to adopting substantive commitments to transnational norms against gender-based violence.

*Section conclusions*

This section has demonstrated how transnational actors coordinate with national religious institutions to advance anti-GBV rights agendas in their countries. Specifically, transnational actors, state governments, and national religious leaders effectively coalesce in a two-tiered response to implement anti-GBV principles. First, transnational actors begin by informing, commissioning, and funding national religious institutions to adopt public positions against gender-based violence. This "authenticates" the global anti-GBV norm by presenting it as a policy specific to a national church body's domestic context and religious values. Next, transnational and national church leaders disseminate the religiously

[40] "Child marriage does have deep socio-cultural and religious roots. Gender roles and social expectations, as well as prevailing conceptions about Islamic Law and the fear of pregnancy before marriage, all play a role in the persistence of the practice" (Gemignani and Wodon, 2015, 42).

[41] Women who were rural residents, married, uneducated, circumcised, and/or unexposed to mass media were also more likely to support FGM's continuation (Masho and Matthews, 2009).

[42] "[T]he empirical accounts presented in this article make it reasonable to question the alleged success of the involvement of Muslim religious leaders in anti-FGM interventions" (Østebø and Østebø, 2014, 98).

authenticated policy into grassroots communities, who (presumably) receive these policies as their own domestic churches' priorities. This section provided preliminary evidence that religious institutions who are members of transnational denominational networks may be particularly effective facilitators of these anti-GBV agendas.

In short, this section demonstrated that national church bodies provide a meaningful and authentic bridge between their transnational affiliates and their local constituents—a bridge which avoids the pitfalls often encountered among secular norm-diffusion approaches. This response to gender-based violence demonstrates an ideal case of transnational norm diffusion with religious leaders as critical interlocutors. It is worth noting, however, that these religious institutions continue to represent and uphold male-dominated gender relations. The next section identifies two ways in which anointing churches to fight gender-based violence and to govern gender relations yields only circumscribed progress for women.

### *3.3 The limitations of religious conduits for anti-GBV agendas*

As discussed in Chapter 2, religious institutions can have powerful influences over private familial structures, gender relations, and sexuality. However, the transnational processes discussed here transform religious institutions into governors of *public* gender relations and into informants about state policies, legal rights, and secular approaches to shifting expectations about gendered behavior. Elite interviewees from countries throughout East Africa agree that this process can have positive outcomes for reducing gender-based violence practices. However, these outcomes are likely to be heavily circumscribed. For one thing, when religious institutions emerge as responsible for prohibiting gender-based violence within political systems that stress a formal separation between religion and state, this can weaken associations between norms against gender-based violence and legal, rights-based prohibitions. Furthermore, because religious leaders are still predominantly male, men become primarily responsible for dictating the scope of those protections against gender-based violence. Ultimately, both of these dimensions threaten to weaken women's rights in practice. This section discusses each of these dimension in turn.

*Rights-based approaches are undermined*

Church leaders throughout East Africa view their institutions both as potential beacons of liberal and democratic rights (Interview 05) and also as well-poised to address gaps between abstract rights and the economic inequalities that inhibit rights' promises.[43] In the process of fighting gender-based violence, local religious spaces become venues for distributing legal knowledge (Interview 66, 69) and for empowering women as rights-bearing individuals:

> We empower women to know their rights, and to stand for themselves and say, "This is not right."... We as a church—we have done so many seminars, through these gender issues. And now I can say some parts of our church—they know their rights. And some of them can stand and say, "This is not right." (Interview 04)

Indeed, leaders have mobilized secular state law and Christian values in complementary, reinforcing efforts to eradicate gender-based violence. However, state rights and religious principles still reside in distinct social spheres of authority. One politician describes how state and religious anti-GBV logics parallel one another, but do not necessarily integrate:

> The state and the church... Because the church on one hand is saying, if you hit your wife you are committing a sin. The state is saying, if you batter your wife, it's a criminal offense [against] the penal code of the criminal law. And so they agree... They will not agree on terms of punishment because the state can drag you to court for prosecution, the church will pray for confession. (Interview 02, quote also featured in Chapter 2)

This distinction between religious principles and rights protections is even more stark in Ethiopia, where the federal policies restrict churches' rights-related work.

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[43] A Lutheran bishop from Kenya said, "When we are talking about the Bill of Rights, the right of shelter, relationship, childhood and women rights and all those, that is what is defined in the constitution. But, when you come to the real life, there is a very, very big gap between the haves and have-not. This is where the few people will talk for the poor. There are so many people who are identified with the poor, but there are many people who are in the power who are not identified with the poor. That is the issue" (Interview 03).

In addition to being complementary but distinct, several interviewees held or encountered a belief that religious interventions served as an important check on more comprehensive secular rights-based approaches to shifting norms. A Ugandan faith-based development practitioner observed grassroots backlashes against European, secular rights-based approaches, which some community members fear will prohibitively disrupt existing social arrangements, undermine "peaceful communities," and dismantle "harmonious families" (Interview 74). She said that, compared to "less visible, slower," and longer-term faith-based approaches to reducing gender-based violence, secular approaches were unproductively destructive ("like hitting, getting into the house through the wall").

However, this separation between faith-based and rights-based approaches can circumscribe women's empowerment. This arrangement runs the risk of relegating and solidifying gender-based violence and other women's-rights protections into the realm of religious governance and away from being seen as enforceable legal protections. This arrangement can undermine both women's knowledge of and access to legal venues for redressing grievances of gender-based violence. It can also quell the development and institutionalization of legal apparatuses to address such grievances. Indeed, there are limits to how empowering churches can be for women because "the woman still has to be submissive, the way the Bible says it" (Interview 74). This Ugandan faith-based development practitioner said that some churches actively resist rights-based approaches:

> Let me quote one of my partners, actually, last year who said, "We believe in Christ, we don't believe in rights"... In that sentence you summarize everything. In terms of gender-based violence, in terms of women's empowerment, in terms of LGBTI, so that's it. You can summarize it that way. (Interview 74)

Accordingly, a secular women's activist in Uganda who recognized religious institutions as critical local allies for women's empowerment indicated that, ultimately, religious narratives were insufficient. Communities eventually need "human rights education, legal education" to "address the rights of women" (Interview 82). An Anglican Ugandan development professional similarly said that religious anti-violence messages are insufficient without the backing of rights-based state action: "So even the church has actually gotten

the message that only bringing [anti-GBV messages] in the Bible study... It's not enough" (Interview 74). In short, these church-based transnational–domestic arrangements can relegate women's rights to the sphere of religious governance rather than state protections. This runs the risk of limiting the strength of women's rights consciousness and access to rights-based claims. Indeed, the faith-based interviewee featured in this section concluded that some existing frameworks must be dismantled in order to eradicate gender-based violence: "You can't make an omelette without breaking the shell" (Interview 74).

*Religious leaders remain predominantly male*

National religious institutions remain predominately controlled by men (detailed in Chapter 4). This introduces several additional barriers to anti-GBV agendas. First, some male religious leaders perpetrate gender-based violence, pressure silence or forgiveness from survivors, offer preferential treatment to husband perpetrators, or engage in victim blaming (Interviews 39, 70, 83). These responses undermine women's abilities to protect and defend themselves. Interviewees featured in this chapter said these forms of resistance or non-compliance are particularly prevalent among lower-level or rural-dwelling clergy leaders. By resisting or subtly undermining church stances against gender-based violence, these clergy members demonstrate a form of church pressure previously unaddressed in this chapter. Such internal resistance introduces another layer of pressure that reduces national churches' capacities to facilitate substantive shifts in behavior.

Second, many interviewees (particularly women) reported that male leaders are insufficiently concerned about gender-based violence and make insufficient investments in programs to implement their national anti-GBV policies (Interview 39): the "upper layers [of church leadership] are unconcerned about issues of SGBV" (Interview 74). Indeed, female national religious leaders from Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya alike shared this critique that their gender-focused programs still encounter budgetary barriers: "the church—generally it has money to do so many things but we have not yet got the commitment" to fund gender-based programs (Interview 85). These gender-focused programs often rely on foreign funding sources, which can be isolated from national male leaders' disinterest in gender-related

projects. However, this leaves churches' gender programs reliant upon transnational funders, who can undermine churches' programatic autonomy (Interview 70), mis-diagnose priorities or under-estimate hurdles to meeting objectives,[44] prioritize siloed rather than holistic approaches to shifting behaviors,[45] or lack integrity (Interview Anonymous). Furthermore, foreign-funded women's-empowerment programs that lack support from male leaders are vulnerable to shifts in transnational agendas and can be disrupted by contentious transnational politics (see Chapter 4).

Third, male leaders delimit definitions of gender-based violence, resist efforts to address more quotidian patterns of gender-based violence like domestic abuse (Interview 80), avoid expanding these agendas to broader women's-empowerment efforts (United Nations, 2018*b*, 36), and/or prioritize maintaining family unity over protecting women. Fourth, male leaders still demonstrate gendered stereotypes and conservative understandings about gender roles, which continue to permeate their approaches to gender-based violence.[46] These stereotypes are likely to shape and circumscribe women's-rights agendas as long as women lack access to economic empowerment. Even male religious leaders who understand these relationships between women's economic power and access to rights betray underlying ideas that a woman's economic disempowerment explains her subservience.[47] These underlying stereo-

[44] One interviewee discussed having to manage expectations from western donors: "I had partners we were discussing gender issues at church of Sweden and then they were like, 'We've just come to discuss GBV,' and I said, 'Don't even go there yet... because I'm still struggling with [relationships between] the men and the women'" (Interview Anonymous).

[45] "As long as that funding is short term, you can never make a difference in the rights of women. For me I see that the best way to make a difference in the lives of women is to look at the rights of the woman holistically. I wouldn't want to get funding that restricts me to eliminating gender-based violence but it doesn't allow me, for example, to be flexible. Say if I want to eliminate gender-based violence, I should also deal with issues of economic empowerment of this woman, maybe literacy and numeracy levels of this woman. Yes. I want a long-term thing that looks [at] the challenge that the woman is facing holistically" (Interview 82).

[46] "It's all in this very conservative understanding or interpretation of the Bible in terms of the distribution of roles between men and women" (Interview 74).

[47] One male regional faith-based leader said women's practical ability to live free from the threat of violence is inextricably attached to her economic empowerment: "Again as I said the issue of economics, issue of poverty. One of the leading causes of gender based violence is the empowerment on women. The women need to be in charge of their livelihood. They need to have capacity to earn, capacity to spend, capacity to look after themselves and then they can negotiate relationship with their men. As long as the men own the forces of production, the land, the money, that weakens the negotiating power of the women. This is about power relations, whoever owns is in charge of the family and I think for me this is where the arguments are.... If I had a woman with a Ph.D., I must be able to negotiate and listen to her... because

types are evident in the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia interviewee's regular references to clergy as "religious fathers" (quoted above). Finally, national male religious leaders fear backlash among their local clergy members,[48] who may feel greater affinity for their community's existing gender roles and cultural alliances than they do to their national religious affiliates.[49]

In short, male-dominated religious institutions maintain gaps between their gender policy positions and their substantive commitments to actualizing change:

> The claim is there. They can even say that about all this issue. My problem is the level of commitment and support mechanisms and the policies and resolutions in church that can help you go beyond simply mentioning them, because for me that is tokenism... [I]t statistically looks good that [policies] are there, but they are not effective. They could say that about leadership, about gender-based violence, about those other issues. But for me, the issue is how you then go beyond mentioning them, creating awareness, to actually doing things that mitigate it and that eliminate the practice, and empower those who survive it to be able to live full lives and meaningful lives after the experience. (Interview 70)

### *3.4 Conclusion*

This chapter demonstrated that state actors and transnational church partners commission national church bodies to take public stances against gender-based violence. Together, these

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she is an asset. She supplements and compliments my efforts but if I have a woman who is not earning, who is not working and I am the one earning and I am the one looking after the home and the family then I must dictate on what goes, what to eat, what to buy. I should be able to dictate but if both of us are earning, then we sit at the table and we say, 'Who brings what? Who does what?' That for me empowers the woman to negotiate the relationships in the family. (Interview 71)

[48]When asked if it was possible that church leaders were afraid of backlash from constituents regarding SGBV, interviewee said: "Yes. That was actually the reason for the LGBT stuff [as well], they were also afraid of the backlash from the constituencies" (Interview 74).

[49]According to a Ugandan Anglican practitioner, in many rural communities, the "culture of the people there seems to supersede the faith they have. They don't feel that they have enough faith to challenge the cultural practices that are happening. But individually some of the priests have decided to do things differently" (Interview 85).

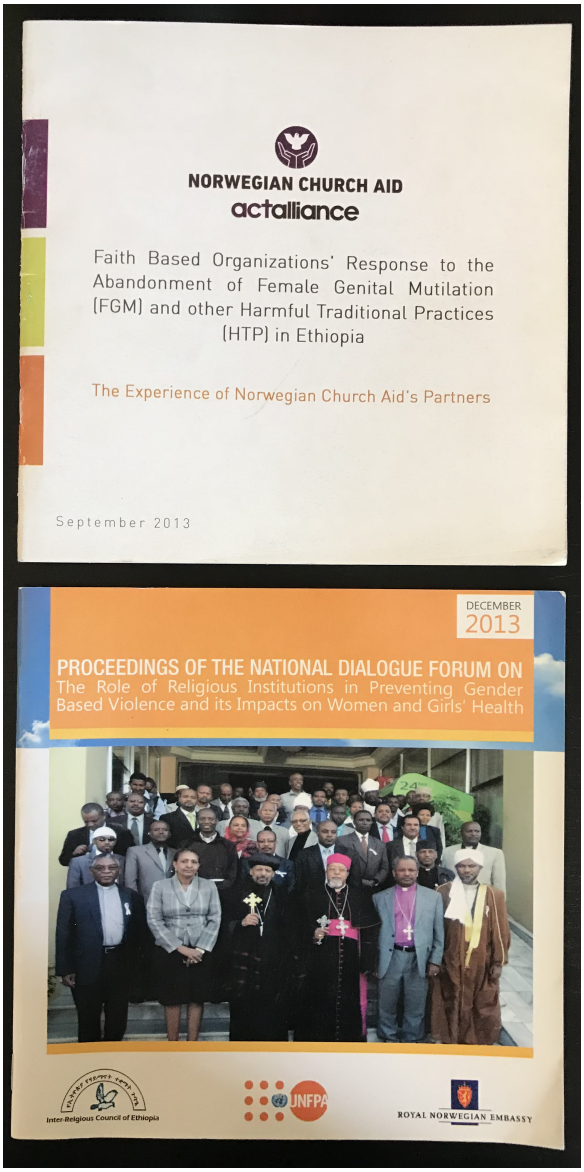
transnational and domestic church actors then inform churches' grassroots clergy and congregations that gender-based violence is illegal and religiously prohibited. As interlocutors between transnational agendas and local communities, churches help alleviate the considerable translation and adoption challenges that transnational norm-diffusion scholars identify. The case of church anti-GBV efforts therefore demonstrates the importance of having domestically authoritative intermediaries—like mainline churches, which enjoy global exposure and strong, country-wide grassroots networks—as drivers and champions of transnational rights-based agendas.

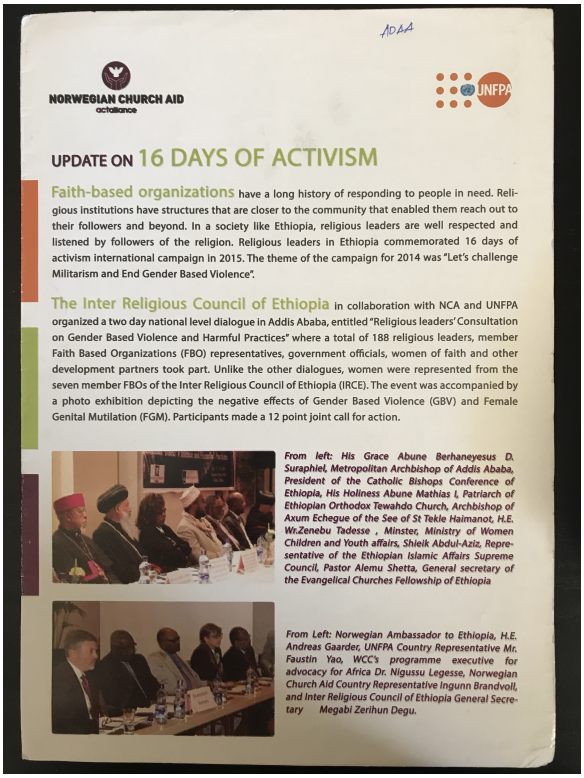
This chapter identified three reasons why multiple transnational and domestic pressures coalesce to influence church leaders to exact promising anti-GBV outcomes. First, the agenda against gender-based violence enjoys a strong, relatively uncontroversial global consensus. East African state actors and religious leaders join this global consensus: "Everyone is convinced that GBV is an evil" (Interview 70). Second, eradicating gender-based violence does not directly compromise the public positional power of existing church leaders. As a result, the anti-GBV agenda does not introduce disagreements among high-ranking national church leaders about the premises of opposing gender-based violence. Third, because of this consensus, mainline churches champion anti-GBV norms without facing challenges to their authority from other domestic actors, including peer religious institutions. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the negative impacts on women and sexual minorities when these conditions are not met.

But even in this "ideal" case of transnational–domestic church-based politics, additional sources of pressure emerge. Pressures internal to a church's institutional structure limit the extent to which it can support and empower women. National leaders encountered resistance from their local clergy members, many of whom ignored, resisted, or subtly undermined their national churches' anti-GBV policies. This resistance represents tensions between national and international identities, on one hand, and local customs and practices, on the other. Furthermore, national female church leaders confronted tensions with their male colleagues who did not share their commitments to gender-based work. In short, even church responses to a global-consensus issue like eradicating gender-based violence exposes internal tensions among a church's various, disaggregated actors.

These tensions become more prominent and pronounced as women seek access to leadership roles within their churches. Chapter 4 examines how women leveraged both transnational and domestic narratives to gain access to church leadership roles. Here, existing male leaders—whose exclusive access to limited leadership roles becomes directly challenged—become more actively involved in opposing women's agendas. Chapter 4 identifies the formal and informal institutional barriers women encounter in the process. Within this more contentious terrain, women's efforts become restricted, contained, and encoded as "foreign." Domestic and the transnational (even "neo-colonial") tensions percolate within East Africa's mainline churches, which become battlegrounds for both domestic gender debates and global North-centered transnational disputes. These tensions therefore demarcate the circumscribed effects transnational movements have on women's efforts to disrupt quotidian forms of disempowerment.

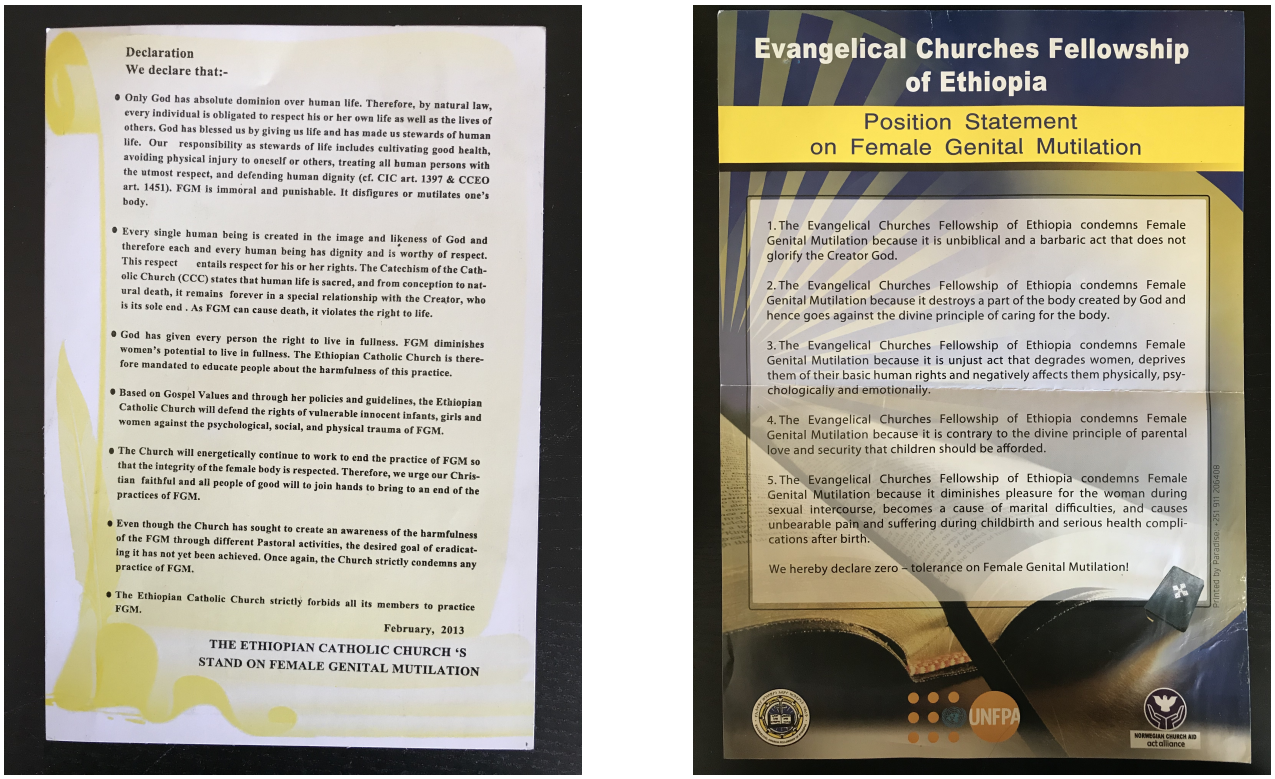
Figure 3.1: Norwegian Church Aid anti-GBV pamphlets




Evidence of transnationally hosted dialogues to educate and activate Ethiopian religious leaders to oppose female genital mutilation (FGM). Material acquired during fieldwork (Fall 2015).

Figure 3.2: Ethiopian church statements against FGM



Declaration
We declare that:-

- Only God has absolute dominion over human life. Therefore, by natural law, every individual is obligated to respect his or her own life as well as the lives of others. God has blessed us by giving us life and has made us stewards of human life. Our responsibility as stewards of life includes cultivating good health, avoiding physical injury to oneself or others, treating all human persons with the utmost respect, and defending human dignity (cf. CIC art. 1397 & CCEO art. 1451). FGM is immoral and punishable. It disfigures or mutilates one's body.
- Every single human being is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore each and every human being has dignity and is worthy of respect. This respect entails respect for his or her rights. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that human life is sacred, and from conception to natural death, it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end . As FGM can cause death, it violates the right to life.
- God has given every person the right to live in fullness. FGM diminishes women's potential to live in fullness. The Ethiopian Catholic Church is therefore mandated to educate people about the harmfulness of this practice.
- Based on Gospel Values and through her policies and guidelines, the Ethiopian Catholic Church will defend the rights of vulnerable innocent infants, girls and women against the psychological, social, and physical trauma of FGM.
- The Church will energetically continue to work to end the practice of FGM so that the integrity of the female body is respected. Therefore, we urge our Christian faithful and all people of good will to join hands to bring to an end of the practices of FGM.
- Even though the Church has sought to create an awareness of the harmfulness of the FGM through different Pastoral activities, the desired goal of eradicating it has not yet been achieved. Once again, the Church strictly condemns any practice of FGM.
- The Ethiopian Catholic Church strictly forbids all its members to practice FGM.

February, 2013

THE ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 'S
STAND ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia

Position Statement on Female Genital Mutilation

1. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it is unbiblical and a barbaric act that does not glorify the Creator God.

2. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it destroys a part of the body created by God and hence goes against the divine principle of caring for the body.

3. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it is unjust act that degrades women, deprives them of their basic human rights and negatively affects them physically, psychologically and emotionally.

4. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it is contrary to the divine principle of parental love and security that children should be afforded.

5. The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it diminishes pleasure for the woman during sexual intercourse, becomes a cause of marital difficulties, and causes unbearable pain and suffering during childbirth and serious health complications after birth.

We hereby declare zero – tolerance on Female Genital Mutilation!

UNFPA

Ethiopian Catholic Church (left) and Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (right). Material acquired during fieldwork (Fall 2015).

Chapter 4

# ORDAINING WOMEN AS CHURCH LEADERS: ADVANCES AND FISSURES IN A ROCKY CONSENSUS

> *In a patriarchal society such as ours, the appointment of a female head of state not only sets the standard for the future but also normalises women as decision-makers in public life.* —Ethiopian Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, on the appointment of Ethiopia's first-ever female President, Sahle-Work Zewde (October 2018)

Shortly after Ugandan Bishop Festo Kivengere returned home from exile under the Idi Amin regime, he ordained several women in his Kigezi Diocese as priests. Convinced that there was no theological or cultural reason to deny women access to sanctified leadership positions, he proceeded to consecrate women despite a lack of consensus from his Ugandan bishop colleagues. Thanks to these actions, the Anglican Church of Uganda became the first mainline church in Africa to ordain women and preceded its missionary "mother church," the Church of England, in doing so.

Despite this groundbreaking step, ordained women in Uganda and throughout East Africa face considerable challenges and barriers that their male colleagues do not encounter. Some national mainline church bodies still refuse to ordain women. Among those that have officially approved women's ordination, women still comprise a far smaller proportion of ordained clergy rosters, relative to men. And most churches report having districts that refuse to comply with their national church's policies. Very few churches throughout the continent have elected female priests to the higher position of bishop. Meanwhile, women who are ordained often report being ostracized, disregarded, or undervalued within their congregations and broader church institutions. What influences coalesced to facilitate women's ordination efforts throughout East Africa? Why do women continue to face such formal and informal barriers that restrict their abilities to serve as empowered civil-society leaders?

This chapter examines church actions to support empowering female labor within their

communities, particularly in the form of female clergy. Transnational and domestic forces coalesced to help women gain access to leadership roles but also introduced significant barriers to their empowerment efforts. Although virtually all transnational entities and powerful church bodies repudiate gender-based violence (Chapter 3), many religious institutions in industrialized and developing countries alike oppose elevating women as sanctified religious leaders. This lack of consensus is ultimately grounded in a continued commitment to patriarchal norms which stratify women as subservient to men and reserve high-level positions of power and authority for men. Lacking a transnational consensus, churches encounter a variety of external and internal pressures that constrain them from functioning as cohesive units that empower women.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section One situates female ordination movements within broader global efforts to elevate women as political and civil-society leaders. Section Two demonstrates how grassroots and transnational movements converged with domestic political environments to champion women as ordained church leaders. This section examines cross-national trends and women's ordination movements in Uganda and Ethiopia to identify these transnational and domestic influences. Section Three features the personal experiences of female clergy and development workers through the region. This section highlights the ways in which women are shaped by, and respond to, these multiple layers of pressure; the ways in which they utilize church spaces and theological concepts as venues for challenging patriarchal norms; and the limits they encounter in doing so. Transnational politics shape these experiences, too. Women navigate between their consciousness as rights-bearing individuals, modeled after transnational human-rights norms, and their community responsibilities to maintaining the integrity of their family units and cultural identities (Merry, 2003*b*). Meanwhile, women personally and financially experience transnational contentions over gender relations and sexuality, as progressive and conservative global North forces wage their own gender wars within the halls of African mainline churches.

