The State of Morality: Sexual, Reproductive and Sartorial Politics in Idi Amin's Uganda

by

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Dedication

For my boys, Nino-Christian and Luka

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Abstract

This dissertation uses a wide range of archival documents and interviews to investigate the controversy over women's sexual, reproductive, and sartorial choices in Idi Amin's Uganda. It shows how women's agendas and aspirations collided with the (moral) agendas not just of the state, but also of husbands, church leaders, medics, birth control activists and ordinary Ugandans. Under Amin, women's morality became a problem for Ugandans to confront collectively as members of one nation. Anxieties about women in the 1970s were formed in relation to the changing architecture of feminine decorum. Ugandans tapped into gendered discourses which dated back to the early twentieth century and which were fueled by anxieties about independent women, to mobilize against women's use of contraception, their sexual practices, and their fashion. The Amin government empowered state agencies such as the police and mobilized medics and the Family Planning Association of Uganda who all joined hands to reform female behavior. By mobilizing against women, the Amin state joined non-state actors including ordinary Ugandans, newspaper editors and institutions like the Catholic Church, which had since the 1960s used the print media to reform women's sexual practices. The anti-immorality campaign generated new ways for the government to engage with citizens, and for citizens to exercise their agency. Ordinary Ugandans used the debates about women's bodies to work out all kinds of anxieties, to make claims on women, hold the government accountable and articulate their vision of the kind of society they wanted. Thus, the dissertation highlights agency, change and continuities in gendered discourses and moral panic in Uganda. It provides insights into how women and girls managed their sexual and reproductive lives at a time when the public thought themselves empowered to dictate to them on how to manage their lives.

Introduction

Gendered Narratives of Moral Degeneration in Idi Amin's Uganda

On March 21, 1977, four years after Idi Amin signed a decree criminalizing abortion, 27-year-old Ibrahim Ouma walked into the Central Police Station (CPS) in Kampala to report his 19-year-old live-in girlfriend, Jane Akello, for allegedly aborting two pregnancies.[1] He told police officers that after he confronted her about the abortions, Jane, who was at the time admitted to Nsambya hospital, tried to commit suicide. Ibrahim stated that he wanted Jane "to be interrogated and properly warned."[2] He also requested a police escort to repatriate Jane back to her village. The police took Ibrahim's allegations against Jane seriously. After recording the statement, they dispatched an officer to Nsambya hospital to interrogate Jane.[3] On being questioned, she denied the abortions, stating that she became "expectant twice but by bad chance all were miscarriage [sic]."[4] The second miscarriage, she explained, had taken place in February 1977 in a government hospital in Soroti, Eastern Uganda.

Police officers spent three months, from March 21 to June 21, investigating the case. They interviewed the medics who were treating Jane and obtained her medical records from Nsambya hospital. However, they did not contact the medics in Soroti, which was situated hundreds of miles

[1] Names changed to protect identity of those involved.
[2] Central Police Station Archives, Kampala, Uganda (hereafter CPSA), File no. SD/84/21/3/77 – CPS/K'LA – 21/3/77.
[3] They noted that Jane was too weak to be brought to the "cells."
[4] CPSA, File no. SD/84/21/3/77 – CPS/K'LA – 21/3/77.

from Kampala, to corroborate her claims of spontaneous loss of pregnancy. After Jane was discharged from Nsambya, police officers paid visits to her workplace and home for a follow up interview. In the end, the officers failed to find evidence of abortion and therefore did not file criminal charges against Jane. They also did not honor Ibrahim's request of repatriation, possibly because there were no laws to support the repatriation of undisciplined women at the time. Moreover, Jane's father refused to have her repatriated to his home since Ibrahim had not paid bride price.[5] In the absence of proof of abortion and without an official marriage, it was decided that the case be settled between Jane's father and Ibrahim.[6]

The fact that Ibrahim summoned law enforcement and attempted to bring the weight of the state on his allegedly deviant wife is indicative of the prominent role of the state in enforcing morality and the ability of husbands and men in general to leverage the power of law enforcement to solve marital disagreements in Idi Amin's Uganda. Until the mid-1960s, marital disagreements and women's morality were adjudicated by indigenous authorities, colonial courts, missionaries, and urban based ethnic associations. Scholars show that in urban Uganda, migrant men like Ibrahim often joined ethnic associations which helped them to solve marital disagreements and repatriate unmarried and undisciplined women back to villages.[7] However, in the 1970s, Ibrahim could not seek out his ethnic association in Kampala to intervene in his and Jane's marital disagreement. This was because power struggles between the central 'national' government and local 'ethnic'

[5] Ibrahim had allegedly seduced Jane when she was a schoolgirl. The police officers mentioned a letter written by Jane's father stating that the "complainant, must pay the damages for spoiling the girl's studies and secondly the complainant must pay *Kasurube* (bride price)." See CPSA, File no. SD/84/21/3/77 – CPS/K'LA – 21/3/77.

[6] In his work on the status of women in Uganda, Melvin Perlman found that in the northern region where Jane and Ibrahim came from, young men like Ibrahim were required to pay a large sum of money and/or cows as bride price. See Melvin L. Perlman, "Law and the Status of Women in Uganda. A systematic Comparison between the Ganda and the Toro, 1969," *Tropical Man*, 2 (1969).

[7] Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival. A History of Dissent, c.1935 to 1972* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Christine Obbo, *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence* (London: Zed Press, 1980).

governments in the mid-1960s had seriously weakened ethnic associations and traditional authorities, the former "guardians of morality."[8]

The demise of these ethnic institutions left a vacuum that Ugandans hoped would be filled by the state. However, in the 1960s, the government of Obote took no steps to replace these institutions or to regulate morality. When some Ugandans requested the central government to ban birth control and miniskirts, Obote refused, arguing that the central government could not intervene in private matters.[9] However, After the overthrow of Obote in 1971, Amin positioned the state and its agencies as an alternative apparatus for men like Ibrahim to discipline their allegedly immoral wives. Under Amin, women's morality and specifically their sexual, reproductive, and sartorial choices became a national problem for all Ugandans to confront, and not just an embarrassment to a particular ethnic constituency as had been the case in colonial Uganda.[10]

A crucial marker of the Amin state becoming the primary enforcer of morality was a much-publicized national debate in the media about miniskirts and sexual morality, which was followed by decrees targeting women's sexual and sartorial practices. To enforce the decrees, the Amin government empowered state agencies such as the police, mobilized the ministries of health, culture and community development and medics, who all joined hands to reform female behavior. By mobilizing against women, the Amin state joined non-state actors including ordinary Ugandans, newspaper editors and institutions like the Catholic Church which had since the 1960s used the print media to reform women's sexual practices.[11]

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[8] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 287.
[9] See Chapters 1 and 3.
[10] Derek Peterson writes that in colonial Uganda, "in combating the menace of prostitution, men positioned themselves as patriots, upholding the virtues of a particular community endangered by social indiscipline." See Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 21.
[11] See Chapter 2.

The dissertation examines the controversy over women's sexual, reproductive and sartorial choices in 1970s Uganda, as a lens through which to not only rethink the nature of the Amin state but also examine the wider public theatre where sexual, reproductive and sartorial morality was argued over, imposed, and contested. The dissertation interrogates how and why women's sexuality and attire became the field on which morality was defined, argued over and contested in 1970s Uganda, and why, in the face of indiscriminate violence by the Amin government, ordinary people, medics, editorialists and religious leaders participated in the anti-immorality campaign. It argues that anxieties about women in the 1970s were formed in relation to the changing architecture of feminine decorum—women's changing fashion and sexual behavior. It demonstrates how state and non-state actors in the 1970s tapped into gendered discourses dating back to the early twentieth century, and which were fueled by anxieties about independent women, to mobilize against women's use of contraception, their sexual practices and their fashion. The dissertation shows how the 1970s debates and campaigns about women's morality generated new ways for the Amin government to engage with citizens, and for citizens to exercise their agency.

In the 1970s, anxiety about women emerged in the context of increased visibility of women in the public sphere. Scholars of women and gender show that in this period, women increasingly attained high positions of power as government ministers and ambassadors. Women also exploited the vacuum created by the expulsion of Asians in 1972 to join the trading business. They joined the International Women's Movement and travelled outside Uganda to participate in women's conferences, for education and to trade.[12] In addition, women sought to control and shape their

[12] Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Oxford: James Currey, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2000); Aili Tripp and Joy Kwesiga, eds. *The Women's Movement in Uganda. History, Challenges and Prospects* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2002); Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo & Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue in Uganda, 1900-2003* (Oxford: James Currey, Athens: Ohio University Press, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2006), and Alicia C. Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

own bodies by adopting new styles of dress, birth control and through sexual exploration. Beginning in the 1960s, Ugandan women like Elizabeth Bagaaya and Katiti Kironde began to participate in international fashion shows where they appeared on the cover of some of the most famous fashion magazines in the world such as *Vogue.* In Uganda, young women embraced a cosmopolitan fashion culture, expanding their fashion catalogue to include miniskirts and dresses, wigs, and trousers—which challenged the traditional meaning of dress.[13] In addition, scholars show that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed changes in sexual patterns: premarital sex became widespread and so did commercial sex.[14] To manage their reproductive health, women activists worked with international actors in the birth control movement such as Clarence Gamble to introduce birth control which promised to give women greater control of their bodies and liberate female sexuality from motherhood.[15]

Perceiving women's ambitions, experiences, and agendas as a threat to public morality, the Amin government undertook measures to regulate women's behavior. Claiming to act on behalf of Ugandans to protect public morality, beginning in 1971, Amin signed and amended various decrees targeting women's sexual, reproductive, and sartorial behavior. Under the anti-abortion decree, a woman who aborted was "guilty of the offense of killing an unborn child," irrespective of the age of the fetus.[16] Those suspected of abortion were to be subjected to the same laws as murderers and were to be tried by the High Court.[17] Amin amended a venereal disease decree dating back to the colonial period. It authorized medics and local government officials to grab any person suspected of being infected, subject them to a medical examination, force them to name those they had had

[13] See Chapter 1.
[14] Shane Doyle, *Before HIV: Sexuality, Fertility, and Mortality in East Africa, 1900-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[15] See Chapters 3 and 4.
[16] Decree 26 of 1971 and Decree 4 of 1973.
[17] Decree 26, 1971, Penal Code, Section 136 and 137.

sexual relations with and detain them until cured.[18] Other decrees banned prostitution and 'idleness'[19] and prohibited women and girls above the age of fourteen from wearing miniskirts, trousers and wigs among others.[20] The decrees which identified women's dress and other behavior as ""injurious to public morals"[21] empowered state organs such as police and courts of law, local council leaders, and medics/public health officials to arrest women, prosecute them or subject them to compulsory treatment.

To demonstrate his commitment to eradicating sexual immorality and other undesirable behavior, Idi Amin publicized his own marital struggles to highlight the dangers of uncontrolled female sexuality. Until 1974, Amin had painted a picture of marital harmony, virility and masculine prowess, showing off a household full of loyal wives and loving mothers of numerous children.[22] However, by early 1974, Amin's household of four wives was in disarray, after three of his wives, Kay, Malyamu and Nora rebelled against him in protest of his infidelity.[23] In his work on non-conformists and the ethnic patriots who sought to bring them to order, Derek Peterson has noted that in East Africa's competitive world, "husbands and fathers needed first to organize their family lives before they could act effectively in the political world."[24] Thus, feeling slighted and dishonored by his wives' perceived unfaithfulness, Amin took various actions against them to show Ugandans that he was in control of his private life. He divorced them, had them arrested, and he

[18] Decree 16, Venereal Disease Decree, 1977.
[19] Decree 26, Penal Code Act, No. 2, 1974. He accused unmarried women of being prostitutes and spreading venereal diseases. See Alicia Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War: Subversion, Sabotage, and the Battle to Keep Uganda Clean, 1971-1979," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, no.3 (2010): 489-513.
[20] Decree 9 Penal Code Act 1972; Decree 4 Penal Code Act 1974.
[21] For example, in Decree 9 The Penal Code Act (Amendment) Decree 1972 which banned miniskirts, Amin made it clear that he was banning miniskirts because they "outrage(d) decency and are injurious to public morals."
[22] Alicia Decker, "Militarismo, Nazionalismo e Matrimonio: Un Ritratto Privato delle Cinque Mogli di Idi Amin," *Afriche e Orienti* 14, no. 3-4 (2012): 124-138.
[23] Henry Kyemba, *A State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997); Decker, "Militarismo, Nazionalismo."
[24] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 283.

took away their businesses.[25] By August 1974, one of Amin's ex-wives, Kay Adroa was dead, purportedly while committing the crime of abortion with the help of her lover, a medic. Amin decided to make an example out of her by publicizing her alleged sexual and reproductive crimes. Although Kay and Amin had divorced on March 26, 1974, he still closely monitored her movements out of jealousy but also possibly because as a member of his family (a mother to his children), her actions had dishonored him. For example, he would drive "past her apartment, hoping perhaps to catch her with a lover."[26] Matters escalated when in early August 1974, Amin had Kay arrested for possessing a pistol and ammunition. When Amin came to visit her at the police station, he allegedly called her "a whore."[27] Then on August 13, 1974, Kay was found dead, supposedly from complications of a backstreet abortion.

Amin used Kay's death to highlight the dangers of unregulated and uninhibited sexuality of Ugandan women. Although the media reported that Amin and the children went to Mulago mortuary to "offer prayers" for Kay,[28] Henry Kyemba, the Minister of Health who had accompanied Amin, stated that while showing them their mother's body, Amin angrily told Kay's children that "your mother was a bad woman … see what has happened to her!"[29] in reference to her alleged sexual immorality. The government-owned *Voice of Uganda*, most likely with Amin's permission, published on its front page a gruesome tale of Kay Amin's death, including a detailed post-mortem report as evidence of Kay's sexual and reproductive crimes:

> The body was dismembered with the trunk alone in a gunny bag and the lower limbs and arms in separate cardboard boxes. The external wounds were consistent with dismemberment of the body, which was done after the person died, internally the woman had been three to four months pregnant and the fetus had been removed

[25] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 149-150.
[26] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 152.
[27] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 152.
[28] "Gen Mourns death of Kay Adroa," *Voice of Uganda*, August 14, 1974.
[29] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 155.

> with the use of instruments. Pieces of membranes had remained inside and caused severe bleeding. Five socked pads were also found in the box. There was also hemorrhage—severe bleeding of the bowels. Cause of death was severe bleeding because of incomplete abortion performed by instruments.[30]

This vivid description was meant to shock and to show Ugandan women what would happen to them if they continued to rebel against their husbands and fathers. It was meant to reinforce national solidarity and patriarchal authority over sexually uninhibited women who threatened the stability of the family and the nation. The death of Kay was a cautionary tale about women who did not keep their sexual appetites in check and who acted as if their bodies belonged only to themselves, rather than their fathers, husbands, brothers or even the general community. As the Cambridge-trained lawyer, former international model, and Uganda's first female minister (of Foreign Affairs), Elizabeth Bagaaya, retrospectively put it, "Kay's death was an ominous sign for the women of Uganda."[31] Indeed, in November 1974, a few months after Kay's death, Bagaaya herself became the subject of Amin's fixation on female sexual immorality when he accused her of having sex with a white man in a toilet at Orly airport in Paris. According to Bagaaya, these allegations stemmed from her refusal to marry Amin.[32]

Amin's accusations of sexual immorality were not limited to his wives and women he was sexually attracted to. Scholars have argued that Amin, who portrayed himself as "father of the nation," used his position to chastise all women.[33] In November 1972, a few months after signing the first anti-immorality decrees, Amin met with representatives of women's groups. During the meeting, he accused women of prostitution and causing instability in the homes. He told them that "there were many women 'poisoning the image of Uganda: prostitutes in Mombasa (Kenya) who were doing

[30] "Gen Mourns death of Kay Adroa," 4.
[31] Elizabeth Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro, The Odyssey of an African Princess. An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 154-155.
[32] Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro,* 178-179.
[33] Obbo, *African Women*, 9.

"terrible things" with Europeans.'"[34] Amin who attributed marital instability to women's sexual promiscuity added that "women were no longer trusted by their husbands because they were too easygoing [sexually promiscuous]…."[35] Amin believed that women's sexual promiscuity did not only threaten the reputation of their husbands but also led to political insecurity. He believed that women were sleeping around with enemies of the state, endangering the nation's security and its reputation. When banning miniskirts and wigs, he stated that women were consorting with enemies of the state and using wigs to hide weapons for them.[36] Believing that women who travelled abroad for trade, women's conferences and education were being used by 'imperialists' to spy on his government, Amin refused to give women scholarships to study abroad.[37] Amin's actions against women were welcomed by Ugandan men and other conservatives who perceived women's behavior as undermining their effort to cultivate morally upright families and communities. They used the print media to attack unmarried urban women who they argued "cause divorce and carry venereal diseases."[38] In letters to the editors, they called upon husbands to discipline their wives using "Amin's treatment of his wives as an example."[39] However, Ugandan men were not merely responding to Amin. The association of unmarried women living in urban areas with marital instability, criminality, and disease pre-dated Amin.[40]

Despite its deep roots in Ugandan society, the media attention it generated and the large impact it had on women, the anti-immorality campaign in Idi Amin's Uganda remained understudied.[41]

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[34] Obbo, *African Women*, 10.
[35] When women's leaders led by Elizabeth Bagaaya attempted to make a distinction between themselves and "town girls," whom they argued led "easy lives while the vast majority [of women] were perpetually slaving away in kitchens and coping with frustrating conditions," Amin did not correct himself. See Obbo, *African Women*, 9-10.
[36] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 65.
[37] Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War," 503.
[38] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic,* 164.
[39] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic,* 164.
[40] Obbo, *African Women.*
[41] With the exception of Alicia Decker's *in Idi Amin's Shadow.*

Scholars have attributed this lack of scholarly investigation to paucity of written sources.[42] However, there is another explanation; scholars in the 1970s perceived the anti-immorality campaign as a frivolous media stunt initiated by a psychotic dictator. As a result, they failed to look beyond the Amin state to other avenues where ordinary Ugandans, church leaders, medics and others were arguing about women's morality. Recently scholars have begun to pay closer attention to less studied but important aspects of the Amin regime, including gender and the status of women in Idi Amin's Uganda. Most notably, Alicia Decker has used a wide range of sources including police records and newspapers to show "the myriad ways that gender informed [Amin's] militarism as both ideology and practice."[43] By examining women's participation in politics, trade and the military, Decker highlights their tactical agency. She discusses opportunities created by the Amin regime for women, but also highlights challenges they faced. Decker uses life histories to show how women were folded into the Amin regime, how they were incorporated into the state to legitimize military rule. She also shows how women as survivors endured psychological trauma due to loss of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sisters.

It is important to note that while women are central to Decker's work, the politics of morality is not. Except for a chapter on miniskirts, in which she argues that Amin used the anti-miniskirt campaign to bolster his regime, and to shift the "public's attention away from his own improprieties,"[44] she does not engage with the sexual and reproductive politics. Neither does she explore the agendas of the disparate actors involved in attempts to reform women.[45] While Decker

[42] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh have noted that as "many official and private records were either not maintained or destroyed... [during war] and newspapers were under tight government control." See Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue,*147.
[43] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow,* 10.
[44] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow,* 60.
[45]She does acknowledge the popularity of the campaign stating that elders and parents who linked miniskirts to delinquency welcomed Amin's decrees. Decker also briefly addresses the anti-venereal disease decree in a separate article on "Keep Uganda Clean Campaign" See Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War."

breaks with a tradition of scholarship on Amin that overlooks the experiences of Ugandan women, she relies on a framework that centers on the personality of Idi Amin. The looming figure of Amin in her work makes it impossible to see continuities in debates about women's behavior that predated Amin, as well as the agendas of non-state actors. In contrast, I investigates the disparate groups of Ugandans—medics, newspaper editors, intellectuals, public health officials, population control advocates, birth control activists, civil servants, police men and women, religious leaders, ordinary men and women who all sought to intervene in the sexual, reproductive, and sartorial practices of women. Instead of seeing the anti-immorality campaign as a foil for Amin's improprieties, as a kind of charade put up to disguise the facts of violence as argued by Decker, I place the campaign in a broader social historical context.

I argue that by signing the decrees, Amin was intervening in ongoing debates about the "uncontrollability" of women, which, as stated by Jean Allman, in colonial Africa was "consistently articulated in terms of a moral crisis."[46] In explaining the legal measures and other actions taken against unmarried and town women in colonial Africa and the period immediately after independence, scholars have argued that concerns about prostitution, venereal diseases, adultery and polygamy among others were a foil to men's real fear—women's economic independence which undermined their authority.[47] Scholars have argued that measures taken against women in towns in colonial Uganda such as repatriation "emerged out of economic contradictions produced by the emerging capitalist and the threatened/embattled patriarchal."[48]

[46] Jean Allman. 'Rounding up Spinsters. Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante,' in *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, eds. Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, Oxford. James Currey. Cape town. David Philip, 2001),138.
[47] See Obbo, *African Women.*
[48] Nakanyike Musisi, "Gender and the Cultural Construction of "Bad women" in the Development of Kampala-Kibuga, 1900-1962," in *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, eds. Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy (Portsmouth: Heinemann, Oxford. James Currey. Cape Town: David Philip, 2001),181.

Accordingly, women's sexuality became the field from where struggles over control of material resources were fought.

However, other scholars have stated that sexual and reproductive struggles were not only about gaining control of material resources but also to "fulfill moral ambitions,"[49] which "included efforts to act in ways valued by the living and the dead."[50] According to Lynn Thomas, it is because of their importance, not only in ensuring material prosperity of individuals' communities but also in protecting civic virtues and building moral communities[51] that sex and reproduction emerged as "contentious sites of intervention."[52] Thus, controlling women's sexuality was important for elders, parents, and husbands "to create respectful and successful" families and for the nation state "to cultivate loyal and productive" morally upright citizens.[53] Other scholars have also paid close attention to moral ambitions i.e. the politics of respectability that drove moral reform campaigns in colonial Africa. For East Africa, Derek Peterson argues that successful men were not just those with material wealth but also those who could establish orderly homes.[54] Peterson states that in colonial East Africa's competitive world, men's ability "to organize their homes testified to their political responsibility."[55] It is because of this that men worked with indigenous authorities who also perceived women's ambitions as a threat to social order to punish allegedly immoral women

[49] Lynn M. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb. Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 4.
[50] Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb*, 4.
[51] Thomas argues that in both colonial and post-colonial Africa, "managing the politics of the womb has been crucial to ensuring material prosperity and constructing moral persons and communities." See Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb,* 6.
[52] Thomas. *The Politics of the Womb*, 175.
[53] Thomas. *The Politics of the Womb*, 7.
[54] Peterson builds on Bruce Berman's and John Lonsdale's work on civic virtues. See Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London: James Currey, Nairobi: Heinemann, Athens: Ohio University Press), 1992.
[55] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 282.

and to repatriate them back to their villages, where the existing patriarchal structures could keep them in order.[56]

Scholarship shows that the late colonial period and the period immediately after independence saw an unprecedented migration of women into urban areas to escape oppressive structures in the countryside. In urban areas, women undertook various economic activities including prostitution and beer brewing, which scholars argue were essential in facilitating male migrants' work.[57] However, although migrant women provided what Luise White calls the "comforts of home,"[58] in Uganda, migrant men, missionaries, colonial administrators and indigenous leaders believed that town life was "bad for women because it corrupts their virtue, leads to marital instability and erodes traditional norms."[59] Believing "that the very fabric of social order was under attack from indiscipline and sexual deviancy,"[60] traditional/indigenous authorities took measures against 'women of ill repute' including fining, imprisoning, subjecting them to forced labor and repatriating them back to villages.[61] In some places such as Jinja where women were being recruited to work in factories, African town council members attempted to prevent women from working in the wage economy to protect their virtue.[62]

[56] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*; Obbo, *African Women*; A.W. Southall and P.C.W. Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making: Kampala and Its Suburbs* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research, 1957),193-194, 197-198; Kenneth Little. *African Women in Towns: An Aspect of Africa's Social Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); W. Elkan, *The Employment of Women in Uganda* (EAISR, 1955).
[57] Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[58] That is accommodation, food, company, and sex. White, *The Comforts of Home.*
[59] Obbo, *African Women,* 27-28.
[60] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 20.
[61] Southall and Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making*.
[62] Little, *African Women in Towns;* Obbo, *African Women*; and Elkan, *The Employment of Women.*

In addition to the above, migrant men created ethnic associations to discipline urban women.[63] In Kampala in the 1960s, there were eight main ethnic associations, some with several branches.[64] The associations were an extension of rural kinship groups tweaked to fit urban circumstances. They were initially formed to provide "group solidarity and aid and assistance in time of need."[65] However, in the 1950s and early 1960s they began to take on other roles, including the disciplining of wayward women. According to Christine Obbo who investigated the lives of women in colonial and post-colonial urban Uganda, ethnic associations became effective instruments against women who were "deemed 'loose' and therefore a blot on their ethnic reputation."[66] She writes that the Luo Union ordered 'disgraced women' "to return home wearing a jute sack with holes in the lower section of the back and front."[67] Similarly, Peterson writes that all over East Africa "Luo women accused of practicing prostitution were stripped, clad in gunny sacks, and forcibly taken back to their rural homes."[68]

Meanwhile traditional institutions and indigenous authorities worked together to repatriate women deemed immoral. For example, in 1956, "the Toro parliament formed a special committee to deal with the problem of prostitution….Toro's Prime Minister corresponded with the government of Buganda kingdom, asking for help in repatriating Toro prostitutes living in the city of Kampala."[69] Indigenous authorities like the Tooro[70] kingdom often worked with ethnic associations to discipline

[63] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism.*
[64] They included the Alur Association, the Acholi Association, the Jonam Association, the Lugbara Association, the Sudanese Association (made up of Nubian ex-servicemen), the Ankole-Kigezi Association, the Rwanda Association, and the Luo Association, Kampala Batoro Association. See Allison Butler Herrick et al, *Area Handbook for Uganda, 1969*. Also, Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, and Obbo, *African Women.*
[65] Herrick et al, *Area Handbook,* 101.
[66] Obbo, *African Women,* 27.
[67] Obbo, *African Women*, 110.
[68] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 21.
[69] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 257.
[70] Toro is old-fashioned spelling which was common during the colonial era and is still used by some scholars. I use 'Tooro' which is the correct spelling. See, O. Ndolerire, J. Kintu, J. Kabagenyi, H. Kasande. *Runyoro-Rutooro-English Dictionary* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2009).

independent women. For example, members of the Kampala Batoro Association which, like the Luo Union, considered unmarried Tooro women in urban areas as a source of embarrassment, worked alongside traditional authorities to discipline them. Members of the association felt threatened by the behavior of Tooro women who were not only successful in using colonial courts to solve marital disagreements,[71] but refused to enter permanent unions to protect themselves from exploitative customary laws.[72] As a result, they acquired a reputation of being sexually promiscuous. Thus, Tooro men, who in the 1950s "came to see their negotiable married life as a political liability,"[73] worked with their counterparts in urban areas and with indigenous authorities to stop young women and men from migrating into towns, repatriate unmarried women and those married to non-Tooro men. For Tooro men, Tooro women's activities in urban Uganda endangered not only the reputation of Tooro men but that of their ethnic homeland.[74]

In the mid-1960s, the above institutions which had worked together to control women's morality came under attack. Beginning in 1966, to consolidate his power, Obote who at independence had won power by allying himself with Buganda's *Kabaka Yekka*—King's Party, overthrew the president (who was also the Kabaka/King of Buganda). In 1967, he banned all indigenous institutions, exiled traditional leaders, and declared ethnicity and kingdoms enemies of the republic. According to scholars of Uganda, Obote like other East African leaders perceived ethnicity as a regressive force, which undermined the central government's nation-building

[71] Perlman, "Law and the Status of Women."
[72] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 256.
[73] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 256.
[74] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 257. Also see Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola, eds., *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009).

efforts.[75] Obote's actions inadvertently weakened ethnic associations and traditional institutions.[76] Obbo writes that the fear of being branded political was so intense that following Obote's actions, members of some ethnic groups like the Luo Union "refused to participate in any activity that might officially be viewed as political, and some Luo even boycotted the Anglican Christmas party on the grounds that they did not want to get involved in politics."[77] However, in the absence of ethnic associations, religious movements offered men a platform to police women's behavior. Obbo states that when the Luo Union lost its power, "in its place religious movements were used by men as a mechanism for controlling women…."[78] Luo joined churches like *Legio Maria*, a breakaway Catholic church whose Luo leaders made it their mission to discourage "women from acquiring independent incomes which would weaken the position of men."[79] Luo husbands who suspected their wives of hiding or misappropriating incomes could take them to the church where they were forced to confess.[80]

Thus, it is clear from the above that in the absence of ethnic associations and traditional institutions, men found other avenues through which to police women's sexuality and morality. As emphasized by Luise White, "no one stopped debating the meaning of adulthood and its responsibilities because they began living in states (colonial or post-colonial) …"[81] or because the leaders of the

[75] According to scholars of Uganda, Obote like other East African leaders perceived ethnicity as a regressive force, that held nations and people back, preventing them from launching into the new era of modernity defined by nationalism. See Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*.
[76] In addition to actions taken against traditional institutions, in 1970, he expelled Kenyan Luo, an action that weakened the Luo Union. See Obbo, *African Women*. Also see Ali Mazrui, "Casualties in an Underdeveloped Class Structure: The Expulsion of Luo Workers and Asian Bourgeoisie from Uganda," in *Strangers in African Societies*, eds. William A. Shack and Elliot P. Skinner (Berkeley. University of California Press), 1979.
[77] Obbo, *African Women*, 111.
[78] Obbo, *African Women*, 119.
[79] Obbo, *African Women*, 111.
[80] This is because the Luo perceived women who had an independent source of income as greedy "and a departure from the Luo ideal of a good wife." See Obbo, *African Women*, 151.
[81] Luise White, "Colonial States and Civic Virtues in Africa: Essays in Honor of John Lonsdale," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 2.

new nation states deemed traditional institutions that enabled such debates divisive and a danger to national unity. In the absence of traditional institutions, institutions like the church provided Ugandans with a forum from where they continued to argue about respectability and the behavior of women. Thus, in this dissertation, I argue that even though the Amin state positioned itself as a primary enforcer of morality, it depended on gendered discursive frames promoted and sustained by ordinary Ugandans and various institutions including the Church. While Amin provided enforcing bodies like the police, ordinary Ugandans and civil society provided a convergent narrative of the uncontrollable sexuality of women and moral degeneration. They nurtured and sustained a vocabulary and a gendered rhetoric of moral decadence, of female sexuality as a threat to public morality.

It is important to examine the role of non-state actors, especially the Church, in the 1970s anti-immorality campaign. As recently argued in scholarship on state-societal relations, non-state institutions derive their legitimacy not just from the "absence" of the state, that is, its inability to fulfil its obligations to the citizens but also from "their ability to deal with people's concerns" by providing space for them to build civic virtues "of politeness, deference, sociability."[82] Indeed, when traditional mechanism used to police women came under attack during the Obote regime, the Catholic Church opened up one of its influential newspapers to Ugandans to debate and adjudicate women's morality. They continued to use the print media to reform women's sexuality in the 1970s even as the government began its anti-immorality campaign.[83] The actions they and other Ugandans took against women's sexual, reproductive, and sartorial choices were far more than a response to the Amin government's directives.

[82] Ben Jones, *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda* (London: Edinburg University Press. 2009), xv.
[83] See Chapter 2.

Thus, although the state took a leading role in the 1970s anti-immorality campaign, the story that this dissertation tells is not a story of a malleable, naive populace exploited by a powerful dictator. Instead, it emphasizes how various groups and individuals sought to manipulate the 1970s political and legal climate to control women's sexual and reproductive lives, in order to restore moral order. The anti-immorality campaigns found supporters in unlikely places, not because of coercion by the Amin regime, but because of what was at stake: the reputation of husbands, fathers, the community, and the nation. It is for this reason that Ugandans from all levels of society welcomed the state's interventions and saw no contradiction in participating in a campaign organized by the Amin regime which was known for its brutality and violation of the civil liberties of Ugandans.[84]

Therefore, this dissertation conceives the work of policing women's morality in the 1970s as a patchwork of different constituencies who perceived new fashions, uninhibited sexuality, and newly available biomedical contraception as a threat to public morality. Although women's participation in economic and political activities increased in the 1970s as "some women assumed positions of political power or taught themselves to become successful business entrepreneurs…."[85] for Ugandans in the 1970s, debates about birth control, abortion, prostitution and venereal diseases were not just a foil to their anxiety about women's participation in economic and political activities. The church, the government and some progressive Ugandans believed that the empowerment of women was necessary in a modern state. What they protested to was putting

[84] Indeed, Kathleen Lockard has noted that Amin's "invocation of strict moral values (particularly with regard to Western modes of dress such as miniskirts which he and many Ugandans regarded as immoral)," endeared him to many Ugandan Christians. Kathleen G. Lockard. "Religion and Politics in Independent Uganda: Movement towards Secularization?" in *Analyzing Political Change in Africa. Application of a New Multidimensional Framework,* ed. James R. Scarritt (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 58.

[85] They also note that gender violence also increased. See Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*; Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue.*

matters of sexuality and reproduction into the hands of women whom they believed were inherently 'weak,' that is, unable to control their sexual urges.

The newly introduced biomedical contraception which separated sex from motherhood, threatened to remove the regulation of reproduction from men's hands, to put women in charge of their sexual and reproductive lives. With birth control, women could have sex with anyone, without getting pregnant and they could determine the number of children they wanted. As a result, birth control undermined fathers' and husbands' ability to build families and for the church to build morally upright communities. For the church, as one of the biggest providers of medical care, the problem of birth control was real and not just a stand in for women's independence. Birth control which they believed encouraged extra marital affairs, abortion, prostitution and led to the spread of venereal diseases challenged the Catholic ideals and teachings about family, sexuality, and reproduction. Thus, the dissertation tells the story of women's sexual and reproductive health in the 1970s. It shows how sexual and reproductive health care and research collided with the moral agendas of not just the state but husbands, church leaders, medics, and other Ugandans. It also tells the story of how women and young girls resourcefully circumvented the laws by forging letters to get birth control, unravelling their dresses to prolong them, and tying *Lesus* (wrappers) around their bodies to hide the miniskirts/dresses.[86] The dissertation also highlights the limits of the state as shown by its inability to effectively, uniformly and legally enforce the laws,[87] to provide resources for medics to test venereal diseases, to effectively manage FPAU and to prevent citizens from taking matters into their hands.

[86] See Chapter 1 and 4.
[87] Although the laws were supposed to apply to all, it was mostly urban women who were most often arrested, prosecuted, and attacked by mobs and soldiers.

Contribution to scholarship: Women and Idi Amin in the historiography of Uganda

Although during the 1970s and beyond, scholars paid particular attention to the government of Idi Amin and its devastating impact on various populations, as noted recently by Peterson and Taylor, "the range of scholarship was constrained, focused on Amin's psychology and his political lineage."[88] Scholars presented the post-colonial state as "a product and personification of Idi Amin's personality,"[89] and as the only organizing entity. Civil society and other institutions which as I show in this dissertation, continued to play a significant role in the politics of morality, were presented as either a buffer against the excesses of the Amin regime or as disempowered and silenced.[90]

Although masculinity and violence are recurring themes in the larger debates about Idi Amin's dictatorship and the failure of the nation-state in Uganda,[91] the anti-immorality campaign remained tangential to the central stories about the 1970s. The few scholars who dedicated a sentence or two to the miniskirt campaign, found no social, cultural or political logic in Amin's actions against women.[92] They treated such actions as a footnote in the larger stories about Idi Amin's psychotic

[88] Derek R. Peterson & Edgar C. Taylor, "Rethinking the State in Idi Amin's Uganda: The Politics of Exhortation," *Journal of East African Studies* 7, no. 1 (2013): 60.
[89] Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State," 60.
[90] See chapter 2. On the role of the Church in the1970s, See Kevin Ward, "The Church of Uganda Amidst Conflict. The Interplay between Church and Politics in Uganda since 1962," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, eds., Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1995); M. Louise Pirouet, "Religion in Uganda Under Amin," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 11, no. 1 (1980): 13-29; J.J. Carney, "The Politics of Ecumenism in Uganda, 1962-1986," *Church History* 86, no.3 (September 2017): 765-795.
[91] For example, in an attempt to find a causal relationship between Amin's violent actions and his background, Mazrui played on old racist tropes of African savagery and hyper sexuality and he presented Amin as a product of a violent precolonial society. Since the 1970s, score of journalists and fictional writers have marveled at Idi Amin's sexual prowess. Recently, scholars including Mark Leopold have argued that using Amin's background to explain his behavior perpetuated old stereotypes of violence and further marginalized the West Nile region where Idi Amin was born. See Mark Leopold, *Inside West Nile: Violence, History and Representation on an African Frontier (*Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2005).
[92] Some of the notable scholarships include Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983); Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle, eds. *Uganda Now: Between Decay and Development* (London: James Currey, 1988); Semakula Kiwanuka, *Amin and the Tragedy of Uganda* (Munchen: WeltforumVerlag, 1979);

personality, they dismissed them as political opportunism or propaganda for the media.[93] Other scholars argued that Amin banned indecent attire to appease his Arab benefactors.[94] Some scholars applauded Amin's efforts to ban miniskirts which they argued were 'imperialist cultural practices.'[95] For example, Mamdani called for a national culture project similar to Tanzania's and which as argued by Andrew Ivaska would be "testament to the nation's post coloniality, its overcoming of the colonial."[96] Mamdani seems to have been concerned that the anti-immorality campaign was selective, and lacked an ideological backing. Thus, in his aptly titled book *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda,* Mamdani stated in reference to Amin's campaigns against women's attire that "to eradicate imperialist cultural influence is not possible through state repression…it requires that a popular national culture be developed simultaneously."[97] This argument gave merit to the anti-immorality campaign and reinforced the idea that women's attire was immoral, a product of imperialism and therefore needed to be reformed.

Seduced by Amin's colorful character as well as his taste for unchecked violence, scholars were unable to fathom the idea that there was a wider theater where ordinary citizens and bureaucrats debated about issues besides high politics, such as sexuality, reproduction and attire. They ignored the gendered feminized rhetoric of the anti-immorality campaign and the initiative of Ugandans in

Samwiri R. Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1988); Ali Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (Sage Publications, 1975); *The Warrior Tradition in Modern Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1977); "The Resurrection of the Warrior Tradition in African Political Culture," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 13, no.1 (March 1975): 67-84; "The Social Origin of Ugandan Presidents: From King to Peasant Warrior," *Canadian Journal of African studies/ Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 8 no.1 (1974): 3-23, and "Soldiers as Traditionalizers: Military Rule and Re-Africanization of Africa" *World Politics* 28, no.2 (Jan 1976): 246-272.

[93] Semakula Kiwanuka, *Amin and the Tragedy of Uganda.*

[94] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*; Kyemba, *A State of Blood.*

[95] For example, Mamdani argued that what made the anti-immorality campaigns wrong was the fact that it did not include the *mafutamingi,* the rich men who stole from the government and who "decked their women with the most expensive jewelry." See Mamdani *Imperialism and Fascism*, 53-54.

[96] Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 207.

[97] Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism*, 53-54.

establishing moral order. Even though with the end of the Amin regime in 1979, research space opened up and some scholars began accessing archives that had escaped destruction,[98] there was no attempt to dig deep to understand why women's dress and sexuality emerged as sites for debate in Idi Amin's Uganda. There was no attempt to link the 1970s to the documented older debates and campaigns against urban women or even similar campaigns in other African countries where leaders had tapped into idealized notions of womanhood and youthhood for nation-building projects.[99]

While lack of sources and government hostility played an important role in limiting historical inquiry in the 1970s, the lack of investigation into the anti-immorality campaign can also be attributed to the androcentric nature of knowledge production in Uganda. With the exception of a small group of anthropologists and sociologists who in the 1950s and 1960s produced studies that paid attention to the lives of women,[100] male-centered discourses have long dominated historical inquiry in Uganda. For example, as part of the (cultural) decolonization project in Africa, beginning in the 1960s, scholars of Uganda undertook various projects to document the political history of Uganda. The result was a male-centered history that documented the exploits of kingdoms and kings as evidence of Africans' ability to organize power.[101] Those involved in the project stated that *Uganda's Famous Men* project was "mainly prompted by the realization that

[98] Scholars like Obbo, *African Women.*
[99] In the 1960s and 1970s, all over Africa, post-colonial leaders began national cultural projects which cast youth, women, and other minorities as either "icons of moral valor" or "moral degenerates." See Jay Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Ivaska, *Cultured States,* 206.
[100] Southall and Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making;* Elkan, *The Employment of Women.*
[101] G.N. Uzoigwe, *Revolution and Revolt in Bunyoro Kitara* (Longman Uganda, 1970); C. Wrigley, *Regalia Galore: the Decline and Eclipse of Ankole Kingship* (East African Literature Bureau, 1975); A.R. Dunbar, *A History of Bunyoro Kitara* (East African Institute of Social Research /Oxford University Press 1965); S.M.S. Kiwanuka *Muteesa of Uganda: Uganda's Famous Men* (East African Literature Bureau 1967) and *A History of Buganda: From the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900* (L*ondon:* Longman Group Ltd, 1971); S.R. Karugire, *A History of the Kingdom of Ankole in Western Uganda to 1896* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1971).

some of these men were at the height of their power toward the turn of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, and were known by intimate old men who are…dying out fast."[102] Although Uganda's 'famous women' faced the same fate, scholars were unmotivated to write histories about powerful Ugandan women like Queen mothers.[103]

Subsequent scholarship in the 1980s dealt with the high politics of power and remained male-centered until Christine Obbo's book on urban women opened up possibilities for studying women's agency.[104] Obbo's seminal work which was inspired by Aidan Southall and Peter Gutkind's study of the lives of Africans in *Kibuga* slums,[105] became the founding text for scholars on women and gender in Uganda. In contrast to Southall and Gutkind's study, Obbo "describe[d] not only the social environment, but…[women's] goals, choices and strategies within certain social, political and economic constraints."[106] She investigated how women in their own ways were spearheading change and undermining the patriarchal society by striving for economic independence.[107]

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[102] A.R Dunbar, *Omukama Chwa 11 Kabalega, Uganda's Famous Men* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau,1965), preface.

[103] Holly Hanson, "Queen Mothers and Good Governance in Buganda: The Loss of Women's Political Power in Nineteenth Century East Africa," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, eds. Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi and Jean Allman (Indianapolis: Indiana university press, 2002); D. L. Schiller, "The Royal Women of Buganda," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23, no. 3 (1990); Nakanyike B. Musisi, ""Elite Polygyny" and Buganda State Formation," *Signs* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 757-786.

[104] Obbo's book was a critique of the colonial and post-colonial scholarship for its misrepresentation of women and for its failure to address women's agency. She stated that her work was an intervention in the male-centered scholarship and the "problem of women" in anthropological works which tended to study women in through lens of social ills. See Obbo, *African Women,* 3.

[105] Southall and Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making.*

[106] Obbo, *African Women*, 4.

[107] Obbo also set out to counter the colonial framework that established women in fixed places and as belonging to the 'rural.' She challenged the colonial notion of the urban as a 'male place' and set out to record the experiences of women living alongside men in the slums of Kampala, emphatically stating that women belonged in the city. Obbo asserted that women persisted in staying in the city by manipulating the same traditions that men used to tie them to rural places such as owning property. See Obbo, *African Women.*

By addressing Ugandan women's tactical agency, Obbo's work alongside earlier studies of urban sociology laid the ground for subsequent work on women and gender in Uganda which addressed domesticity, urbanization and women's education and political participation.[108] The scholarship on women and gender provides a vivid picture of Ugandan women's economic and political opportunities and struggles. It shows how Ugandan women struggled against the domestic model— "an ideological opposition to work outside the domestic context."[109] However, this new scholarship on women and gender in Uganda suffers from unevenness: there is a lot of work on Ganda women and colonial Uganda and little on non-Ganda women and the post-colonial period.[110] For example, Nakanyike Musisi, who is one of the most prolific scholars of women and gender in Uganda, focuses almost exclusively on colonial Buganda and Ganda women.[111] In various articles and edited volumes, she addresses the question of women and royal power in Buganda,[112] and the colonial politics of production and reproduction in Buganda. Musisi links debates and struggles over Ganda women's sexuality to the colonial project by arguing that struggles over the reproductive potential of Ganda women were linked to the role of Buganda as

[108]Some of which came out of collaborative efforts between Ugandan scholars of women and gender from Western institutions and Makerere's department of Women and Gender studies. Some of this scholarship includes Kyomuhendo & McIntosh. *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue,* and Tripp and Kwesiga, eds. *The Women's Movement in Uganda.*

[109] For instance, Kyomuhendo and McIntosh's seminal book which spans a century investigates how the Domestic Virtue Model which was promoted by colonialists, missionaries, and Ugandan men curtailed women's economic independence. It also examines how women struggled against male expectations, and specifically the ideological opposition to work outside the domestic context. While Kyomuhendo and McIntosh argue that missionary education tied women to domestic related tasks, Aili Tripp, and Joy Kwesiga argue that missionary education which promoted domesticity was a steppingstone for women's participation in politics/public sphere o. See Kyomuhendo & McIntosh. *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue*: Aili Tripp and Joy Kwesiga, eds, *The Women's Movement in Uganda.*

[110] With the exception of the works of Kyomuhendo and McIntosh, and Obbo.

[111] Nakanyike B. Musisi," Baganda Women Night Market Activities," in *African Market Women and Economic Power: The Role of Women in African Economic Development* eds. Bessie House-Midamba and Felix K. Ekechi (London: Greenwood Press, 1995).

[112] Nakanyike B. Musisi, "A Personal Journal into Custom, Identity, Power, and Politics: Researching and Writing the Life and Times of Buganda's Queen Mother Irene Drusilla Namaganda, 1896-1957," *History in Africa* 23 (1996):369-385; Nakanyike B. Musisi, ""Elite Polygyny." and Buganda State Formation," *Signs,* 16, no 4. (Summer 1991) 757-786.

the center of British colonialism in Uganda. She states that the colonial state needed healthy Ganda women to nurture healthy families to ensure the production of raw materials.[113]

In an edited volume that examines the process of labelling women 'wicked,' and "how "wicked" women and the paradoxes they generate become sites for debate over, and occasionally transformations in, gender relations, social practices, cultural norms and, political economic institutions,"[114] Musisi revisits studies by Gutkind and Southall and Obbo to examine "the historical and social construction of bad women in emerging urban spaces during the colonial era."[115] She argues that labelling women 'bad'(wicked, promiscuous etc.), the moralizing discourses about town women and the regulations that were instituted to control women were an outcome of men's anxiety about loss of control of women's reproductive and productive assets.[116]

On the other hand, Bantebya Kyomuhendo and McIntosh's seminal book which spans a century shows how women in both colonial and post-colonial Uganda have struggled against male expectations and specifically the ideological opposition to work outside the domestic context.[117] However, the breadth of their work and the lack of sources prevents them from fully examining the struggles over women's sexuality and their sartorial practices in the 1970s. Although Kyomuhendo and McIntosh acknowledge that the 1970s "had a profound impact upon women,"[118] like Obbo,[119] they only briefly comment on the 1970s anti-immorality campaign. They attribute

[113] Nakanyike Musisi, "The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945," in *Women in African Colonial Histories* ed. Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi and Jean Allman (Indianapolis: Indiana university press, 2002), 96. See also Carol Summers, "Intimate Colonialism: The Imperial Production of Reproduction in Uganda, 1907-1925" *Signs* 16 no.4 (Summer 1991): 787-807.
[114] Hodgson and McCurdy, *"Wicked" Women*, 2.
[115] Musisi, "Gender and the Cultural Construction," 172.
[116] Musisi, "Gender and the Cultural Construction," 181.
[117] Kyomuhendo and McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue.*
[118] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh. *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue,* 147.
[119] Although Obbo says little about the 1970s anti-immorality campaign, she argues that the same thinking in colonial Uganda that towns were bad for women was at the center of the 1970s debates about women's morality. She states that like in colonial Uganda, in 1970s, men regarded it as their duty to tackle the hostile Westernized urban

the lack of scholarly engagement with the lives of women during the Idi Amin period to poor sources.[120]

The recent discovery of new archives has made it possible for scholars to investigate the neglected aspects of the Amin regime. [121] The new sources have made it possible to look beyond the looming figure of Amin, to a Uganda where ordinary citizens were exercising their agency. My work contributes to this new scholarship which challenges long-held assumptions about the Amin regime[122] by showing it as "a field of action, in which officials, bureaucrats and citizens used paper work, extortion and other rhetoric and administrative tools to compel others to act."[123] By examining the anti-immorality campaign, the dissertation makes several significant contributions to scholarship on Idi Amin's Uganda, state-societal relations, gender and women, sexuality, health, and medicine. By focusing on how disparate people and institutions perceived women's sexuality and their sartorial choices, by examining their role in shaping and executing moral reform campaigns, the dissertation sheds light on some of the paradoxes and ambiguities of the 1970s, such as the Amin state's contradictory behavior towards women. Unlike his predecessor, Amin went out of his way to promote women. He made history when he named Bernadette Olowo envoy to the Vatican.[124] He also appointed a former fashion model and Cambridge trained lawyer, Elizabeth Bagaaya as Uganda's first female minister. Evidence suggests that Amin wanted to portray himself as a leader of a modern state— and in the modern state, women were part of the

environment and to protect their women from it." But she makes no attempt to fully examine the 1970s campaigns. See Obbo *African Women,* 10.

[120] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue,* 147.

[121] On the state of archives in Uganda, see Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State," and Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and Lynn Kadhiagala, "Finding What you Need in Uganda's Archives," *History in Africa* 27 (2000): 455-470.

[122] A 2013 special collection "Rethinking Idi Amin's Uganda" revisits some of the most written about controversies in the 1970s like expulsion of non-Ugandans and Ugandan Asians and the little researched issue of gender. See Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State."

[123] Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State," 59.

[124] Olowo became the first woman in the whole world to be appointed envoy to the Vatican.

political machinery. Upon appointing Bagaaya, Amin ordered her to be "as tough as the Prime Ministers of Israel, India, and Sri Lanka—Golda Meir, Indra Ghandi, Bandaranaike, respectively."[125] However, as he was appointing women to higher offices, he was also putting in place mechanisms to control their sexuality and sartorial practices.

By appointing women to political offices, Amin fulfilled his obligation as head of a modern state and won a place for Uganda in the international arena. By signing the anti-immorality decrees, he fulfilled his role as head of a moral community and guardian of public morality. As stated by Lynn Thomas, controversies over women's sexual and reproductive lives are "illuminating sites through which to analyze state power because they reveal how officials and politicians have simultaneously sought to juggle the material and moral obligations of rule. They also reveal how women's bodies and reputations have often provided the link between these two realms."[126] By looking at Amin's actions as an attempt to juggle the material and moral, we are able to better understand the contradictory actions regarding women. To borrow Andrew Ivaska's words, instead of seeing his actions as contradictory, they should be seen as 'mutually constitutive.' To be perceived as a modern nation, Amin needed to promote women and to have women representing Uganda at the international stage. But he and other conservatives wanted these women to reflect an image that "was simultaneously modern and distinctly non-Western"[127] i.e. Amin wanted these women to be modern without being western. He wanted them to represent Uganda while adhering to Ugandan gender roles, including submitting to men and keeping their sexuality in check. This became clear when he dismissed Bagaaya for sexual immorality. Amin was proud of her work as minister of

[125] 'Challenge to Bagaya,' *Voice of Uganda* February 21, 1974, 1.
[126] Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb,* 5.
[127] Andrew Ivaska writes that Tanzanian leaders who had an eye on the international stage "were keen to promote a national tradition that would represent Tanzania as simultaneously modern and distinctly non-Western." Thus, they had to filter tradition "through criteria defined as modern before being welcomed as national culture." See Ivaska, *Cultured States,* 206.

Foreign Affairs— a job that involved defending Uganda's position on various issues, until he got information from some of his spies in her delegation that she had allegedly had sexual relations with a white man in a toilet at Orly airport in Paris. According to Amin, Bagaaya's alleged actions contravened Ugandan customs and brought shame on Uganda.[128]

The second contradiction I address is the dual role of civil societies (ethnic associations, the church etc.) which scholars argue provide space for Africans to argue about and build civic virtues of respectability and comportment.[129] In scholarship, civil societies like the church emerge as the anchor that hold society together, especially in times when the state fails to provide or protect civil liberties.[130] However, like the state, civil society organizations have to juggle their roles—on one hand they have to speak against the excesses of the state and on the other hand build moral communities. In Uganda, civil society did both: they spoke out against the state's violation of certain rights of Ugandans, especially in the early 1970s, while supporting the Amin regime's efforts to build a moral community. This is why debates and campaigns about sexuality and dress are enduring in Uganda. They are not just instrument by the state to win popular support, they are a result of efforts by various entities to build moral communities. They may be initiated by the state, but they are sustained by institutions including those we consider protectors of civil liberties.

By examining the role of ordinary Ugandans, the Church, medics, and other functionaries in debates about women's behavior and in shaping and executing state-led moral reform programs,

[128] According to Bagaaya the real issue was that she had turned away his sexual advances. Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro*.
[129] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*; Jones, *Beyond the State.*
[130] Jones, *Beyond the State:* Kevin Ward, "The Church of Uganda Amidst Conflict. The Interplay between Church and Politics in Uganda since 1962," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, eds., Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1995); M. Louise Pirouet, "Religion in Uganda Under Amin," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 11, no. 1 (1980): 13-29; J.J. Carney, "The Politics of Ecumenism in Uganda, 1962-1986," *Church History* 86, no.3 (September 2017): 765-795.

my dissertation contributes to debates about state-citizen relations in post-colonial Africa. The 1970s anti-immorality campaign facilitated new ways for the governments to engage with citizens and for citizens to exercise their agency. In neighboring Tanzania, Ivaska has argued that although the work of reforming women's morals began as a top-down project, with the state providing the national cultural discursive framework, citizens redirected the discussions, ignored the official frame, and adopted a discursive framework that reflected the realities of their everyday lives.[131] He states that the Tanzanian government "was central in providing vocabularies and frames key to urban public debate but never able to control the directions of public engagement with these frames…."[132] Similarly, in Idi Amin's Uganda, some Ugandans used debates about morality to articulate their visions of the kind of society they wanted Uganda to become, visions that sometimes contradicted those of the Amin government.[133]

In addition to highlighting the agency of Ugandans and the limits of the state, the dissertation also reveals continuity and rupture in moral panic in Uganda. It not only shows that Ugandans were tapping into a gendered discourse about the 'uncontrollability' of women which had emerged in the early twentieth century but also calls attention to opportunities the state created for conservatives to restore moral order. The 1970s state-led anti-immorality campaigns showed that it was possible to build a moral community that stretched beyond ethnic homelands and that national identity was as potent as ethnic identity in building moral communities. As members of the nation state, Ugandans created new national solidarities using the media and especially the English language press to reach beyond their ethnic homeland. While before the 1970s, women could subvert the conservative agenda by for example refusing to become members of their ethnic

[131] Ivaska, *Cultured States*, 208.
[132] Ivaska, *Cultured States*, 211.
[133] See Chapter.

association,[134] in the 1970s, men could make claims over any woman using the national identity. Conservatives joined state-affiliated institutions like FPAU where they were able to apply more effective mechanisms to control women's sexuality by, for example, limiting access to birth control.[135]

Methods and Sources

The dissertation emerges from a wide range of sources including police records, newspapers and magazines, parliamentary records, personal papers, minutes, government and church documents and interviews. The archival documents and interviews allow me to bring out the multi-layered history of moral reform projects in Uganda. After consulting the Uganda National archives (hereafter UNA) which was located in the basement of an old colonial building in Entebbe,[136] it became clear to me that there were barely any stories about morality, sexuality and the lives of ordinary Ugandans in the UNA. I began looking into archives of local governments, the police, the church, and other non-governmental organizations. Some of these archives were uncatalogued. For example, one of the most important sources for this dissertation was the Central Police Station (CPS) Archives, Kampala. After getting permission from the Uganda Police's research department, I was given a key to the 'Archives,' a small room filled with police reports and exhibits from crime scenes. The room was a dumping ground for all sorts of crime scene weapons dating

[134] This applies to the Luo Union. Other association like Tooro did not require membership before subjecting women to their rules. See Obbo, *African Women.*
[135] See Chapter 4.
[136] Later, the Archives were transferred to the newly constructed National Records Centre and Archives (NRCA) near the city Centre, Wandegeya, Kampala.

back to the Amin period. While pulling out what we thought was a boxful of files from 1970s, my assistant and I found that the box contained a dozen grenades from early 1980s.

Figure 1: "King" a bomb sniffing dog looking for unexploded ordnances at CPS.
Source: Photo taken by the author in Kampala, 2015.

We spent six months cleaning this archive, a process that involved getting a bomb squad and a bomb sniff dog to sniff out unexploded ordnances. I was rewarded with a large number of documents—arrests records, statements by women arrested for wearing minidresses, details about who paid their fines, and description of the offending items (minidresses). I read them alongside

letters and editorial pieces in various newspapers and magazines which contained debates about morality and dress. The newspapers and magazines were housed in Uganda (National Archives, Makerere University, Rubaga Catholic Archives, and Comboni Archives, Mbuya), the USA (University of Michigan) and Europe (African Studies Center, Leiden, Netherlands).

In the Comboni Archives in Kampala, I found old *Leadership* magazines that chronicled the history of the church's intervention in the sexual and reproductive lives of women. In a private archive of Anne and George Saxton, two key founders of the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU), I found minutes and correspondence that documented the global and local conditions that gave birth to FPAU. I also found private uncensored letters written by and to family members which I read alongside official correspondence between Clarence Gamble, Edith Gates, and Uganda medics and women birth control activists housed at Harvard. I supplemented them with the FPAU minutes and other documents from Uganda Christian University, Mukono, the FPAU Archives and local government archives in Uganda.