This chapter reveals how domestic movements and transnational efforts converge to elevate female leaders while at the same time undermining or preventing efforts to expand leadership into a sector's upper echelons, grassroots environments, or institutional ethos. This issue of female ordination introduces fissures of contestation—fissures within

church leadership, between national church leaders and their non-compliant districts, between transnational actors and national church leaders, and between competing transnational actors—which can undermine women and other marginalized populations.

### *4.1 Transnational movements to elevate female leaders*

Elevating women to high-profile labor roles or to positions of authority can not only benefit the individual women in power. Female leaders also expand social attitudes, leadership perspectives, and institutional policy priorities. A Kenyan aid worker interviewed for this research explained that female leaders—be they in state legislative halls or church pulpits—are important for fairness, equality, justice, and role modeling. She said they also provide new perspectives about interpreting social practices and church doctrines (Interview 69). A female church professional from Uganda elaborated that women need to be involved in shaping church policies because women's experiences and perspectives are different from men's. She said that a church's institutional knowledge and policy-making processes must draw from the perspectives women can provide:

> If [women are] not in the place where decisions are made, chances are some things that are critical for men and women, for girls and boys, will not be seen because women see differently and men see differently. That is a fact. It's how God made them. They see differently, but if the women are not going to inform the decisions that the men are making, over the lives of the people in Uganda— . . . [The church] is big so the decisions that they make are critical not only for the church as an institution, but for the church of God, the people of God. You've got to get the critical people in those [decision-making] places. (Interview 85)

Furthermore, women command credibility in talking about the "life-and-death" gender and sexuality issues that grip their communities. One woman reflected on the importance of a public address she gave on the HIV/AIDS pandemic: "I was a reverend, I was pregnant, and I said, 'There's no one better than me to talk about this'" (Interview 92).

Understanding gender-based inequalities have long been an objective of labor studies in American (McCann, 1994), comparative (Cichowski, 2007), and global contexts (Standing,

1989; Tzannatos, 1999). Gendered discourses of labor—particularly practices and assumptions that men and women should provide distinct forms of labor (Caraway, 2005)—drive gender-based disparities of work and pay within formal and informal labor markets alike. Exclusionary institutional rules and strong social norms about gender roles have sidelined or prevented women from accessing empowered leadership positions within rural communities, national governments, and transnational church entities. This exclusion undermines everything from women's abilities to access prestigious clergy or government roles, obtain professional paychecks and experience, and shape national policy debates relevant to women; to their own economic freedom, familial bargaining power, and protections from domestic violence. A Nairobi-based male inter-religious leader observed this relationship between a woman's access to work and her ability to live free from domestic violence: "As long as the men own the forces of production, the land, the money, that weakens the negotiating power of the women. This is about power relations; who[m]ever owns [resources] is in charge of the family" (Interview 71).[1]

International human-rights and development institutions have accordingly recognized the importance of cultivating female labor and leadership into rural economies and national political legislative bodies alike. In 1995, state representatives, activists, and policymakers from around the world convened in Beijing, China, for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. The Beijing Conference acknowledged that "women continue to be seriously underrepresented as candidates for public office" in almost all countries (United Nations, 1995, 182). The conference produced a platform for action to rectify considerable gender imbalances in political leadership across countries (United Nations, 1995).The Beijing platform commissioned states to "take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and to increase women's capacity to do so.[2] At the same time, states committed to establishing goals to achieve gender balances

[1]This interviewee proceeded to discuss economic disempowerment as one cause of gender-based violence: "[I]f you want to minimize, reduce [gender-based violence]—of course it cannot completely go [away]; even in Europe there is gender-based violence, in America there is gender-based violence, but it is minimized because you can choose to live on your own, so the woman has a choice. If I had a woman with a Ph.D., I must be able to negotiate and listen to her" (Interview 71).

[2]Strategic Objectives G.1 and G.2 of the Fourth World Conference on Women's Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995).

in government bodies.[3] A few years later, the Millennium Development Goals and their Sustainable Development Goal successors recognized that "many women still lack access to employment opportunities, basic education, and healthcare, and they're often subjected to violence and discrimination." These goals therefore sought to dismantle "barriers to women's participation in economic, social and political life" (United Nations, 2015*b*).

The Beijing Conference helped initiate a wave of electoral gender-quota policies around the world. Electoral quotas establish a minimum threshold for women's selection or nomination for elected political office (Hughes, Paxton and Krook, 2017, 333).[4] In 1995, fewer than twenty countries had any form of electoral gender quotas. Between 1995 and 1999, an additional thirteen states established electoral quotas. By 2017, electoral quotas existed in more than 130 countries (Hughes, Paxton and Krook, 2017, 332–335). Several African states, particularly those emerging from conflict, achieved among the world's highest levels of women's representation in their national parliaments (Tripp, 2015). In 2017, Rwanda lead the world with 61 percent of national parliamentary seats held by women. Meanwhile, women held 39 percent of seats in Ethiopia and 34 percent in Uganda, compared to the 2017 global average of 23.7 percent (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). In many of these countries, transnational information flows and international gender-equality standards reinforced conflict-initiated domestic shifts in gender roles to advance women's electoral representation (Krook, 2006; Tripp, 2015).[5]

As Interviewee 85 observed in church settings (quoted above), women in political leadership roles can increase legislative discussions about issues that affect women (Devlin and

[3]Governments "commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions" (United Nations, 1995, 190a).

[4]Electoral gender quotas can take three forms: states reserve portions of elected seats for women, states require that all political parties field a certain percentage of female candidates, or political parties independently commit to fielding a minimum percentage of female candidates (Hughes, Paxton and Krook, 2017, 333).

[5]Similarly, transnational feminist labor movements helped advance women's rights and material conditions (Franzway and Fonow, 2000).

Elgie, 2008).[6] High-profile female professionals can reduce the general population's negative perceptions of, and increase its positive associations with, women's leadership effectiveness (Beaman et al., 2009). Women's leadership can also increase constituent women's local political engagement (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004) and cultivate girls' professional aspirations (Beaman et al., 2012). Because recently implemented electoral gender quotas generally succeed in increasing women's legislative representation (Paxton and Hughes, 2015; Tripp and Kang, 2008), gender quotas can help cultivate these long-term empowering social outcomes.[7]

Efforts to advance women's leadership can also have negative consequences. Authoritarian rulers or single-party states around the world have "politicized" gender for their own political advantage.[8] Authoritarian leaders may elevate women as powerless token representatives (Interview 70) to enhance the perceived legitimacy of their regimes (Darhour and Dahlerup, 2013). Evidence from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia suggests that autocrats advance women's rights and appoint women to high-profile political offices in order to broaden their own bases of political support (Donno and Kreft, 2018*a*,*b*). Meanwhile, male politicians often seek to evade gender quotas (Hughes, Krook and Paxton, 2015; Krook, 2016) or backlash with resistance to, or violence against, female politicians (Hughes, Paxton and Krook, 2017, 346; see also: Rosin and Spiegel, 2016). For example, an executive with the National Association of Women Organization in Uganda interviewed for this research reported, "Now that we are approaching election period, you see violence against women increasing, violence against women who are running for political office. Because maybe they are competing with men and people are not happy about it" (Interview 82). These instrumental motives, disempowering outcomes, and potential backlashes notwithstanding, women's-rights activists and policymakers presume that proactive efforts to achieve women's leadership represent positive steps for women.

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[6]Women's presence in legislative bodies do not necessarily impact policy outcomes, however (Devlin and Elgie, 2008).

[7]However, evidence from Uganda and Lesotho suggests that women who occupy gender-quota seats do not receive as much recognition (Clayton, Josefsson and Wang, 2014) or shift social attitudes as powerfully (Clayton, 2015) as women who are elected in open-competition seats.

[8]I adopt the term "politicizing gender" from Interview 86.

Alongside these transnational and domestic efforts to achieve legislative gender parity, transnational church networks discussed if and how to incorporate women as ordained church leaders. Ordination is a process in which the church consecrates someone as sacred, anoints that person to perform religious rites and ceremonies, and thereby commissions that person to serve as a clergy member (e.g., a priest or pastor).[9] In the 1960s and 1970s, transnational inter-denominational Christian networks began discussing women's roles in church institutions and considering women for ordination. In 1970, the ecumenical World Council of Churches (WCC) held a consultation in Geneva to discuss women's ordination. The WCC is the world's most comprehensive inter-denominational Christian umbrella organization. At the time of the consultation, select Anglican and Protestant churches (mostly from western Europe and Scandinavia) had already ordained women, some for several decades. However, the majority of Christian churches, from across denominations and all over the world, had not yet approved women as ordained clergy. Also in 1970, Lutheran churches in the United States and Canada approved and ordained the first women into their clergy rosters.

Soon thereafter, Anglican women were ordained as priests in the United States (1974), Canada (1976), and New Zealand (1977). At its 1978 Lambeth Conference in London, the Anglican Communion urged member churches to consider ordaining women as deacons (a level of ordination below priesthood). The Communion declared its acceptance of both member churches whose convictions accepted women priests and those whose convictions did not (Anglican Communion, 1978*a*,*b*).[10] Following the 1978 Lambeth Conference, Ugandan Anglican Bishop Festo Kivengere ordained several women as deacons (1979) and three as priests (1983). The Anglican province of Kenya began ordaining women as deacons around this time but did not ordain women as priests for another decade.[11] By 1980, the U.S.-

[9] In the Anglican tradition, people may be ordained as priests or to the lower office of deacon. Unless otherwise specified, this chapter focuses on ordination for priesthood.

[10] "[T]his Conference (a) declares its acceptance of those member Churches which now ordain women, and urges that they respect the convictions of those provinces and dioceses which do not; (b) declares its acceptance of those member Churches which do not ordain women, and urges that they respect the convictions of those provinces and dioceses which do" (Anglican Communion, 1978*b*).

[11] Apart from Anglican bodies in Uganda and Kenya, "the ordination of women seems not to have been an issue in other provinces in Africa during this period" (Mombo, 2008, 131).

based Episcopal Church (part of the Anglican Communion) had ordained more than 200 women. Meanwhile, the Anglican Church of England reported no "theological objections" to ordaining women, yet feared doing so would cause divisions among its existing (male) bishops and clergy (Parvey, 1980, 13).

At that time, non-Anglican protestants churches that had accepted women for ordination (e.g., in the United States and Sweden) reported that 30 to 40 percent of their theological students were women. However, female clergy still comprised a much smaller percentage of their total clergy rosters, were often relegated to less-prestigious clergy posts, and faced difficulty being accepted by their male peers (Parvey, 1980, 15-16). Women throughout Africa were facing additional barriers to achieving theological education.[12]

Over the next three decades, the question of ordaining women gained considerable attention among transnational faith-based organizations.[13] Meanwhile, women achieved a groundswell of support as Anglican, Lutheran, and other Protestant churches around the world approved and began ordaining women (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2, below). Decisions to accept women into ordained leadership roles ramped up throughout Africa in the 1990s. In fact, the 1995 Beijing Conference, along with the preparatory African Regional Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, the preceding year, educated and activated Christian women throughout the continent to engage a variety of women's-rights issues, including women's church leadership roles (Interview 70).[14] By 2017, more than 80 percent of Lutheran World Federation

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[12] According to the 1980 WCC consultation report, "In Africa, not many women are studying theology as yet. Most women with an interest in the subject go to the university and the departments of religion; they do not become ordained. If their interest in theology and religion develops, it is because they are attracted to it, but up to now they have not been encouraged by the churches to follow professional theological training. There are few women in the church-run seminaries, but this is beginning to change. It was also reported that there is some mythology about the leadership of women in the African independent churches. It is true that women can play a large role. They can own a church and can found a church, but they cannot preside at the Lord's Supper. For this they need to be ordained and few of the independent African churches as yet ordain women" (Parvey, 1980, 17-18).

[13] These include the World Council of Church's Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-98), which "[a]imed at empowering women to challenge oppressive structure sin the global community, their churches and communities. To affirm—through shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality—the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities; to give visibility to women's perspective and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and integrity of creation" (World Council of Churches, 1997, 13). See also: Mombo (2008, 128).

[14] "For a majority of the women, it was a learning platform. After the Beijing [meeting], it was then easier to address and do advocacy because they had had enough understanding of how to address it, how to deal

and Anglican Communion member churches around the world approved the ordination of women (Lutheran World Federation, 2016, 26). Among these, more than 70 percent of Anglican and Lutheran churches in Africa either ordained women or are open to doing so.

Movements to grant women access to ordination are notably distinct from legislative gender-quota efforts. Gender quotas seek to achieve a representative proportion of female leaders. Debates about women's ordination, on the other hand, center on permission or approval. Because some theologians interpret scripture as prohibiting women from leading church bodies, female ordination remains unresolved in most parts of the world. Unlike the 1995 Beijing conference, which elevated at least a theoretical consensus among national stakeholders about the importance of female political leaders, national and international religious institutions continue to dispute the theological grounds for ordaining women as church leaders. Today, select mainline protestant churches from the world's industrialized and developing economies alike oppose ordaining women on social and theological grounds. For example, while the largest U.S. Lutheran church (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) began ordaining women in 1970,[15] its conservative American Lutheran counterparts still staunchly oppose doing so. Meanwhile, Jewish and Muslim communities in the United States and around the world harbor similar disagreements. The Roman Catholic Church, the world's single largest Christian church (Noll, 2009, 191), prohibits female priests.[16]

Nevertheless, women's ordination efforts parallel gender-quota movements in important ways. First, both efforts are based on the idea that having female leaders not only is fair but can also make valuable representative and substantive contributions to institutions. These contributions can both advance women's empowerment and equality and also expand institutions' effectiveness at addressing broader social issues: "[T]he ordination of women is

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with it, how to do advocacy and be in solidarity" (Interview 70). This quote is also featured in Chapter 3.

[15]The ELCA's predecessor organizations, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, each ordained a woman to ministry in 1970 (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2000).

[16]In 2018, Pope Francis denied any prospect of including women into the Catholic Holy Order of priesthood: "We cannot do this with Holy Orders (women priests) because dogmatically we cannot. Pope John Paul II was clear and closed the door and I'm not going to go back on that" (N.A., 2018).

important for the full integration of women in the Church, affirmation of women's equality and empowerment of women's ministry in the face of the interlinked problems of gender inequality, poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS" (Mombo, 2008, 123).

Second, both state-level adoptions of legislative gender quotas and national church approvals of women's ordination can be attributed to domestic mobilization efforts informed and aided by transnational norms and movements. Third, in several countries (including Uganda), actors considered and embraced female priests and female legislators in striking temporal proximity and with interrelated approaches. In fact, some mainline churches have even appropriated the concept of gender quotas to ensure women's participation in church decision-making bodies.[17] Finally, female clergy and church-council members encounter considerable gender-based resistance to their leadership, ostracization, and barriers to their ability to affect policy or access higher-level leadership roles—challenges similar to those female legislators face.

Given the political importance and social prominence of East Africa's mainline churches, female clergy members are likely to yield outcomes on policies, social attitudes, and gender-equality opportunities that mirror those outcomes observed among states and constituents with female legislators. It is therefore important to understand the factors that shape women's access to ordained church-based leadership roles. What influences coalesced to facilitate women's ordination efforts throughout East Africa? Why do women continue to face formal and informal barriers that restrict their abilities to serve as empowered civil-society leaders?

### *4.2 Ordination in Africa: Domestic demands for a transnational movement*

This section examines women's ordination movements cross-nationally and then focuses on Uganda and Ethiopia. Grassroots and transnational forces coalesced to support women in their leadership efforts. This section also identify three specific actors—African churches' former-missionary global-North partners, peer religious institutions, and disputing patri-

[17]For example, one-third of reporting African church members of the Lutheran World Federation indicated through a federation-wide survey that they implemented gender quotas to ensure women's participation in decision-making bodies. Roughly half of all African-based LWF churches responded to this survey (Lutheran World Federation, 2016, 7-8).

archal factions within their institutions—which exert pressures on national church bodies. These pressures limit the extent to which women can gain meaningful leadership roles within their church institutions.

*Mainline ordination throughout Africa*

At the 1970 World Council of Churches consultation (introduced above), participants discussed various theological, social, and cultural arguments that church leaders leveraged against ordaining women. Some suggested that aspiring female church leaders would face particular challenges from African patriarchal cultures. However, against the backdrop of colonial missionary work—in which European missionaries and their wives often introduced ideas of women's domesticity and "disseminated the ideology of separate spheres" of labor for men and women—the WCC consultation reasoned that any "low status of women in historic mainline churches had more to do with imported Western assumptions about women's place than their actual place in African culture" (Mombo, 2008, 124-26).[18] The author of the resulting report concluded:

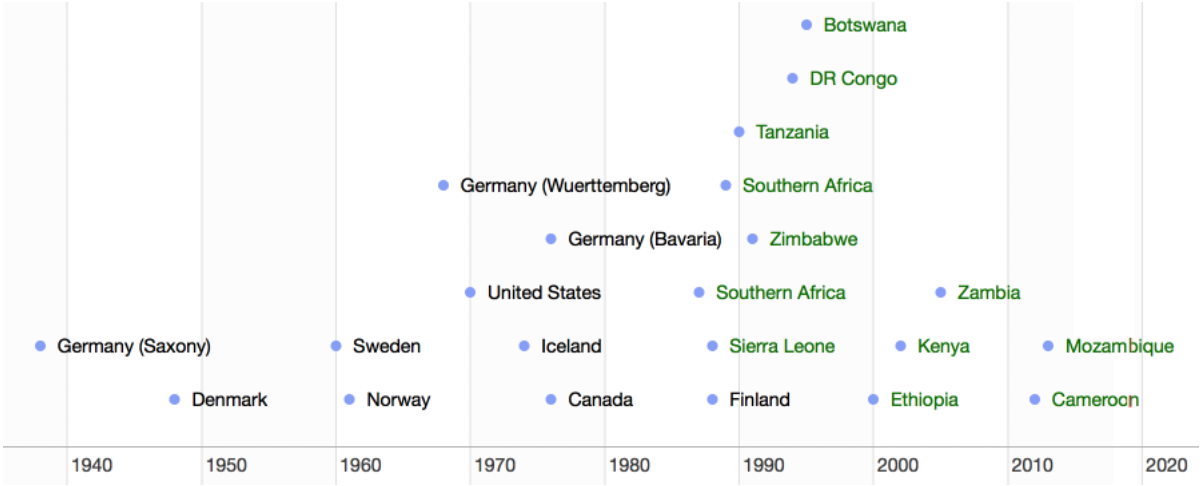
> In my view the instances cited above from both African traditional life and the prophet movements suggest that the question of the inferiority of African women in African thought and life is much exaggerated. For instance, we have discovered that in practically all African societies women can be religious leaders [and] discharge the duties of ritual or sacred specialists. They may even rank higher in importance than their male counterparts. (Bam, 1971)

Accordingly, actors from throughout Africa were at the vanguard of women's global ordination movements. Seven years before the WCC consultation, the All Africa Council of Churches' inaugural assembly broached the notion of female clergy. At its third assembly in 1974, African women advocated to be admitted as students into theological education courses, and the assembly formally acknowledged "a need for churches to open doors of theological training centres to women" (Phiri and Mombo, 2010, 59).[19]

[18]See Nunn (2014) for an analysis of the missionary influences on gender relations in colonial Africa.

[19]See also: (Mombo, 2008, 126-7).

Figure 4.1: First ordained women among Lutheran (LWF) churches

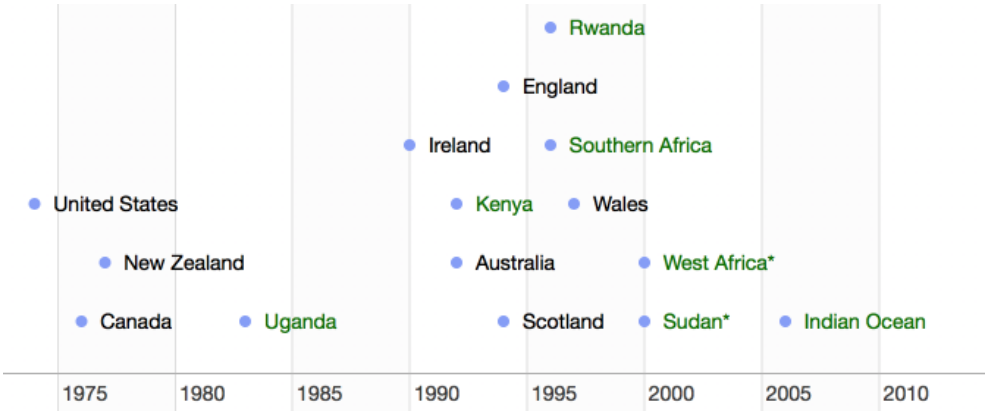



Data include all Lutheran World Federation churches in Africa and the largest LWF churches in Europe and North America. Churches from these regions that have ordained women appear on this timeline. Omitted LWF African churches that have ordained women (year unavailable) or demonstrate an openness to doing so include those in Angola, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, and Rwanda. *Sources:* Lutheran World Federation (2016, 2019).

Despite these Africa-based discussions and widespread critiques about missionary-imposed gender roles, efforts to advance female ordination nevertheless formalized in progressive factions within global North-based networks and church bodies. Protestant churches in North America, Scandinavia, and western Europe took the first steps in the post-colonial era to ordain women. As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, women's ordination in Lutheran churches throughout sub-Saharan Africa followed the decisions of the largest global-North Lutheran bodies. And although less definitive, a similar pattern appears among churches in the Anglican Communion (Figure 4.2, see also Table A.6). In fact, despite grassroots interest in ordaining Ugandan women in the 1970s, leaders within the Anglican Church of Uganda voted to postpone their decision to ordain women until after the Church of England had taken action (Mombo, 2008, 130).

In addition to this general pattern, some protestant churches throughout the global South trace their actions to ordain women (or to refrain from doing so) to the decisions modeled by their former-missionary churches. Global-South participants in the WCC's 1980 consultation reportedly

Figure 4.2: First women ordained as priests among Anglican (AC) churches




Data include all Anglican Communion churches in Africa and the global North. Omitted AC African churches that have ordained women (year unavailable) include those in Burundi and Tanzania. *Year of first ordained is unavailable; year reported indicates the date women's ordination was approved. *Sources:* Interviews; Anglican Communion (2019); Kakaire (2010); Mombo (2008).

> agreed that the issue of ordination of women depends on the position of the 'mother church.' If the European or American church—linked through missionary history—ordains women, then the church in the Third World is likely to do the same. (Parvey, 1980, 17)

Ethiopian church leaders similarly explained variation in their sub-national districts' responses to women's ordination to the gender-based attitudes of that district's original missionaries (discussed in detail below).

This cross-national historical evidence suggests that mainline African church leaders' decisions to ordain women, and the extent to which their constituent districts embrace those decisions, is situated within transnational debates and politics. Women and select male supporters throughout East Africa demanded women's access to ordained church leadership roles. These grassroots movements were informed and supported by similar efforts in global-North churches. However, these efforts ultimately followed—and were even restricted by—the priorities of powerful, former-missionary church partners in the global North.

Today, the scope and strength of East African women's ordination movements remains limited. Seventy-five percent (nine of 12) of Anglican churches in Africa have approved

women's ordination as priests.[20] Roughly 70 percent (22 of 31) of Lutheran World Federation member churches in Africa either ordain women or are open to doing so (Lutheran World Federation, 2016, 26-27). These include four of the six largest Lutheran churches in the continent.[21] Nevertheless, female clergy comprise low proportions of Africa's mainline clergy rosters. For example, men make up 71 percent of the worldwide Lutheran World Federation clergy but 96 percent of African clergy (Lutheran World Federation, 2016, 18-19). There also remains considerable variation within all African mainline churches who ordain women. Some sub-national districts (synods or diocese) within each church body either actively oppose the ordination of women or refrain from doing so in their local congregations (Mombo, 2008, 124). According to one Kenyan government official: "many churches still don't have women as leaders in the church" even though women are "the majority of the population in the churches" (Interview 02). Finally, only three women have been elected as Anglican bishops in Africa, despite female priests' eligibility as active, ordained clergy members.[22]

Most interviewees attributed these low levels and district resistance to a combination of poverty, women's illiteracy, and pervasive but slowly-changing cultures of patriarchy. Low levels of education among rural, impoverished districts leave many women illiterate and subjected to patriarchal gender roles.[23] But even theologically educated women are often sidelined or not "allowed" to work as church leaders (Interview 04):

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[20]Those provinces that have approved women's ordination are the Anglican churches in Burundi, the Indian Ocean (Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles), Kenya, Rwanda, Southern Africa (South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique, Swaziland, Angola), Sudan and South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and West Africa (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone). The Anglican churches in Central Africa (Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria have not approved women's ordination as priests; of these, only the Province of Central Africa does not ordain women as deacons.

[21]Of the six largest LWF African churches, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa ordain women. The Malagasy Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Church in Nigeria do not.

[22]Ellinah Wamukoya of Swaziland and Margaret Vertue of South Africa became Africa's first (2012) and second (2013) Anglican female bishops, respectively. They are both part of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (BBC, 2012; Hartle, 2013). Bishop Elizabeth Awut Ngor of the Episcopal Church of Sudan joined their ranks in 2018 (Global Anglican Future Conference, 2018).

[23]This is one reason Geneva-funded Lutheran development efforts often prioritize increasing women's literacy. See, for example, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (2008).