In Makerere's medical library (Albert Cook Library, Mulago), I found eyewitness accounts and studies about venereal diseases. Some of the authors worked with the government to enforce the anti-venereal disease decree. In the Ugandan parliament, I found in well-kept parliamentary Hansards, various decrees signed by Amin targeting women's attire and sexuality, and parliamentary debates about miniskirts in Obote's Uganda. I also interviewed former beauty queens, health workers, judges and lawyers, tailors, cloth sellers, city workers, policemen and women, demographers, and family planning workers, Catholic priests, politicians, and former ministers in the Amin regime.

To capture public debates about sexual, reproductive, and sartorial morality by ordinary Ugandans, government officials and the church, newspapers proved particularly useful. As stated by Peterson and Taylor, it was through "newspapers [that] particular Ugandan constituencies were addressed, blamed, and exhorted to mend their ways."[137] I examined six newspapers and magazines; the Luganda language *Munno* and the English language *Leadership* magazine which were both owned by the Catholic church, *Taifa Empya,* a Luganda language foreign-owned newspaper; the English language newspaper, *The People*, which was a UPC/Obote mouthpiece; and the government owned *Uganda Argus* which became *Voice of Uganda* in 1972. Newspapers were heavily censored by post-colonial governments and some editors like *Munno's* Fr. Kiggundu were murdered for criticizing the Amin regime. By the mid-1970s, of all the English newspapers only the government's *Voice of Uganda*[138] and the Catholic *Leadership* magazine were still publishing.

Recent scholarship on print media has argued that in East Africa, newspapers were an infrastructure that allowed not only the state but editors and readers "to dictate to Uganda's publics."[139] Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter have argued that, like editors, readers "could set the agenda too, by sending letters, asking questions of editors, and contributing their poems and stories."[140] While undertaking research in newspapers, I was struck by how much the state and citizens utilized the press to debate, contest and summon others to act, especially in 1970s. I also found that newspaper editors played a vital role in campaigns against women's dress by going to the streets to seek ordinary Ugandans' views, publishing readers' letters and government directives among others. However, while the press was saturated with pictures, letters, and commentary on

[137] Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State," 59-60.
[138] Derek R. Peterson and Emma Hunter, "Print Culture in Colonial Africa," in *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century,* eds. Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter & Stephanie Newell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 31.
[139] Peterson & Taylor, "Rethinking the State," 59.
[140] Peterson and Hunter, "Print Culture," 13.

fashion, especially between 1970-1974, there was extraordinarily little debate about sexuality even when the decrees about venereal diseases, prostitution and abortion were signed.

Although the government-owned newspapers covered the intermittent moral outrage about town women in the colonial period throughout the 1960s,[141] there was little coverage of issues of sexuality due to a general reluctance among some Ugandan conservatives to publicly debate sexuality in the media. For example, Shane Doyle writes that in 1971, the editor of one of the government newspapers was attacked when he decided to transform the cartoon character *Ekanya*, "a symbol of ignorance and backwardness…used by the colonial state to educate Ugandans about public health, hygiene and agriculture" into "a modern crafty unrepentant serial adulterer."[142] Some Ugandans protested by writing letters to the editor who they "considered to have crossed a moral boundary"[143] by publishing such information in a national newspaper.

In the absence of newspapers willing to openly discuss matters to do with sexuality, Ugandans turned towards private publications,[144] especially the Catholic press, which had since the mid-1960s paid more attention to the status of women, gender relations, and sexual morality. Bantebya Kyomuhendo and McIntosh found that in the 1960s, the Catholic-owned Runyankole language newspaper—*Ageteraine* published several articles about education, taxation of women, the role of

[141] Doyle writes that "the periodic upwelling of moral outrage which characterized Uganda's newspaper throughout the colonial period and 1960s continued into early 1970s but then seems to have remained largely quiescent over the next decade." See Doyle, *Before HIV,* 348.
[142] Doyle, *Before HIV,* 349.
[143] Doyle, *Before HIV,* 348.
[144] While editors in government newspapers shied away from issues to do with sexuality, some Ugandans took advantage of this to produce erotic literature and content about sexuality. For example, in addition to theater which addressed issues of infidelity, incest and prostitution, Doyle writes that one entrepreneur published a Luganda language "Ekitabu ky'Ekyama (The Book of Secrets about Sex)" which contained "content copied from biology test books and western erotic magazines, information about the sexual customs of the various ethnic groups, and letters to the editor." It sold from markets and verandas was said to have been "read by a third of secondary school children surveyed in early 1970s." In the Book of Sex, Ugandans asked about 'the techniques to seduce women, detect 'girlfriend infidelity' and how to detect 'a woman with any sexual diseases." See Doyle, *Before HIV*, 350.

women in development, equality between men and women, among others.[145] However, because of language barriers, these issues were rarely debated by all Ugandans.

In the mid-1960s, the editors of the English language *Leadership* magazine which was known for its firebrand coverage of controversial political issues ranging from nationalism, political parties, and church-state relations, decided to dedicate the magazine to what they called social issues (sexuality, moral degeneration, etc.). In a media landscape dominated by vernacular press, English language newspapers and magazines like *Leadership* transformed journalism as they enabled Ugandans to imagine a more inclusive, nationalist form of identity. They made it possible to cross geographical/language barriers, to speak as members of one nation. Although the vernacular press occasionally published articles on morality, the intense debates about fashion and sexual and reproductive morality took place in the English language papers. Debates about fashion took place mostly in government owned newspapers, while those about sexuality were to be found in private and Catholic-owned newspapers. Although according to Doyle, by the mid-1970s, national newspapers had become "increasingly sexualized" publishing on topics such extramarital affairs,[146] the Catholic-owned *Leadership* was the only newspaper that consistently addressed issues to do with sexuality and morality.

Censorship and low circulation figures pose questions about using the press as a source. As stated above, newspapers were heavily censored. However, unlike its sister paper *Munno* which was targeted by Amin after it criticized the violence against civilians, the fact that *Leadership* stopped publishing on 'political' issues in the 1960s may have protected it from Amin's wrath.[147]

[145] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue,* 108.
[146] Doyle. *Before HIV,* 350.
[147] Although some members of the Verona fathers, the organization which founded *Leadership,* were, alongside Asians and other non-Ugandans, expelled by Amin who accused them of working without work permits. The Verona fathers

Leadership may also have been protected by the fact that its interests concerning women's morality converged with that of the Amin government. There are no reliable figures to estimate the number of Ugandans who could afford to buy and read newspapers,[148] but as asserted by Luise White, newspaper reading in Uganda was a communal affair. She states that one did not have to know English or to buy a newspaper to know what it said. Newspapers were read and summarized for audiences.[149] Editors of newspapers like *Leadership* targeted groups that not only had resources to buy newspapers but also were in position to influence the moral compass of Ugandans. It targeted health workers, the doctors and nurses who worked in government and Catholic-owned hospitals and health units. It published articles targeting nurses to remind them not to distribute birth control or help women abort. It also targeted academics, headteachers, teachers, students who, it argued, were future leaders and policy makers.

But women's sexuality was not only debated in newspapers. In addition to the rich and informative discussions about premarital sex, birth control, venereal diseases, and abortion in newspapers like *Leadership*, policy makers, birth control activists, medics and academics were actively discussing these issues among and between themselves and in academic journals. Thus, while the government press does not tell us much about the politics of sexuality, other sources which include letters, minutes of institutions like FPAU, local government documents, and research done by academics

learned to not invite Amin's wrath by not commenting or publishing on political issues or issues that contradicted the government's position. Interview with Father Sergio, Moroto, 2015.

[148] In 1962, a government list of newspapers in Uganda showed that of the 19 newspapers, only two were published in English. There were five government vernacular newspapers published weekly, fortnightly, and monthly, all with a circulation of 10, 000, with the exception of the Ganda language weekly which had a circulation of 40,000. By 1967, English language daily newspapers *Uganda Argus* and *The People* were well established, with large circulations at 20,000 and 15000 respectively, while the Catholic-owned *Leadership* was published bi-weekly with a readership of 10,000.See Jacob Matovu, "Mass Media as Agencies of Socialization in Uganda," *Journal of Black Studies* 20, no. 3, (March 1990): 345-346; Daniel Nelson, "Newspapers in Uganda," *Transition*. no. 35 (Feb-Mar 1968): 29-33.

[149] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 252.

tell us a lot about how the church, medics, government officials, birth control activists and others perceived female sexuality.

Overview of chapters

The dissertation is composed of five chapters, each highlighting a different actor or actors including ordinary Ugandans, government officials and civil servants, medics, newspaper editors, birth control activists, population control experts, police men and women who all claimed moral authority over women's bodies. Chapter 1 explores debates in the press about the most visible symbol of perceived moral decadence, miniskirts, and other fashion accessories. It examines attempts by the Amin regime and ordinary Ugandans to steer fashion in directions that reinforced national solidarity and patriarchal authority. The chapter shows how women altered existing fashions and adopted new ones, which allowed them to display and manage their bodies in ways that made sense to them but which unwittingly subverted "traditional" dress codes. It examines the enforcement of the anti-miniskirt law by the police, the resources, and networks that young women tapped into to defend themselves. In chapter 2, I examine debates about female sexuality in the Catholic church; how the church used its newspapers and magazines such as *Leadership* magazine to engender debates about female sexuality, and to portray female sexuality as a threat to moral order. I show how the editors of *Leadership*, used anti-abortion literature such as the 'Diary of an unborn child' to portray women as murderers, abortion as a women's problem, even though men—as health workers, boyfriends, and husbands—forced, coerced, and helped women abort. Unlike other Ugandan newspapers, the editors of *Leadership* relied heavily on the labor of women to publish the newspaper while also making them its subject.

Chapter 3 examines the global and local politics of biomedical contraception in Uganda. The chapter examines the institutional history of the association behind the introduction of biomedical contraception; the Family Planning Association of Uganda and the people that created the association. It examines the surreptitious practice of medicine in Uganda, one of the many African countries that Clarence Gamble identified as in need of mass-produced homespun birth control. It addresses various issues including experimental research, the reproductive exploitation of Ugandan women, the role of Ugandan medics and women activists in the birth control project, and public opposition to birth control. On the other hand, Chapter 4 investigates the nationalization of the FPAU by the Amin government which allowed conservatives to control access to birth control. The chapter shows how Ugandans with no training in sexual and reproductive health replaced medical experts whom they accused of supporting abortion as a form of birth control. They dedicated the association to solving the problem of abortion and eradicating the use of birth control by unmarried women and schoolgirls. While Chapter 3 investigates groups which outrightly rejected birth control, this chapter examines those who embraced birth control as long as men controlled access to it and in the process the reproductive process. The chapter also examines the various tactics used by unmarried women and schoolgirls, to access birth control outside official channels.

Finally, chapter 5 examines venereal diseases as an epidemiological project, socially constructed, but with real consequences for women. It argues that public health officials' concern about venereal diseases among women reflected little more than their (and the public's) anxieties about new forms of birth control and changing sexual mores. It investigates studies done by Uganda medical doctors and public health officials which were part of the requirement for the attainment of a diploma from the Medical School. The studies served several purposes; they were meant to

call attention to the lack of personnel and medical equipment following the breakdown of medical care after the expulsion of non-Ugandans. Medics hoped that their findings (of a high prevalence rate of sexually transmitted diseases) would help them to leverage support from the government. The studies helped them to establish themselves as experts on the subject. In the process, they managed to establish for themselves long careers with government institutions such as the police and hospitals. Like their predecessors in colonial Uganda, they moralized venereal diseases and pathologized women and endorsed conservative views about their sexuality. Like the Catholic church, they came to associate modern contraception with disorder; 'untamed' female sexuality and social ills such as prostitution, premarital sex, and venereal diseases. Collectively, the chapters highlight agency, change and continuity, and how disparate forces—local and global, state actors and non-state actors, all converged to intervene in women's sexual and reproductive lives.

Chapter 1

Immoral Fashions: Debating Women's Sartorial Choices in Idi Admin's Uganda

On January 21, 1972, three Ugandan newspapers, the *Uganda Argus,*[1] *Taifa Empya*[2] and *The People*[3] simultaneously published articles about the arrest of former Miss Kampala Gertrude Jacqueline Kibuuka Basudde for her fashion choice: a belt made of bullets. The newspapers reported that the Kampala chief magistrate fined her 200 shillings after her lawyer, Mr. Kayondo, pleaded on her behalf that she was an innocent victim of foreign fashions from London where "there are many foolish fashions,"[4] imitated by Ugandans. *The People* reported that, "the magistrate … had considered the fact that the accused has been abroad, seeing people wearing these types of belts."[5] When Basudde was arrested, her cartridge belt was not the only item under scrutiny. Newspapers reported that she appeared in court "dressed in a heavy, dark brown mini, with yellow edging round the bodice and wearing the latest fashion in thick medium heeled shoes….wearing glittering, gold-like earrings and bangles…[and] black net stockings."[6] Her arrest came six days after Idi Amin's Minister of Culture and Community Development, Yekosofati Engur, began what newspapers dubbed "Engur's war on the mini."[7] He warned women and girls

[1] "Cartridge Girl Fined-Belt Bought in London, City of 'Foolish Fashions,'" *Uganda Argus*, January 21, 1972, 6.
[2] Eyali Nnalulungi Yatanziddwa 200/- *Taifa Empya,* January 21, 1972, 1.
[3] "Former Miss Kampala Fined Shs. 200," *The People* January 21, 1972,1.
[4] "City of 'Foolish Fashions,' *Uganda Argus*, January 21, 1972, 6.
[5] "Former Miss Kampala Fined Shs. 200," *The People*, January 21, 1972,1.
[6] "Former Miss Kampala Denies Charge," *Uganda Argus,* January. 20, 1972,5.
[7] The mini referred to minidresses and skirts. The discussion expanded to include dresses with high slits, hot pants, trousers, wigs, skin lighteners and makeup.

against wearing miniskirts, which, he said, "were adopted from London street girls."[8] He added that Ugandans were being misled by foreigners, who "discouraged…[Ugandan] culture and instead encouraged…[Ugandans] to practice theirs."[9] Engur portrayed the miniskirt as the antithesis of Ugandan traditions, a foreign import which threatened public morality. Following Engur's comments, Amin called a meeting with the Defense Council and it was agreed that people's views on women's fashion be sought.[10] Although there had been muted debates about women's fashion in the media before Engur's comments, following this announcement, Ugandans intensified their criticism of women's fashion. Four months later, Amin signed a decree banning minidresses and skirts, dresses with high slits, and hot pants. Later, he added trousers, wigs, skin lighteners and makeup to the list of banned items. The decree empowered the police to arrest those who broke the law.

This chapter investigates the gendered war against women's fashion by the government and citizens in Idi Amin's Uganda. It examines attempts by the Amin regime and ordinary Ugandans to regain control of the fashion landscape that had dramatically changed beginning in the late 1960s, when Ugandan women began adopting fashions that challenged the cultural meaning of dress and pushed back against submission to (male) authority. The chapter examines Ugandan women's sartorial practices. It shows how women altered existing fashions and adopted new ones, which allowed them to display and manage their bodies in ways that made sense to them, but which subverted "traditional" dress codes. It also highlights the role played by policewomen in the

[8] "Mini Skirts were Adopted from London-Engur,' *The People* January 15, 1972, 3.
[9] "Minister Engur has Waged War against the MINI-What do our readers say?" *The People* January 17, 1972, 1.
[10] *Munno*, February 8, 1972, 6.

enforcement of the anti-miniskirt decree, it provides insights into how the actual work of prosecuting women was done and the kind of resources women tapped into to defend themselves.

Uganda's anti-miniskirt campaign was one of the many such campaigns undertaken in various countries in Africa after independence. Scholars have argued that while some countries were inspired by the need to "demonstrate their...modernity" by rooting out dress practices perceived to be primitive, "others focused on styles of dress that imitated the West or were seen as antithetical to autonomous cultural development."[11] Decker shows that there were countries where campaigns to reform dress "were less ideological and more pragmatic," and where "immorality served as a useful scapegoat to mask larger political and economic problems."[12] According to Decker, Amin's Uganda belonged to this last category. I show, however, that anxiety about women's fashion which predated Amin was not merely a diversionary tactic by the regime. A reading of opinions of ordinary Ugandans in five newspapers published in Luganda and English between 1971 and 1975 reveal a messy debate where the Amin government's attempt to provide "the vocabularies and frames"[13] for public debates about women's fashion was not always successful. Like in Tanzania, the Amin government adopted the national cultural framework but was not "able to control the directions of public engagement with these frames."[14] Instead, citizens appropriated the debate about sartorial morality and steered it towards issues that were important to them.

The chapter shows that Ugandans used the issue of dress and fashion to battle out all sorts of complex issues revolving around gender and generation, the status and rights of women, the place

[11] Alicia C. Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 62.
[12] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 62.
[13] Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 211.
[14] Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States*, 211.

of women in urban and professional settings and the rights of the individuals in the nation state. By doing this, the chapter sheds light on the role of ordinary Ugandans in the anti-immorality campaign. Instead of a gullible citizenry tricked by Amin into going after women's fashion to divert them from the government's economic woes, I show them as moral entrepreneurs who used the debates about women's fashion to work out all kinds of anxieties. In particular, they used newspapers to, in the words of Peterson and Taylor, extort others and to compel them to act.[15] I show that in debates about fashion in newspapers, it was not just the reputation of women at stake but that of the debaters themselves. Readers went outside the parameters set by the government and by newspaper editors. They quoted and called out each other, they questioned each other's credentials and knowledge of fashion and the anti-miniskirt law and forced each other to defend their position.

The chapter is divided into three sections. To understand Uganda's fractured relationship with the cosmopolitan world of fashion, section 1 examines the infrastructure of fashion in Uganda—the changing fashion landscape from 'respectable' fashion that emphasized community, tradition, domesticity and submission to 'foolish' fashion that celebrated individuality, sexuality, female freedom and connection to the cosmopolitan world. The section also examines the infrastructure through which women came to learn about fashion, and their participation in local and international fashion worlds. Section 2 examines debates about women's fashion in the media by politicians, newspaper editors and ordinary Ugandans. An examination of these debates shows that ordinary Ugandans used debates about fashion to make claims on women, hold the government accountable and articulate their vision of what kind of society they wanted to see. My analysis of newspaper

[15] Derek R. Peterson & Edgar C. Taylor, "Rethinking the State in Idi Amin's Uganda: The Politics of Exhortation," *Journal of East African Studies* 7, no. 1 (2013): 59-60.

debates captures what Ugandans had to say about women's fashion not only as citizens but also as fathers, husbands, sons, daughters, and parents who felt that their own reputations were at stake. The last section investigates the gendered enforcement of the anti-mini decree by policemen and women. While newspapers reported the views of mostly male Ugandans about women's fashion, arrest reports show us the resources and networks that young women tapped into to defend themselves. Police reports also show that young women depended on men (fathers, employers, boyfriends) who stood as surety and sometimes paid court-mandated fines which further allowed men to dictate women's fashion.

From respectable to 'foolish fashions': dress on the eve of the anti-miniskirt campaign

Although lack of historical evidence has made it difficult to trace the history of fashion in Uganda, the limited photographic evidence and anecdotes about dress and fashion in the country show that before the mid-1960s, Ugandan women's fashion choices were limited and were closely tied to the politics of respectability.[16] Fashion was highly gendered and was composed of 'traditional' and 'modern' attire. Men's traditional attire was an Arab/Swahili-like tunic called *kanzu* under which they wore a European style trouser and sometimes a coat or jacket on top. The *kanzu* which Laura Fair describes as "a long white, loose-fitting gown"[17] was simple and practical. However, some evidence suggests that Ganda men had initially adopted the shorter version worn in some Arab countries and then modified it and made it longer because "Baganda regarded it shameful for

[16] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*.
[17] Laura Fair, "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian ocean: Dress, Performance, and the Cultural Construction of a Cosmopolitan Zanzibari Identity," in *Fashioning Africa. Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 16.

just a portion of the legs to show."[18] According to Margaret Hay, the *kanzu* was first worn by Ganda nobles and Christian converts, who were "influenced by the long term presence of Swahili traders at the Ganda court."[19] African servants (of Europeans) also wore the *kanzu*, although with a vest and fez.

While men's dress was simple and practical, women's dresses were elaborate. Women wore either *busuti/gomesi* (hereafter *busuti*) for Central, Eastern and Northern Uganda or *shuuka/suuka* (hereafter *suuka*) for Western Uganda. Scholars have described the *busuti* as a hybrid of the Edwardian style of puffed elbow length sleeves and traditional Ganda "long sleeveless gowns of bark-cloth made from soft, pliable inner bark of the fig tree."[20] The *busuti* was tied with a belt-like sash. The *suuka*, which resembled the Indian sari, was composed of a petticoat, a dress and a long and large sash which was won on top of the dress. The dress and sash were of the same material. With time, women made changes to the dresses. They began to wear a puffy underskirt called *kikoyi* to achieve a large lower backside (protruding buttocks), which was considered a marker of beauty. While describing women's "traditional" fashion in 1976, a Makerere University student of fashion stated that:

> It is understood that ladies even went to the extent of wearing blankets inside the *busuutis* in order to create the sufuliya (sauce pan) as they termed it, because such women looked as if they had cooking pots around their bottoms, thus creating very pronounced steatopygia. Big bottoms were or are still secretly highly celebrated as one man put it "I like her hips to hypnotize me." In fact, it was considered to be seductive.[21]

[18] Alexandra Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda. From Pre-independence to Military government. (BA Thesis, Makerere University, 1976), 2.
[19] Margaret Jean Hay, "Changes in Clothing and Struggles over Identity in Colonial Western Kenya" in *Fashioning Africa. Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 69.
[20] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 60.
[21] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 3.

Although women chose colors or patterns that fit their individuality, fashion options remained constrained by a cultural understanding of dress as a marker of gender and ethnicity.[22] Unlike in other societies such as the Yoruba in Nigeria where, to emphasize marital status and age, women wore a second or third layer or special head gear, in Uganda, women's dresses were largely uniform.[23] Scholars have shown that wearing identical clothes or fashioning clothes served a social, cultural and even political purpose. Fair, who examines "new forms of dress…as public articulation of women's new definitions of self"[24] in Zanzibar, states that in post-slavery society, "wearing identical *kangas*[25] symbolized a growing sense of social and cultural equality amongst women…"[26] In Uganda, the similar style of traditional wear symbolized social and cultural equality, and community.

Dressing—the act of putting on a *suuka* or *busuti*, was laborious and emphasized community and belonging. Women often needed the help of other women to 'gather' the *Kikoyi* material to create a puffy look. Because traditional fashion was heavily policed, it took a lot of time to get the right cultural look. For the *suuka* wearers, a gathered skirt that fell above the ankle or was asymmetric was ground for ridicule. One could also be labelled undisciplined or, worse, lustful if the *kikoyi* did not cover the calves. The unfortunate person was accused of *kuhenuza*, which, in Runyakitara (Runyoro-Rutooro), meant "to dress up in a very short dress" or "to behave lustfully."[27] While

[22] Only dress as a marker of gender, ethnicity, marital status, and social class. See Jean Allman, ed., *Fashioning Africa. Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).
[23] For the dressing style by the Yoruba women in Nigeria, see Judith Byfield, "Dress and Politics in Post war II Abeokuta (Western Nigeria)" in *Fashioning Africa. Power and the Politics of Dress,* ed. Jean Allman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).
[24] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 13.
[25] Fair describes *Kanga* as a cotton piece that newly emancipated women adopted as a replacement for clothes that signaled their servility. See Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 18.
[26] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 23.
[27] Thus, one had to make sure that their dress did not expose calves and thigh, which were considered 'sexual.' *Suuka* wearers had to avoid giving off any indication that they were intentionally trying to look sexy. Dressing was a form of disciplining the body; *Suuka* wearers had to walk slowly, taking measured steps, swaying from one side gently without appearing to bring attention to one's self. *Suuka* wearers had to slightly bend their upper body, which made

older women were likely to wear *busuti* or *suuka* all the time, for 'modern' women in urban areas, especially those employed in the formal sector, *busuti* and *suuka* were reserved for traditional occasions such as marriage, death and church attendance.

Ugandans' modern attire was influenced by conservative British fashion. While men wore European suits, shirts and trousers, women's modern attire was composed of long and midi dresses which they accessorized with stockings, hats and even gloves on special occasions, like weddings. In the 1950s, women adopted puffy skirts called 'stiffs.'[28] In the 1960s, amidst the worldwide 'twist mania,' some young women began wearing the 'twist and tight' dresses named after the 'twist dance,' which were described as "tight from top to waist…free flowing" from just below the buttocks. They accessorized them with platform shoes called *Gabon* or *Bongo*.[29] Despite this, fashion remained under the influence of the politics of respectability and the majority of Ugandan women dressed in "plain and sensible" dresses.[30]

Overall, there was no fashion scene to speak of in Uganda until later in the 1960s. Kaddu Wasswa, photographer, self-styled socialite and admirer of western dance and fashion was alarmed by the lack of sartorial awareness among Ugandans after he observed the youth in Kampala wearing *busuti* and western suits at the beach in the 1960s.[31] To teach Ugandans about fashion, he began holding beauty pageants in places frequented by young people, including night clubs and the

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them appear submissive. See, O. Ndolerire, J. Kintu, J. Kabagenyi, H. Kasande. *Runyoro-Rutooro-English dictionary* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2009).

[28] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 4.

[29] "How fashion in Uganda has evolved over years" October 9, 2012. https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1308339/fashion-uganda-evolved

[30] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda,"4.

[31] Wasswa, who cultivated social relationships with the British in Uganda and befriended prominent British families, left his job in the bank in early 1960s to go to London to study social work to help the youth in Kampala adjust to city life. On his return, he founded a youth organization, the Youth Groups Club (YGC) to help young people adjust to city life. He began instructing them about western dress and dance, he held British style afternoon teas where they drank in china teacups. Interview with Kaddu Wasswa, Ntinda, 2014, Also see, Kaddu Wasswa, Arthur C. Kisitu and Andrea Stultiens, *The Kaddu Wasswa Archive: A visual Biography* (Post Editions, 2011).

beach.[32] Wasswa successfully persuaded European secretaries working in banks to give him used women's magazines which had fashion pages.[33] According to Wasswa, he managed to transform the way members of his youth group (Youth Groups Club—YGC) dressed to such an extent that when a "visitor from Nyasaland met them, he remarked about how well educated, intelligent and "beautifully dressed" Ugandan women were compared to other African women."[34]

Wasswa and his group of youths were among the emerging group of young urban Ugandans who, in the words of Fair, used dress to "display their emergent identities as modern, twentieth century" cosmopolitan citizens.[35] Beginning in the late 1960s, young women began expanding their fashion catalogue by altering existing fashions and adopting radically new cosmopolitan fashions. Young women altered the *busuti* to create a short 'mini-*busuti*.' The mini-*busuti* was not only stylish, but also easy to wear and cheap to make. It required "only four yards of material instead of the original seven-yard garment."[36] Women wore the mini-*busuti* without the *kikoyi* petticoat, thereby highlighting the natural form. They also adopted cosmopolitan fashions including the stylish, flexible and practical mini, hot pants, trousers, fashionable accessories like belts, wigs, glittering makeup, powder, glittering eyeshadow and bold and daring lipstick which transformed them and made them stand out of the crowd of *busuti* and *suuka* wearers.[37] The new fashions redefined the

[32] The category under which the young women competed was "The Best Dressed Lady" and the winner was chosen by the attendees. Dress choices were limited to what young women could afford (a midi dress or skirt and blouse accessorized with a belt and bag). Contestants plaited their hair or hot combed it. Make up was discouraged and lipstick especially was associated with prostitutes. Interview with Kaddu Wasswa, Ntinda, 2014. Also see, Wasswa, Kisitu and Stultiens, *The Kaddu Wasswa Archive.*

[33] Magazines like *Woman's Own* and Woman illustrated (UK), which was concerned with domestic life and covered topics about how to dress and knit clothes. Interview with Kaddu Wasswa, Ntinda, 2014, Also see Wasswa, Kisitu and Stultiens, *The Kaddu Wasswa Archive*.

[34] Wasswa, Kisitu and Stultiens, *The Kaddu Wasswa Archive,*74.

[35] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 28.

[36] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 3.

[37] Nanono writes that young men too began wearing "trousers which were skintight from the hips to the knees and suddenly gave way to a flared bottom, often in combination with broad cowboylike leather belts" and tight shirts. See "Fashions in Uganda," 8.

idea of sexy dressing. For example, while women in traditional *busuti* used the puffy *kikoyi* petticoat to create a large backside which were considered sexy and desired by men, the mini-*busuti* and western mini revealed the female form as it was. Thus, by putting on minis, young women were refusing to conform to this masculine definition of female sexiness.

However, while the new fashions emphasized membership to the cosmopolitan world, as argued by Fair, this "did not imply a necessary reverence for the West…but rather a sophisticated appreciation for international mixing and appropriation of cultural styles and symbols from multiple, geographically dispersed sites."[38] In Uganda, where traditional wear itself was a result of hybridity, young women found inspiration from the traditional and the modern. Although, as I will show later, politicians and others perceived the new fashion as distinctly western, such fashions were in fact a result of mixing and appropriation.

To help them create their masterpieces, young women turned to local tailors. Kampala and other Ugandan towns were full of creative tailors, some taught informally by other tailors[39] and others trained by London-based institutions which offered long-distance courses in tailoring. One such London trained tailor who found himself making dresses including mini dresses for women in the early 1970s is John Epotu. Epotu graduated from London's 'The Tailor and the Cutter Academy' in 1970. Founded in 1866, the academy designated itself "the world-famous education institution," and "the authority on style and clothes."[40] Although Epotu earned a "Diploma of Merit of the First Class" in designing men's clothes, after finishing his course, he diversified his activities and began sewing for women as well.

[38] Fair, "Remaking Fashion,"13.
[39] Interview with Hajatti Masitula, Kampala, 2015.
[40] John kept the measuring ruler, certificate, finger protector, the institutional booklets, and receipts and the sketches that he drew while a student.

Attuned to the demands of their customers, tailors played an important role in facilitating particular fashionable moments. Decker shows that during the 1975 Organization of African Unity (OAU) celebrations in Kampala, after Idi Amin "ordered all residents of Kampala to wear special costumes…which featured…his picture, the OAU symbol, and the map of Africa," "tailors across the city sewed countless shirts and dresses in preparation of the event."[41] Some of their clients were beauty pageant contestants. A video of the Miss OAU pageant which was organized as part of the OAU conference showed some of the contestants wearing long flowing dresses featuring Amin's face.[42]

Customers and tailors got their inspiration from international fashion magazines sold by bookshops or brought into the country by Europeans.[43] Magazines like DRUM recruited young women all over east Africa to pose for photographs. Among its cover models were Ugandan girls who were photographed wearing bikinis, swimsuits, miniskirts, and minidresses. Magazines like DRUM enabled Ugandans to learn about fashion and beauty from each other and from other women in East Africa and across the continent. Because these magazines were too expensive for most people, they were borrowed and passed around from one person to another.[44] Major international fashion magazines also featured Ugandan models like Elizabeth Bagaaya (who would later become Idi Amin's Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Katiti Kironde, who were some of the first black women to appear in fashion magazines in the West.

[41] According to Decker, under great stress to fulfil the government order, some put the map upside down or cut Amin's image in half. Government officials warned them. See Decker, *In Idi Amins Shadow*, 105.
[42] https://reuters.screenocean.com/record/421507
[43] Interview with John Epotu, Soroti 2016.
[44] For example, Kaddu Wasswa sourced them from Europeans (his former co-workers). Interview with Kaddu Wasswa, Ntinda, 2014.

Bagaaya, a Cambridge trained lawyer, decided to become a fashion model after Obote abolished kingdoms and exiled traditional leaders including her brother, the King of Tooro. Her journey into the fashion world began when she accepted an invitation from Princess Margaret[45] to model a fashion collection from Uganda at the Commonwealth fashion show. Bagaaya saw an opportunity to use fashion to expose the plight of kingdoms and cultural leaders in Uganda. In her work on the politics of dress, Jean Allman argues that fashion is "an incisive political language capable of unifying, differentiating, challenging, contesting, and dominating."[46] Bagaaya recognized the power of dress and fashion and used it to challenge power. She stated that her aim was to use fashion "to destroy the myth of white superiority in terms of beauty and sophistication" and to keep the monarchy alive. She stated that:

> Obote had done his utmost to erase the monarchy in Uganda from the national consciousness. The monarchy was virtually extinct. It was not my aim to revive it, but, in adopting my new and unexpected role, I hoped to bring attention to my heritage, to emphasize my ancestral identity, which, Obote believed could be eradicated with one brash sweep of his pen….The language of clothes, of fashion and its attendant publicity, is a significant one. And I was determined to utilize such a powerful weapon to remind everyone that Uganda's culture was still a force with which to be reckoned. If I couldn't do it politically, I would do it with haute couture. I felt that somehow the torch of our culture had to continue.[47]

Thus, Bagaaya was not swapping culture for fashion and glamour. Instead, fashion was helping her promote her culture, expose the plight of her brother the king and his kingdom. She went on to become one of the first black models to be featured in international fashion magazines including *American and British Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar, Life, Ebony* and *Glamour*. As such, she did not only raise Uganda's profile but also inspired young women. A renowned Ugandan fashion critic,

[45] Her father, the King of Tooro hosted Princess Margaret during her visit to Uganda in 1965.
[46] Allman, *Fashioning Africa*, 1.
[47] Elizabeth Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro. The Odyssey of an African Princess: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 79.

who was a young girl at the height of Bagaaya's modelling career, remembers how she and her classmates consumed every piece of information they could find about her, including pictures of her posing in miniskirts and hot pants. It was Bagaaya who inspired her to take on a career in fashion.[48]

In 1967, following Bagaaya's debut on the fashion scene, Uganda began holding beauty pageants. According to Bagaaya, the first beauty pageant was held to sabotage her. She stated that the anti-royalist Obote protested her participation in the Commonwealth fashion show by telling the organizers that "a republic should not be represented by a royal princess."[49] According to Bagaaya, the Obote government was so bent on frustrating her that it launched an unsuccessful "last-minute attempt to enter a rival candidate."[50] The resulting Miss Uganda contest was a spectacular show of young women dressed in swim wear and knee-length sleeveless dresses, which they accessorized with bags and hats and low-heeled shoes.

[48] Interview with Keturah Kamugasa, Kampala, 2016.
[49] Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro*, 77.
[50] Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro*, 77.

Figure 2: Some of the Contestants for Miss Uganda, 1967.

Source: Andrea Stultiens, History in Progress, Uganda.

Nineteenth year old Rosemary Salmon emerged as the 1967 Miss Uganda and went on to represent Uganda at the Miss world competition in London as one of the eight black contestants from the African continent.[51] Elizabeth Bagaaya was one of the judges. Miss Salmon did not win any category. Although there is little information about who these young contestants were and who organized their wardrobe, the limited evidence available suggests that they worked with local tailors to design clothes for the pageant. However, some contestants bought 'readymade' dresses

[51] Contestants from Africa included Teresa Shayo (Tanzania), Araba Vroon (Ghana), Rosalind Balogun (Nigeria), Janie Jack (Gambia), Zipporah Mbugua (Kenya), Rekeja Dekhil (Tunisia) and Naima Benjelloun (Morocco).

from various Indian-ran shops in Kampala. This was confirmed by a former beauty contestant, Cecilia Ogwal who is the present-day Member of Parliament for Dokolo District.

Figure 3: Uncaptioned: Cecilia Ogwal (far right) in the Miss Tea contest 1969.
Source: Andrea Stultiens, History in progress, Uganda.

Ogwal who participated in a beauty pageant organized by Brooke Bond Tea Company in 1969 stated that after passing the first round of the selection process where she and other contestants were "subjected to oral interviews," they were taken to a shop to buy ready-made clothes to wear for the pageant. The company paid for the clothes.[52] She chose a long-sleeved dress whose hemline fell just above her knees. Newspapers often published photographs of the contestants and discussed

[52] Interview with Cecilia Ogwal Kampala, 2016.

in detail the clothes they wore. It is possible that young women got inspiration from local and international beauty contests through these newspaper articles.

Although young men too adopted new styles like the bell-bottomed trousers, tight shirts, cowboy belts, platform shoes and even 'mini shorts,' it was young women's fashion that came under attack.[53] As young women embraced foreign fashion, conservatives began looking for ways to distance Uganda from the cosmopolitan world of fashion and beauty. In 1969, after Joy Lehai represented Uganda at the Miss World contest, Uganda stopped participating in international beauty pageants. It is clear from the words of Rosemary Salmon, the first Miss Uganda, that Ugandan conservatives were unhappy with displaying women's bodies in public. When asked about Uganda's participation in Miss world, she stated that "it was a good idea as it could bring needed publicity."[54] However, she added that "I don't think African men like to see their girls on display."[55] A year after Salmon made these comments, conservatives began to campaign against women's fashion and beauty pageants.

In 1968, the minister of Culture and Community Development, Mr. Kasakya demanded that Obote ban miniskirts which they stated were not only 'against public morality but that young girls had copied them' (from foreigners).[56] Obote's minister of Internal Affairs answered that:

> the constitution of Uganda provides for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. However, should the wearing of the miniskirts become inconsistent with

[53] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 8.
[54] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFfv5K5DNvs
[55] https://ugandansatheart.blogspot.com/2014/11/uah-1967-uganda-beauty-contests.html
[56] Bataringaya replied that "the constitution of Uganda provided for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. However, should the wearing of the miniskirts become inconsistent with or in contravention of the law of public order, public morality, or public health, I shall then advise the government accordingly." With that, the speaker put an end to the discussion and the issue seemed to have been dropped. See, the Parliament of Uganda, Official Report of the Proceedings of the National Assembly, Fourth Meeting— Second Session, No. 72.

> or in contravention of the law of public order, public morality, or public health, I shall then advise the government accordingly.[57]

A heated debate ensued when another member of parliament, Mr. Mugenyi, joined Kasakya to demand that Obote ban the mini. They were overruled by the speaker of parliament and the matter never came up again. By 1971, when Obote was overthrown and Kasakya lost his job, Kampala and other Ugandan towns were overran by mini-wearing young women whose desires had given birth to a homegrown beauty and fashion 'industry.'

Beginning in 1971, the media and ordinary Ugandans began to take a keen interest in women's sartorial and aesthetic expressions. Images of young women in minis, trousers and wigs began to appear regularly in vernacular and English newspapers including *Uganda Argus*, *Voice of Uganda, The People*, *Munno,* and *Taifa Empya*. These newspapers also began publishing news about local beauty pageants and international fashion shows in places like London and Paris. They ran adverts for wigs, nail polish, beauty soaps, creams, and clothes. For example, the government newspaper *Voice of Uganda* ran weekly advertisements of wigs.[58] Wigs were so popular that Mrs. Sarah Lule, a Kampala hair dresser and dress maker complained to *The People* that she had lost all her customers since "the majority of women are almost married to wigs."[59]

Newspapers also provided details about the fashion choices of prominent Ugandan women. When in 1971 Idi Amin summoned Elizabeth Bagaaya, by then a world-famous international fashion model, to appoint her as Uganda's roving ambassador, her fashion was described in detail. An image taken during their first public meeting shows Bagaaya, who is curtsying to Amin, wearing

[57] Parliament of Uganda, Official Report of the Proceedings of the National Assembly.
[58] The wigs were advertised by *Ladies Beauty Salon* located near City bar, Jinja Road, Kampala, See *Voice of Uganda,* October 22, 1973, 1.
[59] "Wigs Caused a Flop," *The People* January 6, 1972, 5.

extremely short shorts (hot pants). Other photos published on the front page of *Uganda Argus* shows Bagaaya "mini-skirted, with shimmery tights and gold-colored shoes."[60] Amin's choice of Bagaaya as Uganda's roving ambassador in 1971 may have appeared as an endorsement of women's fashion choices. However, only a year after appointing Bagaaya, Amin's government began its war against women's fashion. It banned miniskirts and other fashion accessories and revived beauty pageants as cultural events to showcase "traditional" African clothes.[61]

Figure 4: Elizabeth Bagaaya greets President Amin.

Source: Daily Monitor April 19, 2019.[62]

[60] Nyabongo, *Elizabeth of Toro*, 89.

[61] The most famous was the 1975 Miss OAU, where heads of governments who were attending the OAU conference in Kampala were treated to a spectacular display of young woman wearing African dresses. Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow.*

[62] Faustin Mugabe, "Amin decrees that banned wigs, mini-skirts and the spread of STDS" *Daily Monitor*, April 19, 2019. https://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/Amin-decrees-wigs-miniskirts-STDs-Parliament/688342-5078530-vsxl4k/index.html

Debates and protests about dress and fashion in the 1970s

Although conservatives began calling for the ban of the miniskirt in 1968, it was not until January 1972 that politicians moved against women's fashion. The "war against the mini," as newspapers called it, began in 1972 following government officials' condemnation of what they called foreign fashions. What followed was a volatile discourse that sensationalized and distorted women's fashion. As in Tanzania, citizens in Uganda used debates about fashion to battle out social conflict.[63] Letters written just before the miniskirt ban shows that Ugandan men were using women's fashion to stifle debates about the status of women and gender equality and to air out grievances about working women and loss of patriarchal authority.

The debate about women's fashion in newspapers began just before the miniskirt ban, in 1971, when some women wrote letters to newspaper editors questioning their subordinate status. Men reacted by attacking women's fashion choices, which they argued was evidence that women were weak and less competent. For example, in December 1971, Scholastica Dorean wrote a letter to the editor of *Uganda Argus* demanding that, like men, women be allowed to marry more than one person. She expressed frustration not only with unfair cultural practices that kept women in inferior positions but also with the negative portrayal of women in society.[64] While Dorean's letter seems to have struck a chord with some female readers,[65] women's demand for equality led to passionate

[63] On Tanzania, see Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States*; Andrew M. Ivaska, ""Anti Mini Militants Meet Modern Misses": Urban Style, Gender, and the Politics of "National Culture" in 1960s Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," in *Fashioning Africa,* ed. Jean Allman.
[64] Scholastica Dorean, *Uganda Argus*, December 14, 1971. Quoted by Jackson S, Man," Must Always be the Master," *Uganda Argus,* January 12, 1972, 4.
[65] Readers such as Irene who shared her frustration and urged women "to stick to what we think is right for us," *Uganda Argus,* December 22, 1971. Quoted by Jackson S, "Man Must Always be the Master," 4.

rebuttals from men. The contents of Dorean's letter suggests that she was intervening in an ongoing debate about the status of women and equality in the home and at work.

Evidence from newspapers show that as more women began taking jobs in the formal sector not just as subordinates to men but as magistrates, bankers, and lawyers, and as these women began asserting themselves, demanding equality in the workplace and in the home, men reacted by attacking the behavior of women; their sexuality, sartorial and aesthetic choices. For example, in his response to Dorean's letter and women's demand for equality, Jackson S. wrote that women's weakness for and love of creams and perfumes made them unequal to men. He claimed that women's demand for equality did not only contravene Ugandan cultural practices but also Christian teachings which emphasized the designated role of women as men's helpers. He argued that changing gender roles in ways that made women equal to men would wreak havoc on society.[66]

In their letters to protest women's encroachment on what they perceived to be their God-given rights, men portrayed women as moody, gullible, manipulative, materialistic, and out to get men and rob them of their place in society.[67] This caricature of modern women and their demands which was meant to gather sympathy and provoke emotive responses from men shows that Ugandan men regarded women's demand for equality as an attempt to create what a male reader called a "matriarchal society with the strength sapped from the menfolk…"[68] Jackson S. and J.R. Matsiko's letters which were titled *Man Must Always be the Master*, and *"It's a Man's Country"* paint a

[66] Quoting Dorean's letter lengthily, possibly for those who may not have read it, Jackson stated that "I don't agree with her when she claims that women should be allowed to marry more than one man living under one roof. I think if this will ever happen it will be the most dangerous revolution man has ever made. From the time of Adam and Eve, man has been the master in the home." See Jackson S, "Man Must Always be the Master," 4.
[67] "J.R Matsiko, "It's a Man's Country," Uganda Argus, January 5, 1972, 4.
[68] Matsiko, "It's a Man's Country," 4.

vivid picture of how men perceived women's ambitions and agendas. The letters are indicative of struggles over jobs and especially (state-sponsored) positions which men perceived as theirs.[69]

They also show that men wanted women to revert to their domestic lives as mothers and wives. In his letter, Matsiko longed for the old times when a 'woman would carry out her domestic duties faithfully, serving her husband, having his babies and accepting 'a little' beating without running away to her father.'[70] As he called for physical assault on insolent wives, Matsiko longed for a place where men were pampered and cared for by their wives: "there are a few places left in the world where woman still has a proper respect for her mate. I am enchanted with a place that still regards man as an important fellow to be coddled and cared for…,"[71] he wrote. Matsiko cleverly contrasted this blissful world with one where men were suffocated, and their strength sapped by modern, trouser-wearing, cigar smoking women. He likened the experience of living in this world to being in "a perpetual powder room."[72]

There was a widespread belief among Ugandan men that that they were being "suffocated" by women and that women were out of control. A 1965 *Commission on Marriage, Divorce, and the Status of Women*[73] reported that all over Uganda, men complained about loss of authority over women.[74] The commission quoted an elderly man from West Nile who stated that "in the old days,

[69] Matsiko claimed that women were trying to be 'presidents.'
[70] Matsiko, "It's a Man's Country," 4.
[71] Matsiko, "It's a Man's Country," 4.
[72] J. Matsiko, "It's a Man's Country," 4.
[73] In an interview with Rhoda Kalema, she stated that this commission was proceeded by grassroot campaigns by women's organization of which she was part of. Rhoda, who was secretary of the Uganda Women's Organizations, stated that in March 1960, UWO invited all women's organizations for a conference and they passed several resolutions about women's rights, registration of marriages etc. Interview with Rhoda Kalema, Kampala, 2016.
[74] The commission of four men and one woman was asked by the government to investigate the existing laws on marriage, divorce, and the status of women. The authors published pro-women report but the government never acted on it, See *Report of the Uganda Commission on Marriage, Divorce, and the Status of Women* (Entebbe: Government of Uganda,1965).

a man controlled his wives…today this is impossible, and there is always trouble."[75] The feeling that women were beyond control was a result of the many changes taking place in Ugandan society. Studies done in the 1970s found that women were questioning social hierarchies, their assumed subordinate position, the assumed inevitability of men's position as well as social customs about sexuality and reproduction.[76] Men (and women) reacted to these changes by demonizing such women and by creating the category of 'townswomen.'[77]

In the 1970s, women's fashion and aesthetic practices provided men with a lexicon with which to describe their anxieties about women's "clamor for equality." Their letters increasingly took on a moralistic tone and they began to blame women's fashion, especially the miniskirt/dress for the breakdown of public morality. They called on the government of Idi Amin to ban miniskirts. Letters written by men about women's fashion show that the authors drew from what they imagined to be shared 'African values' that cut across national borders. For example, the *Uganda Argus* published a letter from Yowasi K. Buregyeya which commended a Ghanaian teacher, Miss Christine Owusu, a member of a group called 'Action Ghana,' who had at the end of 1971 proposed that teachers should be stopped from wearing minis. Drawing on this knowledge of shared continental values, Yowasi Buregyeya wrote that, "mini-skirts started because of immorality…. Teachers, especially some women teachers have increased prostitution." He ended by imploring teachers to "abandon this democracy of nakedness and try to give the right examples to…children.[78] That Ugandans should look up to Ghana as an inspiration is not surprising. Ghana was not only a leader of Pan Africanism but also one of the first countries in post independent sub-

[75] Report of the Uganda Commission on Marriage, Divorce, and the Status of Women, 1965, 35.
[76] Christine Obbo, *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 4.
[77] A.W. Southall and P.C.W. Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making. Kampala and Its Suburbs* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research, 1957), Obbo, *African Women.*
[78] Yowasi K. Buregyeya, "Minis are Immoral," *Uganda Argus* January 12, 1972, 4.

Saharan Africa to tackle the problem of 'nudity' which women activists like Christine Owuso perceived as "a woman's problem."[79]

Buregyeya's letter was one of the many letters written by ordinary Ugandans to condemn women's fashion choices before the Amin government passed the anti-miniskirt decree. While his letter zeroed in on the responsibility of parents, teachers, and the government to control wayward girls and women, other writers called out government officials for not doing enough to stop what they perceived to be indecent dressing. For example, disappointed with parents who dressed in minis and government officials who condemned the mini without taking action, Y. Serwanga wrote that "I have heard several speeches given by our government officials but whenever they come to half naked dressing (so called minis) they say that it is up to the parents to tell their daughters." He pointed out that leaving the responsibility to parents was not wise because "parents, especially in towns are dressing in the same way." He added that since "such dressing was started by harlots…. who left their parents long ago…," the government must intervene and ban the miniskirts "for the good name of our country and the dignity of those concerned."[80]

A few weeks later, in February 1972, Amin called a meeting with the Defense Council, during which it was decided that people's views on the wigs, trousers and other fashion accessories be sought.[81] In his speeches to Ugandans, Amin echoed Engur's statements that women's fashion was a threat to African culture, and that it endangered public morality. However, he also believed that women's fashion was a threat to national security. When Jacqueline Basudde was arrested, the *Uganda Argus* explained that three of the fifty-four cartridges were live bullets. It added that Ms.

[79] Jean Allman, ""Let Your Fashion be in Line with our Ghanaian Costume": Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Clothing in Nkrumah's Ghana," in *Fashioning Africa*, ed. Jean Allman, 149.
[80] Y. Serwanga, "Minis Must be Burned (sic)," *Uganda Argus* January 10, 1972, 3.
[81] *Munno*, February 8, 1972, 6.

Basudde could have been charged under the 1970 Firearms Act that prohibited civilians and other unauthorized people from possessing "ammunition…wearing a tie-pin or a pair of earrings which resemble a pistol."[82] Amin was also worried that 'imperialist' and other enemies of Uganda, specifically those loyal to former president Milton Obote, could use women's fashion to infiltrate the country. [83] For example, in his remarks during the celebrations to mark the International Women's Year in May 1975, he stated that:

> We are aware that when my government came to power and during the invasion (of September 1972) some spies and also guerrillas worked through women and such activities caused a lot of harm…. Some women were even given pistols, which they kept in their wigs. The wigs had to be banned because they were unnatural, untidy and in some cases were harboring dangerous weapons.[84]

In 1974, The *Voice of Uganda* had reported that Amin had "submitted to public opinion" to ban the wigs after he found out that "the wigs craved by unsuspecting Uganda customers were made by the callous imperialists from human hair mainly collected from the unfortunate victims of the miserable Vietnam war, thus turning human tragedy into lucrative commercial enterprise."[85] Although Amin did not provide the source of his information, he took advantage of the widely publicized opposition against the Vietnamese war, which Ugandans were sure to have read about in the press to mobilize Ugandans against women who he implied were aiding the murder of innocent Vietnamese.

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[82] See "City of 'Foolish Fashions'" *Uganda Argus*, January 21, 1972, 6.
[83] In 1972, troops loyal to Obote invaded Uganda from Tanzania. Amin suspected Tanzania and some Western allies of aiding the invaders. Although Amin's coup is said to have been aided by Western allies like Israel after falling out with Obote who questioned their military presence in neighboring countries, by 1972, Amin had become suspicious about the intentions of the Israelis, British, Americans and their allies. In 1972, he expelled the Israelis. He imprisoned a Western journalist whom he accused of spying and even murdered two Americans; Nicholas Stroh, a journalist and Robert Siedele, a professor who he suspected of being spies. See D. Wadada Nabudere, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*, (London and Tanzania: Onyx press and Tanzania Publishing House, 1980).
[84] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 65.
[85] "Decree bans Women's Wigs and 'Trousers,' 'No one has a Right to be Indecent," *Voice of Uganda* February 5, 1974, 5.

However, evidence from newspapers show that Ugandans ignored such narratives and some even used the debate about women's fashion to critique the government. When *Munno* reported that Amin did not want to infringe on the freedom of Ugandans and therefore the law against the mini was meant to protect the rights of all Ugandans,[86] some Ugandans pointed out the hypocrisy of such arguments. As they saw it, the government was trying to take away the very thing that it claimed to champion—individual freedom.

Contributors to the English language newspaper called *The People* presented some of the most intriguing and compelling arguments against the state's rhetoric. For example, Sali Sekitoleko criticized the anti-miniskirt law arguing that "any time we interfere with people's choice of dresses, then we shall pose to be stumbling blocks in people's liberties which our present government has long proclaimed to maintain." He added that "legislation or any other type of pressure brought to bear upon the people," would cause problems.[87] Sekitoleko argued that if the government banned the mini, it would be acting against its own mandate to protect people's liberties, something that Amin had promised Ugandans when he overthrew Obote. By invoking the government's language of rights and freedom, readers like Sekitoleko sought to hold the government accountable to its promise to protect the freedoms of all Ugandans. Sekitoleko's sentiments were echoed by Gerald Nsubuga, who challenged the Amin government to "appreciate the simple fact that minis are a fashion and that while one fashion might appeal to an individual, it might be quite detestable to another….the guiding principle here, should be to let each other choose his or her own liking according to the particular individual's taste....[88] It is important to note that Ugandans like

[86] *Munno*, a Catholic-owned *Luganda* language newspaper reported that women who wore wigs, minis and trousers were destroying African culture. See *Munno,* February 8, 1972, 6.
[87] Sali Sekitoleko, "Peoples Talking Point" *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[88] Gerald Nsubuga, "Peoples Talking Point" *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.

Sekitoleko and Gerald Nsubuga were not simply defending the rights of women to wear miniskirts. Rather, their concern was abuse of state power or legislation to infringe on the freedoms and rights of all Ugandans.

Other Ugandans pointed out the impracticability of banning the mini. Gerald Nsubuga challenged those who portrayed the mini as the antithesis of African traditions by using the example of the Karimojong who adorned their bodies with just a few items—jewels and animal skins around the lower part of the body (women) or even went naked (men). Pointing out the folly of using the 'cultural argument' to ban minis, he told the government that if they are willing to arrest mini-skirted girls, they must also be willing to "round up and imprison our naked brothers and sisters [i.e. the Karimojong] in certain parts of the country."[89] Simon Muwonge, a Kampala hair dresser, asked, "supposing a ban order is instituted against wearing the mini-skirts by our local girls, shall the same be instituted against mini-dressed non-Ugandans who come to Uganda?"[90] Readers like Muwonge and Gerald Nsubuga implied that the government was using women's fashion to hide the fact that it was not doing its job. Nsubuga suggested that the time spent debating the mini could be used to solve pressing problems facing the country, such as educating people to produce more goods and to use time profitably.[91]

However, for some Ugandans the miniskirt problem was real, and it threatened their reputation as husbands, fathers, parents, and sons. Heather Akou has shown that in Somalia in the 1960s and 1970s, "a woman who exposed too much of her body was in danger of shaming her family by

[89] Nsubuga, "Peoples Talking Point," 2. Idi Amin did end up sending his soldiers to force the Karimojong to adopt modern dress. When the Karimojong went to meet the soldiers to come to an understanding, Amin's soldiers opened fire and killed a number of them.
[90] Simon Muwonge, "Peoples Talking Point"' *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[91] Nsubuga, "Peoples Talking Point" 2.

being labelled a prostitute."[92] However, this shame seems to have also come from the fact that fathers had to bail out their daughters when arrested. She writes of a father who was "mortified at having to post bail for his daughter" arrested by the police for wearing a mini.[93] In Uganda, men were worried about their wives and daughters breaking cultural norms. They used emotive terms when talking about the mini. For example, Hamidu Nsubuga from the Kampala taxi park stated that "minis should be banned because….it is very embarrassing if a girl dressed in a mini passed by you in the presence of your mother."[94] He added that, "when some of the girls who put on the miniskirts sit in a car, you can almost see what they have underneath."[95] The Minister of Culture, Engur, expressed similar concerns stating that "underwear look improper when exposed particularly when a girl is your daughter."[96] Thus, for some Ugandans, the mini was dangerous because it undermined cultural beliefs about how daughters and wives should behave. They wanted it banned because it threatened the reputation of parents and husbands.

That husbands and fathers like Engur perceived the miniskirt as a threat to their reputation is not surprising as scholars have shown that East African men often staked their reputation on the behavior of women. In his work, Derek Peterson has argued that in East Africa's competitive world, the ability of husbands and fathers "to organize their homes testified to their political responsibility."[97] It is because of this that ordinary Ugandans and government officials wanted to reform the behavior of women. Robert Munyagwa, a Uganda Radio and Television news editor,

[92] Heather Marie Akou, "Nationalism without a Nation: Understanding the Dress of Somali Women in Minnesota," in *Fashioning Africa*, ed Jean Allman, 54.
[93]Akou, "Nationalism without a Nation," 54.
[94] Hamidu Nsubuga, "Peoples talking point," *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[95] Nsubuga, "Peoples talking point," 2.
[96] "Minister Engur has Waged War against the MINI-What do our readers say?" *The People* January 17, 1972, 1.
[97] Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival. A History of Dissent, c.1935 to 1972* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 282.

proposed sartorial reforms, which involved forcing young women to wear traditional dresses.[98] He put the burden of reforming young girls on mothers who he argued should educate their daughters about their sartorial traditions. Like Munyagwa, Atikolo from the National Council for Social Sciences argued that parents had a big role to play in discouraging their girl-children from wearing minis but added that "while girls should be left at liberty to put on minis at respective parties, minis should strictly be kept out of use on occasions when girls are with their parents or the elders."[99] Thus, for Atikolo, the mini was only a problem when worn in the presence of elders.