> But [in Lutheran churches] there is a problem in leadership. Ordination is still problem... Although they [women] are going to theological schools, but if they came back nobody bothers and nobody can allow them to preach. But they can be given another small, small job to do. And even in Tanzania there's a big church but according to the report, there are some areas which are not up to date allow women, they are not at ordained women... And Madagascar also it is still a big issue. They have so many [female] theologians, but up to date they have not agreed to ordain them. And even to give them... some work to do in church... But if we come back the men can be employed. But you as a woman you are not given anything. (Interview 04)

A female Anglican leader in Kenya attributes this resistance to "culture:"[24]

> There could be a difference because of culture. As a church, as the Anglican Church of Kenya, the embracing of gender parity is uniform. Nonetheless when it comes to the practice, you may find some of the areas having lesser women at leadership position, not because they are anti-[women's ordination], but because of the cultural influence. But it trickles in slowly. You can see the correct pattern—slowly, but it is embraced. (Interview 62)

Bishops throughout the continent demand that global-North partners afford African national church bodies, as well as the districts within them, the time to allow this "slow" change to emerge. They argue this autonomy will allow churches and their districts to make their own decisions, based on their own "local cultures," about female priests and bishops (Table A.5; Kakaire, 2010). Other influences may coalesce with poverty, under-education, and patriarchal opposition to shape these sub-national patterns of resistance. In the case of Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus church, influences from peer religious institutions,

[24]I never asked about "culture" during interviews. However, the elite religious leaders I interviewed routinely referred to, and blamed, "culture" for practices like harmful traditional practices, violence against women, or gendered behavior. Leaders usually attached these criticisms of "culture" to practices and beliefs in rural rather than urban areas.

cross-national missionary legacies, and contemporary transnational contentious politics also shape which districts adopt or oppose ordaining women.

Meanwhile, ordained women report working to facilitate changes within the cultures of their institutions. Many of the first women who served as clergy in East African mainline churches "had to work hard to prove themselves" (Mombo, 2008, 132) but have observed an increased openness to female leaders, particularly in congregations with women clergy. One ordained woman reported working to facilitate these shifts in her daily professional life: "It is shifting the colleagues I work with [to] have a different attitude. It's the power of influence of simply going on with your job. Being confident, not apologizing for being female, giving yourself as a female into ministry whether people like it or not" (Interview 92). This interviewee also uses her public position to challenge gender-exclusive assumptions and terminology, in order to shift gendered expectations for the "next generation" of women. Others concluded that, by speaking to, interacting with, and leading congregants, ordained women have become emboldened to take on new leadership roles and to help shift church policies and practices (Interview 35).

The following subsections discuss women's ordination developments in Uganda and Ethiopia. The demonstrate the transnational, domestic, and internal pressures that influenced their formal and informal responses to women's-leadership movements. These case studies highlight how transnational movements also introduced considerable incentives and rhetorics for East African churches to resist female leaders. Just as the policies of former-missionary institutions postponed progressive African movements (discussed above), so too do contemporary conservative global-North movements threaten to undermine women's-leadership movements.

### *Women's ordination in the Anglican Church of Uganda*

Under President Yoweri Museveni and his ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, the Government of Uganda in 1989 became one of the first countries in the world to institute a gender-quota system (Donno and Kreft, 2018*a*, 20) and the first to pass the threshold of having ten percent of its national legislators as women (Hughes, Paxton and

Krook, 2017, 336). Since then, women's descriptive representation among national parliament seats has increased considerably. Up from fewer than five percent in the 1980s, Uganda's parliament reached 12.2 percent women in 1990 and 34.3 percent in 2017 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018; World Bank, 2019). The NRM—with central help from female movement activists—also established strong gender-equality provisions within its 1995 constitution (Government of Uganda, 1995).[25] Meanwhile, President Museveni, who has been in office for more than thirty years, appointed women to high-level political positions and championed gender equality.

These actions helped sustain Museveni's popular support (Goetz, 1998, 2002) but also attracted considerable critiques that he politicized and tokenized women for his own objectives. A religious leader interviewed for this research suggested that Museveni exploited women's representation and policy priorities for his own political gain: "It is during the Museveni era that you have seen the death of women power... It's not that he dignifies them, he uses them." This male interviewee called this "the tragedy of the Museveni movement" (Interview 86).[26] Another interviewee agreed that Museveni's tokenization of women undermined their empowerment. She said: "You can say we have so many women in parliament but their performance, their influence is zero" (Interview 70).[27] Another secular civil-society leader said:

> Politics took over the Women's Movement. We thought we were making gains. Yes, we have made some gains, because in terms of numbers, representations

[25] The constitution was amended in 2005 to expand Uganda to a multi-party political system.

[26] "President Museveni is the first president to come to power and make gender his platform... And I would argue that because he precisely made it his platform for political capital. Indeed, women were excited... but here is what has actually happened: It is during the Museveni's era that you have the seen the death of women power... Because he uses them. It's not that he dignifies them, he uses them. He tells them—there was a very, very good policy of affirmation, affirmative action. Excellent policy... I loved it because it was redressing imbalances created by culture. Excellent. But what then happened? He used this as a political tool, as a carrot for women. So you have women seats in parliament, but honestly, it's just women [representation]. And he can just say "women." It doesn't matter whether it has got much content to it, it doesn't matter. Women have therefore suffered and are more abused today because of that placating. It's more like placating rather than a genuine acknowledgement of [women's] dignity and the resourcefulness" (Interview 86).

[27] Empty promises of empowerment via formally codified rights (or in this case, representation) can reify existing gender-based inequalities and subordination (Brown, 1995, 96-194).

> in different positions of leadership we are there, which is good. However, we lost when we got very many women into leadership. Then, we lost the fact that these women were not just supposed to be in those positions as women for the sake of it. They were supposed to be there to influence change for women. Now that ability to influence change, it was taken away from us, we lost it somehow... Women are promoting the ideology of the organizations that they belong to first, before they even think about the rights of women. And some of them don't even think about the rights of women [at all]. They forget that the space that they have was actually out of the lobby of women, who said, "We need women in these spaces so that we can influence decisions." The influence in decisions—we've lost it. (Interview 82)

Political scientists provide additional support for these conclusions about Uganda's legislative gender-quota system (Clayton, Josefsson and Wang, 2014, 2017; Josefsson, 2014).

These legislative gender-quota developments occurred alongside Uganda's uniquely autonomous and multi-sectional women's movement (Tripp, 2001, 2012). Critiques about politicization and tokenization notwithstanding, many laud the ways in which women's access to professional opportunities and leadership roles expanded under the guise of these movements. A woman who led the Ugandan Anglican Mother's Union (Anglican Mother's Union, 2019) during the original women's movements expressed enthusiasm about the changes they yielded in her lifetime. Today, she said, women have employment opportunities as:

> [government] ministers [and] speakers, head teachers, MPs [members of parliament], MPs for women in the districts, LCs [local councils], and many others. There is no discrimination anymore. If a woman can do it, let her do it. Most of them are trying and they have been good examples and they are trusted so much. When it comes to studying law, many now are good lawyers and judges in high positions. Doctors, also are so many. If you want to be treated well, go to a female doctor...That's the status for women in Uganda. They have sympathy

> and love, a lot of sympathy and love. There are also many Ph.D. women these days. (Interview 90)

Alongside these advances among government sectors, the Anglican Church of Uganda took similarly groundbreaking efforts to become one of the first Anglican churches in Africa, and in the world, to ordain women. In a handful of Church of Uganda districts, women initiated grassroots mobilization efforts to obtain leadership within their churches. Indeed, the Anglican Church of Uganda was "way ahead in terms of recognizing women leadership" (Interview 86). Women—including Interviewee 90—began enrolling in universities for theological education (e.g., at what is now the Ugandan Christian University) as early as 1964. At that time, women were not allowed to serve as clergy. Nevertheless, these changes represented "something very new in Uganda," and "eventually, some of them were ordained" (Interview 90).

The demand for ordination emerged within a few select diocese and under the leadership of specific Ugandan bishops who believed that women should be ordained. Bishop Festo Kivengere helped lead this effort and demanded that the Church of Uganda begin ordaining women in 1975. He was overruled by his bishop colleagues, however, who determined that the Church of Uganda should defer action until after the London-based Anglican Communion meeting (1978) and, ideally, until after the Church of England had reached a decision on this issue. Bishop Festo dissented, "If you wait for the Church of England you wait until doomsday" (Mombo, 2008, 130). An Anglican bishop interviewed for this research confirmed that the Church of Uganda pioneered the discussion of ordaining women at the Anglican Communion's 1978 Lambeth Conference:

> When this issue came for discussion in Lambeth, Bishop Festo [Kivengere] and his team said, 'This is a no brainer for us.' It's not much to discuss because there is nothing in scripture that prohibits, there's nothing in our culture that prohibits. And you possibly would know that within African culture most priests in the traditional African religion are women. (Interview 86)

After that meeting, in which the Anglican Communion officially condoned any national

church's decision to ordain women, Bishop Kivengere ordained several women as deacons. Five years later, he ordained three of them as the first female priests in Uganda (1983).

Bishop Misaeri Kauma was another leading figure dedicated to ordaining women. His widowed wife, interviewed for this research, reported that he, too, contributed to women's ordination breakthroughs when he started ordaining women: "My husband... had a lot of sympathy with all women, with children, with women and for others. He tried a lot of things. What that was, as I said, was a breakthrough in Uganda, to ordain someone as a woman" (Interview 90).[28] The Anglican women seeking ordination also received support from their transnational networks. The U.S. church, in particular, "did a lot of that to push for women to be ordained" (Interview 85).[29] And several interviewees said that, even before independence, their European missionary leaders and the Christian revival they facilitated helped educate, liberate, and empower women (Interview 85, 86): "Honestly, there were things that were broken—traditional [gender] barriers that were broken—because of that revival" (Interview 85). Thus, even before Uganda led the world with its proportional representation of female legislatures, Anglican women in a handful of dioceses, supported by select male bishops and transnational partners, initiated grassroots mobilization efforts to access ordination as church leaders.

These domestic grassroots movements notwithstanding, the Church of Uganda was nevertheless also constrained in its actions by transnational, domestic, and internal political dynamics. Three pressures coalesced together to delay Bishop Kivengere's actions to ordain Uganda's first women as Anglican priests. First, his colleagues voted to delay action until the Church of England reached a decision on the issue. One Anglican interviewee familiar with these transnational dynamics confirmed that "some of the provinces in the global church... were pulling the Anglican Church of Uganda down because they are saying, 'No, we need to walk in tandem over this'" (Interview 70). Second, Bishop Kivengere had been exiled from Uganda following Idi Amin's assassination of Ugandan Archbishop Luwum and

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[28] "In Memory of Bishop Misaeri Kauma 1929–1997" (https://www.facebook.com/MisaeriKauma/).

[29] Another interviewee traced women's ordination movements to missionaries' commitment to educating women: "The place of woman in Uganda some years back looked very low, but we thank God for the missionaries from England who helped us very much and cared a lot to women. Because, many schools were built for girls" (Interview 90).

was unable to implement a change in church policy until his return at the end of Amin's regime. Third, Archbishop Luwum's successor, Silvanus Wani, along with several of Kivengere's bishop colleagues, believed that the church needed more time to reach a decision on whether or not to ordain women.[30]

Resistance to female bishops

Despite the Church of Uganda's groundbreaking early approval of ordaining women to priesthood, no female priest within the Church of Uganda to date has been elected to the higher leadership position of bishop. One interviewee lamented that even the Church of England, which was "very slow" in ordaining women as priests, has "overtaken" the Church of Uganda by electing female bishops (Interview 70). Technically, any ordained Anglican priest should be eligible to serve as bishop: "There shouldn't be a debate. It's already in the constitution, we could be [electing female bishops]" (Interview 92). After the Church of England voted to allow women to be appointed bishops in the United Kingdom in 2014,[31] Ugandan Archbishop Stanley Ntagali pronounced that the Church of Uganda was not opposed to female Bishops:

> We do not have a problem with women becoming bishops in the Church of Uganda or elsewhere... In Uganda, we have women priests and Archdeacons, and many of them work for the church in various capacities. We have ordained women since the 1980s, so we have qualified women who could be elected Bishop. (Ntagali, 2014)

Nevertheless, no Ugandan woman has been elected bishop. Existing bishops attribute this existing lack of female bishops to variation in acceptance of female priests among their sub-

[30]Bishop Kivengere wrote the Archbishop to say: "In vain I have been waiting to hear from my fellow Bishops who said they were going to take up the issue with their synods. I feel the delay is unfair on my lady deacons and no reason whatever has been given to me to stop this next step. My synod is fully in agreement with priesting those lady deacons who deserve to be priested" (Coomes, 1990, 427; quoted from Mombo, 2008, 130).

[31]Libby Lane was consecrated as the first female bishop in the Church of England in January 2015 (Anglican Communion, 2018)

national districts and to the relatively low level of female priests in the qualified pool of candidates (Kakaire, 2010; Table A.5).

Several female interviewees within and outside the Anglican Church of Uganda, however, reported that women do not receive the social or institutional support they require to access higher-level positions: "It's just people's minds and attitudes that are not ready" (Interview 92). Ugandan women who advocate for female bishops meet resistance among their male colleagues, who "don't open a conversation on that." Interviewees discussed the church's seeming "hypocrisy" in this unwillingness to elevate women to the position of bishop, despite championing female priests. And they reported accounts from female priests who had been accused of personal ambition for suggesting that an open bishop position might be filled by a woman. One interviewee recounted:

> I remember when they were looking for the next assistant bishop, that bishop, without thinking, said, 'We need to pray for the brother who will become the next bishop.' And then [a female priest] said, 'And a sister?' Then people said [to her], 'Ah you want to become bishop?' [She] said, 'No, the Lord may lead him to a female and it might not be [me].'

Interviewees attributed these barriers to social attitudes and behavior ("it is just attitude issues, it's issues of behavior, and practices mostly"), to certain Biblical interpretations of gender roles, to institutional "feeding system[s]" which disproportionately favor men, and to men who "chickened out" from supporting qualified women. They reported that women seeking higher-ranking church leadership roles have gotten "knocked off" prospective leadership positions for failing to have credentials that male candidates are not similarly expected to have.[32] Meanwhile, church members remain resistant to female bishops and threatened by the way women lead: "Women were looked as different. They have to be in the kitchen and looking after the children only, something like that. But maybe time will come. Because [in] America also it was [like this]... Something new is very difficult to

[32]One woman was told that "she didn't qualify because of one to three, she didn't meet this criteria. But when you look at the people who are saying they qualified then they are not any better. I mean they don't have probably one or two other things that they knocked her out on."

accept quickly."Yet the same long-time women's activist concluded, "We are praying for [a female bishop]...they are there who are capable."[33]

In addition to these internal barriers, contemporary church leaders remain susceptible to foreign pressures seeking to undermine female ordination (Interview 70). The Church of Uganda does not only work with foreign church partners and transnational development agencies that support women's-empowerment agendas. The Ugandan church also receives encouragement and financial incentives from global-North missionaries who continue to oppose female leaders. For example, attending an All African Bishops Conference in Entebbe, Uganda, in 2010, an American bishop said:

> I think it's an issue of leadership, the Bible is clear: the head of the church is supposed to be a man, although some people dispute this. In the Anglican Church, the head is the bishop, so you can't make a female a head. And the Bible says that man should be above woman, and this teaching has been consistent since the time of Jesus Christ. Just go and read Ephesians, 1 Timothy and 1 Peter. (Bishop Doc Loomis, quoted in Kakaire, 2010)

One interviewee with experience working with transnational church bodies said the Church of Uganda is susceptible to following the interests of wealthier global-North actors:

> You might want to be independent as an entity or make a decision based on what you think is good for you, but the financials can undermine that. A financial can undermine a decision and the autonomy of a province, or it can enhance and even begin to drive the agendas... If a donor tells you I have money for this, likelihood is that you are going to create that need, whereas you might have had another need. So there are also donor-driven decisions. (Interview 70)

When a global-North actor advocates against female ordination, this undermines women's informal access to church leadership roles.

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[33]Interviewees unidentified in order to protect the grievances expressed by female leaders.

As the case of the Anglican Church of Uganda reveals, transnational church efforts to advance women's leadership can have grassroots domestic origins. However, hidden under the guise of these championed efforts, women still face considerable pressures, barriers, and internal resistance. These barriers dramatically limit women's abilities to achieve professional promotions, model higher levels of female leadership, and dictate church decisions and policies as high-ranking voting bishops. These barriers appear to be largely driven by internal male colleagues' gendered expectations and resistance to female leaders. However, competing transnational donor actors also intervened to influence the Church of Uganda's internal politics. Meanwhile, internal opposing actors can utilize claims of autonomy from transnational imposition to buttress their informal opposition to female leaders (see Section 4.3, below). In these regards, even the internal opposition women face has transnational contours.[34]

*Women's ordination in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*

As in the Anglican Church of Uganda, Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus was the first—and only religious body to date—in its country to ordain women. Before then, Mekane Yesus was the first Ethiopian religious body to include women as non-ordained church worship leaders. This step has now been adopted by several other religious institutions in Ethiopia, including the Orthodox Church and the nationally growing evangelical Kale Hiwot church.[35]

Mekane Yesus approved the ordination of women in 1998. Two years later, Bekure Daba became the first women ordained in Ethiopia. Supported by her home district (the Western Synod, Boji) in western Ethiopia, Daba acquired several advanced theological degrees institutions in both Ethiopia and the United Kingdom. Daba's ordination was born out of, and symbolized, the interconnected transnational movement and groundswell

[34]Additional historical research conducted in the Church of Uganda's archives at Yale Divinity School can provide further evidence to identify, specify, detail, and clarify these broad trends. This future research should give particular attention to identifying and tracking these original grassroots, church-based women's movements.

[35]The Protestant Kale Hiwot Church has "not ordained clergy yet but they are involved in singing, women are officially to stand up and sing in the congregation...They have also impacted by the evangelical churches, because a number of women [from] Kale Hiwot and other denominations women are solo singers. Because of that the Orthodox just influenced, they were not allowing women to stand up and in congregation to teach and preach or sing, but today, women are solo singers in Orthodox" (Interview 32).

grassroots demand to ordain Lutheran women (Borcha, 2007). Thousands of Ethiopian members from Daba's Western Synod attended her ordination. They were joined by female clergy and other representatives from Lutheran churches in the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands who championed the importance of Bekure's ordination in the Lutheran World Federation's largest church in Africa (Mumia, 2000).[36]

In this process, Mekane Yesus leaders faced opposition from other religious institutions, most notably the Orthodox Church, which was reportedly "not happy about us ordaining women." When asked why Mekane Yesus decided to deviate from Ethiopia's inter-religious norms to ordain women, one high-ranking church official explained that Mekane Yesus was an inclusive church, and that "[w]e believe in a person, not in that person's sex" (Interview 42). National church leaders and the newly ordained women also faced opposition from internal factions within their church. When Daba became the first woman ordained in the Mekane Yesus church in 2000, she faced considerable opposition:

> We had worse times, when people were not happy about that. And I remember the first woman ordination, she had to serve the communion. She was standing on this side and other pastors were standing on that side. People from this side, instead of going and receiving the communion from her hand, they went the other side. So it was like that, but slowly people are getting desensitized. We're happy about that. (Interview 42)

As of 2015, an estimated 63 Mekane Yesus women have been ordained as clergy, out of more than 3,200 pastors in 2014 (Mekane Yesus, 2015*a*,*b*). Meanwhile Mekane Yesus' decision appears to have had a diffusion effect on its peer religious religious institutions. The Kale Hiwot church is considering ordaining women, thanks to Mekane Yesus' influence within common inter-denominational institutions, like the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology. Said one inter-denominational Ethiopian leader, religious institutions influence one another's policies: "it's learning from one another, that's life" (Interview 32).

[36]Two years later, Daba was elected to the Gimbi Jorgo Synod and continued a career as a Mekane Yesus leader. In all these stages, she suffered the gender-based discrimination that "marks women's struggle for the break through into the position of priest-hood and leadership positions" (Borcha, 2007, 44).

Just as in Uganda, Ethiopian women and their advocates received support from global North actors within their transnational networks. Interviewees featured in this research indicated that the Lutheran World Federation played a considerable role in exposing Mekane Yesus women to female colleagues from other countries who had been ordained as church leaders (Interview 35). One female leader recalled having European role models who "encouraged me to see things in [a] liberal way" (Interview 39). Also as in Uganda, Mekane Yesus's female-ordination developments occurred alongside increased efforts from the Ethiopian government to advance policies that empower women as leaders.[37] In fact, one anonymous interviewee suggested that the Ethiopian government was "ahead" of the Mekane Yesus church and helped lay the groundwork for church empowerment efforts.

### Tokenized gender quotas

Like women in Uganda, Ethiopian Mekane Yesus women face considerable barriers in their ability to lead and affect church policy. Before ordaining women, the Mekane Yesus church updated its constitution to mandate that all national and sub-national leadership bodies aim to have at least one-third female members (Interview 35). This followed, and was modeled after, a proposal from the Lutheran World Federation that member churches consider adopting gender quotas as a way to elevate women into decision-making roles (Lutheran World Federation, 2016, 7-8). Mekane Yesus's national church council and general assembly frequently achieves or exceeds its 33-percent goal (Interview 35).

However, women from a variety of positions within and outside the Mekane Yesus institution reported that these gender quotas have fallen short of their goal to empower women. Interviewees reported a variety of mechanisms that men use to undermine or silence female leaders, thus reducing women to disempowered gender-quota token leaders. First, men who

[37]Mekane Yesus's ordination of Daba mirrored the objectives established by Ethiopia's 1993 National Policy on Women (Chapter 3; see also Mukhopadhyay, 2016). The Ethiopian government continues to improve its proportion of political leaders who are women. By 2015, thirty-nine percent of Ethiopia's parliamentary seats were filled by women, up from two percent in 1997 (World Bank, 2019). In 2018, Ethiopian lawmakers appointed Sahle-Work Zewde as Ethiopia's first-ever female president. Although a primarily ceremonial role, Zewede is currently Africa's only sitting female head-of-state. Also in 2018, Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, established a gender-balanced cabinet (Ahmed and de Freytas-Tamura, 2018).

are in charge of appointing female officials often select women who preemptively agree to comply with existing policies and to defer to men's authority. One interviewee said, "I think if those [women] who are gifted, who are empowered, who are bold, wise, gifted, empowered... women come to that position and are free, they can challenge [male leaders' status quo]." However, she reported that educated, qualified, assertive women "are not given that position" and, even if they were, they would be ineffectual without a broader base of support: "[U]nless you have some other people behind you who support you, you cannot achieve anything." Another interviewee similarly reported that qualified, assertive women are passed over for women who are privileged or well-positioned:

> Let us be women who are active not just because they have quota. We have to select women purposely with their talent, with their gifts with their skills who can fight for others. In the quota system, only privileged women will get the position. They will close the door for us as soon. So the quota system is just became an instrument for the leaders to use women. The only women who proceed or act as our leaders... are women who can survive in the quota system, but those active women are only [relegated] to the corner. They're named and [relegated] and prototyped: 'She is mad. She is talkative. She is this, this.' And they are leveled and there is no position for such a strong woman.

Furthermore, women appointed to gender-quota roles in church leadership bodies have also been denied access to the resources they need to meaningfully participate as leaders, including meeting-agenda information or financial support to travel to meetings. These and other "cultural" and "financial" barriers prevent appointed women from actively participating as leaders:

> [T]he council in the church, and general assembly, yes. They have achieved up to 33 [percent], sometimes 40 or so. But sometimes, there is fluctuation. There is fluctuation. That is why I'm talking about the culture. Not only the culture, but it's also financial aspects. As you know, even in the organization, when they want to lay off workers, women are the first ones to be laid off. Is the same thing that

> when it comes to spending money [and traveling to] delegation meetings... For me, what I really want is to find out the way how we can organize women and empower them to have economic power to send the delegates, women, female delegates to the meeting and then orient them [with the information] they need to talk [participate].

In these ways, women are sidelined and silenced within and by the church's gender-quota system.

District resistance to women's ordination

Similar to Anglican and Protestant churches throughout East Africa (discussed above), districts within Mekane Yesus exhibit considerable variation in their openness to ordaining women as clergy. Among its roughly 24 sub-national districts ("synods"),[38] roughly two-thirds have ordained women and one-third have refrained from or refused to doing so (see Table A.7). Development professionals from Ethiopia join others from throughout East Africa in suggesting that poverty and low education levels contribute to a local opposition to female leaders. Mekane Yesus professionals identify two additional pressures that help explain this non-compliance with national church policy: peer religious institutions and missionary legacies.

First, the strong presence of peer religious institutions reportedly affects whether a given church district resists or opposes its national church body's ordination of women. In northern Ethiopia, Muslim and Orthodox populations predominate more heavily than they do in other regions of the country Orthodox priests must be male, and only they are permitted to read scripture. Orthodox women, who worship separately from men, are therefore considerably restricted and unable to independently access religious teachings in any form (Addis Ababa Women's Association, 2015, 23-25; Int 65).[39] As a result of this predominant Orthodox influence, Mekane Yesus congregations in this region do not consider

[38]This number shifts as the church continues to grow. Some church documents list up to 28 synods.

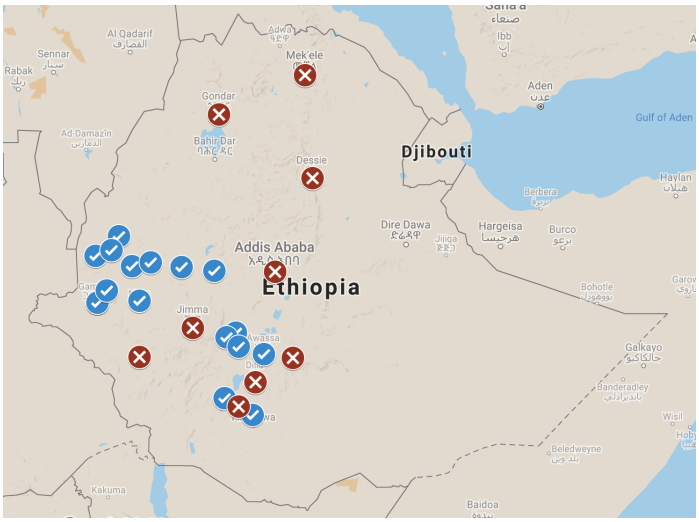
[39]Images in Figure 4.4 depict the gendered differences in behavior among Orthodox and Mekane Yesus worshipers. Images were taken on the same Sunday morning in Addis Ababa in November 2015.

ordaining women (Interview 65). Another interviewee said:

> Even they don't think about it, because this is the world that has the Orthodox influence and the Muslim influence. They work. They are living. There are very minorities in that area, so they are afraid of the society thinking and understanding.

A third interviewee similarly agreed that women's ordination among Mekane Yesus districts in northern Ethiopia was difficult because of the Orthodox Church: "It is very difficult to ordain when in the northern part of Ethiopia, where all the culture is dominated by Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which never, ever needs women's leadership at all." As such a small minority in the region, the Mekane Yesus districts there must "just keep quiet. They do not want to expose themselves and they can [be] persecute[d]." As Figure 4.3 demonstrates, Mekane Yesus synods in northern Ethiopia do not ordain women.

Figure 4.3: Adoption of women's ordination by Mekane Yesus district




Districts (synods) that **have** and **have not** ordained women.
*Sources:* Mekane Yesus (2015*a*,*b*).
Figure constructed using Google Maps (www.maps.google.com).