M.D. Kaggwa, a reader of the *Uganda Argus* did not only blame men for encouraging girls to wear the mini but believed that it was their responsibility to stop the vice. He stated that "it is men who encourage girls to wear the mini-skirts. We give them money to buy micromini-skirts…. If we show strong aversion for mini skirted girls in the long run, they will stop wearing them and will retain their beauty. My fellow men keep away from micro-skirted girls and minis will eventually become extinct…"[100] Men like Kaggwa believed that Ugandan women were wearing minis because men failed 'do their work' of controlling them. Because he believed that women were wearing the mini to seduce men, he wrote that if men could refuse to fall for these antics, the mini problem would be vanquished. Other writers also linked the mini to lustful behavior. Mohamed Sengoba stated that the mini demonstrated how sexually expressive women had become. To justify the ban, he stated that "women were given freedom to dress as they liked but they abused that freedom and wore micro-minis which warranted the Government to act in the way it did."[101] A frustrated J.B. Bikalyerengeza asked Ugandan men to begin a "self-help scheme" of banning the

[98] Munyagwa, 'Peoples Talking Point,' 2.
[99] Atikolo "Peoples Talking Point" *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[100] M.D Kaggwa, "Men are to Blame," *Uganda Argus*, January 17, 1972, 3.
[101] Mohamed Sengooba, "Issues on the 'Mini Law' Continue to Smoulder," *Voice of Uganda* March 14, 1973, 6.

mini instead of waiting for a "one-year old government to do everything for them." He urged men to punish the mini wearing culprits by denying them money and that "without a penny in their bags for a week and if they know why, they will learn a lesson and make a change."[102]

Other views of newspaper contributors reveal gender and generational struggles. In 1976, a Makerere University student who was an ardent supporter of the war against the mini captured the tension between generations. She wrote of how "wolf whistles of appreciation from bell-bottomed young men…conflicted with sighs of exasperation and despair among the older generation, outraged by the uninhibited exposure of gorgeous legs and swinging bottoms."[103] Evidence suggests that some older women wore miniskirts and their actions caused anger and exasperation among the younger generation. Some opponents of the ban, especially some young women,[104] argued that older women should not wear minis. Three young women, Teddy Kibuga, Esther Mulinde and Nora Kityo, who were interviewed on the streets of Kampala by *The People* "recommended the use of the mini by the young girls" but they "condemned and bitterly attacked those 'old women' who look ugly in the mini-skirt."[105]

Another contributor, Mukasa, a self-styled fashion and make up expert, wrote that minis, lipstick, and nail polish gave women self-confidence if only worn correctly, in moderation and by someone of the appropriate age. Mukasa stated that only young girls should dress in "movie-star fashion" and use make up.[106] However, Florence Aqueira, a secretary with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives disagreed, stating that "minis can be worn at any age so long as the style fashion

[102] J. B. Bikalyerengeza, "Do-it Yourself Mini-Ban", *Uganda Argus* January 31, 1972,3.
[103] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 8.
[104] Not all women opposed the Ban. Decker shows that some women wrote letters supporting the ban. See Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow.*
[105] Teddy Kibuga, Esther Mulinde and Nora Kityo, "Peoples Talking Point", *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[106] Joseph W Mukasa, "What Women Love in Men," *Uganda Argus* January 13, 1972, 5.

suits the owner." She added that "minis are a type of fashion that helps to give the 'lady' that everlasting young look as contrasted with the MOD' styled 'granny look!'"[107]

Other Ugandans used the debates to position themselves as fashion experts. In his letter, S. Gutaka-Nabende from Jinja gave advice to girls about how to wear their hair. He advised the 'new African girls,' as he called them, that "ribbons are completely out of place for the African curly hair….ribbons are strictly used by girls or ladies who have the trouble of their long hair constantly falling in their eyes."[108] Gutaka-Nabende also claimed that tying a piece of cloth (ribbon) onto one's head in many African cultures was a sign that someone had died. His letter caught the attention of Dan Semambo who questioned Gutaka-Nabende's expertise and accused him of having an "anti-women and superstitious character."[109]

His reputation at risk, Gutaka-Nabende was forced to defend himself. In a reply to Semambo, he rebutted claims that he was anti-women, stating that he was simply against African's imitation of the European culture. He stated that he had sought the opinion of a European friend on the question of ribbons and that his view, in addition to his own knowledge of African fashion practices, had led him to his conclusion that ribbons were not suitable for African hair. Letters like Gutaka-Nabende's do not only reveal the fashion practices of Ugandan women but also show that there was more at stake in debates about fashion. Men like Gutaka-Nabende who used the debates to claim expertise risked their reputation.

Other Ugandans established themselves as experts on the law and began questioning the applicability of the anti-miniskirt law. After the courts began prosecuting the law breakers, some

[107] Florence Squeira, "Peoples Talking Point," *The People*, January 17, 1972, 2.
[108] Gutaka-Nabende, *Voice of Uganda*, October 16, 1973, 2.
[109] Gutaka-Nabende, "Letters to the editor," *Voice of Uganda,* October 29, 1973, 3

Ugandans noticed that it was only women who were being prosecuted. E. Mulindwa-Kabugo, a contributor to *Voice of Uganda,* wrote that:

> unfortunately, all mini cases one reads about in the *Voice of Uganda* are directed against women only where as there are still thousands of men wearing shorts as far above the knee line as seven inches and yet none of them is taken to court. President Amin has repeatedly warned that nobody is above the law in Uganda but why should women face charges for wearing minis while men are left to violate the same law without getting any penalties? Isn't this very unfair and discriminating against our so-called weaker sex? Please prosecutors, it's high time you take action against these men who are carrying the law of the land in their own hands. They are disorderly and very embarrassing to look at while in their mini shorts as women and should therefore be equally charged.[110]

Responding to Mr. Mulindwa Kabugo, G'strone Acir criticized him for his lack of knowledge of prosecutors' work. He admitted that while more women were arrested, he had newspaper cuttings that proved that men too were arrested. He concluded by advising Mr. Mulindwa to read other 'local' newspapers which had cases of men accused of wearing the mini.[111] Mulindwa-Kabugo defended himself in another letter, where he admitted that he did not go to court because he was a busy man but pointed out that there were more mini cases in Kampala than his home, Lugazi: "Mr. Acir don't expect what is in Kampala to be the same situation prevailing all over the country. Do admit the truth that many men in upcountry areas are still wearing mini shorts,"[112] he wrote. He advised Acir to re-read his letter with "patience and care." The exchange shows that minis were not just worn in cities and that there was a prosecutorial gap between rural and urban Uganda and between men and women. As I will show later, almost all the mini cases at the main police station in Kampala involved young women. The exchange also shows that contributors read each other's

[110] E. Mulinda-Kabugo, "Issues of the Mini Ban," *Voice of Uganda*, March 7, 1973, 2.
[111] G'strone Acir, "Issues on the 'Mini Law' Continue to Smoulder," *Voice of Uganda,* March 14, 1973, 6.
[112] "Mulindwa Replies", *Voice of Uganda,* March 19, 1973, 6.

letters and openly challenged each other. Thus, by participating in these debates, contributors risked their reputation.

Other Ugandans were concerned about the wording of the decree and the loopholes in the law. The decree was drafted by lawyers including Ruth Masika who was "the second woman to qualify as an attorney in Uganda."[113] However, it appears that not all Ugandans were happy with their work. Mohamed Sengooba wrote that the law was so controversial that it was being debated by both educated and uneducated Ugandans in bars, at tea parties and lunch tables. He claimed that:

> the decree banning the unwanted minis for men and women have been attacked by both lay and learned men such as lawyers who say that the wording of the mini law is somewhat below the required standard. It is said that the law has a lot of legal loopholes which may be the cause of its breach by many women.[114]

One of the loopholes was that the offenders were being charged with the crime of being 'idle and disorderly.' In one of the few reported cases involving a man, Willy Petersen, who was arrested for wearing 'mini shorts' measuring seven inches above the knee line, is said to have found his arrest and prosecution hilarious. On being told by the magistrate Francis K. Butagira that he was guilty of being idle and disorderly, Petersen answered that, "I confidently consider myself a very hard-working man."[115] He was fined an unspecified amount of money. Thus, Sengoba was right when he argued that equating wearing of the mini with being 'idle and disorderly' gave culprits an opportunity to challenge the law.[116] However, when interviewed, former judges and magistrates stated that they were concerned about the law, not because of its wording as it had been drafted by

[113] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 67.
[114] Mohamed Sengooba, "Issues on the 'Mini Law' Continue to Smoulder," *Voice of Uganda,* March 14, 1973,6.
[115] "White Man in Mini Shorts," *Voice of Uganda,* March 23, 1973, 5.
[116] Sengooba, "Issues on the 'Mini Law,'"6.

some of the finest legal minds in the country, but because it infringed on the freedom of Ugandans.[117]

While Sengoba was bothered by the wording of the law, some Ugandans such as Evon Tukahirwa were concerned that the law allowed culprits to pay a fine which, he argued, would not deter them from wearing minis. The issue of repeat offenders shifted the debate to the working-class woman and her access to money to pay off fines. Tukahirwa argued that repeat offenders should be jailed so as to have an impact on their homes, work, and children. He reasoned:

> now think of somebody paying Shs. 150/- twice or three times because of wearing a mini, it is very big money, but because those women who wear minis are working, and they don't find it difficult to pay that small amount of money that's why they keep a deaf ear to government orders, they know money will talk.[118]

He added that many mini-wearing women owned cars which allowed them to park near shops, buy whatever they needed and drive off without being arrested. Tukahirwa stated that women were using a *Lesu* or *Kitenge* (a wide cloth/sash) to hide the mini. He called for the "imprisonment for girls and women who tie *lesus* around their legs,"[119] Letters written by Ugandans like Tukahirwe allows us to see ordinary Ugandans in action: directing, exhorting, and compelling others to act. They show that ordinary Ugandans used debates about fashion to make claims on women, hold the government accountable and articulate their vision of what kind of society they wanted to see.

[117] Interview with Judge M, Ntinda, Kampala, 2016.
[118] Evon Tukahirwa, "'Mini' Law Violators," *Voice of Uganda,* March 2, 1973, 2.
[119] Evon Tukahirwa, "'Mini' Law Violators," *Voice of Uganda,* March 2, 1973, 2.

Policing women's fashion: the enforcement of the anti-miniskirt decree

On May 6, 1972, Idi Amin signed Decree 9 of the Penal Code Act "in the interest of public morality and decency."[120] The decree stated that "every person of or above the apparent age of fourteen years who in any public space wears any dress, garment, skin, or shorts the hem-line or bottom of which is 7.62 centimeters (3 inches) above the knee line or wears any dress popularly known as a midi or maxi having a slit on any part of the circumference of such dress the apes of which is above the knee-line"[121] would be prosecuted. Those who contravened the law were "deemed an idle and disorderly person…liable to imprisonment for three months or a fine not exceeding two hundred shillings or to both such fine and imprisonment." The decree gave police officers power to arrest the law breakers. [122]

An examination of the arrest reports from the police archives at the Central Police Station (CPS) in Kampala indicates that police officers started arresting women immediately after the passage of the law. The police arrested so many women, especially in the first year of the ban, that the Kampala chief magistrate Mr. Wilson Kityo observed that the courts were receiving more cases of mini wearers than of theft.[123] Those arrested included school girls, barmaids, secretaries, house wives and even a medic. In her analysis of the anti-miniskirt campaign, Decker states that police reports "make it possible to construct a demographic profile of offenders" most of whom were

[120] Also known as "The Decree to prohibit the wearing of certain dresses which outrage decency and are injurious to public morals and for other purposes connected therein." Decree 9 of the Penal Code Act.
[121] Traditional costumes worn for ceremonial purposes, sportswear, swimming costumes, ballet and drama costumes were not banned, and short school uniforms were allowed until December 31, 1972.
[122] Decree 9 The Penal Code Act (Amendment) Decree 1972. Except for the cases reported in newspapers, all the names of women arrested by the police have been changed to protect their identity.
[123] "Mini Wearers Common than Thieves," *Voice of Uganda*, September 24, 1973, 3; Also, Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 70.

young women.[124] Arrest records also provide insights into how the actual work of prosecuting women was done and the kind of resources women tapped into to defend themselves. The detailed reports which were filled with spelling errors indicate that female officers and the police matron played an important role in the processing of the suspects.

While newspapers tended to focus on the work of magistrates in courts, arrest records show that police matrons played an important role in ensuring that the evidence was collected as per the law, which required that women be processed by female police officers and the matron.[125] In courts, both the arresting officer and the matron were called to give evidence as witnesses, so it was important that the matron was around to process the women. For example, when 19-year-old Hawa was arrested in Entebbe and driven to Kampala at midnight, the matron had to be fetched from her house to measure her and document the exhibit, "a tetron light green dress" which was 6 inches above the knee line. The matron provided the following account:

> I was called from my house then I was called to come and take a measurement of one woman who weared [sic] a mini dress I came and I took the measurement which is 6 inches six above the knee by the time of taking the measurement she stood up, I had ruler which I did the measurement and the mini was kept as exhibit in the store and I detained her in cells, that is all.[126]

Hawa was released on police bond. Her case was scheduled to be heard at Buganda Road Court in five days, but she did not turn up. An arrest warrant was issued but the arresting officers were on

[124] Also, Decker found 9 cases of men or boys out of 58 cases. I was not able to trace any case involving men from the CPS archives. By the time I examined them, years after Decker, the archives were in a sorry state. See, Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow.*

[125] Former and current police officers told me that the police 'operations manual' required female suspects to be searched by female police officers to avoid accusations of indecent assaults. Interview with Ogwang, Kampala, 2016 and Officer Nankya, Kampala 2016.

[126] Central Police Station Archives, Kampala, Uganda (hereafter CPSA), S/No. 1185/72 – SD/2/31/7/72 .

leave and no one knew her physical address. Her case was dismissed because she could not be traced.

The police records also show that women depended on their male relatives and employers to bail them out. The law required that suspects be released after being processed at the police station. However, women sometimes did spend a day or so in police jail, waiting for relatives or employers to bring a change of clothes, or to stand as surety. A lawyer who defended a middle class woman, a graduate of Makerere who was arrested at Kampala club stated that when his client was arrested during the weekend, she had to stay in jail until Monday, when he bailed her out.[127] 16-year-old Rachel was detained for a day because she did not have a dress to wear except her mini which was considered police evidence. Because Rachel was unemployed and therefore unable to pay the fine, she faced a month in jail. It was her male relative who paid the court fine after she was convicted.[128] Similarly, Mrs. Haziz, a nurse, did not get a jail term because her husband, a renowned professor at Makerere Medical School paid her court fine.[129]

While it is unclear whether it was the young women who chose who to contact or the police made the decisions for them, evidence suggests that employers were often contacted by the police to pay fines for their employees. For 14-year-old Theresa and 15-year-old Marjorie, who were both recorded as "lottery saleswomen," it was their employer who stood as surety. Similarly, when Rita, employee of East Africa Post and Telecommunication, was caught wearing a blue mini dress, police officers rang her employer and asked them "to come to CPS to bring some dresses to this girl." The officers released her only after her employer brought her an acceptable dress and paid a

[127] Interview with Byarugaba, Kampala, 2016.
[128] CPSA, SD/74/31/7/72 – CPS/K'LA – 31/7/1972.
[129] CPSA, MCB/779/72 – CPS/SD/54/26/7/72.

non-cash police bond.[130] Although we do not know what transpired after the fines were paid, the fact that it was men—husbands, boyfriends, fathers and employers who stood as surety or even in some cases paid fines for those unable to come up with the money, reinforced men's control over women's fashion choices.

Arrest records also reveal the subtle and not so subtle ways women fought back against the anti-miniskirt law. When 23-year-old Tina was arrested after being spotted by an officer who was investigating a road accident, she quickly "unfolded some part of her dress in the presence of police officers who brought her in the station." Her dress which was described as 'spotted brown' was kept as an exhibit.[131] Other young women used police gender rules to buy themselves time to elongate their dresses. When Bena, a 24-year-old secretary working for Shell company was arrested, upon reaching CPS, she refused to get out of the police car. The arresting officer stated that Bena told him that "she wanted a police woman to escort her not me, when I went in the duty room looking for a police woman for escort…I went back and found that the woman has prolonged her dress…." Once in the police station the matron "took the measurement from the original point." Bena was convicted and fined.[132] Similarly, Jessica, a 23-year-old shop keeper, tried to undo the hem of her dress. The arresting officer stated that "while I was making my statement, I saw…[Jessica] letting the hem of her dress down. She was destroying the exhibit. So, I stopped her and pinned the part she had undone." After being charged with being idle and disorderly, she was released on a non-cash police bond of 200 shillings. Her dress which was described as a 'reddish mini dress' was retained as an exhibit.

[130] CPSA, CPS/K'LA – SD/94/5/8/72.
[131] CPSA, MCB/799/72 – 30/7/72 – CPS/K'LA – SD/32/30/7/72.
[132] CPSA, MMU/1161/72 – Sd./39/25/7/72 – MCB/769/72.

According to Decker, police officers described such acts not as resistance but as acts performed to get on the nerves of officers and to get them in trouble. The police officers told her that girls would hike their dresses to look like miniskirts and they "would wait until just before they got into court to lengthen their dresses." They did this to make officers "look foolish… for making a "false" arrest."[133] Decker adds that such acts of resistance "undermined the waning authority of an already emasculated police force."[134] However, police reports from CPS contradicts the police officer's claims that the girls were just cheeky. As shown above, when arrested, the dresses were measured by a matron or a female police officer. It was confiscated, labelled as exhibit, and presented to court on the appointed date. The suspects who were released on bond appeared in court wearing not the offending item but a 'decent' dress.

Being arrested was a traumatizing experience and many girls did all they could to avoid being arrested. When Edith Kakeeto, a Kitintale-Kampala typist was arrested, she was reported to have "shed tears" as she admitted before the magistrate that she was "wearing a maxi having a slit with an apex above [her] knee cap."[135] Young women did all they could to protect themselves from being arrested. For example, when 23-year-old Agnes was arrested in 1976, she fought off the arresting officer. The officer stated that when she told Agnes that she needed to come to CPS, "she started abusing me in front of people and she was in position of boxing me." Civilians began "gathering and shouting" and an off duty female police officer came to the assistance of the arresting officer, but Agnes refused to follow their directions. The officers called the Military Police to arrest Agnes. The police officer's ordeal did not end there. She wrote that "on our way

[133] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 69.
[134] Decker states that policing morality and petty crimes "underscores the relative weakness of the force" which many referred to as "force of women." See Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 69.
[135] "Tears in 'Mini' Court," *Voice of Uganda*, March 21, 1973, 6.

going to CPS…the accused was telling me that she has known my appearance she will go on watching me to the bus park where by she will find me and beat [me].” Agnes is said to have “used a bad language to the female police by saying that why do you arrest me when you don’t know me.” She was charged with both obstructing a police officer and for being idle and disorderly.[136]

As the fines and sentences became tougher, suspects began exploiting loopholes in the law to fight the charges in courts. Some used motherhood to get themselves out of trouble and to challenge the law. After pleading “guilty to a charge of being idle and disorderly, Rose Nakimuli, a pregnant shop assistant, explained that the dress was originally of the proper length but it became shorter as a result of her pregnancy.”[137] However, the magistrate answered that since pregnancy was a process, Nakimuli must have anticipated that her dress would become shorter. At that point, Nakimuli’s lawyer changed tactics. He told the magistrate that Nakimuli’s dress dealer had assured her that the dress was the right size and it shrunk after being washed. The magistrate fined her 180/-shs. Another housewife, Mrs. Elizabeth Kassim, told the court that that her dress “became shorter by two inches because her houseboy had washed it with cold water. However, Inspector Wagalinda rejected her excuse and she was fined 100/-[138] Meanwhile, 17-year-old Asa Namusisi claimed that all her clothes had been stolen leaving her with only the mini dress.[139] She was fined 50/- shillings, paid by her father.

Arrest reports also show that corrupt officers solicited bribes from young women to get them out of their predicament. In 1976, a case of corruption against a female police officer was registered at CPS by a 21-old year clerical office of East Africa Posts and Telecommunication. In March

[136] CPSA, CPS/K’LA – MMU/324/76 – SD/31/28/2/76.
[137] “Mini Wearers Common than Thieves,” Voice of Uganda, September 24, 1973, 3.
[138] He stated that “it cannot be argued that she wore the wig and the dress by mistake. At least one can say she was mistaken when she wore the dress but not the wig.” “Mini Wearers Common than Thieves.”
[139] “Housewife Fined 250/- for Mini Wig,” *Voice of Uganda,* September 26, 1974, 3.

1976, a female police officer arrested Fina for allegedly wearing a mini dress. Instead of taking her to CPS, she drove the suspect towards Kira Road and stopped near the Uganda Museum. She told Fina that she would let her go if she paid 200/- shs. After receiving 100 shs, the officer set Fina free. Afterwards, Fina reported the officer to CPS and she was arrested. When another female officer searched the accused, she did not find the money. The case was investigated for a full year and in March 1977 the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and the Commissioner of Police forwarded the case to the Department of Public Prosecutions, which concluded "that the evidence assembled does not warrant any charge against the suspect." Although the officer got off because of "insufficient evidence," this case shows that police officers often exploited women's vulnerability and they took advantage of the prosecution process.

Even civilians took advantage of women. When in October 1974, Medi, a 15-year-old student, was sent by her mother to purchase items from a shopping center, a man who identified himself as a police officer asked her to accompany him to CPS because she was wearing a minidress. She obliged. However, on the way, the man told her that he would let her go if she gave him the shopping money. She again complied. A case of impersonation of a police officer and obtaining money by false pretense was registered but the fake police officer was never caught. Medi was not charged for wearing the mini, most likely because she did not wear one when she went the station to report the case of impersonation and theft.[140]

Medi's case suggests that despite the government's stipulation that only police officers enforce the law, some civilians took matters into their own hands, to con young women but also to punish them. For example, an off-duty policewoman was accosted by two men who attacked her after

[140] CPSA, CPS/K'LA – CRB/5057/74 – 30/11/74.

mistaking her hair for a wig. They pulled her hair but after realizing their mistake, they let her go.[141] Newspapers reported similar cases of civilians attacking women. *Munno* published a story in which the reporter delightfully recounted the case of a woman attacked and beaten by a mob because she was wearing a wig. According to the reporter, two women reported the wig-wearing culprit to the civilian men who rewarded them with 60/-shs for their help in identifying her. The reporter concluded that the culprit begged the mob to let her go and declared that she would rather 'have peace than wear a wig.'[142]

Soldiers too participated in enforcing the anti-miniskirt decree. Although initially only the police had been given power to arrest the law breakers, it did not take long before soldiers began arresting young women. In a letter to the editor of DRUM magazine, a Ugandan woman wrote that it was not only the police but also "ruthless army men" who arrested and beat up women.[143] Decker recounts an incident where the notorious Public Safety Unity arrested more than 100 girls whom they took to their headquarters. The soldiers "shaved their heads with broken glass and gang raped one of them."[144] Soldiers performed other acts of violence on women including encouraging street mobs to strip women.[145] Thus, although the work of policing women's morality was largely conducted through a legal framework, these acts of violence against women reveal that overzealous and sometimes violent individuals exploited loopholes in the Amin regime to impose their will on women.

[141] Interview with Officer Nankya, Kampala, 2016.
[142] "Yasabye," *Munno* February11, 1972, 6.
[143] Adam Seftel, ed., *Uganda: The Bloodstained Pearl of Africa and its Struggle for Peace. From the Pages of DRUM* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2010).
[144] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 72.
[145] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 72.

Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the changing landscape of fashion and shown that changes in women's fashion were met with resistance from not only the government but also ordinary citizens. Ugandans used the debate about fashion to express gender and generational concerns and voice criticisms about the states' obligations and promises towards its citizens. Ordinary Ugandans did not only contribute to debates in newspapers but also played an active role in enforcing the ban. In her thesis written four years after the ban, a Makerere University student observed that ordinary Ugandans whom she identified as men who lived in places like Nakibuvo car and bus park "had done a good job by emphasizing the importance of the government warning [against wearing miniskirts]."[146] She added that thanks to them "hundreds of long-legged lovelies were currently popping out of their western style—miniskirts and donning instead, colorful and lengthy "Bitengis" made locally at Kawempe."[147] Decker states that women stopped wearing minis because they feared being arrested.[148] She notes that miniskirt cases at CPS peaked in the mid-1970s before coming "to an abrupt halt" early in 1975. She adds that press coverage of mini cases also reduced.[149] By 1975, the 'old classics' that is, long dresses and the midis, were back, and women were again wearing braided hair instead of wigs.

Ugandan women named the 'maxi' dresses promoted by the government "*Amin Nvako,*" that is, "Amin leave me alone!" Decker writes that "when a woman wore this dress, she firmly asserted her right to be left alone," but the dress was also a symbol of acquiesce "to state demands for

[146] This was confirmed by a lawyer who defended a woman accused of wearing a minidress in the 1970s. Byarugaba told me that most women were modestly dressed, only 'street girls' wore minis. That they were abused and stripped by taxi drivers. Interview with Byarugaba, Kampala, 2016.
[147] Nanono, "Fashions in Uganda," 11.
[148] She also states that it is also possible that "the police no longer had the will or the capacity to make arrests." See Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 71.
[149] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*, 71.

decency."[150] However, a video from the 1975 government-organized Miss OAU which shows the majority of contestants in long flowing 'maxi' dresses, some featuring Amin's face, shows that women's fashion was not completely changed. While women lengthened their dresses, they also adopted styles that exposed the upper arms and back. The winner, a 19-year-old student, was dressed in a halt neck dress that fell slightly above her kneecap and exposed her backside.[151] It was the shortest dress in the contest.

[150] Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow*,73.
[151] https://reuters.screenocean.com/record/421507

Chapter 2

Debates about Sexual and Reproductive Morality in Catholic-Owned Print Media

In February 1974, a few months after Idi Amin signed the anti-abortion decree, the Catholic church-owned *Munno*, the oldest (vernacular) newspaper in Uganda, published an exposition titled "Why do women abort and abandon children?"[1] The author, Birabwa Nnamutebi, praised the newly amended anti-abortion decree and called upon "every sane, morally upright person" to "condemn the murderous women who abort." [2] She went on to write that:

> A few months ago, the president passed an anti-abortion decree which made us all happy. But what drives the mothers of the nation to commit this murderous act? …some want to enjoy life, they want to go dancing, drinking, they want to go to the cinema. Such women are found in the slums of Kampala and other small towns. They do not have enough money to support their lifestyle, so they depend on men for financial support. Pregnancy interferes with their lifestyle.... Rural women are despised but they do not commit such acts because they are morally upright and are hardworking. It is townswomen who abort. They are *bakireereesi* (rootless women) and *malaya* (prostitutes). They abort and throw away children because they have no idea who the fathers are. Because they love money, they have up to seven lovers …. Even schoolgirls abort and throw away babies. They sleep with schoolboys and men who as old as their fathers and then they find themselves pregnant and abort.[3]

Birabwa's article, which was steeped in colonial-era stereotypes about "townswomen," was one of the many published by newspaper editors following the nationalized anti-immorality campaign

[1] Published on the second page of the paper alongside news about religious events, it was marked "For Women."
[2] Decree 26, 1971 Penal Code, Section 136 and 137, Decree 26 of 1971; The trial on indictments decree referred to the fetus as an unborn child. Those suspected of abortion were to be subjected to the same laws as murderers and were to be tried by the High Court.
[3] Birabwa Nnamutebi. "Lwaki Abakazzi baggyamu embuto oba okusula abana"? ("Why do women abort and abandon children"?) *Munno*, February 1974 (translated from Luganda).

that targeted women's sexual, reproductive, and sartorial choices. The incendiary article was published at a time when relations between the church and the state were deteriorating. Just two years before, *Munno*'s editor Father Clement Kiggundu had been violently murdered by Amin's soldiers for reporting on state violence.[4] Given this recent experience with the Amin state, did the editors of *Munno* publish this article merely to placate Amin? Or was it motivated by a genuine concern about the sexual and reproductive practices of Ugandan women?

This chapter investigates the role of the Catholic print media, specifically, *Leadership*, in shaping public discourse concerning women's sexual and reproductive choices in 1970s Uganda. An examination of *Leadership* suggests that *Munno's* praise of Amin's anti-immorality campaign fits a broad pattern in Catholic print media (predating the ascent of Amin) of waging a war against women's sexual and reproductive practices. The chapter shows how after independence, the editors of *Leadership* set it up as a vehicle for moral reform, transforming it from its original role as a national forum for intellectuals to debate about the political future of the country. Although this change in *Leadership's* editorial practice suggested a departure from political activism altogether, I argue that their new social agenda was also a form of political activism. This especially became clear in the 1970s when the Amin state began policing women's morality. I argue that at a time when existing avenues to police women's morality were cut off following the conflict between the central government and traditional (ethnic) institutions and associations, *Leadership* became an

[4] In addition to murdering Fr, Kiggundu, he murdered Chief justice Benedicto Kiwanuka (a Catholic) and in 1973, Amin expelled some of the Catholic expatriate missionaries in 1973. On conflict between the church and the state see Kevin Ward, "The Church of Uganda Amidst Conflict. The Interplay between Church and Politics in Uganda since 1962," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, eds., Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1995); M. Louise Pirouet, "Religion in Uganda Under Amin," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 11, no. 1 (1980): 13-29; J.J. Carney, "The Politics of Ecumenism in Uganda, 1962-1986," *Church History* 86, no.3 (September 2017): 765-795; Robert J. O'Neil, MHM, *Mission to the Upper Nile: The Story of St Joseph's Missionary Society of Mill Hill in Uganda*, (London, Mission book Service 1999);and Jonathon. L. Earle, *Colonial Buganda and the end of the Empire*: *Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

engine for the generalization of moral anxiety. As the only newspaper that consistently addressed women's morality, *Leadership* enabled a societal shift toward a national discourse about women's conduct. In the 1970s, its efforts to curate women's morality overlapped, politically and discursively with the Amin regime's brutal campaign to reform women's conduct.

The chapter examines *Leadership* both as a subject of historical inquiry, showing how editors creatively set the agenda for readers, and as a source for assessing how Catholic leaders and Ugandan men and women perceived female sexuality. *Leadership* helps us see the work of policing women's morality as a preoccupation of not just the Amin state but also of institutions like the (Catholic) church, on whose behalf the editors of *Leadership* spoke. The chapter also helps us see the 1970s campaign as a continuation of long-term anxiety about women's behavior. Recent scholarship on print media in East Africa has argued that newspapers were an infrastructure that allowed not only the state but editors and readers alike "to dictate to Uganda's publics."[5] In chapter 1, we saw the Amin government using newspapers to direct Ugandans, while readers appropriated the debate about sartorial morality and took it to directions that both reaffirmed and sometimes contradicted the government's message. In this chapter, the editors of *Leadership* set the parameters of the debate. As put by Gingyera-Pinycwa who examined the role of Catholic press in Ugandan politics, in *Leadership*, "we encounter, on the one hand, the clergy [the editors] initiating, directing, or encouraging the Catholic laity [to act], and evidence as to the reaction of the laity to such clerical programmes, on the other."[6] *Leadership* allowed young women to make a moral inventory of their lives. The editors turned their confessions (about sinful sexual lifestyles)

[5] Derek R. Peterson & Edgar C. Taylor, "Rethinking the State in Idi Amin's Uganda: The Politics of Exhortation," *Journal of East African Studies* 7, no. 1 (2013): 59.
[6]A.G.G. Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics in Uganda: A Case Study on the Contribution of Religion to Political Debate in Uganda in the Decade 1952-62* (East Africa Literature Bureau. Kampala, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, 1976), 9.

into an important resource with which to instruct other women against abortion, use of birth control and premarital sex. One aspect that distinguished *Leadership* from other Ugandan newspapers and perhaps strengthened the power of its message, is that it relied heavily on the labor of women while also making them its subject. Women wrote letters calling other women to order, shared their life histories to be used as teaching materials on the dangers of uncontrolled sexuality and they helped in the typing and printing of the newspaper.

Despite its impact on the lives of women, *Leadership* has remained understudied by scholars of the print media in Uganda for several reasons. First, there has been a tendency among scholars of the print media in Uganda to treat newspapers as sources for studying certain historical (political) moments. As a consequence, newspapers like *Leadership*, which covered issues (such as morality) that may not have been considered of political significance, have remained understudied.[7] Second, *Leadership* was published from Northern Uganda. As Gingyera-Pinycwa pointed out, scholars of Uganda's print culture have suffered from what he calls "Buganda-philia:" a tendency to consult newspapers published in Buganda and to ignore those published from elsewhere in the country.[8] Third, *Leadership* did not espouse the nationalist rhetoric that tended to attract the attention of scholars. Emma Hunter has observed that "for a long time, historians have tended to focus more on what newspapers *ought* to have done than on what they actually did. When historians first began to write the history of newspapers in Africa, they did so in search of the roots of anticolonial

[7]Except for the work of Ugandan scholar Gingyera-Pinycwa who extensively documented the role of the Catholic church in Uganda and the government of Obote in A.G.G. Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, and A.G.G Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Apollo Milton Obote and his Times* (NOK publishers. New York, London, Lagos), 1978.

[8] Gingyera-Pinycwa describes Bugandaphilia as "a tendency by people who are well informed about Buganda but meagerly informed about the rest of the country to presume to generalize about the country as a whole.…" See Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics,* 172.

nationalism."[9] They were naturally drawn to anti-colonial newspapers and ignored "newspapers operating within the framework of the colonial state…."[10] Thus, newspapers like *Leadership* which often went after nationalist parties, and in some cases even endorsed the colonial state's witch hunt of nationalists,[11] were ignored by scholars. However, despite their anti-nationalist attitude, newspapers like *Leadership*, often published content, especially about morality, that resonated widely within society.

Leadership was owned by the Catholic church, which used it to promote its interest. In this respect, *Leadership* was no exception among Ugandan newspapers, which all served as mouthpieces to their owners. However, what made *Leadership* interesting is that it was one of the very few English language newspapers founded in the 1950s and 1960s with the explicit aim of engaging Ugandan educated elites in debates about national issues. Unlike vernacular papers like *Munno* which only engaged with specific ethnic constituencies, *Leadership* was not constrained by linguistic, ethnic, regional, or geographical boundaries. Even more importantly, it was the only newspaper to explicitly address the issue of morality. *Leadership's* readership consisted of the intellectuals and elites who were in position to influence policy and calibrate the moral compass of Ugandans. Its readership included health workers, academics, teachers, and students—people who, by the nature of their work or future careers, made or would come to make decisions about women's bodies.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 1 gives a general background of newspapers in Uganda, and their ideological and political orientation. The section provides a general background

[9] Emma Hunter, "Komkya and the Convening of a Chagga Public, 1953-1961," in *African Print Cultures. Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century* eds. Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter & Stephanie Newell. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 283.
[10] Hunter, "Komkya and the Convening."283
[11] Zie Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles in Uganda. 1900-1962*. (Kampala: Center for Basic Research, 1992), 7.

about the print media in Uganda and helps us see *Leadership* as a key player in Uganda's newspaper industry which was used by the Catholic church to mobilize against those who it deemed a threat to its interests. Section 2 examines how the Church used its media resources to shape public opinion about women's bodies in the 1970s. I show how the editorial practices of *Leadership* enabled the Church to spread its conservative views about contraception and to wage a war against female sexuality in general. Specifically, I examine debates in *Leadership* about birth control and abortion, two issues that the Catholic church vehemently opposed.[12] Although these debates coincided with global debates about birth control in the Catholic church,[13] there were homegrown events that warranted this change in editorial focus.[14] I show how the editors of *Leadership* used confessions by young women and anti-abortion literature to portray women as murderers, absolve men of responsibility and erase them from discussions on abortion, birth control and sexual health.

The birth of *Leadership*: situating *Leadership* magazine in the wider context of political activism and the newspaper industry in Uganda

Leadership was one of the English language newspapers that emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s to enable intellectuals to debate about *national* issues—issues that had to do with the leadership of the soon to be independent nation of Uganda. *Leadership* was started and edited by a Verona missionary priest, Father Tarcisio Agostoni who was described as "the principle mentor of the

[12] In 1968, Pope John Paul IV issued an encyclical "Humanae Vitae" which stated that the Catholic church opposed all forms of artificial birth control. See Sylvia Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility in Uganda," *International Journal of Human Rights* 13, no. 24 (2016):117-128.
[13] Debates that culminated into a papal encyclical (*Humanea Vitae*) which laid out the Catholic church's position on birth control and sex in general. Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility."
[14] Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility."

Church on political matters."[15] In 1956, Fr. Agostoni was appointed the director of lay apostolate for Gulu diocese, in Northern Uganda. While in Gulu, Fr. Agostoni realized the need for "some sort of publication that would spread news, programs and opinions concerning lay apostolate."[16] In 1956, he started a mimeographed publication which he named *Leadership*. However, by 1960, what had started as a simple conveyor of information to the Catholic laity had turned into one of the most engaging and influential newspapers in Uganda.

Before 1950, the print industry in Uganda was dominated by vernacular newspapers founded by Africans, the Church and foreign businessmen. These newspapers were involved in political activism and promoted partisan causes.[17] However, towards independence, it became clear to some of those involved in the newspaper industry that the domination of vernacular, especially Luganda, in the print media made it impossible to mobilize the non-Ganda and the educated elite who spoke different languages to participate in debates about the future of the country. Although in Uganda, "the languages of deep politics were…Luganda [and Lusoga, Acholi, Lango, Runyakitara etcetera],"[18] towards independence, as ethnic interests began to be supplanted by national interest, newspaper editors began to argue that the vernacular press which was divided along ethnic,

[15] Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence*, 9.
[16] The idea for a magazine came to him after he organized a series of lectures for teachers and headteachers of the Catholic founded primary, secondary and post-secondary schools. After the lectures, Fr. T. Agostoni. "The Founder of Leadership Remembers." *Leadership*, No. 191, October 1976, 4.
[17] In 1900, the Anglicans started a vernacular (Luganda) language newspaper, *Ebifa Mu Buganda* (renamed *Ebifa Mu Uganda*) to keep their African converts informed of developments in the church. In 1911, the Catholics started a vernacular (Luganda) newspaper which they named *Munno*. *Ebifa* and *Munno* mainly published religious content, which they supplemented with occasional government notices. These were followed by newspapers founded by African entrepreneurs beginning in 1921, which provided Ugandans with space to argue against the injustices of colonialism. See James R. Scotton. "The First African Press in East Africa. Protest and Nationalism in Uganda in the 1920s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, no. 2 (1973): 211-228: John C. G. Isoba. "The Rise and Fall of Uganda's Newspaper Industry, 1900-1976," *Journalism Quarterly* 57 no 2 (1976): 224-233, Peterson, Hunter and Newell, *Print Culture* 8; and Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles*, 7.
[18] Peterson, Hunter and Newell, *Print Culture*, 11.

linguistic and regional lines made it impossible to create a more inclusive, nationalist identity.[19] Thus, some owners of vernacular language newspapers began founding English-language newspapers to cater for the non-Ganda speakers and educated elite.[20] While introducing the paper to the readers, the editor of *Uganda Times* stated that this new English language paper was aimed at "the fast increasing number of educated Africans, and all those members of the different communities who take a keen interest in matters of internal and local importance and those who use languages other than Luganda."[21] However, like their vernacular counterparts, the editors of English language newspapers used their outlets to promote polarizing partisan causes.[22] For example, the newly founded *Uganda Express* and *Uganda Times* continued to promote the interests of Buganda.[23] Other newspapers like *Transition* which presented themselves as non-partisan platforms for the educated elite to argue about important political events in Uganda found themselves accused of promoting the interest of the USA.[24]

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[19] A 1950s editorial piece in vernacular *Dobozi lya Buganda*, calling on the colonial government to nominate educated men instead of the uneducated chiefs, was followed two months later by a letter by one of Uganda's intellectuals A.K Mayanja, calling on Ugandans to begin thinking about the future of Uganda, "aspire for something greater," beyond Buganda and the colonial government. Towards independence, editors and owners of newspaper were increasingly becoming worried that the chiefs and their descendants were setting themselves up to inherit power from the colonial government. Having denounced chiefs as corrupt stooges of colonialism, towards independence, some editors of the vernacular press began pressing the colonial government to appoint educated Africans to positions of power (instead of chiefs) and to Africanize the civil service. For example, in the 1950s the editor of vernacular *Dobozi lya Buganda,* denounced the 'unsuitable men' nominated by colonial government as people's leaders. He called for the nomination of "men of education," "who can express themselves well and who know something of the central government." Such editorial pieces made it clear that the future leaders would not be the chiefs but the educated men. See Gariyo. *The Press and Democratic Struggles*, 33-35.

[20] In 1953, Jolly Joe Kiwanuka founded the *Uganda Express*, the sister paper of Luganda language *Uganda Post*. In 1956 *Uganda Times*, a sister paper of *Uganda Eyogera* was founded. More English language newspapers were founded in the 1960s to cater for the elite including *Transition* which was founded in 1961, *Uganda Nation* in 1962, and *The People* in 1964. Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles.*

[21] Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles*, 42.

[22] On editing newspapers in Africa and editors as activists, See Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*.

[23] *Uganda Express* and *Uganda Times* campaigned for Buganda to keep the "lost countries" which were curved from Bunyoro and given to Buganda by the colonial government. See Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles.*

[24] *Transition* was founded in 1961 by Rajat Neogy, a 22-year-old Ugandan-Indian anthropology dropout of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Unknown to its editors, contributors and readers, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began funding the magazine through its anti-communist advocacy group, the Congress of Cultural Freedom. The CIA helped the magazine by organizing parties for Neogy to meet and recruit celebrities, artists, intellectuals, and journalists in the USA. Thanks to dedicated editors and writers, and CIA money, *Transition* emerged

In the 1950s, as the church amplified its political activism,[25] it became clear that it had no English language newspapers to cater for the non-Ganda constituencies and the educated elite, many of them from outside of Buganda. It thus founded *Leadership* to rally Catholic elites to protect the interests of the church.[26] Through papers like *Leadership*, the church highlighted "injustice over the allocation of the resources…,"[27] and bias against Catholics during independence elections.[28] It used *Leadership* to nudge Ugandans to elect Catholic candidates and to campaign against

as one of the most popular intellectual magazines in the 1960s. See Bernard Tabaire, "The Press and Political repression in Uganda: Back to the Future"? *Journal of East African Studies* 1, no 2, (July 2007): 193-211; Paul Theroux, "More than a magazine: Memories of Transition and Rajat Neogy," *Transition* 106 (2011).

[25]Political activism was the cornerstone of the newspaper industry in Uganda. Scholars of the print media have noted that editors tended to be partisans and they used their newspapers to promote political causes. For example, *Sekanyolya*, the first indigenous newspaper founded in 1921 addressed the issue of oppression and exploitation of Africans. The pro-Bataka/anti-colonial *Munyonyozi*, *Gambuze* and *Dobbozi lya Buganda*, all founded in the 1920s addressed the unfairness of the 1900 Buganda agreement and advocated for the restoration of Bataka lands. To defend themselves, the chiefs who benefited from the 1900 agreement between Buganda and the colonial government started their own newspaper which they called *Enjubba Ebiresse*. On the other hand, *Tali Nkunyonyole*, *Uganda Commonwealth* and *Uganda Voice* were founded during World War II to frustrate the efforts of the colonial government to recruit Ugandans into the war. Farmers, under their umbrella organization, African Farmers Union, started *Mugobansonga* and *Okwegata Manyi* to fight Asian and European trade monopolies. Alongside the *Uganda Herald*, which was started by a British businessman, the colonial government founded a number of newspapers including the *Uganda Gazette*, and *Matalisi* to counter the anti-colonial rhetoric in indigenous newspapers. When these newspapers were banned towards 1950s for their anti-colonial rhetoric, new newspapers sprang up and continued the attack on both the colonial and indigenous government. For example, in 1952 Eridadi Mulira founded *Uganda Empya* while Uganda National Congress' Jolly Joe Kiwanuka founded *Uganda Post* in 1951. Like their predecessors, these newspapers were critical of the colonial regime and worked hard to mobilize Ugandans against colonialism. See Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles;* James R. Scotton. "The First African Press in East Africa": Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*.

[26] Although the Anglicans alongside the Catholics pioneered the print industry in Uganda, the Anglican newspaper industry never took off. In addition to the *Upper Nile Magazine* which was founded in 1956 and ceased publication in 1961, their *New Day/New Century* survived into the 1960s but was not as influential, and struggled to maintain readership (New Day had a readership of 2500 in 1962). While the Anglican church was covered by other Luganda language newspapers, beyond Buganda, according to Gingyera-Pinycwa "it never had any popular publications of its own comparable to…*Leadership*." Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 74. See, also, Jacob Matovu, "Mass Media as Agencies of Socialization in Uganda," *Journal of Black Studies* 20, no. 3, (March 1990): 345.

[27] Gingyera-Pinycwa, *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 73.

[28] F.B. Welbourn, *Religion and Politics in Uganda 1952-1962* (Kampala: East African Publishing house, 1965).

Anglicans,[29] who it argued ignored *"amazima no'bwenkyanya* (truth and justice)"[30] and used trickery and questionable alliances to win political seats.[31]

Commenting on *Leadership's* political activism during the early years, Fr. G. Degano, who succeeded Fr. Agostoni as the paper's editor, stated that *Leadership* was founded to be an anchor for Christians in turbulent times, when divisive forces (election manipulation, communism, inter-religious fights) threatened the Church.[32] Fr. Agostoni stated that *Leadership* sought to give "its readers the Christian point of view on various social and political problems of the moment."[33] Although it was the brainchild of one dedicated priest and his army of equally dedicated nuns, the Church embraced *Leadership* as a guide for Christian laity "to know how far they could get involved in the social and political development of their countries without giving up their allegiance to the church."[34] The editors of *Leadership* made it clear to Catholic voters that in electing Catholic candidates as Uganda's leaders, they were demonstrating their allegiance to the church.

Because *Leadership* was under the management of a missionary society, it maintained a level of independence that allowed its editors to make decisions about how to use their resources. Despite this, it "contained views that can without any degree of doubt be described as Church views."[35] Although the editors did not get funds from *Rubaga*, the headquarters of the Catholic church in

[29] The Catholics argued that the Anglicans had been favored by the colonial regime because of their connection to the Church of England.
[30] Jonathon Earle shows that the Catholics, alarmed by the incivility of their Anglican counterparts, adopted the concept of truth and justice to advocate for participatory democracy. See Earle, *Colonial Buganda*.
[31] The Catholics accused the Anglicans for using the media to spread fear that a Catholic prime minister threatened the Anglican *Kabaka* (King) and Buganda's future. See Welbourn, *Religion and Politics.*
[32] Rev. Fr. G. Degano, "Leadership, A leading Magazine in Africa," *Leadership,* No. 191, October 1976.
[33] Fr. T. Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership Remembers," *Leadership*, No. 191, October 1976, 6.
[34] Rev. Fr. G Degano, "Leadership, A Leading magazine in Africa" *Leadership,* October 1976, 9.
[35] Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 9.

Uganda,[36] they still had access to other church resources (highly trained personnel and printing machines) which were commanded by semi-independent, self-financed religious "cells," organizations run by highly trained expatriate missionaries and indigenous Ugandan priests.[37] While the indigenous press struggled with printing their newspapers on old and broken machines, the Catholic press had access to well-maintained printing machines operated by nuns.[38] For example, in 1955, the Claverian sisters (the missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver)who were known as the "apostolate of the press"[39] because they had a strong tradition in publishing,[40] took over the famous Catholic Marianum Press from the White Fathers.[41] When Fr. Agostoni started *Leadership*, he asked the Verona Sisters who were teaching at the nearby Catholic Girl schools to type the stencils and duplicate them. Thus, unlike other newspapers, *Leadership* and the Catholic print industry in general heavily relied on women (nuns) to produce newspapers.[42]

[36] Note that some newspapers did get financial support from Catholic leaders. For example, *Munno*, the longest running newspaper in Uganda had since 1966 been heavily subsidized by the Archbishop of Kampala and donations from abroad. When in early 1970s it ran into financial trouble and temporarily closed down, it appealed to the readers of *Leadership* to help raise money for a relaunch. See. M. Kaggwa, "The Death of a pioneer," Letters to the editor, *Leadership* October 1972.

[37] Until 1953, local Catholic churches were under the authority of various missionary societies. The English Mill Hill Fathers and French White Fathers controlled Eastern and Central and Western Uganda, and Italian Verona Fathers dominated Northern Uganda/West Nile. Missionary societies and the dioceses they controlled were financially self-sufficient through growing cash crops, church collections, tithe, school fees. Parishioners built churches and schools and, in the process, saved the church money. Although in 1953 they came under the direct authority of the Vatican bishops, they still depended on the infrastructure and personnel of the well-established missionary societies. This arrangement allowed various religious bodies to not only plan and put their resources in areas they thought would benefit their congregants (such as literacy, fighting immorality) but also to build and maintain presses. See Yves Tourigny, *So Abundant a Harvest*: *The Catholic Church in Uganda, 1879-1979* (Darton: Longman, 1979) 153-154.

[38] On the mechanics of printing newspapers in Uganda, see Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*.

[39] Tourigny, *So Abundant a Harvest*, 159.

[40] Their founder, Mary Ledochowska, was a pioneering female publisher in Europe. She published missionary correspondence from Africa, "Echos from Africa," in a Catholic periodical which became a magazine in the late 19th century. https://www.claveriansisters.com/foundress

[41] The Marianum Press published *Munno* and other Catholic newspapers.

[42] The print industry in Uganda was dominated by men who played a central role in producing newspapers. See Peterson, Hunter, and Newell, *African Print Cultures.*

To produce *Leadership*, Fr. Agostoni used an "old Gestetner duplicating Machine of Lacor Seminary,"[43] where he taught philosophy. In 1957, only 500 copies of *Leadership* were printed. In 1959, unnamed benefactors came to his help and agreed to pay for the printing of "50,000 copies of a cover in three colors…to last five years at a rate of 1000 copies per month."[44] Fr. Agostoni stated that "there was such a boom of subscription that the covers were hardly enough to finish the year 1959."[45] Due to increased demand, he doubled the pages of the magazine from sixteen to thirty-two. While its early subscribers were mostly schoolteachers in Catholic schools, by 1959, *Leadership,* unlike other Catholic-owned vernacular newspapers, commanded a diverse readership stretching beyond Uganda into Africa and even Europe. Unlike *Munno* which shared the overcrowded market of Ganda speakers with numerous newspapers, *Leadership* targeted non-Ganda speakers including those in Northern Uganda, home to some of the most outspoken nationalists including Obote. It targeted the growing elite, "especially the young educated elite whom it [the Catholic church] was sure would become the political leaders of the next day."[46] The editors used the vast network of Catholic institutions and lay leaders,[47] to reach all Catholics and even non-Catholics working in Catholic institutions.

To ensure continued subscription, the editors of *Leadership* worked with Catholic education institutions to have the magazine subscription fees included in students' tuition.[48] They sometimes supplied Catholic schools and institutions of learning with newspapers and magazines free of charge.[49] By 1960, subscription had reached 1200 copies per month because heads of schools were

[43] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership Remembers," *Leadership,* No. 191, October 1976, 4.
[44] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 5.
[45] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 5.
[46] Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles,* 51.
[47] Lay leaders are unordained members of the church, 9.
[48] Two other Catholic newspapers *Lobo Mewa* and *West Nile Catholic Gazette* had a similar arrangement with Catholic institutions. Gingyera-Pinycwa. *Issues in Pre-independence Politics,* 173-74.
[49] Gariyo, *The Press and Democratic Struggles,* 51.

making "bulk subscriptions of hundreds of copies for their students."[50] Due to demand, *Leadership* was translated into two vernacular languages; Acholi (*Leadership ki dog Acholi*) and Alur (*Leadership Ki dog Alur*). Later, an issue for women called *Leadership ki Min Ot* was added. The editors also published a collection of articles in a handbook called *Every citizen's handbook* which sold 'several thousand copies.'[51] In addition, they published 20,000 calendars per year and special issues which often doubled the usual subscription. For example, during the pope's visit in 1969, they sold 20,000 copies.[52]

In terms of readership, *Leadership*, which was printed monthly, competed favorably with other newspapers in Uganda.[53] Circulation "remained constant at about 8-10 thousand copies…"[54] throughout the 1960s and mid-1970s. Given the fact that there were more than three million Catholics at the time, the number of subscribers may not seem all that impressive. However, as argued by Luise White, in Uganda one did not have to buy a newspaper to read it and one did not have to read a newspaper to know what it said. Writing about the culture of newspaper reading in the 1950s in Uganda, White states that:

> virtually all newspapers were read by more than one person, and many more were read aloud, translated, summarized, amended…by a variety of readers for a variety of audiences. Even newspapers written in languages that requires years of schooling

[50] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 6.
[51] Degano, "Leadership," 10.
[52] Degano, "Leadership," 10.
[53] Catholic-owned newspapers were among the most widely read in Uganda and they competed with African, foreign and government newspapers for readership. With the exception of the government *Mawulire* which had a circulation of 40,000, the only other papers with circulation that was more than Catholic newspapers were *Taifa Uganda Empya*, and *Uganda Argus*, with a circulation of 14000 and 14200, respectively. Catholic newspapers *Leadership* had 10,000, *Lobo mewa* 12000, *Ageteraine* 7000, *Munno* 6200 in 1962, and West Nile Gazette had *3000*. See Matovu, "Mass Media," 345.
[54] Degano, "Leadership," 10.

> to read could be read out aloud in a few minutes to illiterates. The crowds…might not be newspaper readers, but they knew what newspapers said.[55]

Thus, it is likely that the 10,000 copies were not just read by their original buyers. Those who bought *Leadership* shared the message with family, friends, and neighbors. Moreover, Catholic schools and institutions which were nondenominational and served a diverse population of students, irrespective of their religion, kept copies of *Leadership* in their libraries which students and teachers could borrow and read. It is possible that school children and teachers read or shared the news with parents, friends and neighbors who may not have been Catholics.

Getting the material to publish was not a problem as most of the content in the early years came from encyclicals and other Vatican documents and articles written on political events by educated professionals. According to recent scholarship on print media in Africa, African editors often 'clipped, plagiarized and republished' materials from other newspapers,[56] to among others, "make comparisons and liken local events to things happening at a distance."[57] There is evidence to suggest especially during the early years that the editors of *Leadership* borrowed material from other newspapers and some of the materials (especially on communism) was supplied by Vatican agencies. According to Gingyera-Pinycwa, Rome-based *Agenzia Continentale* and *Agenzia Fides* "scouted for news of the communist world, and of its relations with the third world; and passed over to church representatives…[in Uganda] whatever they considered relevant."[58] Some of this material ended in *Leadership*. For example, an article "titled 'Russian eyes on the colonies' based on the London *Times* Weekly Review of October 30, 1958, appeared in the January issue of

[55] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 252.
[56] Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*, 25.
[57] Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*, 26.
[58] Gingyera-Pinycwa, *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 109.

Leadership in 1959."[59] Evidence shows that this practice continued after the change in editorial policy. As I will show later, in its articles on abortion, *Leadership* may have borrowed materials from American newspapers.

By 1960, *Leadership* had managed to brand itself as an international magazine for all Christians. In 1959 during a Young Christian Students (YCS) meeting in Kampala, "*Leadership* was accepted as the National Publication for Y.C.S in Uganda."[60] This was a great achievement for *Leadership* as YCS was an international organization with members from all over the world. In the same year, the magazine changed its tagline from "*A magazine for Catholic Action Leaders*" to "*A monthly Magazine for Christian Leaders*" and was registered as a newspaper owned by Gulu Diocese. *Leadership* became an inspiration for lay apostolate leaders all over Africa. For example, the lay apostolate leaders in Kenya were inspired to start "*The Spearhead*." They were unsuccessful and *The Spearhead,* which ran between 1964 and 1967, merged with *Leadership*.[61] The biggest acknowledgement came from the Pope when during his visit in Uganda in 1969, he recognized *Leadership's* role in training Christian leaders. During the same occasion, the Bishops of Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda wrote a letter of appreciation for *Leadership's* role as "the voice of the church."[62] From its humble beginnings as a collection of lecture notes, *Leadership* grew into a reputable international magazine known for its instructive political, social and religious content.

From its foundation until the mid-1960s, *Leadership* exclusively published on political and religious issues. An examination of *Leadership* issues from 1956 to 1962 shows that alongside

[59] Gingyera-Pinycwa, *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 109.
[60] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 5.
[61] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 5.
[62] Degano, "Leadership," 10.

religious content, *Leadership* covered contemporary political events in Africa ranging from communism, nationalism and political parties, church-state relations, and independence movements to freedom of the press.[63] In mid-1960s, *Leadership* toned down its 'political' activism and amplified its 'social' activism. The editors of *Leadership* dedicated the magazine to what they called 'social issues' such as premarital sex, abortion and use of artificial birth control.

From 'political' activism to 'social' activism: sexual and reproductive morality in *Leadership* magazine

In the early 1960s, the editorial board of *Leadership* which was known for its insightful coverage of politics, made a radical decision to abandon political coverage "in order to deal with social problems."[64] Evidence from *Leadership* shows that the editors felt compelled to speak out against immorality because they believed it was an immediate threat to the moral wellbeing of the newly independent nation. When asked about what motivated them, the second editor of *Leadership* stated that they were guided by the question: "[what] does the Church say about what is going on in Africa today?"[65] He added that in the 1950s and early 1960s, they concentrated on covering politics because it was their duty to guide Christians (Catholics) through independence politics. After independence they decided to turn *Leadership* into a platform to help citizens deal with social

[63] *Leadership* issues published between 1958 and 1963 covered topics such as Catholic Action and Politics, Priests and Politics, Communism and Africans, True Democracy, Nationalism, Freedom of religion, The Catholic Church and colonialism, Freedom of Speech and Press, The church and independence, Political Parties, The role of the State in New Africa, Religion and politics in Africa, Human rights among others. Articles from late 1960s included, a letter to the youth, women's role in the modern world, Susan and Robert, a love story, Beauty, African women anything but Oppressed! Christian panorama, YCS, for the youth, Social problems, African women facing modern life, religion in schools, Pills and Planning, Christian panorama, marriage, The women teacher, the impressive work of a woman, nurse and responsibility, Right Leadership, Religion in Schools, Population, Catholics and Priests in Africa, Diary of an Unborn Child, The Social problem, St Joan of Arc, African economic development, vocation to sisterhood, the role of brothers, lay apostolate. See Degano, "Leadership,"9.
[64] Degano, "Leadership," 10.
[65] Degano, "Leadership," 9.

problems such as premarital sex and abortion. Although the change in editorial policy coincided with debates in the global Catholic church about artificial contraception, marriage, and parenthood,[66] the decision to concentrate on "social problems" was an outcome of the shifting priorities of the Catholic Church in Uganda, necessitated by what they perceived to be a moral crisis. This crisis, they argued, was brought about by the movement of young people into urban areas where they were exposed to birth control, and other trappings of modernity. The editors, therefore, decided to turn *Leadership* into a platform to debate these issues.