Second, interviewees trace a given district's decision to accept or refrain from ordaining women to the attitudes toward gender adopted by their former missionaries. In part because

Ethiopia was never formally colonized, the country received missionaries from various countries and ideological persuasions. Lutheran churches from Germany, Norway, and Sweden sent missionaries (e.g., the Norwegian Mission Society and the Swedish Mission Church) to build church communities primarily in western Ethiopia. Their respective churches ordained women in 1961 (Church of Norway) and 1958 (Church of Sweden). These missionaries "appreciated women's ministry" (Interview anonymous) and were influential in advancing progressive female-leadership attitudes and policies. It was the independent Western Synod (WS), Boji, that ordained Dr. Bekure as the church's first female clergy. On the other hand, more conservative missionary entities, like the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, focused their missionary work in southern Ethiopia. The Norwegian Lutheran Mission partners with conservative American Lutherans, all of whom oppose women's ordination.[40] Today, the considerable majority of western synods ordain women, while synods in the south are less likely to do so (Figure 4.3). In short, districts that received missionaries in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries from progressive European churches ordain women in higher rates than do those who received more conservative Lutheran missionaries.

The historical and interview-based evidence presented in this subsection suggests that missionary legacies shape long-term theological and social attitudes. Former missionaries also established and maintain contemporary donor-funding patterns, which offer incentives for a district to adopt its donor's priorities: "If you follow their step, they will let you the budget."[41] This historical evidence demonstrates the lasting impacts that missionary institutions have on contemporary norms and behavior and contributes new insights to a considerable body of comparative politics scholarship dedicated to examining the colonial determiners of post-colonial political dynamics (Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001; Mamdani, 1996; Nunn, 2010, 2014; Woodberry, 2012). This history also demonstrates the

[40]See, for example: Collver (2015). Conservative missionaries from Denmark and Finland also worked in southern Ethiopia.

[41]One Nairobi-based interviewee said there was significant variation in the integrity with which global donors contribute funds to poorer churches in need. He said that conservative Lutheran donors working in Ethiopia were more heavy-handed with their funding than are more mainstream donors: "Very honestly and very, very sincerely, there is no uniformity in the integrity or non-integrity of those who are partners. There are some with high level integrity, who respect you for who you are and what you stand for.... But there are others who are obsessed with getting you to do that which they want, so that you will become their agent over and against the others" (Interview anonymous).

ways in which missionary legacies and contemporary realities of global inequality continue to shape the attitudes and policies of East African religious institutions. In this case, women are particularly affected by these dynamics.

Recent transnational politics over sexual minorities have brought into particularly harsh relief the vulnerabilities of donor-reliant churches (like Mekane Yesus), and the ways in which these vulnerabilities are particularly shouldered by Ethiopian women. This section closes with a vignette about how transnational LGBTQ church politics have shifted debates about women's ordination. Mekane Yesus's primary transnational donor partners, like the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, helped establish its national efforts to support women's leadership and rural empowerment programs. They also provided the considerable majority of financial support to these programs: "The ELCA is the one who is promot[ing] this department...It is like a backbone of the Woman's Department. The whole process came because of their support." However, Mekane Yesus dissociated with both the American and Swedish churches in 2013 to express is dissatisfaction with their increasingly inclusive attitudes toward LGBTQ church members and leaders (see Chapter 5). In doing so, Mekane Yesus surrendered considerable funding,[42] and its women's programs lost this direct support.

In response, the conservative U.S. Lutheran Church Missouri Synod infused Ethiopia with support to offset Mekane Yesus's lost funds. However, this funder, which opposes ordaining women, avoided funding Mekane Yesus women's programs, undervalued women-focused development initiatives, and exerted pressures to undermine Mekane Yesus's ordination of women: "Only the women are left with nothing." That interviewee reported that these politics represented a "silent diplomatic way of demolishing" women's efforts within the church. Mekane Yesus's gender-quota policies were not implemented, few (if any) scholarships for theological study were awarded to women ("the Missouri men says, 'We never support women leadership; we never train women for leadership'"), women lost access to funds to support travel with transnational partners ("this time, the line is cut"

[42]This funding amounted to approximately $500,000—$800,000 USD annually from the American ELCA church alone.

but "men can just go to America when invited from there [Missouri Synod]"), and female leaders became ostracized by their male colleagues who do not wish to "disappoint" the Missouri-Synod donors.

This anecdote demonstrates the ways in which mainline churches in Ethiopia (and throughout East Africa) can become the arena within which wealthier foreign church partners wage their own gender wars. Just as Ethiopian women mobilized transnational women's-empowerment standards to obtain increased access to leadership roles, so too are they vulnerable to the contentious whims of their competing and disagreeing transnational partners. This vignette therefore highlights how global-South churches' financial dependence on foreign partners can further compromise the well-being of women and other socially vulnerable populations.[43]

*Conclusion*

This section has situated East African mainlines' ordination of women within their transnational denominational movements. It suggested that women and their male advocates mobilized transnational ideas and policies to gain women access to leadership roles. Once national church bodies approved women for leadership, however, several competing actors intervened to undermine the scope and strength of these positions. These include: former-missionary partners, conservative transnational partners, peer religious institutions, and internal disputing factions within the church. These pressures introduce fissures that compromise the integrity of a church's ordination policies. The following section explores ordained women's own experiences with these internal fissures that challenge and undermine their authority as church leaders.

### *4.3 The East African women working within patriarchal systems*

While mainline church bodies and their primarily male leaders champion gender-inclusive ordination policies, women from throughout the region report shouldering the burden of

[43] Additional archive- and interview-based research conducted at the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva can provide further detail and specificity to identify and clarify these broad trends and grassroots movements.

working within institutions whose predominately patriarchal cultures remain largely unchanged. Men reinforce existing practices which informally exclude women (saying, "No, let's do it as it was"), while women and their advocates "try to look at how can we use what is existing in order to make a change." This section features accounts from women in leadership roles throughout the region. In doing so, this section examines women's efforts to empower one another and to dismantle gendered expectations of labor and leadership that continue to pervade in their countries and their church institutions.

This section begins by highlighting church development professionals' often-painstaking efforts to gain vulnerable, rural-dwelling women access to formal labor and community-leadership roles. Although these efforts are modeled after transnational women's-rights norms,[44] faith-based development professionals often avoid adopting explicitly rights-based frameworks. Because "rights" are perceived to threaten social stability, many fear that integrating rights language could hinder their ability to foster sustainable change in local gender-related behavior.

The ordained women interviewed for this research shoulder similar burdens of advocating for their professional rights and qualifications while fulfilling the social and familial roles they are expected to maintain. This section therefore shifts to examine the ways in which ordained women and other church leaders feel ostracized, disregarded, or undervalued; how they adopt theological reinterpretations to counteract the patriarchal underpinnings within their church and social "cultures";[45] and how they routinely attract accusations that they are contaminating their churches and communities with "foreign" and "feminist" values.

The women interviewed for this research relayed experiences and sentiments that were common across national—and even continental—boundaries. They reflect the *unique* ways in which East African women working within mainline churches experience the gendered pressures that women face all over the world. Undoubtedly, a woman's country of origin represents a unique set of fixed political, cultural, historical, and institutional effects that

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[44]See, for example, the Beijing Conference's Strategic Objective G.2, introduced above.

[45]See Footnote 24 for a discussion about when and how interviewees introduced "culture" as a concept during our interviews.

shape her experience.[46] However, the purpose of this section is to highlight those common experiences that women across East Africa share, despite hailing from different countries and different mainline Christian affiliations. This section features voices of women from throughout East Africa, primarily from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Some of the women featured are ordained clergy who have been at the forefront of their churches' ordination movements. Others worked for faith-based development agencies, church institutions' women's programs, or interdenominational umbrella organizations. All the assertions in this section have been lifted from, or otherwise supported by, this interview-based data. However, I removed all institutional affiliations and country identity markers. This offers interviewees an additional layer of protection, because many interviewees could be personally identified from such information.[47]

*Faith-based efforts to empower rural women*

I interviewed a number of female church-based women's development professionals in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Churches' "women's programs" focus on everything from fighting gender-based violence and integrating women into informal economies to training female theologians and implementing state-based gender-justice rights and policies. Women familiar with these programs report that they lack the institutional support, adequate and reliable funding, and enforcement mechanisms ("there's nothing like a sanction") they need to fulfill their work. Their predominately male institutional decision-makers frequently fail to sufficiently prioritize these church-based women's empowerment efforts, leaving women's programs particularly reliant on foreign funding and susceptible to transnational contentious

[46]One Ethiopian development worker, for example, observed that women from other African countries (e.g., Kenya or Ghana) are more outspoken than women in Ethiopia (Interview 35). She attributes these differences to Ethiopia's low levels of female education and to its exclusionary patriarchal norms ("we are not given that position"). The differences this interviewee observed may also be related to Ethiopia's subdued and indirect language and culture (Levine, 1965).

[47]All of the women interviewed here consented to be interviewed, recorded, and featured in academic research. The vast majority of them also consented to allow their name and institutional affiliation to be attached to their words. Some requested anonymity, in whole or in part; those requests were strictly honored. As in the this entire project, I elected to remove names in order to offer interviewees a layer of security.

politics (as discussed in the case of Mekane Yesus, above).[48]

Many of interviewed women work to advance women's empowerment by educating rural women about their rights to work outside the home and by helping them to develop income-generating skills. Trainings for rural-dwelling women include providing new skills, exposing them to time-saving technologies and subsistence farming tactics,[49] providing literacy and theological training, and modeling other tactics that give women access to money and reduce their household workload. These efforts often coincide with church programs to reduce gender-based violence, since women's economic disempowerment and vulnerability to domestic violence often closely co-occur. Ideally these tactics help increase overall household wealth; reduce gender-based violence; provide women and their children access to money and marital bargaining power; and enable women to pursue higher levels of education and leadership roles.

Most of the interviewees report encountering hesitation, suspicion, or opposition from men in their targeted communities. These women navigate this opposition by emphasizing the religious affiliation they share with community members, the integrity of this shared religious identity despite ethnic or cultural differences, and the household economic benefits these trainings could provide. To emphasize common religious affiliations between the development workers and community members, they base trainings for women, local clergy, and local government officials in local churches and combine Biblical study with technical, income-generating trainings. In one instance, a church opened a regional women's college for those "who were serving in their local churches." The college provided attendees Bible courses and technical courses for generating income. When the attendees returned home, they gathered other women for Bible study and used that venue to provide informal trainings on income-generating skills: "After they study the Bible for one or two hours, then they do the other business." This combination of religion and development work reduces

[48]This assertion is based on the observations and attitudes of female interviewees working within church organizations. Detailed analysis of church budgets, which are not typically made available for public or academic purposes, would be required to assess the accuracy of these perceptions.

[49]E.g., "reducing women's workload by introducing mud stove (fuel-saving stove made from mud), vegetable gardening for both nutrition and to sell as well as for consumption—household consumption," and access to livestock (Interview 35).

suspicion from women and their husbands and provides a platform to advance a theology of gender-based equality.

The remainder of this section features an interview with a woman in charge of a church-based development project to support rural-dwelling women. Her work is representative of the development models many women interviewed in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia described. This development professional routinely encounters suspicion from local government officials, clergy, and husbands who are "not eager" to allow these trainings. They fear that these trainings will make men "inferior" to women and threaten to dismantle their community's culture and family structures. This professional adopts three tactics to assuage these concerns. First, she integrates into a community slowly and emphasizes the overall familial benefit of these trainings:

> Because of culture is not easy for women. The people do not allow women to go out of their home; to go far places and to leave the house even for one hour. Men do not allow women to go out of their house.... So when we started to organize these women in many places, at first, we had to go to every man's house and ask permission ('Please, can your wife come to the training only for two hours? We train them and we will send them back to you'). So we had to go from home to home to get permission to bring that woman from their house... At first, that was a good challenge. Some of the husbands even think that we [the national development professionals] were not good women. We came from the [capital] city... to teach their women. Not a good behavior... But in the meantime, when these women are doing their training, so when they go back to their room, there is a change in them in their action; how to raise their children, how to manage their homes. So the[ir husbands] started to see changes in many areas. And then, little by little, they allowed them to come from their areas up to our city [for additional trainings].

Second, she emphasizes her religious affiliation and association—an affiliation which she shares with many of the people in her targeted communities. She often needs to present letters from her male colleagues to certify her qualifications and religious affiliation: "We

have to get a letter [indicating] that 'these women are coming from the head office to teach your women. They are Christian women. They are coming to teach your wives how to raise your children. This is for the benefit of your family.'" This shared religious affiliation signals a common identity and ideological commitment among herself and the community she services. Once she gains access to a community, she locates and couches all of her work under the auspices of the church she represents.

Third, she avoids adopting rights-based terminology. Communities reportedly fear that secular rights-based approaches will empower women to take "the other extreme:" to transition from being a subservient housewife to becoming a rights-claiming "feminist" who will leave her husband, saying: "Now, I've got my rights. I'm not going to submit." Men are concerned that this will compromise their gendered positions of authority. Meanwhile, development professionals fear that this rights-based approach will inspire women to dismantle their family-based social fabric without providing women—who remain physically and financially dependent upon men—viable community-building institutions to take the place of existing family units. The woman featured here believes that church efforts can successfully infuse rural communities with women's empowerment tools while maintaining social cohesion. In doing so, they can offer more sustainable solutions to empowering women without dismantling family units, which would compromise women's existing economic stability. This work "cannot come in one day. We have to work through these things slowly, slowly, slowly."

Several faith-based development workers interviewed for this research relayed similar anecdotes. Together, these anecdotes suggest that religious institutions can utilize rural congregations as venues for garnering community trust and integrating transnational-rights norms into their existing social frameworks. In other words, these anecdotes provide evidence that transnational norms channeled through church-based venues can catalyze a shared identity between development professional and target community-member. In doing so, norms can avoid being cast aside as foreign, disruptive, or mistranslated. In other words, faith-based human-rights work may be able to more successfully integrate and more successfully facilitate long-term shifts in community behavior, relative to secular approaches (Merry, 2006*a*). So compelling is this approach that even secular development professionals

interviewed for this research reported partnering with local church leaders (Interview 44):

> Religious leaders at the local level are our assets... We get a lot of support from religious leaders, because they have encountered gender-related practices that need to be addressed at the local level. (Interview 66)

However, when churches become sites for rights-based discussions, they are often accompanied by an ethic of responsibility a woman has to her family and to her community. In this process, then, women shoulder the burden of navigating between their own nascent rights-based consciousness and maintaining the gendered expectations laid out by their communities. In some cases, church leaders, development professionals, and local politicians have navigated between legal rights-based protections and faith-based community responsibilities to protect and empower women. According to a politician in Kenya's Kajidado County:

> The state and the church... Because the church on one hand is saying, "if you hit your wife, you are committing a sin." The state is saying, "You batter your wife, it's a criminal offense [against] the penal code of the criminal law." And so they agree. They will not agree on terms of punishment because the state can drag you to court for prosecution, the church will pray for confession. (Interview 02)

However, linkages between state rights and church responsibilities were far less direct or evident among other empowerment agendas. When a rights-based agenda sought to provide women increased access to a limited resource—money, a marketable skill, theological education, employment as an ordained clergy member, or an elected bishop position—rights tended to disappear from male interviewees' vernacular. As women carried increasing responsibilities in both their professional and personal lives, men often reinforced the patriarchal underpinnings of their religious institutions. This contained and constrained the aspiring female leaders in their midst.

*Ordained women's personal experiences*

The challenges of navigating between contemporary rights and existing social responsibilities similarly burden East African women who are ordained as clergy. These women report that there are "more expectations placed on female clergy than the male, unfortunately," because women are expected to seamlessly manage church, community (e.g., school, hospital, local governance), childrearing (e.g., "visiting children at school, taking children to school, taking them to hospital and many other activities"), and household responsibilities, all the while staying "humble" and "reliable" in their church leadership roles:

> When [women] are being ordained, they are told, one, action one, two, three, four, just like the men. If it is to preach, they do. If it is to go to hospital and to pray for this, give Holy Communion, they do. That now means that we get back to what it means to be a priest, but you are a woman. The womanhood takes over because the expectations of the female priest are more than the male priest. *They are expected to take on more tasks?* Exactly, and they are expected to carry on their caring role.. . . 'Your being a woman, your being the person who has the various roles in your home, do not bring them to us. You must be here in time.' 'But I had a child to care for.' 'No, you are a priest. You had to start the service at this time.' You can't say, 'Now, I won't be there because my husband is not well so I have to care.' That's why you realize that the criticisms come in more than what you have managed to achieve because the priesthood is [only] one of [your] jobs anyway. You are still expected to service your motherhood, your wifelihood, your everything, you are a woman.

Meanwhile, these women report ever-present struggles to be admitted, accepted, and respected for their qualifications and leadership responsibilities. They experienced gendered expectations that women clergy defer to their male counterparts. They reported experiences of being publicly ostracized and undervalued, fired or undermined for pregnancy, transferred to less-desirable positions, demoted in everyday interactions (One woman was asked, " 'Aren't you just a lay minister?' 'No, I'm ordained.' They didn't know what to

do with me."), denied positions, pressured to quell advocacy roles in order to retain church reputations, sidelined by male clergy, stigmatized for being strong, rejected ("I had been rejected so many times in my ministry"), discriminated against despite degrees and credentials, and underpaid and overqualified for hired positions relative to similarly qualified men. One woman who advocated for her rights against gender-based employment discrimination was told: "This is not our culture to have a woman [figurehead]." Others reported that they became seen exclusively associated with their women's-rights activism: "it's like you become synonymous with the word [gender]."

Women drew on theological concepts to counteract these patriarchal norms that pervade national church institutions. They became actively involved in driving a reinterpretation of theology to supersede cultural expectations that they defer to men. Many of the women interviewed here located gender inequality in traditional "cultural" norms and believed that theology provided a venue for overturning those disempowering practices: "Bible interpretation, it's really misunderstood. That misunderstanding is because of the culture and from leadership influence, [my country's] culture influence." One woman attributed gender-exclusionary attitudes to cases in which traditional "cultural" norms supersede religious doctrine:

> I have come to realize during these gender discourses and through marriage discourses, our culture is actually stronger than our faith, unfortunately. I find that very unfortunate. Because actually our faith should be stronger than our culture because when Christ came he found culture holding people in bondage and he broke all those cultures... It hit me at some point during all these discourses [about gender and sexuality] and then I [thought], 'Oh, my God. Our faith has not been able to break through our culture—our cultural norms and values.' We're not saying all of them, but the ones that are fundamentally dragging us behind, fundamentally not allowing us to thrive and to blossom.

Another similarly utilized theology to supersede cultural expectations. People say, " 'In my culture, women have played second fiddle, so how can a woman come and lead us?' That's the culture. I tell them, 'God calls whom He calls... I am created in His image so if He just

call me, who are you to question him?'" For these women, religion represents a moveable, dynamic, and progressive force, where as "culture" indicates fixed, unmovable, patriarchal structures:

> I can argue about this omission/addition thing [based on] when the Bible was written, and the Bible's copy of copies written over years, translated into the different languages. Maybe people didn't understand the language of that time and then omitted it, or mistranslated, or interpreted it. This is what I feel. And Jesus did not say that women shouldn't attend anything or shouldn't do anything.

Women adopt these theological approaches and social battles to end the "silence of women" and to support younger generations of female leaders: "I am still trying all my best to support women, to give them information, to share my experience. . . I try to transform. . . the culture of [my country] by educating women, by arranging Bible studies, [which is] also a relief for those who are illiterate." Another said:

> I've just been mentoring a young lady who's going to be [ordained] on Sunday. I almost thought she was reliving my nightmare. The bishop asked me to mentor her and then I presented her for ordination. They didn't ordain her and we had no answer [as to why]. . . I started fighting that battle and this year I said, "You either tell us if you want her to be ordained, otherwise you're pushing out very capable people, pushing them into other churches and so forth." But she was very patient. I said, "Why were you patient?" She said, "Well, I know your story." A lot of them who came immediately after me, their stories are similar, either they were ordained and then many people were not placed in the parish or if they were placed in the parish, you were treated as if you were not ordained.

*Conclusion*

A tension is evident in these interviews between women's embrace of universal, egalitarian principles and their continued responsibility to maintain gender-differentiated roles for the

sake of cultural cohesion. Two women's-rights activists from the same country and religious institution demonstrate this tension. One locates transnational human-rights principles of universal equality in religious texts:

> My operating point is one: They [men and women] are both created in the same image. Therefore, they're equal in dignity and rights, because they are created. If you want the Universal Declaration, we will give you the right and these other documents that we have on a human level. But if you go also in your Bible, he [God] says, "in his image." Which other image do you want to give them? And if they [women] are in his image, and they deserve this—if the men deserve this, so do the women, because they have the same image.

The other argues that cultures emerge to catalyze and cultivate the important distinctions between women and men:

> I think that some of the realities are not to do with demeaning women in our culture. It has to do with traditional roles. And I will certainly say to you myself that I am one of those who believes that custom and culture are very, very important and that these roles that are assigned by culture—to the extent that they don't demean, to the extent that they don't dehumanize—they are actually of value because they are what creates cohesion. They are what creates a way in which there is predictability. You need norms—norms and standards—for a society to cohere. So I personally don't have problems with these aspects of traditional roles that are assigned to different [genders], provided those roles are not based on demeaning the dignity either of the woman or the man.[50]

Many scholars have explored the ways in which purportedly universal principles or transnational human-rights norms represent and even recreate global-North dominance.

[50]This male interviewee proceeded to laud distinctions between men and women: "It's beautiful. It's the beauty, it's what God has made us to be. It's beautiful. We must celebrate this diversity and, indeed the flourishing, human flourishing. The flourishing of human dignity is in being able to let these flourish in a way that does not demean the other, but appreciates the other and hence the complementarity. And it is powerful. My argument is that the truly empowering movements for women [are] also [empowering] for men."

Others have identified how "rights" lack the proverbial teeth to emancipate vulnerable populations. This is because rights are still created, guarded, and implemented by powerful domestic stakeholders (McCann, 2012) who codify and exalt rights as empty promises with unbearably light conviction (McCann, 2014). This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which right-based entitlements—here, in the forms of gender quotas or women's ordination—have offering relatively empty promises to emancipate women from more pervasive male control.

As the interview evidence above suggests, however, church venues and theological principles *have* provided women avenues to incorporate elements of transnational human-rights principles into revered local doctrine and institutions. In these spaces, women can authentically integrate human rights into the premises modeled by more powerful social actors. In doing so, women were able to avoid (or at least challenge) accusations that they have disavowed their community's deeply held convictions. In other words, church spaces can serve as venues for women to locate their "rights-talk" within existing institutional parameters, rather than challenging those parameters from outside. In this sense, women have used church spaces and theological ideas to circumvent the difficulties secular diffusion efforts encounter (Merry, 2006*a*).

This approach introduces considerable limitations for women's movements, however. In the process of merging transnational human-rights norms and theological principles, women experience and respond to pressures to justify and circumscribe their own claims for rights. This self-circumscription is evident in how women from Ethiopian and Uganda, and from various protestant denominations, use or reject the term "feminism." Many rejected the term entirely, as an unproductive or destructive "western" concept.[51] Others distinguished between "liberal feminism" and "radical feminism." To them, liberal feminism represented a claim for rights without dismantling existing gendered distinctions. Radical feminism, on the other hand, represented a disintegration of social order. Several interviewees also associated radical feminism with lesbianism. The three interviewees quoted here discuss their concerns with feminism as a concept:

[51]For example, one interviewee feared that her colleagues would frame her position as a "feminist seat office."

> There is a lot of fear [about] the "woman attitude." Many, they believe, some of them believe, that all the women [will] become very strong. They might think about feminism, even they do not know about feminism, but they always talk about radical feminism. If you stand for [even a] few women, you are automatically [labeled as a] feminist. But the feminist in [my country's] perspective, feminism is radical feminism. *What is "radical feminism"?* Radical feminism [represents she] who wants to live a woman by themselves, who doesn't like men, who doesn't like men oppression.
>
> There are radical feminists who go to the extent of lesbianism. Then there are liberal feminists who are promoting the rights of women to opportunities such as education, economic empowerment, work for equal pay, things like that. [Rights] to protection, peace, and security.
>
> Yes, once in a while when you say you are a women's-rights activist, then people begin to think you are promoting lesbianism. . . I find the term "feminism" is more associated with lesbianism than [with] women's rights or human rights.

Many interviews also associated this "radical" feminism with western ideas of gender and actively sought to avoid receiving that association in their work. Several bemoaned experiencing associations between gender and homosexuality, which they believed undermined the scope of the progress women are able to achieve.

Herein lie the limitations church spaces offer for women and for sexual minorities. Church leaders navigate between transnational influences and domestic "cultural" ideologies to support and elevate women. In doing so, they arrive at a middle ground which expands women's professional prospects. However, this middle ground continues to burden women with the responsibilities of maintaining social cohesion. Meanwhile, sexual minorities become marginalized and framed as adopting behavior that resides entirely beyond the purview of acceptable community conduct. Finally, these dynamics associate feminism and homosexuality with one another and casts them both as "foreign" concepts. Doing so not only undermines the real, lived experiences of East African women and sexual minorities. This association also

provides straight, male opponents an avenue for marginalizing these identities and their rights claims as "neo-colonial" impositions from an increasingly secular global North. As Chapter 5 demonstrates, this neo-colonial framework provides a rhetoric of resistance that many in racially and economically marginalized post-colonial contexts find appealing.

### *4.4 Conclusion*

This chapter examined mainline churches' female ordination movements throughout Africa, with a focus on movements in Uganda and Ethiopia. It situated these movements within transnational and domestic efforts to elevate women as political and civil-society leaders. First, this chapter discussed the history of the ordination of women by Africa's Anglican and Lutheran churches. It argued that African women and their male advocates leveraged transnational terminologies and policies to advocate for women's inclusion in ordained clergy rosters. This section also identified competing pressures that limited the extent to which women were able to access these new inclusions. Pressures from conservative transnational actors, former-missionary church bodies, internal disputing factions, and competing religious institutions ultimately prevented women from being ordained in certain districts, elected as bishops, or included as valued church council members. Notably, transnational forces informed, restricted, and undermined inclusion efforts.

Second, this chapter elevated the personal experiences of women at the front lines of women's empowerment and ordination movements within their churches. These women encountered accusations that they overstepped culturally-designated gender boundaries and undermined their communities' social fabrics in the process. Even among churches that herald their inclusive ordination of women, female clergy encountered significant formal and informal barriers to their abilities to work, shape church policy, and access career-advancement opportunities. In response, women were forced to circumscribe transnational women's-rights ideas in order to expand their standing as women.

The female leadership agenda reveals how domestic movements and transnational efforts can converge to elevate female leaders while at the same time undermining or preventing efforts to expand leadership into a sector's upper echelons. The internationally unresolved question of women's ordination—which ultimately undermines mens' exclusive

access to powerful leadership roles—introduces fissures that were unobserved in church efforts to reduce gender-based violence (Chapter 3). These fissures include contentions within a church's internal leadership, between national church leaders and their non-compliant districts, between transnational actors and national church leaders, and between competing transnational actors.

This chapter closed by demonstrating how women shoulder burdens between transnational norms and domestic practices. In doing so, women become accused of betraying their communities and countries. Meanwhile, transnational networks can also fuel resistance to those efforts, particularly among transnational networks that represent imperial inequalities and dependencies. As regional leader said:

> I believe the church can be champion in turning around a lot of things, but we need our physiological needs met. Without that, we can't make our own choices, our choices are orchestrated by someone else. Whoever is in charge of the factors of productions would swing around our choices.

In a response that must be understood within the context of these global inequalities, a rhetoric of resistance to "western feminist ideas" often emerges. This allows domestic actors to justify their non-compliance as a protective defense of their culture from interventions that have neo-colonial undertones. The fissures, contentions, and forms of resistance introduced here—often in quiet, informal spaces—crystalize as prominent, public drivers of church responses to LGBTQ inclusion. This is the topic of Chapter 5.

Figure 4.4: Worshipers at Orthodox and Mekane Yesus churches in Addis Ababa

Orthodox women (above) are typically required to worship with head coverings and separated from men. Mekane Yesus women (below) are typically expected to do neither. Photos taken in Addis Ababa (Sun 1 Nov 2015).

Chapter 5

# RESISTING LGBTQ INCLUSION: MAINLINES' STRATEGIES OF SYMBOLIC RESISTANCE

> *What I desperately need, personally, is for the West to put [on] some brakes, to step on the brakes on pushing this [LGBTQ issue]... Because you're not giving them time to understand it. That's where we lost a lot of mileage on the gender discourse. Because it started with [a] push, so countries like [mine] and other African countries were like, "It's these white guys [who] are pushing these things down our throats, these things are not important to us."* —East African church leader sympathetic to supporting women and sexual minorities

In 2003, the U.S.-based Episcopal Church—a prominent member of the global Anglican Communion—consecrated its first openly gay bishop. Six years later, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America allowed congregations to appoint LGBTQ clergy and sanctify same-sex marriages. Even though these LGBTQ-inclusive[1] policies applied only within the United States,[2] they proved remarkably divisive throughout East Africa and the entire African continent. Some African mainline churches denounced their American partners' policies but maintained collaborative bilateral partnerships with the U.S. churches. Other African mainlines dissociated entirely from their U.S. counterparts and surrendered long-standing American relationships and financial contributions in the process. Why did these disagreements over domestic church policies introduce transnational schisms with such tangible bilateral consequences? What explains variation in African mainlines' responses to these disagreements?

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[1] See Chapter 1, Footnote 1, for the explanation of my use of the term "LGBTQ inclusion."

[2] The Episcopal Church's LGBTQ-inclusive policies also applied, or were relevant to, the sixteen other countries (primarily in Latin America and Europe) in which the U.S.-based church has a small or modest presence.

When these schisms crystalized, nearly all Anglican and Lutheran churches in Africa publicly rejected sexual diversity. Away from public view, however, leaders often adopted much more nuanced and supportive (if not inclusionary) attitudes toward the sexual minorities in their communities. Therefore, ideological disagreements do not alone explain variation in church responses. African and U.S. churches could have maintained divergent domestic policies without devolving into schism, which many African churches elected to do. Yet some mainline churches publicly rejected and disavowed their American partners. The Anglican Churches of Nigeria and Uganda led these dissociation efforts within the Anglican Communion. Meanwhile, Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus was the only Lutheran World Federation member to do so. This chapter therefore continues this project's focus on Uganda and Ethiopia to examine the contours of LGBTQ politics. Cross-national supporting evidence from other African mainline churches, including those in Nigeria and Tanzania, supplement this focus on Ethiopia and Uganda.

This chapter argues that the dissociation outcomes demanded by the Church of Uganda and Mekane Yesus can be thoroughly understood only by examining the multiple and competing pressures on churches that this research explores. Church leaders in Uganda and Ethiopia experience pressures from transnational denominational networks, state actors, local clergy members and constituents, and peer religious institutions in their countries. In the case of gender-based violence (Chapter 3), which enjoys a strong global consensus and does not undermine men's public access to leadership roles, these pressures aligned to elevate national church leaders as champions of the anti-GBV movement. Local clergy and communities often quietly resist these transnational standards. However, this resistance does not gain national traction, and national church leaders appear to have identified effective strategies to gradually overcome this resistance.

Chapter 4 explored how the Church of Uganda and Mekane Yesus led women's ordination efforts in their own countries and, in the case of Uganda, among their transnational denominational networks. However, with a far weaker consensus among global partners and domestic peer religious institutions, and with male leaders facing competition from women over influential leadership roles, women encountered barriers on multiple fronts. Predominant Orthodox and Muslim communities in parts of northern Ethiopia prevented Mekane

Yesus districts from ordaining women. In this sense, peer religious institutions maintained and reinforced certain shared normative standards (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; see also: Interview 85). Furthermore, within their own churches, women absorbed disproportionately high performance expectations alongside accusations that they represented a western, "radical" form of feminism that would damage or dismantle their families and communities. Women's leadership movements therefore elucidated the ways in which transnational denominational networks exert pressures that can both advance but also undermine rights-based agendas.

Two particular pressures introduced in Chapter 4 come into harsh relief when East African mainline churches are drawn into LGBTQ politics by their global North partners: pressures from peer religious institutions and pressures introduced by the "neocolonial" narratives that transnational networks represent. These two pressures increased attention East African religious actors gave to the global North's LGBTQ-inclusive policies. Meanwhile, active global-North opponents to sexual minorities introduced new incentives for African church leaders to follow their lead. These pressures forced church leaders to take strong, public anti-LGBTQ positions. These positions, in turn, threatened to reinforce anti-LGBTQ attitudes among their constituents and therefore further marginalize sexual minorities.

Specifically, Anglican and Lutheran mainlines in Africa feared their constituents and colleagues would affiliate mainlines with their global North partners' LGBTQ policies. Relatedly, they faced being associated with the "neocolonial" endeavors that those more-powerful foreign partners represented. Mainlines responded to these interrelated threats by adopting what I call a "strategy of symbolic resistance".[3] Mainline leaders invoked anti-colonial sentiments to publicly and symbolically denounce the LGBTQ policies of their foreign partners. In doing so, they sought to buttress their symbolic capital, relative to domestic religious peers. From here, mainline churches that relied least on U.S. counterparts could fortify that symbolic capital by dissociating entirely from those global-North partners.

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[3]I follow scholars of transnational norm diffusion who refer to domestic anti-LGBTQ activism as "resistance" movements (Ayoub, 2014). I do not intend to invoke or undermine movements that have claimed "resistance" as an empowering mobilizing tactic against exclusionary politics (Chua, 2014). Neither do I intend to equivocate or imply commonality between inclusive rights-based movements and the exclusionary, anti-LGBTQ movements to which "resistance" in this chapter refers.

Transnational denominational networks seeking to facilitate "dialogue" over contentious issues therefore induce complicated outcomes for both their global-South partners and for inclusionary LGBTQ policies. Actors in the global South do more than simply reject norms deemed incongruent with domestic ideals (Acharya, 2004, 2011). Recognizing that transnational exchanges are far from meaningful dialogues among partners with equal access to power and legitimacy (Diagne, 2011, 138-9), global-South actors capitalize on that incongruence to gain symbolic capital in their domestic environments. Resistance becomes a mechanism for catalyzing popular anti-colonial sentiments, claiming sovereign autonomy, and deflecting neocolonial impositions. To whatever extent domestic populations (erroneously) associate sexual diversity with the global North, debates about LGBTQ rights enable anti-colonial social resistance. Transnational rights movements thereby unwittingly incentivize domestic actors to mobilize a strategy of symbolic resistance that obstructs global agendas.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section One details the LGBTQ-related schisms within the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation. Section Two incorporates scholarship on contentious transnational politics and global LGBTQ politics into this study's treatment of churches as arenas for the transnational–domestic mobilization of rights. In doing so, it develops a theory of strategic symbolic resistance. Section Three provides demographic, financial, interview-based, and public-statement data as evidence of church leaders' strategic use of symbolic resistance. This section examines broad continental trends alongside focused evidence from Uganda and Ethiopia. Section Four concludes with theoretical and practical implications for transnational LGBTQ-rights movements and discusses avenues for future research.

### *5.1 Transnational religious schisms: The case of LGTBQ inclusion*

Beginning in the 1990s, disagreements over LGBTQ inclusion gained prominence within both the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation (Valentine et al., 2013, 167; Anderson, 2011, 431-35). To assuage tensions, Anglican and Lutheran leaders hosted theological debates about sexuality, urged respect among disagreeing members, and encouraged churches to postpone domestic action while cross-national disagreements remained

contentious. In 1998, Anglican bishops passed a non-binding resolution that rejected same-sex practices as "incompatible with Scripture" (Anglican Communion, 1998). Five years later, the LWF announced, "Since we are a communion of interdependent churches, no member church can ignore the issue, or consider it closed one way or the other, while sister churches are struggling with it" (Lutheran World Federation, 2014).

The Anglican schism surfaced in 2003 when the U.S.-based Episcopal Church elected the first openly gay bishop within the Anglican Communion. Bishop Gene Robinson's election initiated an international wave of dissent. Fewer than three weeks after his consecration, the Anglican Church of Nigeria dissociated from the Episcopal Church. The Nigerian church later noted its "total rejection of the evil of homosexuality which is a perversion of human dignity" (Bates, 2006). The Church of Uganda and the West African Province of the Anglican Church followed days later. Uganda's Anglican leader at the time, Archbishop Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo, announced, "We deplore, abhor and condemn in the strongest possible terms the resolution of [the Episcopal Church] to consecrate Gene Robinson and all other resolutions related to the ordination of homosexuals and blessings of same sex unions" (Nkoyoyo, 2003). Meanwhile, West African Archbishop Justice Ofei Yaw Akrofi called homosexuality "unscriptural, unnatural and totally incompatible with Christian values" (N.A., 2003).

Anglicans in Africa and throughout the global South joined conservative Americans and Europeans to oppose LGBTQ inclusion. African Anglican leaders helped launch the global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GAFCON) to oppose homosexuality, initiated "reverse-missionary" work to save American souls (Effa, 2013), and incorporated conservative American Anglicans into their churches (Jenkins, 2007; Kaoma, 2010). This conservative network nearly succeeded in expelling the U.S. Episcopal Church from the Anglican Communion, thereby formally splitting the long-standing global network (Bailey, 2016; Goodstein, 2016).

All but one of twelve African Anglican churches denounced the Episcopal Church for its LGBTQ-inclusive policies.[4] The head of the Anglican Province in Central Africa said the

[4]The Anglican Church of Southern Africa did not denounce these policies. In fact, bishops in South Africa resolved in 2016 to fully welcome parishioners in same-sex unions. However, the broader Southern African province overturned that resolution (Nzwili, 2016*a*,*b*).

Episcopal Church "brought darkness, disappointment, sadness, and grief" to his church. The Anglican Church of Tanzania "reiterated its opposition to the consecration of homosexuals and women as bishops" and called Robinson's consecration "a leadership failure" (BBC, 2008; Kiishweko and Sakwari, 2008). Despite widespread dissent, however, only half of Africa's Anglican churches formally dissociated from the U.S. church. Those that did framed their dissociation as principled and sacrificial; they willingly surrendered crucial financial assistance to assert their theological rejection of homosexuality.[5] Two Anglican churches retained strained relationships, continuing select connections but refusing other avenues of support or partnership. Four maintained stable relationships with U.S. partners (see Table A.8 for a list of Anglican churches in Africa). An interviewed leader from the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa said, "It's not like the other provinces have endorsed [LGBTQ inclusion], but they have said, 'that is a hitch in our relationship... but we will collaborate in other areas.'" The interviewee added: "There's the respect to say, 'That's in your context, don't bring it to our context'" (Interview 59).

Meanwhile, the Lutheran World Federation committed to a "period for respectful discussions within and among the LWF member churches" in the absence of agreement on LGBTQ inclusion (Lutheran World Federation, 2014). Before this period ended, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) voted in 2009 to allow individual congregations to ordain same-sex partnered clergy and recognize same-sex marriages. Lutheran churches in Sweden (2006), Norway (2007), Germany (2010), and Canada (2011) made similar decisions. In 2013, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus terminated its ties with LWF churches in the United States and Sweden, two of its longest-standing partners (Weber 2013). No other African Lutheran church dissociated (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2013). Instead, each publicly denounced LGBTQ inclusion but maintained relationships with American and European Lutherans (Table A.9 lists LWF member-churches in Africa).

African mainlines that dissociated from LGBTQ-inclusive partners attracted alternative funding from conservative actors. American evangelicals and conservative Anglicans trained

[5]For example, the Church of Uganda announced it could not pay maintenance or electrical bills after dissociating from the Episcopal Church (Kaoma, 2009, 10).

and funded African Anglican leaders to resist LGBTQ inclusion (Kaoma, 2009, 9-12).[6] Similarly, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, a smaller conservative U.S. church, promised donations to Ethiopian Lutherans to partially offset lost funds.[7] Conservative funding most likely did not entirely replace funds surrendered, however. African Anglicans made it "very clear that Northern conservatives' help only went so far" (Hassett, 2009, 229; Kaoma, 2009, 10). Conservative funds often benefited individual leaders rather than supporting institutional needs (Naughton, 2006, 4-7). Furthermore, shifts in funding sources introduced financial discontinuity, uncertainty, and other inefficiencies. For example, Missouri-Synod Lutherans undermined select Ethiopian Mekane Yesus projects, most notably its women's ministries programs (Interview 39, see also Chapter 4). Ethiopian leaders reported uncertainty about how they would replace lost ELCA resources (Interviews 42, 39).

As this project has demonstrated, African mainline churches worked productively alongside, and as part of, their transnational denominational networks to address other social issues. They initiated efforts to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Catholic News Agency, 2014; Patterson, 2011, 35-64), eradicate gender-based violence (Chapter 3), and advance women's church-based leadership (Chapter 4). This ongoing work requires widespread changes to post-colonial social practices. Like LGBTQ inclusion, this gender-related work often attracts opposition from local constituents. Yet several church leaders interviewed for this research credited their transnational networks with providing information and tactics to allay local opposition. Interviewees recounted painstaking efforts—often funded by transnational networks—to educate local communities of the harms certain gender-based customs cause (Interviews 04, 35, 39, 53, 85). In these cases, African churches' transnational partnerships did not insurmountably undermine their credibility in affecting social change. However,

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[6] According to one interviewed Anglican leader, American conservatives hosted the Nigerian and Ugandan archbishops in the United States in advance of the 1998 Lambeth Conference: "They had been invited by members of breakaway Episcopal Church... They wanted to give them awards for being the 'Lions for Africa,' fighting for the 'right' gospel truth. The two of them were awarded that evening $25,000 each" (Interview 70). See also Naughton (2006, 4-7).

[7] The Missouri Synod announced: "Because of [Mekane Yesus's] decision to stand firm on God's Word [against LGBTQ inclusion], the ELCA discontinued its support—including funding—for Ethiopian students at their seminaries. Meanwhile, the [Missouri Synod] was at the ready to step in and assist its brothers and sisters in Christ by providing Global Seminary Initiative (GSI) scholarships" (Miller, 2013). Those scholarships exclude women seeking ordination.

transnational networks turned from allies to potential liabilities when bilateral partners embraced LGBTQ inclusion.

*Anti-LGBTQ sentiments*

Church opposition to LGBTQ inclusion has ideological origins. Public opinion polling throughout the continent indicates a strong rejection of sexual minorities.[8] The salience of this rejection increases with political democratization (Grossman, 2015, 346-50), the increased politicization of LGBTQ rights (Van Klinken and Chitando, 2016, 1-16), and increased resentments toward Western imperialism (Awondo, Geschiere and Reid, 2012, 159). Religious institutions—often unwilling to challenge "thorny" political or social issues (Haynes, 2004, 71-76)—share and reinforce this social rejection. As a result, religious and political leaders throughout the continent reject same-sex behavior as "un-African."

The designation of LGBTQ identities as "un-African" has little empirical basis, however. Sexual diversity existed throughout pre-colonial Africa (Tamale, 2014).[9] Scholars widely attribute European colonists and missionaries with codifying "homosexuality" as a distinct, "anti-social" identity that would erode society (Boyd, 2015, 717). Colonists introduced neoliberal legal frameworks (Comaroff, 1997, 198-225) and hierarchical social classifications (Mamdani, 1996) to regulate and control colonized communities. Criminalizing homosexuality contributed to this social-control strategy (Gupta, 2008, 13-35). Despite the colonial origins of anti-LGBTQ penal codes, attitudes, and theologies, however, Africans leaders and citizens today accuse sexual minorities of representing un-African, un-Godly threats to African identities (Currier, 2012; Essa, 2014, 124). Meanwhile, religious leaders "scapegoat" sexual minorities for social ills (Sadgrove et al., 2012, 110-126) and present LGBTQ community members as "secular threat[s]" to both religious beliefs and to "African identity

[8] In 2007, respondents from five African countries overwhelmingly said their societies should reject homosexuality: ninety-seven percent in Nigeria and Ethiopia, ninety-six percent in Uganda and Kenya, and ninety-five percent in Tanzania (Pew Research Center, 2007). In 2016, nearly eighty percent of respondents from thirty-three African countries reported they would dislike having a "homosexual" neighbor (Afrobarometer, 2016; see also Figure A.2). Cross-nationally, researchers find "little support for LGBT rights among educated, urban, and younger Africans" (Dionne, Dulani and Chunga, 2014).

[9] "Simplistic constructions of homosexuality versus heterosexuality, modern versus traditional, Africa versus the West, or progress from the African closet towards Western models of 'out' politics... are [empirically] insupportable" (Epprecht and Nyeck, 2013, 5).

itself" (Valentine et al., 2013, 168).

### *5.2 Transnational contention, localization, and resistance*

Until now, this study has treated transnational rights-based agendas as global commitments that have been generally uncontroversial and widely accepted. Chapter 4 began to expose transnational contention over women's ordination movements. In reality, however, transnational agendas are rarely uncontentious. Instead, transnational politics contain "dueling networks" with competing agendas (Bob, 2012, 108). Each dueling network leverages resources and messaging campaigns to gain global traction and influence domestic behaviors. Just as progressive transnational networks have supported LGBTQ-rights movements in Africa, so too have their conservative global-North opponents supported exclusionary attitudes and policies.[10]

Alongside transnational contention, domestic mobilizers of global movements often encounter local opposition to their agendas (Bloomfield and Scott, 2017). Domestic actors are most likely to adopt transnational norms that align with—or "could be constructed to fit"—existing local norms or indigenous traditions (Cortell and Davis Jr, 2000, 66). When those norms challenge existing local practices, however, domestic shareholders serve as crucial interlocutors. They decide whether to import, translate (Merry, 2006*a*, 134-78), adapt or localize (Acharya, 2004, 244-50), or undermine or reject (Acharya, 2011, 97-102) foreign ideas.

This research has demonstrated cases in which transnational actors successfully partnered with domestic leaders to end harmful practices (Cloward, 2016, 53-96). In other cases, domestic actors publicly reject transnational agendas as "threats" to the nation (Ayoub, 2014, 345-53). In doing so, they consolidate oppositional sentiments and inspire backlashes against norm adoption (O'Dwyer and Schwartz, 2010, 220). For example, sexual minorities and their activists throughout East Africa partially attributed recent increases in anti-LGBTQ violence to foreign LGBTQ-rights activism (NPR, 2016; Onishi, 2015). In

[10]For example, American evangelicals encouraged the introduction of Uganda's now-defunct Anti-Homosexuality Act (Human Rights Campaign, 2014; Kaoma, 2010; Lively, 2009; Nyanzi and Karamagi, 2015, 25-36).

other cases, activists' transnational LGBTQ-rights movements introduced "simultaneously enabling and disempowering consequences for constituents and for political action" (Currier, 2012, 125-28).

But resistance to these transnational agendas does not only provide activists the chance to register substantive objections to a given issue (for example, LGBTQ inclusion). Resistance also offers "peripheral" actors in the global South a venue to challenge the global North's disproportionate power in shaping international norms. Transnational, Euro-centric processes of rule-making and policy-setting routinely marginalize global-South actors.[11] Resistance provides globally marginalized actors an opportunity to reject the imperialist underpinnings of transnationalism and to opt instead to localize policy decisions: "Africa developed subsidiary norms, whereby [it] sought to develop local rules to challenge great powers' dominance and hypocrisy and secure regional autonomy" (Acharya, 2011, 113). Through this process of subsidiarity, domestic actors help preserve their national sovereignty,[12] maintain their cultural boundaries, and safeguard against "dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse" by powerful global actors (Acharya, 2011, 95) .

Thus, LGBTQ-rights movements provide domestic actors in "peripheral" countries an opportunity to guard against "external" threats.[13] In parts of Europe, for example, dominant political and religious institutions framed sexual diversity as "foreign." They built narrative barriers between domestic values and foreign LGBTQ "impositions" and leveraged this perceived "national threat" to quell LGBTQ-rights mobilization (Ayoub, 2014, 356). In post-colonial contexts, anti-LGBTQ subsidiarity can take an anti-imperial tone:

> Homophobia has become the latest way for some African leaders to reassert a claimed "authentic" culture and morality and to articulate independence from the West and its perceived secular, neocolonial and individualized values. (Valentine et al., 2013, 170).

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[11] Indeed, African philosopher Diagne asserts that "this [colonial] Europe does not dialogue, it soliloquizes" (Diagne, 2011, 141).

[12] Traditional notions of state sovereignty are entangled with, and buttress, heterosexuality. In international political arenas, sovereignty and heterosexuality codify and marginalize "the homosexual" (Weber, 2016).

[13] Similarly, opponents to LGBTQ- and immigrant-rights movements in the United States cast both sexual minorities and immigrants as threats to American boundaries (Adam, 2017, 142-49).

Meanwhile, sexual minorities often lack the visibility needed to challenge this neocolonial narrative. Sexual minorities live dispersed throughout "all walks of life" but largely "invisible" (Campbell, 2014; Mwachiro, 2014). They face criminalization from colonial-era laws (Carroll and Mendos, 2017, 81-107) and experience exclusion from colonial religious mores (Jenkins, 2002, 247-54). Considered together, this existing research suggests that African leaders who oppose same-sex practices establish themselves as guardians responsible for protecting their nation's boundaries from secular, global-North incursion.

*Strategic symbolic resistance*

This chapter advances existing research by exploring the domestic politics that motivate anti-LGBTQ subsidiarity. Subsidiarity enables actors from "peripheral" countries to retain autonomy from the transnational politics that marginalize them. Similarly, this resistance to global norms allows global-South actors to garner popular domestic support as guardians of their nations.[14] Constituents and community-members applaud those who protect their national identities, particularly when this process also uplifts their substantive commitments (for example, opposing LGBTQ rights). For religious institutions and other actors that must compete with domestic counterparts for constituents and symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 94-139), resistance introduces a valuable strategy to retain, energize, and attract constituents.[15] This strategic gain is particularly important to Africa's transnationally linked, former-missionary mainlines, who must compete for constituents with the compellingly non-colonial Pentecostal movements (Meyer, 1998) or with the prominent precolonial Ethiopian Orthodox church. Thus, churches will make strategic use of rhetorical, symbolic arguments (Schimmelfennig, 2001, 62-68) to denounce their foreign counterparts' policies and the neocolonial interventions those policies are perceived to represent. I call this a "strategy of symbolic resistance."

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[14]Scholars should also consider which domestic actors increase their power as a result of this subsidiarity and which are disempowered (McCann, 2012, 479-84).

[15]Religious institutions often behave like strategic interest groups (Warner, 2000) and competitors in a "religious marketplace." Competition strengthens religion's salience in a given society (Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; Stark and Finke, 2002, 224-64) and influences church policies and commitments (Gill, 1998; Trejo, 2009) (for example).

This strategy is symbolic in two ways. First, the resistance rhetoric itself is largely symbolic; this strategy does not represent a substantive shift in policy or doctrine. Second, the targeted outcome is symbolic; this strategy signals an institution's willingness to uphold its constituents' substantive priorities and to safeguard their shared national narratives. If mainline leaders do not publicly denounce foreign LGBTQ-inclusive norms, their institutions risk being affiliated with the LGBTQ movements their constituents widely reject. Mainlines also risk being accused of insufficiently protecting African identities. By denouncing homosexuality, on the other hand, mainline leaders symbolically affirm domestically salient anti-LGBTQ attitudes and denounce "neocolonial" forces. In doing so, they demonstrate their sovereignty from transnational networks and foreign benefactors and highlight their commitments to national narratives. In sum, African churches responded to bilateral partners' LGBTQ inclusion by adopting a strategy of symbolic resistance. African mainline leaders invoked collectively held anti-colonial sentiments to publicly denounce LGBTQ-inclusive policies and to appease their constituents and colleagues.

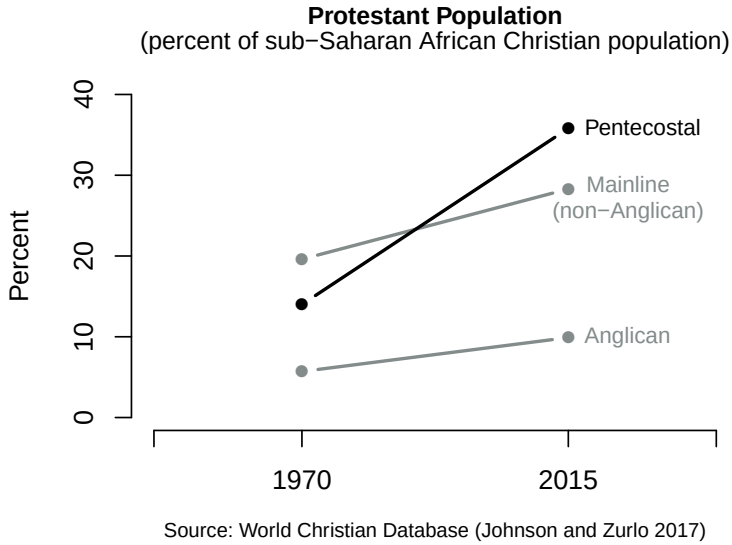
The next section provides evidence of this theory of strategic symbolic resistance and its two dimensions: denouncement and dissociation. First, the section introduces the thriving, competitive religious landscape that defines much of sub-Saharan Africa. From there, it demonstrate that East African mainlines made public denouncements against global-North LGBTQ policies, in part in response to these competitive religious environments. Doing so alone introduced few tangible costs to mainline churches. This analysis draws on interview data to demonstrate church leaders' concerns and perspectives that motivated these public denouncements. The theory of strategic symbolic resistance emerged inductively from these interviews. Finally, this section demonstrates that mainline churches that relied least on their U.S. partners (financially and institutionally) buttressed their symbolic denouncements with tangible, material action: dissociation. Those with higher levels of bilateral dependency, on the other hand, maintained foreign partnerships despite publicly denouncing LGBTQ inclusion.