Beginning in 1963, the editors rebranded *Leadership*. The new *Leadership,* which addressed the behavior women, was written *for* men. Before it was rebranded, *Leadership's* content resembled that of magazines like *Transition*. After the change, it resembled that of the sexualized popular international magazine—DRUM, which was "famous for its vivacious and titillating cover girls," and for a "generous mix[ing] of the popular and the political…."[67] In the new *Leadership*, women became the central subject of debate while men were identified as leaders for whom the magazine was intended. Although its tag was "*Leadership* magazine for Christian leaders in Africa," in its advertisements, *Leadership* identified Christian leaders as male: "if you have *Leadership*, you must be a leader…Be a *man* of *Leadership*" read its tagline.[68] To make the magazine attractive to men, the editors changed its cover. Portraits of nubile young girls in color replaced the black and white portraits of churches, religious leaders, and other religious symbols; covers which had deep religious meaning. For example, one of the earliest covers of *Leadership* was a map of Africa

[66] Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility," 117-128.
[67] Kenda Mutongi, ""Dear Dolly's" Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship, and Sexualities in Africa, 1960-1980," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*33, no. 1(2000): 1.
[68] Advert for in *Leadership,* November 1972. Men were asked to pay 10shs for a copy of *Leadership* for one year. Also, see R. Aranha, "Right Leadership," an article that discussed the moral character of a good leader. It was accompanied by a picture of well-dressed men, *Leadership,* April 1975.

surmounted by a cross. As explained by *Leadership's* first editor, this cover conveyed a powerful message:

> There is the picture of Africa with a cross right in the middle: This means that the aim of the magazine is to spread the cross of Jesus and his teaching allover Africa. Africa is surrounded with three different colors: the white symbol of Christian faith; the green of Christian hope; the red of Christian charity. There are also three ornaments: these symbols are used in the New Testament and mainly in St. Paul to point out Christian faith: "Arma Fidei" "Scutum Fidei." The palm tree ever green and ever strong means Christian hope that must never cease; The lamp with flame means Christian charity that must always burn in the hearts of Christians. The whole of it means that the cross of Jesus will be planted in Africa only if Christians work and live out of Christian faith, Christian hope, and Christian charity.[69]

Other covers (all black and white) included the picture of the Pope, depictions of Uganda martyrs, and congregants on the steps of the church.[70] Fr. Degano, the second editor of the magazine, stated that the use of young girls and color gave *Leadership* a competitive edge:

> Looking back at the issue of Jan. 1968,….the picture of the two young ladies on the first color cover still stands for all the readers of *Leadership* as a symbol of a new era in the history of our magazine….In order to compete with other publications, *Leadership* had to take a livelier look and the color printing of its cover, together with its large format, helped the magazine survive amid the competition of other publications. The use of color improved, and the magazine soon became one of the best overall publication in East Africa.[71]

The above suggests that the need to attract readership was one of the reasons why *Leadership* changed its content and style.[72] The change in the editorial practices of *Leadership* did not affect

[69] Agostoni, "The Founder of Leadership," 5.
[70] They occasionally published pictures of a group of young boys, children, or couples.
[71] Degano, "Leadership," 10
[72] In their work on print culture, Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter have argued that East African newspaper editors, unlike their West African counterparts, often had "to speak as defenders of public morality, to espouse conservative values, to speak on behalf of people," in order to court their linguistically segmented readerships and cope with publishers' financial precariousness. Yet there is no evidence to show that the editors of *Leadership* were compelled by precarious finances or the changing needs of the readers. They easily found sponsorship, had access to church resources, and had stable subscription. See Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*, 10.

the subscription, which remained steady at 10,000. Among the targeted readers were students, teachers, nurses, doctors, catechists, seminarians, Christians, and non-Christians, young and old, men and women. In addition to church teachings, it published "instructive and edifying texts"[73] about sexuality, family life, working girls and women, young people in urban areas, love, beauty and cosmetics, birth control, abortion, marriage, etc.

To keep readers interested, scholars have argued that editors of newspapers and magazines in Africa were continuously finding new ways to communicate their message.[74] The editors of *Leadership* were not different. They serialized the stories of religious heroes and heroines; Joan of Arc, Sudanese slave-turned-saint Bakhita, Genevieve, Saint Monica mother of St Augustine, and the venerated politician intellectual saint Thomas Moore, among others. They published letters sent by readers from Germany, Belgium, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. They used the letters (including those written by young women confessing sexual sins) to instruct readers about living a Christian life of sacrifice, charity and hope, controlling bodily urges, and the dangers of abortion, birth control, premarital sex, among others.

Like other editors of magazines and newspapers in Africa, the editors of *Leadership* employed fiction to reach readers. For example, they used the serialized fictional story "*Susan and Robert; a modern Africa love story-with a difference"* by B.R. Lwanga to not only entertain but to instruct readers, and especially young women, about the dangers and temptations in the city, choosing the right marriage partner, and relationship and intergenerational conflict.[75] *Susan and Robert* is about a church going young nurse named Susan who moved from her village to live alone in the city.

[73] Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture*, 4.
[74] Peterson, Hunter, and Newell, *African Print Cultures.*
[75]In the early years of the magazine, the editors used fiction to teach Ugandans about the dangers of communism. See Gingyera-Pinycwa, *Issues in Pre-independence Politics*, 105.

Susan is a modern young woman who eschews traditional customs (she refuses to honor familial obligations; she rejects "her father's suggestion to keep her young sister with her"). Although the city enables her to live on her own terms, Susan is very lonely. She is so lonely that "at times she really felt like crying and doubts about the wisdom of her decision were cropping up ever more frequently." Nonetheless, she refuses to be tempted by the city and she remains a faithful Catholic. She refuses to join her co-workers and friends on their weekend outings; she instead attends mass on Sunday. Susan spends her free time performing domestic chores— mending and ironing clothes and reading. It is this fiercely independent, modern, and lonely young woman who falls in love with a 'timid' Robert, who she encounters on a poorly lit lonely bus stop.[76]

Falling in love with Robert is the easier part. Susan faces pressure from her parents (who live in the village) and who want her to marry a richer man (she tells them she will marry for love). The rest of the story is about the many trials that Susan and Robert face; pressure from their village folks to observe traditional customs, sickness, separation (Robert is sponsored by his company to go to Nairobi for a short course), work obligations, theft of company items (Robert's office is broken into), temptation and doubt. These leave the couple drained and Susan begins wondering if Robert is the right man, if he can withstand these pressures and not succumb to the temptation of the bottle as most husbands she knew had.[77]

In their work on the role of the print media in fostering communities, Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter have stated that editors working under constrained circumstances often employed fiction as "a means for escaping from the confinements of political discourse, a strategy for evading

[76] B.R. Lwanga, "*Susan and Robert; a modern Africa love story-with a difference," Leadership,* January-February 1971.
[77] Lwanga, "*Susan and Robert" Leadership*, June, July-August 1971.

colonial censorship, a way of reaching for a different register, of claiming a higher ground."[78] However, for the editors of *Leadership,* serialized fictional stories like *Susan and Robert* allowed them to dramatize city life and to present its depressing aspects (without boring the readers), in ways an editorial piece about social problems in the city would not.[79] Most importantly, stories like *Susan and Robert's* and the gut-wrenching story of "an unborn child" which I will introduce later, were powerful emotional tools which allowed *Leadership* to deliver the church's message about temptations in the city, perseverance, preservation and respect for human life etc., without being polemical. Fiction allowed the editors to reach readers in ways that the dry, emotionless but factful article such as "Problems in city life" or "Pills and Planning"[80] or the polemic article by Birabwa Nnamutebi, cited at the start of this chapter, would not. [81]

Fiction allowed the editors to tap into the readers' emotions and to manipulate reality to paint a vivid picture for the readers. For example, a year after *Munno's* exposition on abortion*, Leadership* published the "Diary of an Unborn Child" written by a soon-to-be aborted fetus whose last entry was a single sentence; "My mother killed me today!" The editors gave the fetus which they called "unborn child" a voice and feelings. On the first day that it was conceived, January 5, the unborn child stated:

> My life began today. My mother and father aren't aware yet that I've come into existence. I'm hardly as big as a pinhead but I am an individual with a being of my own. It is already settled what my natural traits and characteristics will be; for instance, I am going to have my father's eyes and my mother's curly hair. Oh yes! It is also settled that I am going to be a girl!

[78] Peterson and Hunter, *Print Culture,* 23.
[79] Sometimes, the editors would publish articles about immigration into cities and challenges of living in the city.
[80] Lwanga, "*Susan and Robert." Leadership,* January-February 1970.
[81] Birabwa Nnamutebi, 'Lwaki Abakazzi baggyamu embuto oba okusula abana"? *Munno,* February 1974.

Two weeks later, it wrote:

> Tiny veins are growing now, and my first blood cells are forming. Of course, none of my organs are full developed yet so it is my mother's blood that is helping me to keep alive at present. I depend on her a lot and even after I've been born, I shall have to depend on the milk she supplies for my food.

And then:

> My mouth has grown enough for me to be able to open it. In about twelve months or less, I'll be using this mouth to greet my parents with a smile and a gurgle. The first word it will say will be "Maama."

And the last entry, after three months: "My mother killed me today."

While it is not clear who composed the diary as the source is not acknowledged, the diary uses a language that is similar to that which was used during heated debates about abortion in the 1970s in the USA. Opponents of abortion such as the Republican assembly man Nell W. Kelleher, who was said to have "displayed an aborted fetus preserved in a jar," stated that "an unborn child feels cold, feels heat, feels pain," and thus has life.[82] The Catholic church in the USA 'lobbied for the repeal of the abortion law and after the law was passed,' they "pursued legislatures in their home districts who voted for the present law."[83] While it is unclear if the source of the diary was the Catholics in the US, the editors of *Leadership* appropriated it and used it to convey to Ugandans the dangers of abortion.[84]

[82] William E. Farrell, "Assembly votes to Repeal liberalized Abortion Law," May 10, 1972. https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/10/archives/assembly-votes-to-repeal-liberalized-abortion-law-measure-passes-79.html
[83] Farrell, "Assembly votes."
[84] The diary appeared in *Leadership* No. 177, April 1975.

The editors of *Leadership* magazine intended the diary to be the "voice of an unborn child," which they argued was often silenced by its mother and in pro-abortion arguments. The fetus chronicled the process of its development from the time of conception to its abortion. It made a strong moral claim on its right to life. It told the reader about the joy it would bring to its parents and other people, it talked about the fact that even if it were to be born with defects, there were doctors who would correct such defects. It emphasized the role of its mother as a nurturer — a giver of life. The editors used the diary as a tool through which to persuade women against abortion. By claiming that on day one a fetus is really a person with feelings and with a voice, the editors managed to convey to the reader the Catholic church's teaching that personhood begins from the moment of conception. In doing so, the editors turned scientific facts upside down, and lent authority to the Amin government's anti-abortion decrees, which gave the fetus the same rights as a baby/child and defined abortion as the killing of a child. According to the decree, those suspected of abortion were to be subjected to the same laws as murderers and were to be tried by the High Court.[85]

Although the diary was meant to be an educative tool, it did not only misrepresent scientific facts but also singled out women as the only responsible party in the act of abortion. The editors were aware that men as well as women were involved in abortion. In an article about abortion, they acknowledged that they knew about a male doctor who was undertaking research into "the production of a drug that could be used to accelerate birth and to cause abortion."[86] As I will show in Chapter 4, they shared this view with leaders of the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU) who accused a medic of being involved in making an abortion pill.[87] Despite knowing that some doctors were operating abortion clinics and that some husbands and boyfriends coerced their

[85] Decree 26, 1971 Penal Code, Section 136 and 137 and Decree 26 of 1971; The trial on indictments decree.
[86]'Abortion the Christian view,' *Leadership,* March-April 1970, 8.
[87] See Chapter 4.

partners to seek abortion, the editors of *Leadership* and by extension the Catholic church presented abortion as a female problem. Thus, while *Leadership* was successful in bringing the voice of the child into discussions about abortion, it also succeeded in erasing men (doctors, husbands, boyfriends) from the same discussion.

The editors of *Leadership* launched a column targeting nurses (and midwives) whom they identified as enablers of abortion. Although we know from cases such as Kay's that it was male doctors who operated back street abortion clinics,[88] *Leadership* singled out nurses and midwives (who were in the case of Uganda, women) as likely to participate in the 'sinful' act of abortion. The magazine began publishing editorials about nurses, in which they emphasized their role in preserving life. Unlike other editorials which often had the full names of the authors, the articles about nurses were authored by someone simply referred to as 'Catherine.' Just like 'Dear Dolly,' the no nonsense but funny DRUM magazine sexpert, 'Dear Catherine' dealt only with questions about sexuality. She published editorials that explained the role of nurses in nurturing life while giving them advice on how to live a sexually pure life. However, while Dolly's replies were often short, funny, silly, and ironic,[89] Catherine's were detailed, instructive and peppered with scripture and Catholic teachings as well as public health facts about sexual health. She encouraged and praised readers who confessed their sins (abortion, prostitution, using birth control) and promised to write to them privately to explain to them more thoroughly on how to live a sexually pure life.

In an article titled *'The nurse and illicit procedures*,' Catherine criticized nurses and midwives who broke the fifth commandment; "Thou shall not kill." Although Catherine had acknowledged to her

[88] See introduction. Also, Rose, a nurse, stated in an interview that abortion cases were handled by doctors. Interview with Rose, Ntinda, 2015.
[89] See Mutongi, ""Dear Dolly's" Advice."

readers that she knew about doctors who were helping women and girls to abort, in her editorial pieces, she pointed out nurses and midwives as the main culprits in 'illicit procedures.' Like a teacher to her students, she told nurses that she knew that they were being asked by doctors to help in "destroying a life through procuring an abortion."[90] She outlined the ways nurses were implicated in abortion; by preparing a patient, sterilizing instruments or giving post-operative care to a patient. She advised nurses to not give contraceptives (considered abortifacients) to women and to only give advice about the 'safe period.' Catherine's articles had a great effect on young women—nurses and trainees who started writing to her confessing their sexual sins. "Dear Catherine," confessed a nurse:

> Since my time in midwifery training, I have had a very free sexual experience with several men—of course to avoid a pregnancy I was taking 'the pill.' One day they got finished…. I found myself pregnant. Not to interrupt my training I got rid of the pregnancy by using drugs which I took from the ward.[91]

Another nurse, Ester Asio, wrote:

> I want a baby very much but due to the consequences of previous venereal diseases, and infection following abortion, I am not able to conceive…. I'm now working in a busy maternity ward and looking at and caring for the newborn babies I am constantly reminded of the one I could have had—the one I killed.[92]

Through columns such as "Dear Catherine," *Leadership* invited readers to participate in creating a new community. It called upon readers to unburden themselves by publicly confessing their sins. Writers of such letters made it clear that they wanted their letters to be used as evidence of what a promiscuous lifestyle could do to a woman or girl. They expressed hope that their confession

[90] *Leadership*, July-august 74.
[91] 'Effects of free sex' *Leadership*, July-august 1975,15.
[92] *Leadership*, July-August 1975, 16.

would deter other girls from using birth control, having premarital sex, and aborting. Confession or penance is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic church (the others being Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Anointing of the sick, Holy orders and Matrimony). While confession was expected, and demanded of all Catholics, public confession was unheard of in the Catholic church. Confession was done in private before a priest and in the church. Priests were expected to not share the sins of the confessing person, even for the sake of teaching others. However, the editors of *Leadership,* who were Catholic priests (and might even have been Catherine), were men who most importantly believed that women's behavior threatened the family and by extension the Church and the nation. Therefore, if such public confessions could deter other young women from destroying 'the temple of Christ,' they would publish them!

On the other hand, young women like Ester Asio saw Catherine's columns and *Leadership* magazine as "an arena where technics of self-accounting could be practiced,"[93] a place where they could become true Christians. Most importantly, *Leadership* allowed these young women to participate in ministering to others. The founders of *Leadership* were ardent believers in getting the laity involved in ministering to others. Therefore, unlike colonial officials, indigenous authority and ethnic patriots who perceived public confessions by revivalist as undermining moral order, the editors of *Leadership* did not treat young women's confessions as guilt-laden ramblings that "undermined social discipline, and fractured community."[94] Instead, they treated them as important resources with which to minister young women. Letters like Ester's provided the evidence they needed to convince readers that women were indeed aborting, using birth control and having

[93] Derek R. Peterson writes that in the early 20th century East and Central Africa, revivalists unsettled church traditions of self-accounting by publicly confessing their sins. It is important to note that unlike the revivalists who named themselves and those with whom they had sinned, young women like Asio only named their sins. They, unlike revivalists remained anonymous. See Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism.*
[94] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism,* 3.

premarital sex, and that the Church could play a key role in combating these vices.

They used such letters to offer general advice about the dangers of premarital sex such as venereal diseases, and abortion. To Ester, Catherine wrote:

> Thanks for your sincerity about your past life and again for giving me the opportunity to help convince many girls not to repeat your experience. On reading your letter I can see several moral points. As I am sure of your sorrow, I feel you will not mind me pointing them out for the benefit of other girls.

She began her letter by reminding Ester and other young women of the fifth, sixth and seventh commandments (Thou shall not kill, Thou shall not commit adultery and Thou shall not steal) and then went on to point out the physical consequences of pre and extra marital sex and abortion such as venereal diseases and sterility. She explained that Christians were called upon to respect their bodies and to act in a dignifying manner. Most importantly, Catherine made it clear that God would forgive their sins if they changed their ways, thus indicating that confessing one's sin's in *Leadership* was as good as confessing them before a priest.

While the editors of *Leadership* continued to tell young women to 'protect life' by resisting abortion, they failed to address the problems that married and unmarried Catholic women faced, such as how to limit the number of children and how to prevent pregnancy. For example, Alice Kisu, a married nurse gave birth to four children in five years. Desperate, she wrote to Catherine that; "I have always practiced my Christian religion. I would like from you some advice and explanation about family planning. Is it right for us to decide how many children to have? If so, how can I do this without going against…the rules of the Church?"[95] Alice's letter struck a chord with other married Catholic couples. A.K Muthike from Nairobi, Kenya who read Alice's desperate

[95] *Leadership,* November 1975, 22.

letter seeking 'a breathing space' wrote that:

> there are many catholic couples, who are agonizing and do not know what to do to regulate childbirth for their welfare and that of their children…. since we did not want to either take the pill or have surgical birth control, we did not know what to do or whom to go to for workable assistance.[96]

Although Alice's letter indicated that she was desperate, Catherine congratulated her for her 'nice family' and for giving her an opportunity to write to other mothers about family planning. She explained that the aim of marriage was procreation and that while the Church recognized the need to space children, the only accepted method was the natural methods such as abstinence which she stated was "an act of love and respect" and which bound "husband and wife more closely together."[97] Although such advice may have seemed too harsh to non-Christians, it made sense to Christian readers as self-denial was considered a virtue that implied not only love of one's body but also love for the neighbor and God (the two great commandments). Thus, a couple who denied themselves sexual pleasure was virtuous and those who could not were immoral. Catherine advised Catholic couples to practice self-mastery/self-denial for the sake of a healthy and happy family and by extension the Church and the nation.

It is important to note that Catherine recognized some of the problems that women and girls faced and the reason they sometimes used birth control and sought abortion. She acknowledged the pressures that young women faced and the unfair practice of expelling pregnant girls from educational institutions.[98] When Christine Namukasa wrote to get advice on how to deal with classmates and friends who were using birth control (pills) and were involved in 'prostitution' (she

[96] *Leadership,* January-February 1976.
[97] *Leadership,* November 1975, 22.
[98] Rose and Christine who were both nurses confirmed that nursing schools were expelling pregnant students. They also stated that unmarried nurses working in missionary hospitals were not allowed to get pregnant. Interviews with Rose, Ntinda, Kampala, 2015; Christine, Naguru, Kampala, 2015.

also wanted to know what the pill was and how it worked and if there were any dangerous consequences in taking it), Catherine replied:

> Dear Christine, there are rumors…about the pill being given to trainees to enable them to reach a satisfactory [educational] end which could be a university degree, EACE, or Nursing and Midwifery certificates. The problem of having to dismiss girls because of pregnancy or because they procure criminal abortion has existed for many years, but it seems to be on the increase lately. However, the answer to this problem is not by giving the pill to avoid pregnancy.

The Catholic church and its spokespersons like Catherine believed that artificial birth control methods such as the pill encouraged promiscuity among women and girls and that it led to an increase in sexual immorality.[99] Such views (that birth control encouraged promiscuity) were also shared by medics including Catholic medical doctors. In his address to the Association of the Members of the Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) in December 1973, Dr. Samuel J.K. Kamau asserted that birth control encouraged immorality. He stated that:

> There is a God-given natural fear in every one of conception outside marriage. A person using contraceptive methods has this fear removed, and sexual acts outside marriage become permissive, unless he/she has a strong moral training. Contraceptives now being used indiscriminately and without control will lead to moral degradation of the individual and society.

Providing no facts, Dr. Kamau claimed that couples using birth control were "breaking up in ever increasing numbers and this trend will continue into the 1980s." He urged nations which were represented at AMECEA conference to regulate the use of birth control because "a country that does not effectively control the use of these drugs will find itself with a downward curve of development and progress before long." He added that:

[99] Readers of *Leadership* believed that it was the obligation of the Church to strongly condemn sexual immorality and to "make it hard for women and girls to access birth control, abortion, among others." Peter Murungu Kanyandago, 'Make it harder for them,' *Leadership*, January- February 1976.

> The Church, both clergy and laity, must constantly work to achieve and maintain a vivid awareness among its members of the individual, family, and national consequences of birth control. The Church must define and clearly make known and understood her position on birth control to governments and peoples. This, to be effective, must be a continuous process coexistent and alive with the family planning organization activities. The Church must declare and teach upon the immorality of the various methods used by medical science for birth control. The Church must study ways and means of influencing public opinions, educational and healthy systems, now used as family planning institutions. The Church should warn nations of the inherent dangers of indiscriminate and uncontrollable use of medical contraceptives and methods of birth control. An organization of medical professional men should be formed to propagate and safeguard Catholic medical ethics.[100]

The proceedings of AMECEA which contradicted the prevailing views about birth control among population and development experts were published in *Leadership* magazine. Although there is no evidence that Catholic medics formed a professional organization to stop the use of birth control, I will show in chapter 3 that some Catholic medics used their positions to stop the distribution of contraception in the medical centers they controlled. Moreover, many Ugandans including non-Catholics shared the Catholic church's views about birth control as expressed in the AMECEA report. They used their position to limit the distribution of birth control to unmarried women and girls.[101]

Conclusion

Although scholarship on Uganda portrays the Church as a disempowered and silent witness in the erosion of Ugandan's rights in 1970s,[102] in this chapter, I have argued that when it came to issues of women's morality, the interest of the church and those of the Idi Amin state converged. In the

[100] *Leadership*, January-February 1974, 12.
[101] Some of the arguments in this report were adopted by some members of FPAU who argued that unregulated use of birth control was a danger to society. See Chapter 4.
[102]Carney, "The Politics of Ecumenism," 780.

1960s, at a time when traditional mechanisms for disciplining women were under attack by the Obote government, *Leadership* offered Ugandan men and women a platform to call out behavior perceived to be a threat to public morality. It also offered young women a platform to make a moral inventory of their lives. Although *Leadership* was the only Catholic-owned magazine to dedicate itself to social issues, in 1970s, it became clear that the new government shared their concerns. *Leadership'*s efforts were rewarded when the government of Idi Amin signed a series of decrees including the anti-abortion decree, the anti-miniskirt decree, and anti-venereal diseases decree. Although there was no official statement from the Church regarding the decrees, some Catholic media such as *Munno*, were among the first to praise Amin for taking a stand against immorality. In some of the decrees signed by Amin, the language resembled that used in *Leadership*. For example, in the anti-abortion decree, a fetus was "an unborn child" and a woman who aborted was a murderer.

Thus, contrary to the belief that in the post-independence period the Church was disempowered and silenced, I show in this chapter that the (Catholic) Church continued to play a prominent role in directing the moral compass of Ugandans through its media empire. The Church remained a powerful institution controlling vital resources like hospitals where they endeavored to limit access to birth control and abortion services, schools, where they continued to train future leaders, and most importantly the media, where they continued to influence public culture.[103] It is important to note that, although the Anglican church was intertwined with the Catholic church in its effort to protect church privileges from an increasingly dictatorial state in the 1960s and 1970s, Anglicans did not join their Catholic counterparts in its war against birth control and abortion. This was partly due to the fact that after the 1930 Lambeth conference, Anglican leaders allowed the use of

[103] See chapters 2 and 3.

artificial contraception.[104] In Uganda, when artificial birth contraception was introduced, the Anglican church worked with the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU) to make birth control available to married women. The Anglican church invited FPAU leaders to teach members of the Mother's Union about family spacing and some Anglican priests were even members of the FPAU board.[105]

[104] Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility."
[105] See Chapter 3 and 4.

Chapter 3

Austerity, Experimentation and Opposition: The Global and Local Politics of Biomedical Contraception in Uganda and the Reproductive Exploitation of Ugandan Women

In 1957, physician, eugenicist and American heir to *Proctor and Gamble*, Clarence Gamble teamed up with medics and women's activists in Uganda to found the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU) to provide birth control[1] to Ugandan women. However, the real agenda of the birth control project in Uganda was to find a new frontier for Gamble's "simple" birth control experiments, after the key players in the global birth control movement had denounced him for promoting dangerous and unscientific forms of birth control. Although approved and safe birth control existed in the West, Gamble chose to subject Ugandan women to dangerous birth control experiments, hoping to invent a simple, easy to use and cheap birth control method that could be used by illiterate women. His approach to birth control bred opposition from Ugandan medics, politicians and caught the attention of pronatalist groups, such as the Catholic church which opposed birth control on moral and religious ground and a group that called itself *Bawejjere* or the 'Uganda Common Man Association.' Arguing that birth control was intended to exterminate the black race,[2] *Bawejjere* made it their mission to end the birth control project in Uganda.

[1] In this chapter, birth control is used interchangeably with family planning and modern contraception or contraceptives.

[2] They shared these views with other Africans especially in the USA who argued that birth control was a form of genocide against Africans. See Simone M. Caron, "Birth Control and the Black Community in the 1960s: Genocide or Power Politics?" *Journal of Social History*, 31, no.3 (Spring 1998): 545-569; William A. Darity and Catellano B. Turner, "Family Planning, Race Consciousness and the Fear of Race Genocide," *American Journal of Public Health* 62, no. 11 (November 1972): 1454-1459.

The chapter examines the establishment of the birth control project in Uganda as a biomedical endeavor driven by global concerns about the reproductive capacities of Ugandan women and global overpopulation. It shows how these concerns clashed with local anxieties about demographic changes, social and political reproduction, and medical ethics. The chapter examines the institutional history of the FPAU and its role in the reproductive exploitation of Ugandan women. Because the birth control project involved concealed experimentation, and women were often denied safe birth control, I examine the birth control project in Uganda as a form of reproductive exploitation of women. I show how instead of helping women gain bodily autonomy, Gamble turned them into guinea pigs for his experiments. Birth control experimentation did not only expose women to reproductive health problems such as infections, but also hampered Ugandan medics in their efforts to provide safe birth control services. I argue that Gamble's experimentation on women, and FPAU's refusal to engage the public and their detractors played into the hands of its critics and left the association vulnerable and unable to perform its role of providing birth control. His actions legitimized the concerns of pronatalist groups especially the *Bawejjere*.

Although they tapped into a global racialized rhetoric, that birth control would exterminate the black race, I show that *Bawejjere's* concerns also arose from a history of reproductive crisis in Uganda and the resultant fear of social and political annihilation by outsiders. Scholars have shown that in the first three decades of colonial rule, pronatalism in Uganda grew out of concern over the decline in fertility and high infant mortality rates. However, even after the colonial government, indigenous authorities and medics took measures that led to population growth, anxieties about

social and political annihilation as a result of out of control sexualities or outsiders did not subside.[3] In Buganda in particular, pronatalism was driven by fear of political marginalization by (Rwandan) foreigners and the Obote government's usurpation of their political and cultural autonomy.[4] Thus, to *Bawejjere,* in addition to threatening the reproductive potential of Africans, birth control was also a reflection of a broken political system that sought to please Westerners at the expense of Ugandans. They used the birth control issue to expose the poor state of medical care in Uganda.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the global politics of birth control, the demographic concerns in Uganda and the establishment of the "simple" birth control project in Uganda. It sheds light on the practice of surreptitious medication and experimentation on Ugandan women. The second section examines the institutional history of the FPAU and the role of women (birth control activists) in Gamble's project. It shows how women's activists tapped into their experience and interest in social work, maternal and child health as well as their ambition to participate in the public sphere to build FPAU. The section shows that Gamble depended on the labor of women—politicians and wives of politicians, midwives and nurses and especially leaders of women's organizations, who often worked with limited resources to mobilize medics, distribute birth control and run the day to day activities of the FPAU. The section closely looks at FPAU's leader, Sugra Visram, who used her political connections to facilitate the birth control project, which in women activists' view was supposed to liberate women and help them space children. It also captures Gamble's unwillingness to build structures to support the distribution of safe birth control. The last section of the chapter investigates opposition to birth control by various groups,

[3] Shane Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility and Generation in Buganda, East Africa, 1860-1980, in *Parenthood between Generations: Transforming Reproductive Cultures. Fertility, Reproduction and Sexuality*, eds. Sian Pooley & Kaveri Qureshi (New York: Berghahn, 2016).
[4] Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility," Ashley Brooke Rockenbach, "Contingent Homes, Contingent Nation: Rwandan Settlers in Uganda, 1911-1964," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2018).

including the pronatalist *Bawejjere*, who weaponized birth control, adopted a racialized narrative and used it to wage a campaign against FPAU and Obote, who they argued failed to deliver the promises of independence. It also investigates the relationship between Obote and the FPAU.