## *5.3 Evidence of strategic symbolic resistance*

*Denouncing LGBTQ inclusion*

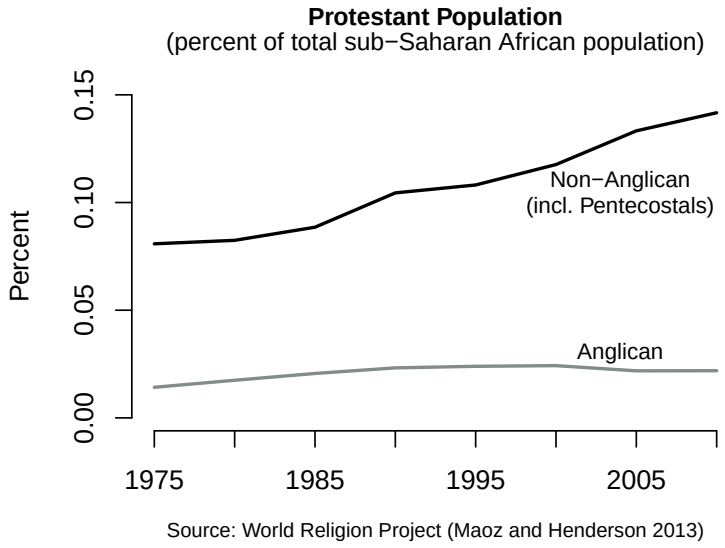
Today, Africa's competitive religious marketplace thrives. Both Pentecostal and Muslim movements (to a lesser extent) challenge the prominence of mainline Christianity. Pentecostalism registers "incredible rates of growth" and "startling conversion rates" (Riedl, 2012, 30) across the continent, particularly in urban areas. In 2000, Africa housed an estimated 126 million Pentecostals (Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 2005, 143), up from fewer than 20 million in 1970. That number will reach 226 million by 2020 (Johnson et al., 2013, 8). As a portion of all Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, Pentecostal Renewalists have surpassed Anglicans and mainline Protestants alike (Figure 5.1). Evangelicals and other non-Anglican Protestants experienced ten-percent growth since 1975, relative to Anglican's three-percent growth (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1: Pentecostal size, proportional to overall Christian population




This Pentecostal growth defines many of Africa's competitive religious environments today. Pentecostalism represents a "burgeoning of religious bodies, of converts to new faiths

Figure 5.2: Protestant size, proportional to overall population




and [of] the centrality of religious concerns" in public and political life (Love, 2006, 619). Pentecostal approaches attract constituents from Africa's mainline churches (Jenkins, 2002, 68-69). In this competitive environment, mainlines must maintain their social relevance and commitment to purportedly shared norms, including opposing sexual diversity. Otherwise, they risk surrendering their social dominance (Haynes, 2004, 81-82) and failing to remain competitive enough to "retain their own religious followers" (Riedl, 2012, 47). Accordingly, the Anglican Church of Nigeria reported: "In a place where you have competition between churches and Islam, both are ready to pick holes in the other's religion. Homosexuality is not our culture. It may be allowed in the west but here you will lose your flock" (Pigott, 2003).

Pentecostal and Muslim movements have a critical advantage over mainlines. Unlike mainline Christianity, Pentecostalism claims historical, theological, social, and institutional independence from missionary colonialism. Pentecostals represent a "complete break" with Africa's colonial period (Meyer, 1998, 316). Pentecostal churches incorporate a traditional, "enchanted" approach to spirituality (Gifford, 2015, 13-28) which "self-consciously and crit-

ically engages with local cultural practices, moral codes, modes of sociability, rituals, forms of authority, and techniques of power" (Marshall, 2009, 6-7). These religious spaces cultivate "believers' sense of their own potential and autonomy as individuals" (McClendon and Riedl, 2015*a*, 119) rooted in disciplined submission and "the agency of supernatural forces" (Marshall, 2009, 10). While mainline churches attract suspicion for their "connections with colonialism" (Ranger, 1995, 33), Pentecostal movements resonate with an opposition to foreign control and commitment a to self-determination.

Many East African mainline church leaders interviewed for this research reported that Pentecostalism threatens their membership and undermines their domestic prominence. A senior regional leader of the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa said, "All [African Anglican] provinces are struggling with this dynamic" of Pentecostal growth. That leader said Pentecostalism attracts members away from the Anglican Church. Although concentrated in urban centers, Pentecostalism "is spreading in other areas as well, even in rural communities... It has posed another challenge in terms of engagement" (Interview 59). A regional leader for the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa similarly reported Pentecostal leaders "fishing their members"—mostly youth—from Lutheran churches. As a countermeasure, the Lutheran Commission developed programs to educate Lutheran "youth on this religious fundamentalism and prosperity gospel." This leader reportedly hoped these programs would "strengthen our Lutheran identity" and safeguard against youth departure from Lutheran to Pentecostal churches (Interview 05).

Countries that hosted leading Anglican and Lutheran dissociation movements (including Uganda, Ethiopia, and Nigeria) experienced particularly strong Pentecostal growth. Nigeria routinely registers among the world's highest percentages of Pentecostal membership. In 2010, its 5.1 million Pentecostals and 13.1 million Charismatic Christians[16] together made up eleven percent of the population—roughly equivalent to Nigeria's Anglican Church. Pentecostalism grew by nearly fifteen percent in Uganda and Ethiopia in the twentieth century, placing both countries in the world's top ten for Pentecostal growth. Kenya—whose An-

[16]The data this paragraph feature distinguish "Charismatic" Christians from other non-denominational Christian affiliations. I use the term "Pentecostal" to refer to the interconnected Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Independent Christian movements which the World Christian Database categorize as "Renewalist Christianity" (Johnson et al., 2013). See Chapter 1, Footnote 23.

glican church experienced a formally strained relationship with the U.S. church—joined Nigeria among countries with the largest Pentecostal populations in the world (3.2 and 5.1 million, respectively). Nigeria and Uganda also house the world's largest populations of Charismatic Christians: 13.1 and 5.4 million (Johnson, 2009, 481-82).

This Pentecostal groundswell suggests that churches in Uganda and Ethiopia experienced competitive pressures to invoke strategic symbolic resistance to LGBTQ inclusion. A senior official from the Uganda Joint Christian Council said, "A number of young [Ugandans], mostly from mainline churches... join Pentecostals" (Interview 75). A national leader of the Anglican Church of Uganda said most Pentecostal members "come from the [Anglican] Church of Uganda" (Interview 84). This Anglican leader partially attributed Pentecostal growth to the Anglican Church's reluctance to embrace Uganda's "charismatic renewal." That interview said doing so could have helped distinguish the Anglican Church of Uganda from its British missionaries. A Ugandan Anglican bishop prescribed that the Anglican Church needed to "adjust [its] style of worship" to counteract this "exodus of young people" (Interview 86). Anglican leaders also perceived Islam as a modest threat to their membership. They attributed recent Muslim growth in Uganda to "methods of converting people into Islam" from Catholicism, Anglicanism, and the broader Christian community (Interview 84). Although leaders in Uganda discussed religious competition primarily as a challenge to membership, some also said politicians leverage new religious movements for political gains.[17]

Ethiopia's Mekane Yesus church reported challenges to acquire symbolic capital, relative to the dominant Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (which has staggering numbers, commands national political influence, and enjoys deeply rooted indigenous origins). Mekane Yesus also competes with Ethiopia's fast-growing Pentecostal churches. One Mekane Yesus leader said, "The Pentecostal and evangelical churches are very charismatic. They embrace you, they are very engaging, they talk and sing loudly, and people speak in tongues. You have to be charismatic too, or people will leave your church" (Dreier, 2014, 197). Ethiopian religious leaders also report modest competition with Muslim movements for

[17] "The Muslims have just started coming in, and then the Pentecostal churches are very new in Uganda and... [political] powers... use them a lot for votes" (Interview anonymous).

constituents and social legitimacy.[18]

Pentecostal leaders vocally oppose LGBTQ inclusion. In fact, African communities that experience Pentecostal growth also see increases in the social salience of debates about sexual diversity (Grossman, 2015, 346-50). Religious leaders interviewed for this research reported that Pentecostal movements "fixat[e] around sexuality" and maintain a hard line against same-sex practices. All members of the Uganda Joint Christian Council reportedly oppose same-sex practices, but "Pentecostals are even more vocal" (Interview 75). Similarly, growing Pentecostal movements in Nigeria take "even more uncompromising" positions against same-sex practices than their mainstream counterparts (Pigott, 2003).

In this context of pronounced religious competition, several mainline church leaders reported concern that their institutions would be misbranded as supportive of sexual diversity if they maintained LGBTQ-inclusive bilateral partners. Anglican leaders in Nigeria registered concern that they would "be held guilty by association with a church body that elects and accepts a gay bishop" if they remained in partnership with the Episcopal Church (Pigott, 2003). This would expose Anglicans to opprobrium and loss of membership. Nigerian Bishop Peter Adebiyi equated condoning homosexuality with "evangelical suicide" in Nigeria (Skidmore, 1998).

Mekane Yesus leaders expressed similar concern about losing membership and prestige within Ethiopia:

> Part of portraying yourself as a strong shepherd or leader is maintaining the purity of the doctrine of the church. This includes fighting against any social norm that is taboo or different. There is an attitude that, if Mekane Yesus remains complacent with the ELCA and keeps quiet, this would compromise the strength and legitimacy of the church. They don't want to be branded as supporting this sort of relationship. (Interview anonymous)

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[18] According to a senior official of the Protestant Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church, Muslim movements contribute to religious competition in Ethiopia: "[Muslims] may win some of them or convert some of them by teaching and interacting. Building friendship is the first way of leading somebody religiously. Build up a friendship, talk to him, chat to him, that is another way of winning somebody to their religious aspects. That competition is there... between Orthodox and Muslim, Evangelical churches" (Interview 32).

Another Mekane Yesus interviewee similarly said, "Many people sa[id], 'If Mekane Yesus does not decide [to dissociate with the ELCA], we'll go to Orthodox'... So it is [a] problem, bad problem, challenging" (Interview anonymous).[19] Other Mekane Yesus leaders agreed that "complacency" when facing politics of LGBTQ inclusion could have "damaged Mekane Yesus's credibility in Ethiopia among Christians and Muslims and created high pressure from the surrounding communities." On the other hand, taking a strong stand against LGBTQ inclusion strengthened their reputation as "champions within existing norms on the ground."

Anglicans throughout the continent similarly reported fear of these branding liabilities:

> The Anglican Church somewhere has done something, and you're part of that family, so it's like you are branded... It has suffered from that. Whereas, maybe the local Church may not necessarily be in agreement, total agreement with that position, but because you carry the same name brand, you're suffering from that. (Interview 59)

Pentecostals reportedly used these associations to undermine the Anglican's credibility and membership: "Pentecostal churches have used it against the Anglican Church, they say [to potential church members], 'are you going to the Church of the homosexuals?' " (Interview 59).

African mainline religious leaders distanced themselves from their global North partners to mitigate against these branding concerns. When the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya denounced global-North Lutherans' LGBTQ-inclusive positions, it reiterated its autonomy to domestic religious counterparts:

> We... would like the general public, particularly the Church of Christ here in Kenya and elsewhere in the world, to take note... that we condemn in the strongest terms possible this unfortunate and anti-scriptural development in

[19]This interviewee proceeded to explain that dissociating on account of social disagreements was problematic because global influences were inevitable: "We cannot shut the door, not to bring international experiences. Even if we shut them out of the window of the churches, you know there are [other] windows that they will go and get whatever they like, you know you cannot stop that."

> a church body that bears the name of the great reformer, Dr. Martin Luther. (Obare et al., 2009)

The Church of Uganda reportedly crafted a nuanced internal policy to address the complexities of sexual diversity within its communities. Nevertheless, the church publicly presented a more definitive rejection of LGBTQ inclusion. One leader reported, "We sat around and developed a theological response, and it's there. But when it came to public pronouncements by the Archbishop, he did not pronounce on that policy. No, he simply said, 'Church of Uganda is anti-gay' " (Interview 86). This pronouncement reduced the possibility of misinterpretation from Anglican constituents or manipulation by Pentecostal competitors. Concerns about religious competition and domestic symbolic capital appear to have superseded normatively grounded conviction to disproportionately shape the Church of Uganda's public position on LGBTQ inclusion.

I argue that mainline churches invoked strong stances against LGBTQ inclusion to mitigate against the transnational branding liabilities that threatened their domestic symbolic capital. Furthermore, connecting anti-LGBTQ positions to anti-colonial resistance movements buttressed mainlines' reputations as authentic guardians of national identities. This association assuaged accusations that mainlines represent neocolonial entities. Invoking these anti-colonialism narratives allowed Africa's mainline religious leaders to turn transnational LGBTQ-inclusion debates from liabilities into assets. The debate allowed them to denounce their missionary founders and assert their sovereignty and independence from global North benefactors.

The Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, emerged as a leading figure in this dissociation movement. He helped found the global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans network to oppose "modern moves" toward LGBTQ inclusion within the Anglican Communion. Under his founding leadership, the Fellowship amasses influence within the Anglican Communion to counteract the ways in which a "small, economically privileged group of people [in the global North] has sought to subvert the Christian faith and impose their new and false doctrine on the wider community of faithful believers" (Akinola, 2004). Accordingly, Ugandan Anglican Archbishop Henry Orombi framed the Episcopal Church's

LGBTQ inclusion as a new iteration of the "determined imperialism" that undergirded the colonial project (Church of Uganda, 2008). He joined Akinola's resistance to "neocolonial" imperialism:

> Many of us from the two-third[s] world feel that the global [N]orth still seeks to retain its disproportionate power and influence in our Church just as in the world. It is significant that those dioceses most tempted to indulge themselves with unilateral actions, taken without consulting the wider Communion, seem so often to be among those materially most advantaged and to be in the global north... Do we not see here, in the ready assertion of superior wisdom, a new imperialism? (Anglican Communion, 2003)

There is evidence of similar dynamics elsewhere in East Africa. For example, in opposing LGBTQ inclusion, Lutheran Tanzanian leaders similarly articulated their cultural boundaries and self-determination from Europe and the United States:

> [C]ultural or societal changes in some areas such as Europe or America should not be construed as directives to other areas worldwide... because in other locations people have their own values and cultures they may wish to protect and perpetuate. We as Tanzanians/Africans have our own values and cultures, built over the years, that have guided our lifestyles and which accept only marriages between man and woman. (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 2010)

As part of this strategic symbolic resistance, religious leaders reinforced their positions as guardians of theology, national narratives, and even domestic law. A senior official with the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda critiqued foreign leaders' opposition to Uganda's previous Anti-Homosexuality Act:

> The [Ugandan] government is coming up with the legislation and the president of America is concerned about our legislation. What is his interest? The Prime Minister of the [UK] is concerned [with] this legislation. What is his interest?" (Interview 71)

Importantly, this leader recognized that sexual minorities are present within Ugandan communities. Because LGBTQ individuals are neither foreign nor uncommon within Uganda, this leader critiqued foreign involvement to protect sexual minorities as unmerited and unnecessary. According to this official, foreign intervention raised the public salience of anti-LGBTQ attitudes but accomplished little else:

> Even before, without this legislation, we've been living together. They [sexual minorities] are in our compound. They're in our house. They're our brothers. They're our sisters. Nobody talked about it until there was open funding and promotion and people said, 'Why is this coming? Is there a foreign interest?' " (Interview 71)

The theory of strategic symbolic resistance suggests that resistance movements may, at times, inflate ideological attitudes for strategic political gain. Accordingly, one religious leader said church responses to LGBTQ inclusion represented political rather than ideological priorities: "The real story is money, is power... Three things: money, sex, and power" (Interview 86). Similarly, a faith-based regional development practitioner underscored the "important role that religious actors play when it comes to determining [norms and practices] in society. That practitioner reported regret that church leaders' maneuvers elevated the political salience of anti-LGBTQ sentiments: "The whole issue of homosexuality has some very serious divisive power... I'm not proud that we kind-of chickened out of that, but that's the reality" (Interview 69).

In fact, several interviewed religious leaders indicated an openness to adopting policies more inclusive of sexual minorities than their public institutional statements suggested.[20]

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[20] A faith-based development practitioner in Uganda recounted a conversation with a prominent continental Christian leader. That continental leader expressed acceptance of sexual minorities and concern that Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni leveraged the Anti-Homosexuality Act for political purposes. "He [the continental religious leader] told me... 'I don't care what happens in people's bedrooms, I don't have any comment to that.' When the bill now failed... He said, 'I told [religious leaders] in Kampala to stay away, now Museveni has made mockery of the church'" (Interview 74). Another mainline church leader said, "I'm engaged with LGBTI people... I think it's a complete distortion that people should be defin[ed] by [their sexual preferences]. We are human... You can't define identity. No. That is selfish dehumanization" (Interview 86).

However, these leaders stressed that their institutions needed both distance from global-North partners and time to allow communities to develop openness to sexual minorities on their own terms.[21] An Ethiopian scholar suggested that transnationally unaffiliated evangelical institutions managed their ongoing, internal debates about same-sex relationships more productively than did their mainline peers (Interview 19).[22] In short, interview evidence suggests that mainline religious institutions throughout East Africa may maintain a less-definitive rejection of sexual minorities than their public statements indicate.

This suggests that scholars and activists should not assume that a church's public opposition to LGBTQ inclusion accurately represents a revolved, solidified, unwavering position against sexual diversity. More than that, this response may be a strategic rejoinder to religious competitors and a symbolic elevation of mainline church leaders as champions of national narratives. This strategic symbolic resistance protects mainlines from transnational affiliations they fear would damage their institutions' domestic reputations. Such resistance prevents mainlines from being held accountable to those transnational norms which are incongruent with domestic ideas. Accordingly, mainline churches gathered accolades as domestic champions when they invoked anti-colonial resistance to oppose LGBTQ inclusion:

> The other denominations [in Kenya] actually respect the Anglican Church in Kenya for its position... [Those denominations] are very proud that [we] are outspoken and [we] are willing... We returned back money to U.S., that you can take such a bold position... in your poverty (if you want to call it so). Say, "we don't need your riches. We'd rather remain in our poverty but stand for the truth." (Interview 62)

[21] According to one mainline regional leader, "The rate in which [the LGBTQ issue] unfolded within places like the U.S. and the rest of the world was slightly more manageable than it seems to be here. Because, here we have middle-aged and younger generations who are more open-minded but who still live in a society with a large chunk of people for whom that is something unacceptable" (Interview 60). A leader of the Kenyan Evangelical Lutheran Church subtly indicated the possibility for greater LGBTQ-acceptance in the future: "We have people who have the same-sex issues and they have that right. They wanted it to be in the [Kenyan] constitution. The churches and religious groups said, 'not *now*'" (Interview 03, emphasis added).

[22] This scholar nevertheless observed strong anti-LGBTQ perspectives within those indigenous religious institutions.

Despite this ideological ambiguity, religious leaders' statements almost surely shape and reinforce their countries' widespread, public disavowal of sexual diversity. Thus, this strategy of symbolic resistance introduces tangible, disempowering consequences for the sexual minorities within their communities.

*Dissociating from Global North Partners: Examining Variation*

Why did some Anglican and Lutheran churches choose to reinforce their denouncement by dissociating from their LGBTQ-inclusive partners? Why did others remain in partnership despite disagreements? Data from church demographics, budgets, transnational networks, domestic political contexts, and public rhetoric suggest a trend. Larger, institutionally stable churches with less financial dependence upon global North partners appear more likely to dissociate from those partners. Smaller, financially dependent churches appear more likely to remain in partnership. Church population provides one meaningful measure of institutional stability. Larger churches more likely have a cohesive institutional structure and operational agenda, command prominence within their transnational networks, receive stable levels of financial contributions from constituents, and enjoy access to government resources and influence (Haynes, 2004). This institutional and financial support enables those mainline churches to dissociate. On the other hand, institutional weakness—including size; financial dependence; or domestic political instability, civil unrest, or underdevelopment (Haynes, 2004, 68)—likely dissuade churches from dissociating from bilateral partners.

*Anglican Communion*

The Anglican Church of Nigeria first and most prominently dissociated from its global North counterparts. Since its independence in 1979, Nigeria's archbishops focused on expanding church membership and exerting theological and social dominance within Nigeria and the Anglican Communion. They worked to keep "the Church of Nigeria standing tall and taking its rightful place in the Anglican Communion." The church grew significantly under this evangelist theology and "granite determination to take the Gospel of Christ to the nook and crannies of Nigeria" (Church of Nigeria, 2017). The Nigerian church expanded from

twenty-nine dioceses in 1989 to 161 in 2005 (Onwubuariri, 2005). Today, the Church of Nigeria stands as the largest Anglican church in Africa, the second largest in the world, the fastest-growing in the Communion, and among the wealthiest and most influential Anglican churches in Africa (Ward, 2006, 112-35).

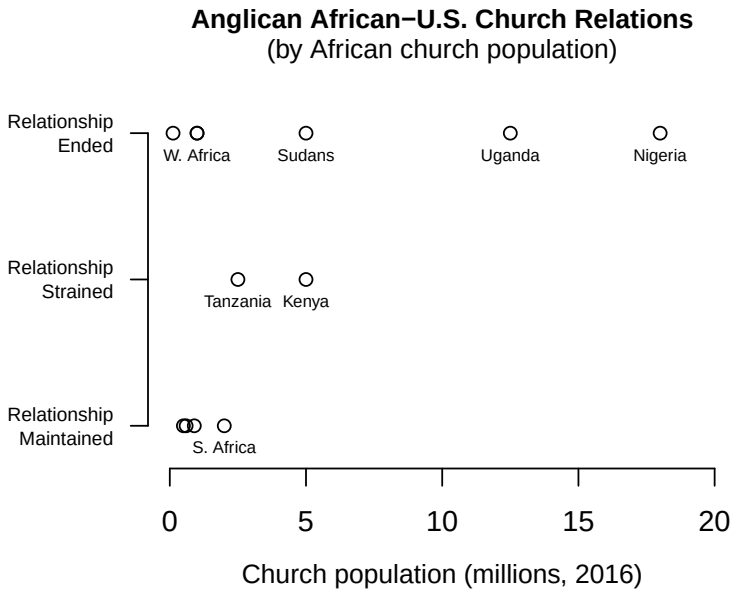
The Church of Nigeria rejected financial contributions (which Nigerian Anglican leaders called "gay money") from the Episcopal Church even before its formal break in 2003 (Virtue, 2000). In June 2003, the Nigerian church demanded that the Episcopal Church "refuse to ratify" the consecration of Bishop-elect Robinson and forestall any similar actions that would "threaten the already fragile relationship that [the Episcopal Church] has with the Anglican Communion worldwide" (Akinola, 2003). When the Church of Nigeria officially dissociated from the U.S. church, it rebuked, "We do not want any money from the Episcopal Church of the United States... We will not, on the altar of money, mortgage our conscience, mortgage our faith, mortgage our salvation" (Crawley, 2004). Archbishop Peter Akinola believed that institutional instability and financial dependence undermined a church's normative autonomy. He established an endowment "with the aim of financing the activities and programmes of the church" (Onwubuariri, 2005) to support less-wealthy African churches who dissociate from LGBTQ-inclusive partners:

> [T]he rich Churches in Europe, America and Canada... have long used their wealth to intimidate the financially weak Churches in Africa. Our boldness in condemning the spiritual bankruptcy of these Churches must be matched by our refusal to receive financial help from them. This means that we must become self-reliant as a matter of urgency so that we will not only meet our own needs locally, but also those of our poor African brethren who have long depended on handouts from the rich Churches of the western world. (Akinola, 2003)

Cross-national evidence supports this theory of institutional stability (measured according to church size and/or financial independence). Larger Anglican churches—in absolute size and relative to their national population—frequently dissociated (Figure 5.3). The moderately-sized churches in Tanzania and Kenya adopted strained relationships. Smaller

churches tended to maintain unencumbered relationships. Table A.8 provides comprehensive demographic data for African churches and their countries in the Anglican Communion.

Figure 5.3: Anglican bilateral U.S.–African church relationships




Anglican church membership population and relationship with U.S. Episcopal Church, among African church members of the Anglican Communion. *Sources*: Public statements and official positions, confirmed by interviews with Anglican leaders from East Africa and the global North. See Table A.8 for details.

The West African Province of the Anglican Church—a notable outlier—looks primarily to the Church of Nigeria (rather than to global-North partners) for financial and institutional support (Ward, 2006, 112-35). This likely made dissociation more viable, if not strategically preferable.

The Episcopal Church of Sudan represents another outlier. Sudan and South Sudan's political instability alongside the church's shifting political access may explain its decision and timing. The Episcopal Church of Sudan initially prioritized efforts to address the social effects of civil war, extreme poverty, and humanitarian crises over the transnational LGBTQ-inclusion debate, stating, "We have much worse things to face" (BBC, 2008). At the time, the church also had limited political access to the predominantly Muslim Sudanese

government in Khartoum. This shifted with South Sudan's independence from Sudan in July 2011. The government of the new, predominantly Christian South Sudan identified the Episcopal Church of Sudan as a trusted civil-society organization. South Sudan's first president, Salva Kiir Mayardit, appointed the church's archbishop to key political positions.[23] This political shift may have provided domestic political support the church needed to dissociate from LGBTQ-inclusive foreign partners. In December 2011—only five months after South Sudan's independence—the Episcopal Church of Sudan dissociated from the U.S. Episcopal Church over LGBTQ inclusion.

*Lutheran World Federation*

As detailed in previous chapters, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the fastest-growing Lutheran World Federation church in the world and the largest LWF church in Africa (Lutheran World Federation, 2011). Mekane Yesus registered its rejection of LGBTQ inclusion before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) voted in 2009 to ordain same-sex partnered clergy. At its 2013 Church Council meeting, Mekane Yesus elected to dissociate from the ELCA on theological and cultural grounds. They reportedly reached this decision after "an intentional theological reflection and deeper search of Scripture as well as legal and cultural perspectives of the Ethiopian Context" (Weber, 2013). The only LWF member to dissociate, Mekane Yesus leaders question their belonging within the network:

> In the LWF itself, it's very hard, it's only Mekane Yesus that speaks out and we are just standing alone in this case and it's a big challenge and sometimes people say... "We are not needed there [in the LWF], they don't need us, we don't fit there, so let's get out." (Interview 42)

To date, no other LWF church in Africa dissociated from the ELCA. In most cases, the actions of African LWF churches confirm the theory this chapter advances. Most LWF

[23]South Sudan's President Salva Kiir appointed Anglican Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul to chair both the 2012 Presidential Committee on Peace, Reconciliation, and Tolerance in the Jonglei State, and the 2013 National Reconciliation Process Committee (Zulu, 2013).

churches have small membership populations, which is likely associated with reduced institutional stability and increased foreign dependency. They would therefore be unlikely to dissociate from the ELCA. Table A.9 provides comprehensive demographic data for African churches and their countries in the Lutheran World Federation.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is a notable outlier, however. The Tanzanian Lutheran church is the second-largest Lutheran church in Africa. Nevertheless, Tanzanians elected to keep the ELCA as a close partner. This is likely due to the Tanzanian church's disproportionately extensive networks with the ELCA. Individual ELCA synods maintain far more bilateral companionship relationships with Tanzanian Lutherans than they do any other church in the continent. As a result, ELCA members make more district-based investments in Tanzania (including direct financial support) than they do in any other African Lutheran church (Figure 5.4). Tanzania's disproportionate access to American resources likely overshadowed its internal institutional stability and thus reduced its incentives to dissociate from the ELCA.[24]

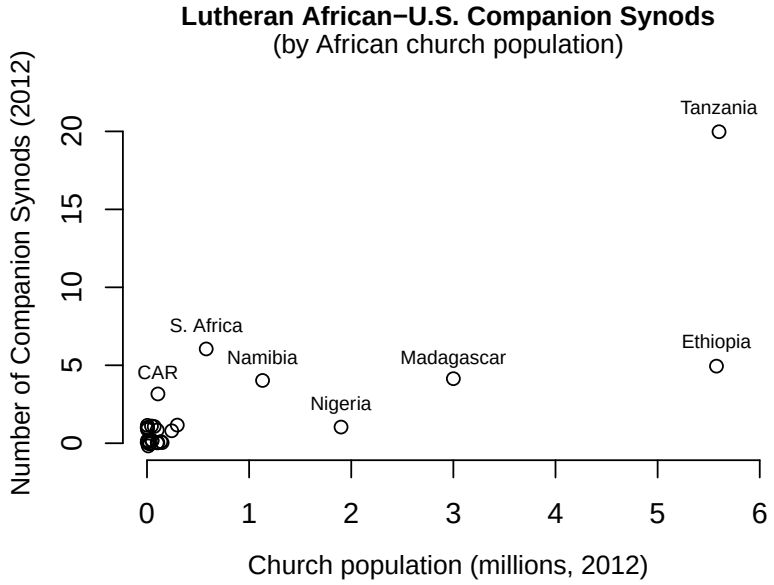
### *5.4 Conclusion*

This chapter argued that African churches responded to transnational LGBTQ-inclusionary policies with a strategy of symbolic resistance. Mainline churches faced the possibility of being perceived as pro-LGBTQ, neocolonial institutions. In post-colonial countries with pronounced religious competition and widespread rejection of sexual diversity, this affiliation threatened to undermine mainlines' symbolic capital. To counteract this threat, mainline leaders invoked anti-colonial symbolism to denounce their transnational partners' LGBTQ inclusion. In doing so, religious leaders elevated themselves as guardians of their religion and their nation. Institutionally stable, financially independent churches reinforced this resistance by dissociating from their global-North partners entirely.

The theory of strategic symbolic resistance developed in this chapter demonstrates how the multiple transnational, domestic, and internal pressures on global-South institutions

[24]The research presented here cannot address whether the church in Tanzania responded primarily to financial considerations themselves. Alternatively, Tanzanian Lutherans' interpersonal relationships may have primarily dissuaded Tanzanian Lutherans from dissociating.

Figure 5.4: Lutheran bilateral U.S.–African church partnerships




Membership population and number of companion-synod relationships with U.S. Lutheran Church (ELCA), among African church members of the Lutheran World Federation. *Sources*: Lutheran World Federation, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. See Table A.9 for detail.

(like churches) coalesce to undermine the rights of marginalized populations. LGBTQ politics served as the breaking point for mainline churches strained by these competing influences. However, similar strains are evident as East African religious institutions respond to their female leaders' demands for access to leadership roles (Chapter 4). Nor are these dynamics limited to religious institutions. Political and social actors throughout the continent continue to conflate LGBTQ rights with global-North incursions to justify rights-based exclusions. Tanzanian President John Magufuli's crackdown on foreign-funded health-care workers and LGBTQ activists provides a notable recent example.[25] Regardless

[25]President Magufuli's policies and rhetoric associate same-sex practices with foreign assistance, international nongovernmental organizations, and foreign product imports (Fallon, 2017; Ng'wanakilala, 2017). This dynamic is not limited to Africa. Actors around the world continue to exploit LGBTQ politics to oppose "western" interference. For example, Russian opponents to LGBTQ rights justify the government's recent ban of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" as political defenses of "traditional" values against "western" incursion (Chan, 2017; Remnick, 2013).

of whether anti-LGBTQ sentiments primarily motivate these actions—or whether actors strategically employ LGBTQ politics to symbolically express self-determination from neo-colonial interference—transnational forces clearly introduce easily mobilized mechanisms for resisting human rights.

Tellingly, the internationally heralded LGBTQ-rights activist, former Anglican Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, reported that the plight of LGBTQ Ugandans—not exposure to transnational ideas—inspired him to support Ugandan's sexual minorities (Interview 77). The Ugandan origins of Senyonjo's dedication to LGBTQ rights provides a crucial reminder that dialogue ultimately happens between individuals, not through the terrain of disembodied exchanges of words under the auspices of amorphous transnational ideas (Diagne, 2011). And in order to achieve a meaningful dialogue of cultures, individuals must be enabled to embrace, rather than sideline, their own cultural roots.[26] Human-rights movements may be most likely to change local hearts and minds when they can effectively distance themselves from transnational agendas and champion the principles of equality and recognition embedded within their own social, theological, and political frameworks.

*Supplementary Information*

Appendix Tables A.8 and A.9 provide demographic data of African churches in the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation. They include country-level measure of LGBTQ attitudes and religiosity (Afrobarometer, 2016). Figure A.2 presents Afrobarometer's LGBTQ-attitude country means.

[26]New attempts at dialogue requires that African interlocutors "dive down to the roots of our race and build on our deep reserves" of "African-ness" (Diagne, 2011).

# Chapter 6

# CONCLUSION

## *6.1 Project summary*

This research project examined East African mainline churches' varied receptivity to three transnational rights agendas: eradicating gender-based violence, increasing women's access to leadership positions, and cultivating LGBTQ inclusion. This analysis provided answers to three specific questions. First, why have religious leaders emerged as governors of gender relations and sexual behavior? Second, once religious leaders emerged as responsible for governing these dynamics, why did mainlines adopt, advance, and champion some transnational agendas, while publicly and vociferously opposing others? Third, what were the consequences of these church responses for marginalized communities, particularly women and sexual minorities?

East African mainline churches are among the region's strongest and most influential civil-society organizations. In theory, they represent great promise as venues for integrating transnational human-rights commitments into their communities. However, although mainlines are officially influential, independent, and autonomous institutions, they face considerable pressures that limit their abilities to adopt and successfully implement changes to their constituents' attitudes and behavior. Mainlines face pressures from their transnational partners, from their state governments, from their peer religious institutions, and from within their own organizations (for example, from clergy, constituents, and sparring elite leaders). These competing pressures explain churches' various responses to transnational rights agendas.

This analysis argued that transnational influences coalesce with domestic religion-state relations to commission religious leaders to govern gender relations and sexual behavior. As prominent and influential civil-society organizations, East African mainline churches provide a variety of services upon which state actors rely. However, mainlines also up-

hold commitments to democratic processes, governmental transparency, and human-rights protections. Church leaders who voice these commitments threaten to expose individual politicians' anti-democratic behavior or to undermine state-government institutions.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that state actors respond to churches' social influence by simultaneously imposing two distinct, inconsistent expectations about churches' political activity. States promote a *nomos* of religion-state separation that excludes churches from critiquing states' administrative failures. Meanwhile, state actors authorize church leaders to take the lead on modeling norms and state policies that govern the often-contentious terrain of gender relations and sexual behavior. These "dual registers" of religious-state relations quell a potential source of state criticism (mainline churches) while relieving the state from wading into divisive social wars. Transnational denominational networks reinforce churches as governors of gender and sexuality by educating and funding East African mainlines as venues for gender-based development work.

Chapters 3–5 answered this project's second and third questions. They argued that mainline churches respond to strong, relatively uncontentious global commitments to eradicate gender-based violence by adopting clear, public anti-violence national policies (Chapter 3). Because these policies do not explicitly threaten male church leaders' public positional authority, church anti-violence policies are largely undisputed at the national church level. This lack of contention strengthens church commitments to anti-violence and positions them to integrate anti-GBV norms into their grassroots constituents' social and theological ethos.

Chapter 4 argued that women's-rights activists in Uganda and Ethiopia—influenced by transnational forces and movements—sought and achieved women's access to church-based leadership roles. However, the question of ordaining women as church leaders remains largely unresolved on the transnational level. Ordaining women also challenges elite male church leaders, who have enjoyed preferential access to high-profile leadership roles. Women's leadership efforts therefore face pressures from competing transnational, domestic, and internal factions seeking to either advance or undermine women's access to influential leadership roles. These pressures introduce fissures in women's mobilization movements. As a result, female leaders continue to encounter institutional and interpersonal challenges. Women also absorb accusations that they represented a "western" and "radical" form of feminism that

could damage or dismantle their families and communities. Women's leadership movements therefore elucidate how transnational denominational networks exert pressures that both advance but also undermine rights-based agendas.

Competing church pressures came into harsher relief when global-North churches drew East African mainlines into transnational debates about LGBTQ inclusion (Chapter 5). As global disagreements over LGBTQ rights rage, East Africa's sexual minorities and their advocates become increasingly targeted for adulterating domestic norms with "western" secular practices. Mainlines' peer religious institutions seek to associate mainlines with their LGBTQ-inclusive transnational church partners and accuse mainlines of caving to neocolonial pressures. Mainlines respond with a strategy of adopting symbolically strong statements that resist and disavow LGBTQ inclusion. Doing so reinforces (and potentially over-emphasizes) mainlines' existing anti-LGBTQ policies. This strategy of symbolic resistance, in turn, threatens to solidify anti-LGBTQ attitudes among mainlines' constituents. Evidence suggests that church leaders invoke a similar (although more subtle) strategy of symbolic resistance to women's empowerment efforts.

Together, these cases demonstrated how transnational, domestic, and internal pressures variously coalesced and competed to shape mainline churches' responses to transnational rights-based agendas. These pressures also explain why churches are often limited in their abilities to affect substantive changes in the behaviors of their communities and in the cultures of their institutions. This study therefore identified mainline churches as strong yet bounded civil-society organizations at the center of transnational and domestic efforts to diffuse international human-rights norms into grassroots practices.

### *6.2 Contributions to transnational rights-based frameworks*

Scholars of transnational rights-based diffusion efforts typically focus on how global-North secular organizations transport international standards to communities who live far removed from the spaces in which norms are established. Such efforts face considerable difficulties transposing international standards into sustainable shifts in local policies and practices. This is partially because targeted communities perceive imported standards as foreign ideas that threaten to usurp or dismantle communities' existing social fabrics. Building on this

existing research, the analysis presented here demonstrated that mainline churches—which have meaningful, authentic affiliations with both transnational and local identities—can circumvent some of these transnational barriers. In doing so, this analysis demonstrated the unique promise that mainline churches pose to efforts to infuse transnational rights-agendas within church communities. This project made four specific contributions that advance scholarly knowledge of transnational human-rights movements.

First, this study placed mainline churches at the center of transnational–domestic politics. It demonstrated the crucial role that mainline churches play in formulating and implementing social policies at all layers of political analysis. This crucial role allows churches to serve as effective conduits between transnational and domestic political arenas. Churches can catalyze the interactions between their multiple layers of political influence to circumvent some of the liabilities, inefficiencies, or weaknesses that secular-based international development efforts encounter (Dionne, 2017; Merry, 2006*a*).

Second, this study complicated transnationalism's primary framework, which assumes that human-rights norms are typically generated in powerful countries or international institutions and exported to recipient actors in peripheral countries. By examining transnational denominational behavior, this analysis disrupted assumptions that transnational norms are developed unidirectionally. Instead, East African religious leaders are involved in establishing their transnational denominations' policies. Those contributions are shaped by the lived experiences of East African leaders, their families, and their constituents, rather than by messages from elite global actors. Recall the bishop whose son's AIDS-related death prompted him to action, or the bishop for whom the marginalized LGBTQ youth in his congregation activated his inclusionary agenda. Indeed, religious leaders working in these transnational venues speak less in terms of "receiving" pre-established norms from foreign partners, and more as benefiting from venues for collective, interactive transnational engagement:

> We're talking about the global village. We're talking about people listening to radios, televisions but also [acting] out of [their own] experience[s]. People are able to make choices... At the end of the day, it is about you (the individual)

> and your God. That kind of [global] exposure empowers the local people, the individuals, to make decisions in their interest as long as does not impact other people or their church. (Interview 71)

Third, this study modeled a treatment of domestic institutions as complex networks shaped by their own internal dimensions of power, exploitation, and contestation. East African religious institutions are not unitary entities. Nor should they be treated as domestic "recipients" of transnational norms as cohesive, uniform institutions. Instead, this analysis examined churches as disparate networks of groups and individuals who maintain distinct and often conflicting values and interests. Mainlines' national elites (which are the focus of this research) respond differently to transnational agendas than do their local clergy leaders. National elites must therefore consider how their local clergy and constituents will understand, adopt, or subvert national church agendas. Meanwhile, national female leaders adopt different priorities than do their male counterparts. In aggregate, the women interviewed for this research were more willing—and eager—to invest church resources into advancing women's rights, relative to their male colleagues. Female church leaders reported feeling empowered by transnational women's rights dialogues, even as many of their male counterparts remained reticent of, or resistant to, transnational women's empowerment agendas. This disaggregated approach demonstrated the ways in which internal actors work at cross-purposes to reinforce or contest power within domestic spaces (McCann, 2012).

Fourth, this study demonstrated how transnational connections can become liabilities that undermine rights-based agendas, particularly when those agendas challenge powerful domestic actors' positional power. Individuals who enjoy disproportionate identity-based access to power might accuse marginalized communities of adulterating national narratives or religious beliefs with destructive "foreign" concepts. These accusations limit the effects that transnational women's rights agendas can have in challenging patriarchal domestic institutions. In short, East Africa's marginalized communities seeking access to autonomy, influence, or recognition shoulder the burden of these transnational networks or ideas. This research therefore contributed to a burgeoning body of research that exposes the heavily circumscribed effects that transnational women's rights agendas can have on improving the

lives of women and sexual minorities living in patriarchal global-South contexts (Berry, 2018; Cronin-Furman, N.d.; Hughes and Tripp, 2015; Lake, 2018; Pierotti, Lake and Lewis, 2018; Tripp, 2015).

### *6.3 Enduring colonial legacies*

I conclude by highlighting the colonial missionary legacies that endure within two institutions at the center of this project's analysis: transnational denominational networks and East African religion-state relations. The transnational politics examined in this research exposed the inequalities that percolate within contemporary transnational denominational networks. In these denominational networks, past missionaries (and colonizers) and their historically racialized colonial subjects join together as apparent equals. Yet despite denominational claims of equality in a post-colonial era, church members of transnational mainline networks represent considerable economic inequality, much of which the colonial era solidified. Today, African churches remain at least partially dependent upon their white global-North benefactors to light their sanctuaries, pay their clergy, and fund the development programs their communities need. East African church leaders report that these colonial legacies and economic dependencies impede the development of their churches' own theological approaches,[1] reduce incentives for them to develop their own fiscal independence (Interview 19), and render mainlines vulnerable to both foreign influences[2] and to criticisms from other domestic churches that they themselves are colonial institutions (Meyer, 1998).

Furthermore, East Africa's mainline leaders and constituents continue to harbor sensitivities or resentments for their longstanding dependency on global-North partners. The transnational debates over LGBTQ inclusion and, to a lesser extent, over women's rights,

[1]One Ugandan Anglican leader said this missionary history has impeded his church from developing its own theological identity: "The Church of Uganda does not have a political theology... The way Anglicanism developed in Africa was fashioned along Anglicanism in the [United Kingdom] because [the Church of England's Missionary Society] was the mission body. We really, as a church, have been incapacitated in developing a political theology [of our own]" (Interview 86).

[2]An American employee of the Anglican Church in Kenya said that Kenyan church leaders are "very sensitive" to any attempt from churches in the United Kingdom or the United States "to manipulate them." He said that past interventions from the global North have "ended badly, due to colonial sentiments." He elaborated that Kenya's Anglicans "do not have a colonial chip on their shoulder. They have taken what they saw as good from the colonial era and adapted or made those things their own. No chip, but they [are sensitive to] those kinds of interventions" (Interview 08).

have revealed colonial-legacy resentments and unveiled the ever-present, deeply felt racial divisions that continue to percolate within these global networks. Indeed, debates over LGBTQ inclusion prompted what Anglican bishops described as "raw," divisive fights that exposed transnational denominations' foundational cleavages and founding sins: "Black vs. White, Imperialist vs. The Natives, North vs. South" (quoted in Chapter 1). Debates over LGBTQ inclusion thus introduced venues for East African actors to resist colonial legacies and to claim theological superiority over the global-North leaders that still reign economically superior among transnational "equals." It is possible that, without these racialized economic dependencies (to say nothing of African homophobia's colonial origins), efforts to advance rights and recognition for East Africa's women and sexual minorities would meet considerably less resistance than they do today.

This project's dual registers of religion-state relations also represent colonial legacies. These dual registers, which authorize religious leaders to govern "private" issues and exclude religious leaders from "public" policy matters, mirror the patterns of governance common throughout colonial sub-Saharan Africa. Comaroff (1997) describes how colonists in southern Africa anchored colonial legal orders in private property rights. They denied those rights to those who did not abide by the gender roles, sexual behaviors, and family structures colonial missionaries deemed acceptable.[3] Scholars trace post-colonial states' contemporary hybrid legal systems, which often divide political and personal legal norms, to these colonial administrative distinctions (Lazarus-Black and Hirsch, 2012; Merry, 2003*a*).

These dual registers are not unique to post-colonial contexts, however. Assumptions of religion-state separation infuse social ethos about state/non-state boundaries throughout the world. In the United States, for example, religious ideologies enjoy considerable authority to shape the normative parameters that state laws and policies uphold. For evidence, one need look no further than the U.S. Supreme Court's authorization of religious actors' discrimination against those the religious actor deems incompatible with that actor's beliefs. Meanwhile, states restrict religious institutions from challenging the state's structural

[3]Colonial administrators often used these Victorian Christian expectations about gender and sexuality to justify constraining colonized subjects or excluding them from accessing legal protections (Comaroff, 1997; Gupta, 2008).

neoliberal bases of power. States authorize the boundaries of religious institutions' political functions and enforce those boundaries with the threat of state violence (Cover, 1986).

In sum, the East Africa-based research analyzed here does not only expose the enduring legacies of colonial administrative rule. It also exposes the fallacies about religion-state separations that are embedded within neoliberal state orders around the world, and the ways in which post-colonial states absorb expectations that they comply with the "image" of the state established by the world's most powerful players.

### *6.4 Future research*

This study lays a strong groundwork for at least four valuable avenues for future research dedicated to further understanding and specifying transnational–domestic church politics. First, this study introduced dual registers of religion-state relations as the framework within which East African churches manage their transnational–domestic negotiations. Further investigation could elaborate upon this framework with detailed empirical evidence of the contours of these dynamics. What are the processes by which religious leaders directly or indirectly shape their state's gender- or sexuality-related policies and priorities? When and where do religious actors engage in quiet diplomacy and when do they publicly critique their state actors? More generally, what are the empirical conditions that dictate religious actors' proportional power, relative to their state institutions?

Second, this study focused on the attitudes and perspectives held by elite religious leaders based in the national and regional hubs of Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and Kampala. How accurate are elite leaders' assessments about the effectiveness of their approaches in local, rural contexts? For example, Chapter 3 represented the perspectives of elite religious and secular leaders. In aggregate, these perspectives suggested that religious institutions are uniquely effective conduits for anti-GBV rights-based agendas. Are faith-based interventions actually yielding these perceived local outcomes? Alternatively, does the quantitative evidence suggest a disconnect between what national elites believe and the empirical realities on the ground? Future research should track the impact that national church policies have on both gender-based violence outcomes and on broader gendered attitudes among their own religious constituents, relative to non-religious or cross-religious constituents. Al-

though it is difficult to isolate religious influences from other social or cultural influences on social behavior (United Nations, 2018*b*, 34), analyses of survey data from the U.S. Agency for International Development's Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and from the Afrobarometer may enable closer examination of the associations between religious identity, transnational exposure, attitudes about gender, and gender-based violence outcomes.

Beyond examining consistencies or disconnects between elite religious leaders and rural-based outcomes, these data could be used to answer several additional questions: What is the relationship between religious identities and reported prevalence of FGM and other forms of gender-based violence? Does individual or community-level religious identity mediate reductions in gender-based violence? Do adherents to religious groups that are members of transnational denominational networks exhibit lower rates of gender-based violence or more egalitarian gender norms? Answering these questions would provide evidence either that confirms the accuracy of the attitudes and sentiments held by national religious elites, or that challenges the extent to which elite religious leaders sufficiently understand (or are willing to volunteer information about) the social dynamics in their grassroots communities.

Third, this study argued that multiple transnational, domestic, and local pressures together shape church policies and behavior outcomes. What are the unique effects of each of these pressures on church outcomes? For example, Chapter 5 examined how these various pressures coalesced to shape church responses to transnational LGBTQ debates. Future research could seek to accomplish several tasks: to isolate the effects of counter-transnational, strategic symbolic resistance narratives (relative to preexisting domestic beliefs) on public LGBTQ attitudes; to isolate the effects of domestic religious competition, relative to transnational politics, in shaping church policies and public pronouncements; and to systematically understand how and why global-South actors perceive LGBTQ rights to be foreign concepts, as well as to understand the dynamic connection between anti-colonialism and anti-LGBTQ attitudes.

Finally, this study has demonstrated forms of anti-imperialist backlashes against both women and sexual minorities. Future research should seek to examine the stability of these backlashes. In the United States, warnings of backlash likely overemphasized the stability

of anti-LGBTQ counter-mobilization efforts.[4] The same may prove true in parts of Africa. Indeed, global attention to the continent's anti-LGBTQ laws and attitudes overshadow evidence of increased public support for sexual minorities (Nwaubani, 2017); the perseverance of LGBTQ movements (McClelland, 2012); the productive links between international actors and local LGBTQ-rights activists (Currier, 2012, 121-50); and the considerable variation in LGBTQ-related laws, attitudes, and practices across and within Africa's extensively diverse countries (Carroll and Mendos, 2017, 81-107). If Africa's mainline church leaders are any indication, these backlashes may be less entrenched—and more symbolic—than they initially appear. However, by taking staunch, symbolic anti-LGBTQ positions, religious leaders present, model, disseminate, and reinforce popular exclusionary sentiments. Thus, their strategy of symbolic resistance creates the possibility for tangible, material, and disempowering consequences for sexual minorities in their congregations and communities.

I close with a word of caution to international actors seeking to support the world's marginalized women or sexual minorities. Transnational networks, especially those that reflect colonial inequalities, introduce both opportunities and liabilities for Africa's marginalized communities. Transnational collaboration can undoubtedly provide invaluable support to domestic rights-based movements. However, by virtue of long-standing global economic inequalities, social and political institutions in the global South face multiple, competing pressures from transnational and domestic sources alike. In this environment, human-rights norms that challenge domestic ideas offer tantalizing opportunities for global-South actors to strategically employ a symbolic, anti-colonial resistance to powerful global-North leaders.

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[4]U.S. social conservatives' counter-mobilization against LGBTQ rights anticipated and catalyzed legal backlashes for disproportionate impact (Dorf and Tarrow, 2014, 461-66). In reality, public-opinion surveys provide little evidence of long-term anti-LGBTQ backlash (Bishin et al., 2016, 631-33) and some evidence that inclusive laws reduce anti-LGBTQ attitudes (Flores and Barclay, 2016, 51-53). However, this "no-backlash" research predates the anti-LGBTQ sentiments and policy proposals that gained traction following the 2016 U.S. presidential election of Donald Trump (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017).

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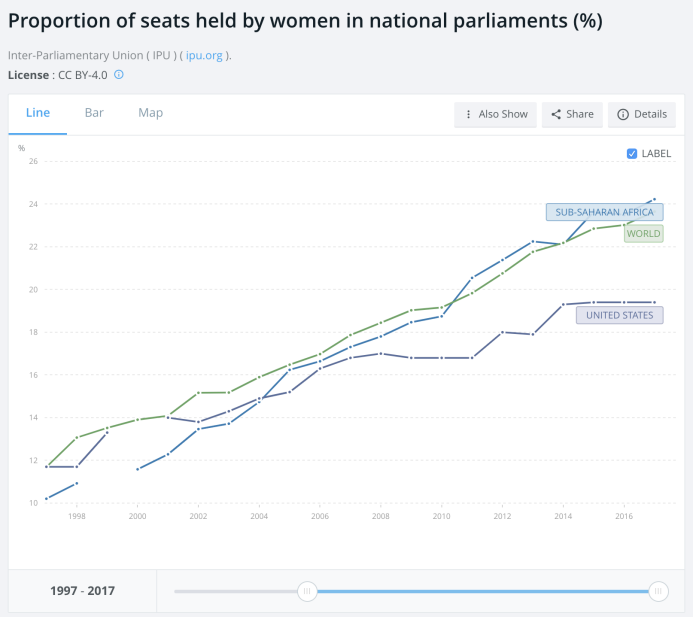
# Appendix A

# ADDITIONAL DATA AND EVIDENCE

## *A.1 Chapter 1: Supportive evidence*

Figure A.1: Women's proportional seats in national parliaments




*Sources*: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017); World Bank (2019).
Figure constructed by World Bank Open Data (www.data.worldbank.org).

## *A.2 Chapter 2: Supportive evidence*

Table A.1: Dates of independence for states and mainline churches

| Country | National Independence | Mainline Church | Church Independence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Burundi | July 1962 | Anglican Church of Burundi | 1961,[1] 1965[2] |
| | | Conference of Catholic Bishops of Burundi | NA |
| Ethiopia | NA | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Lutheran) | 1963[3] |
| | | Assembly of Catholic Hierarchs of Ethiopia and Eritrea | NA |
| Kenya | Dec 1963 | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya | 1970[3] |
| | | Anglican Church of Kenya | 1955[2] |
| | | Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops | 1976[5] |
| Rwanda | July 1962 | Province de L'Eglise Anglicane au Rwanda | 1961,[1] 1965[2] |
| | | Conference of Catholic Bishops of Rwanda | 1980[4] |
| Tanzania | Dec 1961 | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania | 1964[3] |
| | | Anglican Church of Tanzania | 1970[2] |
| | | Tanzania Episcopal Conference (Catholic) | 1956,[4] 1980[5] |
| Uganda | Oct 1962 | Church of the Province of Uganda (Anglican) | 1961[1] |
| | | Uganda Episcopal Conference (Catholic) | 1960,[4] 1974[5] |

[1] Inaugurated as independent Anglican Province; [2] First national Anglican bishop; [3] Joined Lutheran World Federation as independent church; [4] Established as independent church; [5] Episcopate approved by the Holy See

Table A.2: Ecumenical and interfaith coalitions: Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda

| Country | Body | Members |
|---|---|---|
| Ethiopia | Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia | Ethiopian Orthodox Church |
| | | Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council |
| | | Ethiopian Catholic Church |
| | | Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia |
| | | Ethiopian Seventh Day Adventist Church |
| | | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus |
| | | Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Churches |
| Kenya | National Council of Churches of Kenya[1] | African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa |
| | | Anglican Church of Kenya |
| | | Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya |
| | | Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya |
| | | Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya |
| | | Methodost Church in Kenya |
| | | Presbyterian Church of East Africa |
| | Inter-Religious Council of Kenya | *National Council of Churches of Kenya members* |
| | | Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops |
| | | Evangelical Alliance of Kenya |
| | | Org of African Instituted Churches Kenya |
| | | Seventh-Day Adventist Church |
| | | Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims |
| | | National Muslim Leaders Forum |
| | | Hindu Council of Kenya |
| Uganda | Uganda Joint Christian Council | Church of Uganda (Anglican) |
| | | Roman Catholic Church |
| | | Uganda Orthodox Church |
| | Inter-Religious Council of Uganda | *Uganda Joint Christian Council members* |
| | | Uganda Muslim Supreme Council |
| | | Seventh-Day Adventist Uganda Union |
| | | Born Again Faith in Uganda |
| | | Nat'l Alliance of Pentecostal & Evangelical Churches |

[1] For complete list, see www.ncck.org

## *A.3 Chapter 3: Supportive evidence*

Table A.3: Ethiopian religious institutions' statements against FGM

| **Religious Institution** | **Statement** |
|---|---|
| Evangelical Ch Fellowship of Eth (January 2009) | The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia declared that it "condemns Female Genital Mutilation because it is "unbiblical and a barbaric act,... destroys a part of the body created by God,... degrades women,... is contrary to the divine principle of parental love,... diminishes pleasure for the woman... and causes unbearable pain and suffering. We hereby declare zero-tolerance on Female Genital Mutilation! |
| Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (September 2011) | We religious fathers and leaders will teach that female genital mutilation, early marriage, abduction and other harmful practices committed against women have severe consequences on the lives of our daughters, sisters, and mothers. Such practices have no support in any religious teaching. We have reached an agreement for religious admonition to be administered on all people committing such practices in violation of the call. |
| Eth Orthodox Tewahedo Church (October 2011) | The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church condemns female genital mutilation as it contradicts with the religious principles of the church. [It] will exert maximum effort to abandon female genital mutilation... Active participation of religious fathers [is] crucial to strengthen its campaign against female genital mutilation and gender-based violence... We hereby declare zero-tolerance to female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence. |
| Ethiopian Catholic Church (February 2013) | We declare that... every single human being is created in the image and likeness of God [and that the] Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that human life is sacred... The Ethiopian Catholic Church will defend the rights of vulnerable innocent infants, girls and women against the psychological, social and physical trauma of FGM... [It] strictly forbids all its members to practice FGM. |
| Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church | EKHCDC has been denouncing the practice since early 1950's through the local congregations though its practical and organized project based activities have started in 2000. EKHCDC regards the practice as a sin that deserves punishment. It is a violation to the Word of God. EKHCDC understands that there is no a biblical background to support the female circumcision. Therefore, it denounces the practice as a sin. *Romans 6:23*. |
| Eth Muslim Development Agency (2014) | Abducting a woman forcefully and marrying her without her consent is a forbidden act in Islam. It is also a criminal act. Her family and she have to give consent for marriage (Nikah). Any act that is conducted in between is considered as sinful (*haram*). |

*Source*: Norwegian Church Aid (2016)

Table A.4: Religion's role in addressing GBV practices

| Organization | Quote |
|---|---|
| **Ethiopia** | |
| Norwegian Church Aid (Interview 50) | In Ethiopia, religion plays a significant role in people's lives. More than 96.7% of the population is a follower of a certain religious denomination (CSA, 2007). In this regard, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) have a broad reach to mobilize the society. They are firmly rooted in communities, having a strong trust and the ability to influence the attitude and behavior of their constituencies. They not only provide spiritual guidance to their followers, they are also at the forefront in delivering social services. Religious leaders of the different faiths are affiliated with all age groups of the society. People rely on them for guidance on many personal and family matters. Due to this, working with faith based actors has a promising potential to bring lasting and sustainable change to end harmful practices; female genital mutilation and child, forced and early marriage. (Norwegian Church Aid, 2016) |
| | Religious institutions have significant influence over community members and have strong grassroots structures, credibility, and capacity in mobilizing their constituents for abandonment of harmful traditional practices. (Norwegian Church Aid, 2017, 10) |
| | [NCA projects] prioritize partnerships with the religion most prominent in the area... [We] work with theological college[s], work with local congregations... When need in population is very great, we use religion. |
| Addis Ababa Women's Assoc (Interview 44) | [Religion is] the most dominant, strongest institution in the country. |
| Inter-Religious Council of Eth (Interview 27) | If you change in this nation, if you change the attitude of religious leaders, the society will change it because they respect their Religious Fathers. If things came from the Religious Father, that is acceptable in the society. The main challenge is to change the mind of the Religious Fathers. If you do that part good, things will go very smooth [sic]. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Harmful Trad'l Practices Office (Interview 56) | They [religious leaders] are community leaders, and they are believed by the community. The word of these people is accepted by the community. Because they say that they have charismatic authority... These people are accepted and trusted by the people. What they say will be accepted totally by the community so that discussing with these people and gaining their support of people is an advantages.<br><br>Religious Institutions has its own structures. Federal level, Regional level, Zonal levels and Woreda levels. Every time, whenever we go down to the grass roots, there is [inaudible] you have more information and you have the capacity to have the truth and will be aware about something. As far as you go down to the grass root, that [knowledge] is always decreasing. |
| **Uganda** | |
| Inter-Religious Council of Ug (Interview 71) | We [IRCU] are as big as the country itself. In every village, we are there. |
| Dutch development (ICCO, Interview 74) | The voice of the Church is very much respected... The moment something is talked about in the Church, now society will notice that. [People will think], "Oh, even the Church is talking about it. We heard it today even at the mosque so it's serious." It actually increases the awareness potential of the issues... They have the prophetic voice and the reason why we're putting so much effort here is when we see how the Church was manipulated in conflict in Congo, in Rwanda, in DRC. Just to say that you can't just be manipulated when things are going wrong, you can also be manipulated to fix the problem.<br><br>[Secular development groups enter a community, implement a clearly defined task, and leave, whereas the] church will always be there. |
| Anglican Church of Uganda (Interview 85) | If you talk about gender-based violence, especially when it comes to domestic violence, the church is very keen on that because the church's realm of operation is a family. When there is a problem there, they are very concerned. When we started talking about domestic violence, then we would also talk about inevitably gender-based violence. We cannot talk about gender-based violence unless we understand what gender is all about in the first place. We go back to the definitions and understanding these terms and that kind of thing. That is why we have come up with things like this because now we have with UNFPA for example, the church came up with something like that. |

National Association of Women Organization in Uganda (Interview 82)

Churches, religious institutions play a very big role in the lives of women. We talked about violence against women and girls and in the Districts where we work because religion has an influence on people. We work with religious leaders and we implement the projects in partnership with the District Networks. We actually build their capacities and then they are the ones who do the implementation, the mobilization, the advocacy and all that... We train the women groups. We also train the different institutions that we feel have a stake in the lives of women. Religious leaders are part of that, and they work as advocates to reduce violence against women and girls.

There are areas where the Church is very effective like violence against women, education, you find they play a key role because if you are working with the Church, they are going to pursue. The religious leaders are going to pursue, they will follow up the cases, they will talk to the parishioners and try to make sure that they are doing the right thing... You can go to a District and you decide to work with the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, with the Muslims, or whichever faith and they will support you especially when you are looking at those rights and you are not doing anything that violates their faith. They will support you and they'll make sure that they will do their role.

In terms of violence against women and girls, education, if you wanted to do anything on economic empowerment for women with the religious institutions, they will support you. They will support you, they will not say, 'No,' they will support you.

The religious institutions have a big role to play. I'm also aware that religious institutions have access to funding. With funding from religious institutions, we could address some of these issues with the religious institutions in the different communities.

Churches are grounded and they're there to stay... [and some] have the capacity to be able to deliver those projects.

Ugandans are very religious, religious leaders are influential everywhere.

You find that when the woman is battered in the home, some of them will choose that I am not going to go to the police, but I'm going to report this to a religious leader. Then it will be dealt with at that level.

| | |
|---|---|
| | You will find that the religious institutions play a big role. In terms of mediation, in terms of advocacy to encourage people, to tell people, it's wrong to beat up another person. It's wrong to abuse women and girls. That makes a very big difference because then because will people believe so much in religion. They find that the message that is coming from either their Church or their mosques is more influential than a community liaison officer of the police going to talk to them. |
| **Regional** | |
| Norwegian Church Aid (Kenya, Interview 69) | The main opinion shapers in the community are religious leaders and traditional leaders. Government is more seen as a law enforcer. That's why even when you do put in laws, if you do not get the buy-in of these critical groups, the laws are viewed as punitive." One must recognize "the important role that religious actors play when it comes to determining a lot of things in society. |
| TICAH (secular NGO, Interview 66) | Religious leaders at the local level are our assets... We get a lot of support from religious leaders, because they have encountered gender-related practices that need to be addressed at the local level. |
| Retired British Catholic Priest (Interview 06) | [In Sudan / South Sudan,] there was no U.N., no civil society, no NGOs. The church was the only institutional presence there so the church remained on the ground when everybody else had left... People looked to the church for leadership because there was no other leadership. Even non-Christians, even Muslims, even followers of traditional religion would tend to look to the church for leadership.<br><br>[The churches in Sudan] provided services like health and education, which they had always provided. It added humanitarian relief. To some extent, it became a resolver of local conflicts. It became a protector to some extent because many of the armed factions would moderate their behavior in the presence of the church. The church gained huge credibility and huge moral authority because of that. |

Quotes selected from interviews conducted in Fall 2015.

## *A.4 Chapter 4: Supportive evidence*

Table A.5: Anglican bishops' attitudes about female clergy

| **Bishop** | **Quote** |
|---|---|
| **Supportive** | |
| Bp Gandiya (Zimbabwe) | Those who oppose it say that Christ was male and the disciples were all male, which is not consistent with the biblical teachings in Genesis that talk about the creation of both male and female which to me grants equal status to both sexes. |
| Archbp Ernest (Indian Oc) | I feel that women are already in the ministry and my church accepts that and we even ordain them as priests. |
| Bp Seoka (South Africa) | We have female priests and as a matter of fact we intend to make them bishops if the time comes. |
| Bp Mhogolo (Tanzania) | All that is fine, but it also depends on the provinces that do it (ordain women) because there are those that don't, basing on cultural aspects which is quite complex. But still the mindset factor also deters people from ordaining ladies as priests, which is unrealistic because the service of God is for both male and female. |
| Bp Gakumba (Uganda) | There is no problem with the ordination of women as bishops, but still the issue can be about numbers of women and men because when you look at the ratio in our church it doesn't really translate well. And different provinces have different perceptions about women. |
| Canon Mwesigye (Uganda) | There is no problem with ordaining women as priests and even making them bishops because God created both man and woman. So those who are against the consecration of females base it on culture which varies. And refusing to ordain females makes them second class citizens in the house of God. |
| Bp Matovu (Uganda) | Here in Uganda, we don't have problems ordaining women as priests and as a matter of fact we have female canons. So it depends on the way different provinces regard the female gender in relation to their traditions. So if the issue of consecrating females as bishops comes on board in Uganda, we shall discuss it as a province. |
| **Undecided** | |
| Archbp Okoh (Nigeria) | This has been done to avoid some unpredictable consequences, Nigeria being multi-cultural. And there were attempts to legalise the ordination of females as priests but the issue was defeated. It will only be considered when everyone is on board, so we still need a consensus on this issue. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Bp Njoka (Kenya) | Time will tell. But if a certain church has allowed the ordination of females as priests, then there is no limit to them becoming bishops. But that issue is not yet on the table in Kenya. If it comes, then we shall be glad to discuss it with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. |
| **Opposed** | |
| Bp Tawonezvi (Zimbabwe) | I don't support the ordination of women as priests or as bishops because that is not the tradition of our church. Even when you look at Jesus' disciples, they were all male, but secularly women are free to be given positions of leadership if they have the required capabilities...still I think it is theologically wrong. |

*Source:* Kakaire (2010)

Table A.6: Women's ordination status among Africa's Anglican churches

| Country | Decaons | Priests | Bishops |
|---|---|---|---|
| Burundi | Y | Y | |
| Central Africa | Y | | |
| DR Congo | | | |
| Indian Ocean | Y | Y | |
| Kenya | Y | Y | |
| Nigeria | Y | | |
| Rwanda | Y | Y | |
| Southern Africa | Y | Y | Y (2012) |
| Sudan | Y | Y | Y (2018) |
| Tanzania | Y | Y | |
| Uganda | Y | Y | |
| West Africa | Y | Y | |

*Sources:* Kakaire (2010); Mombo (2008)

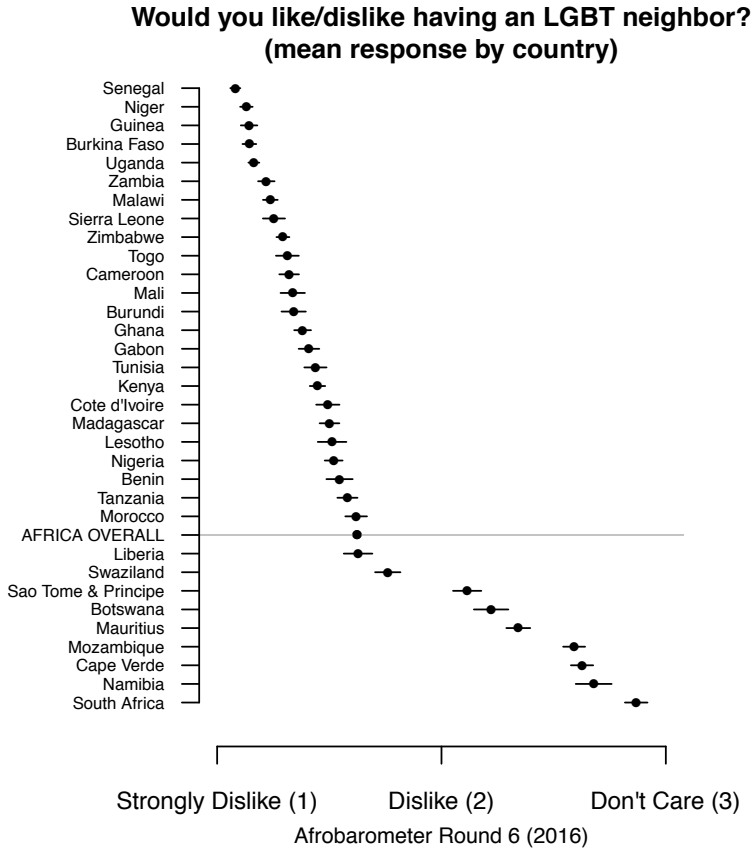
Table A.7: Numbers of female clergy by Mekane Yesus district

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | Discussions began | |
| 1998 | Ordination approved | |
| 2000 | First woman ordained (Western Synod) | |
| **Total Synods** | | 24 |
| Western synods with ordained women | | 12 |
| Southern synods with ordained women | | 5 |
| **Total Synods with ordained women** | | 17 |

*Sources:* Mekane Yesus (2015*a*,*b*)

## *A.5 Chapter 5: Supportive evidence*

Figure A.2: Attitudes toward sexual minorities



### *A.6 Anglican and Lutheran demographics*

Table A.8: African provinces of the Anglican Communion

| | Relations w/ U.S. Church† | 2016 Church Population (millions)§ | Country | Country Population (millions)‡ | % Dislike LGBT* | Mean Level Religiosity* | % Trust Relig Leaders "a lot"* | % Say No Relig Leaders are corrupt* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Church of Nigeria | 3 | 18.00 | Nigeria | 185.99 | 0.842 | 5.433 | 0.302 | 0.163 |
| Church of Uganda | 3 | 12.50 | Uganda | 41.49 | 0.955 | 4.246 | 0.734 | 0.62 |
| Episcopal Church of Sudan | 3 | 5.00 | South Sudan | 12.23 | | | | |
| | | | Sudan | 39.58 | | 5.014 | 0.372 | 0.379 |
| Province of West Africa | 3 | 1.00 | Gambia | 2.04 | | | | |
| | | | Ghana | 28.21 | 0.894 | 4.469 | 0.39 | 0.256 |
| | | | Guinea | 12.40 | 0.957 | 6.56 | 0.703 | 0.574 |
| | | | Liberia | 4.61 | 0.831 | 4.319 | 0.333 | 0.162 |
| | | | Sierra Leone | 7.40 | 0.93 | 5.458 | 0.642 | 0.298 |
| Anglican Church of Rwanda | 3 | 1.00 | Rwanda | 11.92 | | | | |
| Province of the Indian Ocean | 3 | 0.12 | Madagascar | 24.89 | 0.886 | 3.642 | 0.539 | 0.712 |
| | | | Mauritius | 1.26 | 0.495 | 4.958 | 0.205 | 0.308 |
| | | | Seychelles | 0.09 | | | | |
| Anglican Church of Kenya | 2 | 5.00 | Kenya | 48.46 | 0.857 | 4.562 | 0.461 | 0.294 |
| Anglican Church of Tanzania | 2 | 2.50 | Tanzania | 55.57 | 0.808 | 4.326 | 0.62 | 0.611 |
| Anglican Church of Southern Africa | 1 | 2.00 | Angola | 28.81 | | | | |
| | | | Lesotho | 2.20 | 0.839 | 3.526 | 0.776 | 0.557 |
| | | | Mozambique | 28.83 | 0.393 | 3.604 | 0.454 | 0.335 |
| | | | Namibia | 2.48 | 0.451 | 3.861 | 0.51 | 0.277 |
| | | | South Africa | 55.91 | 0.32 | 3.932 | 0.358 | 0.253 |
| | | | Swaziland | 1.34 | 0.737 | 4.204 | 0.441 | 0.256 |
| Anglican Church of Burundi | 1 | 0.90 | Burundi | 10.52 | 0.896 | 3.904 | 0.81 | 0.738 |
| Province of Central Africa | 1 | 0.60 | Botswana | 2.25 | 0.571 | 3.626 | 0.429 | 0.34 |
| | | | Malawi | 18.09 | 0.94 | 4.257 | 0.65 | 0.36 |
| | | | Zambia | 16.59 | 0.933 | 4.585 | 0.545 | 0.33 |
| | | | Zimbabwe | 16.15 | 0.897 | 4.037 | 0.451 | 0.256 |
| Anglican Church of the Congo | 1 | 0.50 | DR Congo | 78.74 | | | | |

†Relation w/ U.S. Church: Ended (3), Strained (2), Maintained (1)
§Anglican Communion (Accessed: 2017)
‡World Bank (Accessed: 2017)
*Country means and percentages from Afrobarometer Round 6 (2016)

Table A.9: African church members of the Lutheran World Federation

| | Country | Church Pop 2012 (2016) (thousands)[§] | # ELCA Companion Synods 2012 (2016)[†] | % Dislike LGBT* | Mean Level Religiosity* | % Trust Relig Leaders "a lot"* | % Say No Relig Leaders are corrupt* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ev Luth Ch of Angola | Angola | 48 (50) | | | | | |
| Ev Luth Ch in Botswana | Botswana | 19 (19) | | 0.57 | 3.63 | 0.43 | 0.34 |
| Ev Luth Ch of Cameroon | Cameroon | 296 (350) | 1 (1) | 0.88 | 4.98 | 0.38 | 0.29 |
| Ch of the Luth Brethren of Cam | Cameroon | 106 (157) | | 0.88 | 4.98 | 0.38 | 0.29 |
| Ev Luth Ch of the CAR | Central Af Rep | 107 (120) | 3 (3) | | | | |
| Ev Luth Ch in Congo | DR Congo | 136 (122) | | | | | |
| Ev Luth Ch of Eritrea | Eritrea | 11 (11) | | | | | |
| Ethiopian Ev Ch Mekane Yesus | Ethiopia | 5,576 (7,887) | **5 (0)** | | | | |
| Ev Luth Ch of Ghana | Ghana | 28 (23) | | 0.89 | 4.47 | 0.39 | 0.26 |
| Kenya Ev Luth Ch | Kenya | 44 (44) | 1 (1) | 0.86 | 4.56 | 0.46 | 0.29 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Kenya | Kenya | 100 (100) | | 0.86 | 4.56 | 0.46 | 0.29 |
| Luth Ch in Liberia | Liberia | 71 (70) | 1 (1) | 0.83 | 4.32 | 0.33 | 0.16 |
| Malagasy Luth Ch | Madagascar | 3,000 (3,000) | 4 (4) | 0.89 | 3.64 | 0.54 | 0.71 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Malawi | Malawi | 100 (102) | 1 (1) | 0.94 | 4.26 | 0.65 | 0.36 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Mozambique | Mozambique | 13 (13) | | 0.39 | 3.6 | 0.45 | 0.34 |
| Ev Luth Chs in Namibia (all)[1] | Namibia | 1,132 (1,197) | 4 (4) | 0.45 | 3.86 | 0.51 | 0.28 |
| Luth Ch of Christ in Nigeria | Nigeria | 1,900 (2,200) | 1 (1) | 0.84 | 5.43 | 0.3 | 0.16 |
| Luth Ch of Nigeria | Nigeria | 148 (121) | | 0.84 | 5.43 | 0.3 | 0.16 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Congo | Rep Congo | 2 (4) | | | | | |
| Luth Ch of Rwanda | Rwanda | 4 (6) | 1 (1) | | | | |
| Luth Ch of Senegal | Senegal | 4 (4) | 1 (1) | 0.97 | 6.62 | 0.79 | 0.59 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Sierra Leone | Sierra Leone | 3 (3) | 1 (1) | 0.93 | 5.46 | 0.64 | 0.3 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Southern Africa | South Africa | 580 (580) | 6 (6) | 0.32 | 3.93 | 0.36 | 0.25 |
| Other Luth Chs in South Africa[2] | South Africa | 64 (64) | | 0.32 | 3.93 | 0.36 | 0.25 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Tanzania | Tanzania | 5,601 (6,531) | **20 (20)** | 0.81 | 4.33 | 0.62 | 0.61 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Zambia | Zambia | 2 (4) | 1 (1) | 0.93 | 4.58 | 0.55 | 0.33 |
| Ev Luth Ch in Zimbabwe | Zimbabwe | 242 (293) | 1 (1) | 0.9 | 4.04 | 0.45 | 0.26 |

[§] Lutheran World Federation (Accessed: 2013, 2017)
[†] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "Companion Synod Relationships" (Accessed: 2013, 2017)
[*] Country means and percentages from Afrobarometer Round 6 (2016)
[1] Ev Luth Ch in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC), Ev Luth Ch in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), The Ev Ch in Namibia (ELCIN)
[2] Ev Luth Ch in Southern Africa (Cape Church), Ev Luth Ch in Southern Africa (N-T), Moravian Ch in South Africa

## *A.7 Interview information*

Table A.10: Select cited interviews (basic information)

| **Interview** | **Month** | **Affiliated Organization** | **Location** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 02 | September 2015 | Kajidado County | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 03 | September 2015 | Kenyan Evangelical Lutheran Church | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 04 | September 2015 | Lutheran Communion in Central & East Africa | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 05 | September 2015 | Lutheran Communion in Central & East Africa | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 06 | September 2015 | Catholic Church in Sudan | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 15 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Catholic Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 17 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 19 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 20 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 22 | October 2015 | African Union Commission | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 23 | October 2015 | African Union Commission | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 27 | October 2015 | Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 28 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Catholic Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 30 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 32 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 35 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 36 | October 2015 | Seventh-Day Adventist Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 39 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 42 | October 2015 | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 44 | October 2015 | Addis Ababa Women's Association | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 53 | November 2015 | Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 54 | November 2015 | (anonymous) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 56 | November 2015 | Harmful Traditional Practice Office | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia |
| Interview 58 | November 2015 | Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 59 | November 2015 | Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 60 | November 2015 | All Africa Conference of Churches | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 62 | November 2015 | Anglican Church in Kenya | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 65 | November 2015 | Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Af | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 69 | November 2015 | Norwegian Church Aid | Nairobi, Kenya |
| Interview 70 | November 2015 | Anglican Communion | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 71 | November 2015 | Inter-Religious Council of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 73 | November 2015 | Nakawa Pentecostal Church | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 74 | November 2015 | Dutch Development (ICCO) | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 75 | November 2015 | Uganda Joint Christian Council | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 77 | November 2015 | St. Paul's Reconciliation Center for Equality | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 79 | November 2015 | Nat'l Fellowship of Born-Again Pentecostal Chs | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 80 | December 2015 | Seventh-Day Adventists Uganda Union | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 82 | December 2015 | Nat'l Association of Women Org in Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 83 | December 2015 | Makerere University | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 84 | December 2015 | Anglican Church of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 85 | December 2015 | Anglican Church of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 86 | December 2015 | Anglican Church of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 90 | December 2015 | Anglican Mother's Union | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 91 | December 2015 | Inter-Religious Church of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |
| Interview 92 | December 2015 | Anglican Church of Uganda | Kampala, Uganda |

Interviewee name, professional title, and date of interview are available upon request.

# VITA

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