Simple birth control for simple people: demographic concerns and the global and local politics of birth in Uganda

The history of modern contraception in Uganda can be traced back to the USA, and specifically to one man, Clarence Gamble. Although the first Family Planning Association in Britain was formed in the 1930s, birth control services were not extended to the colonies and specifically to Africans. This was because in the colonies, different groups perceived birth control as a threat to their race and the colonial governments were unwilling to fund such a controversial service.[5] In Uganda in particular, scholars show that due to high infant mortality rates and a decline in fertility due to famine, malnutrition, diseases and violence in the first three decades of colonial rule, there was widespread concern among Ugandan societies about their ability to reproduce.[6] Shane Doyle states that in Buganda, the durability of a marriage depended "above all on the production and survival of children."[7] In Western Uganda, he shows that people channeled worries about fertility and death in naming rituals.[8] It was not just Africans who were worried about their ability to reproduce.

[5] See Susanne M. Klausen, *Race, Maternity, and the Politics of Birth control in South Africa, 1910-39* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Susanne M. Klausen, "Eugenics and the Maintenance of White Supremacy in Modern South Africa," in *Eugenics at the edges of Empire: New Zealand, Australia, Canada and south Africa*, eds. Diana B. Paul, John Stenhouse and Hamish G. Spencer (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[6] Shane Doyle, *Before HIV: Sexuality, Fertility, and Mortality in East Africa, 1900-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills. Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Nakanyike Musisi, "The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, eds. Jean Allman, Susan Geiger & Nakanyike Musisi (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002); Carol Summers, "Intimate Colonialism: The Imperial Production of Reproduction in Uganda 1907-1925," *Signs* 16 no. 4 (Summer 1991): 787-807.
[7] Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility," 5
[8] He writes that "previous experience of child loss influenced many colonial-era parents' decision to give names belonging to two most common mortality-related categories, those which meant either the child will die (10.56 percent

Scholars have stated that a declining population threatened the colonial project in Uganda.[9] Thus, colonial, and indigenous authorities enacted pronatalist strategies (medical and moral campaigns) to reverse the devastating effects of diseases on African populations. They passed legislation against prostitution, venereal diseases, adultery, and fornication. With the help of indigenous authorities, colonial medics undertook mass treatment for venereal diseases. The colonial government established maternal and child welfare clinics, criminalized abortion, and exempted pregnant women and men who had more than five children from public work, taxes and *Luwalo* (communal labor).[10]

By the 1950s, these efforts had paid off. Venereal diseases which had been known to cause infertility,[11] malnutrition, childhood diseases and the sleeping sickness epidemic that had decimated populations along the lakes were under control.[12] In 1959, Uganda's population was approximately 6.5 million. By 1969, it had increased to 9.5 million people. The birth rate which in 1959 was 5.5 children per woman had by 1969 risen to 7 children per woman.[13] Western Ugandans changed their naming rituals to reflect this success.[14] However, despite these positive outcomes, anxieties about demographic decline did not abate. This was especially the case in places like Buganda where the increase in population was a result of the immigration of Rwandan outsiders

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of all names) or the child might die (12.72 percent) Shane Doyle, "'The child of Death': Personal Names and Parental Attitudes towards Mortality in Bunyoro, Western Uganda, 1900-2005," *The Journal of African History* 49 no. 3(November 2008):361-382.

[9] See Chapter 5. Also, Nakanyike Musisi, "The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945" in *Women in African Colonial Histories,* eds. Susan Geiger, Nakanvike Musisi and Jean Allman (Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 2002); Carol Summers, "Intimate Colonialism: The Imperial Production of Reproduction in Uganda, 1907-1925," *Signs* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1991)

[10] Doyle, *Before HIV.*

[11] The colonial authorities overestimated the role of venereal diseases in Buganda's fertility problems. It was later found that other disease and non-disease-related factors also played a role. See chapter 5.

[12] Doyle, *Before HIV.*

[13] See Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda 1860-1955* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

[14] Doyle, "The Child of Death."

into Buganda.[15] Having migrated to Buganda beginning in the early 20th century as seasonal laborers, they decided over time to permanently settle in Buganda to raise families. In the process, they, alongside other migrants from other parts of Uganda nearly turned the indigenous Ganda into a minority in their own homeland.[16] The fear of political annihilation by outsiders was exacerbated by independence politics which saw non-Ganda candidates like Obote emerge as leaders of independent Uganda. According to Shane Doyle, "the competitive world of post-1945 nationalism and democratization heightened Ganda fears that their low fertility would facilitate their political marginalization in post-colonial Uganda and might even cause their ethnic group's extinction."[17]

While some Ugandans were preoccupied with how to prevent outsiders from overtaking them, transnational actors and governments in the West were debating about how to reduce fertility in Third World countries like Uganda which had high fertility rates. In the USA, a country with minimal ties to the colonial project in Africa, population experts, birth control experimentalists, medics and the government began to make plans to intervene to 'diffuse the population bomb.' However, there was another reason for USA intervention, the belief that unchecked population growth in the non-western countries made them "more vulnerable to communism,"[18] While the USA government went on to sponsor birth control projects in various countries, in places like

[15] Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility," 13
[16] Michiel de Haas, "Moving Beyond colonial control? Economic forces and shifting migration from Ruanda-Urundi to Uganda, 1920-1960," *Journal of African History,* 60, no. 3 (November 2019):379-406: Rockenbach, "Contingent Homes, Contingent Nation"; James H. Mittleman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda: From Obote to Amin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).
[17]Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility," 13.
[18] Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion. Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press, 2005),199.

Uganda, it was the self-funded Gamble who stepped in to provide birth control through his organisation, the 'Pathfinder Fund,' which he founded in 1957.[19]

Although there already existed birth control organizations running successful birth control programs in the West, they had neglected to extend their services to the rest of the world. As a result, with the exception of the Caribbean[20] and India where birth control was being mass produced,[21] modern birth control was largely unknown to the majority of those in the Third World. Political conservatism and ambivalent attitude towards the Third World prevented birth control organizations such as the Population Council from extending safe birth control to the Third World. It also prevented them from stopping medical entrepreneurs like Gamble from turning the Third World into a testing ground for the so-called "simple" birth control.[22] In his work on the implementation of birth control policies in Africa, Donald Warwick describes the Population Council as "a very professional organization" that was held back by its inability to solve "tension between that value (professionalism) and the quest for action." In contrast, he describes Gamble as "willing to go in and do any damned thing to get started." [23]

The Population Council's attitude unwittingly facilitated Gamble's birth control experiments in places like Uganda. In the mid-1950s Gamble fell out with the IPPF and the Population Council. The problem stemmed from Gamble's promotion of the so-called "simple" methods. According to

[19] The USA began to provide financial support for birth control in some countries such as Puerto Rico. The government was forced to withdraw after it came under attack from the Catholic church. See Schoen. *Choice and Coercion.*
[20] For an analysis on the politics of birth control in the Caribbean, see Nicole Bourbonnais, *Birth Control in the Decolonizing Caribbean. Reproductive Politics and Practice in Four Islands 1930-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[21] Sarah Hodges, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce. Birth Control in South India, 1920-194*0 (Hampshire and Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008). See, also, Schoen, *Choice and Coercion.*
[22] Ilana Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users After World War II: North and South*"* in *Gendered Drugs and Medicine. Historical and Social Cultural Perspectives* eds. Maria Jesus Santesmases and Teresa Ortiz-Gomez (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).
[23] Donald P. Warwick, *Bitter Pills. Population Policies and their Implementation in Eight Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 61.

Matthew Connelly, the IPPF feared that "when Gamble hired someone in the name of the IPPF with no experience or training to study what happened when women agreed to put "salt rice jelly"—something he had cooked up in his own laboratory—in their vaginas, it threatened to discredit the whole idea of international support for family planning…."[24] Connelly notes that "the showdown with Gamble came at the IPPF conference in Tokyo in 1955."[25] The IPPF told Gamble that "his field workers and studies did not represent IPPF, and he should not pretend otherwise." It further told him that "the Federation would accept his money, but they would decide how to use it."[26]

It is after this encounter that Gamble began looking towards Africa, Asia and Latin America, places that were far removed from the prying eyes of his detractors. Gamble was one of the numerous physicians, scientists, population experts and birth control activists in the 1950s and 1960s who were driven by the need to diffuse the so-called population bomb, by introducing mass-distributed birth control, especially to poor women in Third World countries. They were not interested in ethical, scientifically tested, and regulated birth control. They argued that in addition to not having enough trained medical personnel, non-western women had no "financial means, living arrangements and necessary 'intelligence'" to use sophisticated methods like the diaphragm.[27]

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[24] Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception. The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2008), 178. Note that Gamble had a long history of experimentation on poor women including Africa Americans. As one of the leaders of the Human Betterment League North Carolina, Gamble had mobilized medics and social workers to carry out eugenicist influenced experimentation on black and poor white women in rural areas in Kentucky, South Virginia, Georgia, California Michigan among others. See Jessie M. Rodrique, *The Afro-American Community and the Birth control Movement 1918-1942* (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, 1991).

[25] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception.*

[26] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 179.

[27] During the interwar period, two competing groups emerged among physicians, scientists, population experts and birth control activists. The first group was driven by the need to legitimize birth control, to "dissociate these preparations from dubious links with STIs." This group promoted scientific testing of contraceptives and embarked on "a systematic effort to transform contraceptives—especially chemical contraceptives (or spermicides) used by women—into ethical drugs, sold in mainstream pharmacies and regulated in the same way as legitimate pharmaceutical preparations." See Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 93.

Gamble was convinced that the ballooning population of the world could only be slowed down by a radical approach to birth control that would involve "concoctions that could be made by women themselves using ingredients found in their own kitchens."[28] Gamble's decision to promote self-administered birth control came after he became "aware of the difficulty of promoting, in non-western countries, a technique which only a trained surgeon in a hospital setting could carry out."[29] Thus, he turned back to 'homespun' contraception such as the salt and sponge method which consisted of a sponge soaked into a salt solution and inserted in the vagina, and foaming tablets which could be inserted in the vagina immediately before sexual intercourse. Although, as I will show later, many of these methods had already been rejected by women and birth control organizations in the West, Gamble nevertheless developed plans to introduce them to places like Uganda.

In 1955 Gamble sent two female 'field educators;' social worker Margaret Roots to Asia and health educator Edith Gates to Africa, the Middle East and South America.[30] Gamble, whose field workers were said to be mostly "single women or widows in their fifties—with some experience of charity or other administrative work,"[31] tasked them with recruiting governments, politicians and medical workers for his birth control project. In Africa, Gates visited Uganda where she met two colonial government representatives: Yusuf Kironde Lule (the then minister of Rural Development) and Dr. Board (the in-charge of the Kampala Health Department).[32] Following their meeting, in October 1956, Gates wrote to Dr. Board and asked him to start family planning clinics

[28] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 93.
[29] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 94.
[30] Roots was aided by Edna McKinnon while Gates was aided by Ruth Martin. See Clarence J. Gamble, "The Initiation of Contraceptive Services," in *The Population Crisis and the Use of World Resources*, ed. Stuart Mudd (Springer, 1964), 364.
[31] Lowy," Spermicides and their Female Users," 94.
[32] Box 125, Folder 2181, Uganda: Slight 1958-1959, Corres and Report of Family Planning Committee for 1958 Date: 1958-1959, Clarence J. Gamble Archive, Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard (hereafter CGA).

in government hospitals and health centers. He did not respond to her letter. Gates sent Dr. Board another letter asking if Lule, had "mentioned the need for family planning in any of his recent pamphlets…."[33] There is no evidence that Dr. Board responded to Gates' second letter either, or that Lule mentioned family planning at all.

Thus in 1956, after failing to get support from the colonial government[34] because as noted by Gamble's partner, George Saxton, the "British were not so tactless as to raise such a controversial subject in public,"[35] Gates turned to medical doctors, many of them operating private clinics. She gave them foam tablets to distribute to upper class women, mostly white and Asian. However, they soon ran out of tablets and because there were no pharmacies supplying birth control in Uganda, several doctors wrote to Gates asking for more birth control. An ecstatic Gates sent a report to her employer Gamble stating that "there was so much interest in family planning, with several programs started."[36] Gamble began asking the doctors to participate in his experiments. In one letter headed "Sent: Two simple methods by sea mail" addressed to Dr. S.M. Ruwala of Kampala, Gamble's secretary Betty U. Kibble wrote on his behalf that she had sent "a small amount of plastic sponge, to be cut into two-inch squares or circles, for use with a salt solution for birth control…If you would like to test this method of birth control with your patients, we will be glad to send you an addition supply, together with case cards and tabulation sheets for keeping records of the results."[37]

[33] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2181, Uganda: slight 1958-1959, Corres and Report of Family Planning Committee for 1958.
[34] The colonial government refused to offer financial support to FPAU. In May 1962, a dejected Visram who had hoped for financial support from the colonial government wrote that "we have no grants from the government or any business firms." CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.
[35] George and Anne Saxton Archive (hereafter GASA) George A. Saxton, "A History of F.P in Uganda" Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton, accessed with permission from their daughter Tali Saxton, Sand Lake New York, August 2017.
[36] GASA, Saxton, "A history of F.P."
[37] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2181, Uganda: slight 1958-1959, Corres and Report of Family Planning Committee for 1958.

Gamble was aware that such methods of birth control had already been rejected in the West and others were only allowed if used alongside another form of birth control. For example, while the Population Council had found foam tablets "to be the most hopeful for the immediate use in those areas where simplicity of procedure and low cost are essential,"[38] it did not want to promote their use and the testing on women.[39] The IPPF rejected the salt and sponge method which they argued was ineffective.[40] In Uganda, medics who were not aware of the ineffectiveness of the birth control methods proposed by Gamble agreed to participate in his birth control project. At Aga Khan (private) hospital, Dr. Javani began to offer birth control to mostly Indian and European clients. At the Anglican Mengo hospital, to avoid getting in trouble with the hospital management, a medic "worked quietly in its out-patient department,"[41] distributing foam tablets to elite women whenever they were available. In 1960, Dr. Jivani began opening birth control clinics to cater for low income women in the slums of Kampala and in rural areas. A clinic was organized under a church group in Namatumba village, 65 miles from Kampala. In June 1960, another clinic was opened in Iganga, 80 miles from Kampala.[42] A report from 1961 stated that "two European women from the Anglican church…arranged for talks by Dr. Jivani in two rural areas. However, Dr. Jivani's rural clinics closed because Gamble failed to convince other medics, who now questioned the effectiveness and safety of Gamble's birth control methods, to run them after she left Uganda in 1961.

[38] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 92.
[39] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 92.
[40] Lowy states that after Gamble's colleagues and field workers in Malaysia and Singapore had begun selling and distributing colored salt solution made of vegetable dye and perfume, which were added for aesthetic purposes, "IPPF's staff accused Gamble not only of promoting ineffective methods, but of lying to the people: he distributed salt water, colored and labelled to appear like a legitimate medication." Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 95.
[41] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA,1964.
[42] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2188, Uganda: 1962 Miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls Summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings),1962.

Gamble tried to win medics over by telling them that foam tablets were approved by the Family Planning Association of England and that they were being used in India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. He asked them to "make a test to learn whether these tablets are satisfactory for use in your country and whether they fill a need there."[43] Medics who accepted to work with him expressed concern about the safety of foam, which often melted in the hot, humid tropical climate and during transportation from the USA/Britain to Uganda.[44] When in June 1964 Gamble and Gates sent a shipment of foam tablets to Reverend Flinn for medics to distribute to the married members of his Anglican church-ran clinic, he wrote to Gamble that medical personnel in his clinic did not want to give their patients foam tablets because "they are only 70% effective, which they did not feel was a sufficiently high enough percentage."[45] Still Gamble insisted on sending them.

After some medics asked for other safe birth control, Gamble sent diaphragms and condoms which he stated must be given to educated women and foam tablets which he insisted they distribute to uneducated African women.[46] According to Lowy, Gamble preferred foam tablets because they were "relatively cheap, easy to store (usually in a glass bottle with a stopper), provided a reliable, fixed dose of the product, could be used in primitive living conditions (no birth room was necessary) and were reported to be stable in warm climates."[47] Although the tablets melted away in the warm Ugandan climate and there was ample evidence from other places such as India where,

[43] CGA, CGA, Box 125, Folder 2187, Uganda: Other slight 1962 corres (incls Dr. W.R. Billington of Mengo Hospital).
[44] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2187, Uganda: Other Slight 1962 corres (incls Dr. W.R. Billington of Mengo Hospital).
[45] CGA, Box 125 Folder 2195. Reverend J. Seymour Flinn St Andrews Community Center, Mbale Uganda June 10, 1964.
[46] Later Gamble sent the diaphragm and condoms. However, he maintained that foam tablets were to be promoted for use by uneducated African women. See CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961; Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.
[47] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 97.

in the 1930s, Gamble's colleague and friend Margaret Sanger found that foam tablets irritated the vagina,[48] Gamble continued to dump them on poor African women.

Gamble continued calling for concealment and unethical testing of birth control on Ugandan women. In the early 1960s, after the copper Intra Uterine Device (lUD) was invented, Gamble recruited a highly respected female medic, Professor C.W. Rendle-Short who was the head of Makerere Medial School's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology to secretly recruit patients to test the new method. Without the knowledge of the hospital administrators, she began inserting a few IUDs into elite women, but soon these women began getting infections. When in 1962 Gamble asked Professor Rendle-Short to continue inserting IUDs, she refused. In her letter to Gamble, she wrote that "I am afraid that I do not agree with this procedure as in my opinion it sets up chronic uterine infection, which is most undesirable. I therefore cannot avail myself of your kind offer."[49] Dr. Rendle-Short's refusal to inserting IUDs was a big blow to Gamble's project in Uganda but he soon found a way out.

In early 1960s, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Population Council decided to recruit an American couple, Dr. George Saxton, and his wife, family nurse practitioner Anne Kemble Saxton, to establish medical training centers in rural Uganda. Gamble saw an opportunity to continue his project and he convinced George and Anne Saxton to take over the stalled IUD project. Gamble instructed George Saxton to recruit Professor Rendle-Short's assistants.[50] However, his plans were almost derailed when the registrar of the Uganda Medical Board refused to accept George Saxton's academic credentials, stating that:

[48] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 97.
[49] CGA, Box 125 Folder 2188. Uganda:1962 Miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings).
[50]CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda: 1963 Correspondence with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1963 Folder 2190.

> despite the high regard with which your qualification of M.D (Harvard) is held, I regret that owing to a technicality it is not registrable in this country. This is of course no reflection of Harvard or yourself. It is simply that just as British degrees are not recognized in America, so American degrees are not recognized in Britain and parts of the commonwealth.[51]

However, the Medical Board allowed him to practice medicine in Uganda because as they told him, "this technicality does not preclude you from being fully licensed for medical practice in this country."[52]

The Saxtons, 'new believers' in preventive medicine, were perfect for the job. Anne was a nursing practitioner and George was a trained medic who had studied the effects of radiation on the human body and worked with polio patients. After serving in the USA Army Air Corps, he returned to school to study preventive medicine and public health between 1960 and 1962.[53] It was after his training that he was approached about working in Uganda. In Uganda, the Saxtons embarked on their new projects with gusto. George established himself at Kasangati, a peri-urban community, "which had the primary function of training Uganda's medical students in health care in a semi-rural environment."[54] Kasangati which, alongside Mulago Hospital, was the main centers of medical research,[55] was the perfect place for Gamble's experiments. It already had an established research community in maternal and child health, hygiene and immunization.[56] According to

[51] GASA, I.S Kadama, Registrar Uganda Medical Board to G.A. Saxton August 30th, 1962.
[52] GASA, I.S Kadama, Registrar Uganda Medical Board to GA Saxton August 30th, 1962.
[53] George Saxton who had served in the USA Army Air Corps was looking for a fresh start for his family (four children and a wife). Meanwhile, Rockefeller was looking for someone to set up medical training centers and Gamble was looking for a partner in his IUD project. It was a win-win situation for everyone.
[54] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 299.
[55] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 311.
[56] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 299.

scholars, its residents were one of the "most closely monitored and medicalized community in East Africa."[57] Thus, it was the perfect place for IUD experimentation.

Anne Saxton established herself as a maternal and child health educator. She taught women about birth control and travelled across Uganda to meet clients and insert IUDs. George Saxton too began inserting IUDs to clients and to research their effects. Gamble sent funds for the IUD program, to be used to recruit and train medics. He accompanied the money with notes stating that "we are particularly anxious to see the intrauterine method more widely used..."[58] He told the Saxtons that he would support the experimentation of simple birth control that "could demonstrate an inexpensive set up which could be used elsewhere in Africa." Revealing his real motive which was experimenting on Ugandan women to produce a cheaper alternative form of IUD, Gamble added that if they "could make a demonstration of an inexpensive intra-uterine center to show that it doesn't have to be done in a hospital with all of the medical equipment there it would be a valuable project. [59] In hospitals, the insertion of IUDs required scientifically tested equipment like the speculum that opened up the cervix and an insertion device to insert the IUD. Gamble hoped to replace this expensive equipment with locally made cheaper versions.

The Saxtons did not disappoint. Anne Saxton fashioned IUD insertion equipment out of bicycle spokes, something that delighted both her husband and Gamble. In her private correspondence, she stated that she practiced on herself before using them on women. In one letter to Gamble, George praised his wife's creativity: "I'm urging Pug (Anne Saxton) to write a paper on her ingenious devices and techniques and call it something like *Tricks of the Trade*. For instance, you

[57] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 299.
[58] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964. Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.
[59] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda, 1964.

should see her model of the uterus made of plain old plastic sponge…."[60] In another letter, George Saxton recounted how shortage of coils had "stimulated Pug to design a way of tying your own."[61] While Anne Saxton's creativity was celebrated, the reality was that it was unnecessary and only fed into Gamble's obsession with simple birth control.

By the mid-1960s, other birth control players such as IPPF had begun providing small funds for birth control in Uganda after Gamble and Ugandan birth control activists lobbied IPPF, OXFAM, USAID to support birth control in Uganda. Gamble could have advocated for scientifically tested birth control, but he chose not to.[62] He asked the Saxtons to promote certain birth control methods over others. Although it was found that African poor women preferred pills while elite women preferred IUDs, he asked the Saxtons to promote the IUD.[63] George Saxton explained to Gamble that because of the "delicate nature of the subject of FP here," he first recruited "wives of men who are prominent in the government." He added that he dreaded "the day some anti-FP [family planning] member of parliament (possibly a husband of one of the patients) gets a hold of one of these (IUDs) and starts waving it about and accusing us of murdering Africans."[64] He added that African women had realized better birth control was available. He wrote that "we have reached the point where a number of women realize we have the "better mousetrap" [better safe birth control] and they want one."[65] However, Gamble continued to push for inferior and unsafe birth control on Ugandan women.

[60] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2198, Uganda, mostly 1965 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date:1965.
[61] GASA, Saxton to Granny 10 November 1966.
[62] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2200, Uganda: 1965 miscellaneous materials (incls FPA annual report and article on IUDs by George and Anne Saxton) Family Planning Association of Uganda. Annual Report for the year 1963-1964.
[63] While pills cost between 48 to 52 shs (per 100 uses), IUDs cost 17shs (5sh for IUD and 12 shs to insert) Condoms cost 33shs per 100 uses, Diaphragm and cream 17shs to insert, 42shs per year.
[64] CGA, Uganda Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda: 1964 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964.
[65] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Saxton to Gamble. George Saxton to Gamble 18th January 1964.

Interestingly, this was not the first time Gamble experimented on women with inferior birth control. In Asia, Gamble instructed his field workers not to tell women of the existence of safe and scientifically proven methods of birth control.[66] So that he could "collect data on the efficacy and accessibility of the salt and sponge method," Gamble commanded his field workers that the salt and sponge method "be introduced in places where women" "do not know about other methods and will not be told about them by distributors of sponges." [67] He did the same in Uganda. He ignored evidence from studies he had sponsored including that by his friend Dr. Koya in Japan which showed that a "'cafeteria approach,' offering people a choice between foam tablets, diaphragms, spermicidal jelly, the rhythm method, sterilization, and a sponge dipped in salt solution, was the best.[68] Gamble ignored this when it came to Uganda and Africa in general. He refused to provide African women with safe and scientifically tested birth control.

Mobilizing local resources: the role of women in Gamble's birth control project

Women played an important role in Gamble's project not only as subjects for his experiments but also in founding and building a central body (FPAU) to coordinate the day today activities of the birth control project. They also recruited politicians, and other key individuals who were strategically placed to help him sell his project to the government. His recruitment of non-medics (women's activists) speaks to Gamble's belief that the population problem would not just be solved by medical doctors but ordinary people who were willing to work with limited financial and material resources to provide birth control to poor women. It also reveals the opportunistic nature

[66] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 96.
[67] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 96.
[68] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 173.

of his project in Uganda. He needed (elite) women to sell his project to their politician husbands, community leaders and poor women.[69]

That women should emerge as leaders in the birth control project in Uganda is not surprising. Women bore the brunt of childbearing and childcare. In the post-World War II period, Uganda saw the rise of what scholars have called "the politically active and civil-minded"[70] indigenous women, who joined various women's organizations including maternal and child health welfare organization.[71] These women who worked with community development officers to start welfare community clubs, "were keen to improve domestic skills [which they saw] as a stepping stone not just for better nutrition and healthy children, but women's advancement in the public sphere as well."[72] By 1950, the number of African women-led organizations had dramatically increased as a result of the increase in the number of educated African women. Unlike ethnic welfare associations whose main aim was to promote cultural values of particular ethnic groups and to weed out what they saw as immoral practices,[73] women-led welfare associations aimed at ensuring the welfare of disadvantaged women and girls. They organized fundraising activities and invested the funds raised in maternal and child health, education, and self-help projects. Their experience and interest in social work, maternal and child health as well as their ambition to participate in the

[69] The reasons for Ugandan women's participation in Gamble's project can only be glimpsed from their few surviving letters. Despite their long and impressive careers, these women did not write biographies which could have provided Insights into their motives. Some of the activists like Visram did write letters but these brief letters usually discussed practicalities like the need for funds. While we know that Gamble was driven by the need to stop the so-called 'population bomb,' we know from the few letters written by the indominable Sugra Visram, Ugandan women and birth control activists were driven by non-demographic reasons. Their aim was not to stop population growth but to help women space out their children.

[70] A.M. Tripp & J.C Kwesiga. eds., *The Women's Movement in Uganda: History, Challenges, and Prospects* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2002), 24.

[71] As early as 1945 indigenous women worked with community development officers to start welfare community clubs whose aim was to teach women "sewing, knitting, repairing clothes, child welfare, nutrition, housekeeping and cooking." See Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 34.

[72] Tripp & Kwesiga. eds., *The Women's Movement,* 24.

[73] Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

public sphere made leaders of women's organization perfect candidates for Gamble's project in Uganda.

Among these women was Sugra Visram, an Asian-Ugandan member of the powerful *Kabaka Yekka* (Only the King) party and one of the only two women in the Legislative Council (LEGCO).[74] In addition to her role as the chairperson of the Kabaka Yekka Women's Wing, Visram also held various positions in women's organizations.[75] A shrewd politician who went by the Ganda name *Namubiru*, proudly wore Ganda traditional dress, and spoke *Luganda*,[76] her ability to cross the racial and religious divide, her access to politicians, as well as her role in various women's organizations made her a key asset for Gamble's birth control project in Uganda. Although Gamble's field worker Edith Gates liked to say that she "discovered Visram in her little store,"[77] during her second trip to Uganda in 1957, Visram had already established herself as a politician and women's rights activist before meeting Gates.

It was Visram, who, with Dr. Jivani, mobilized women of all races to listen to Gates' lecture about the need for family planning during her second visit to Uganda on May 22, 1957. Following the lecture, which was given in the Aga Khan Diamond Jubilee Hall, Visram, together with other representative of the Indian Women and the Muslim Women's Society, and two representatives of African women formed the Family Planning Committee of Kampala (FPCK).[78] Gamble who believed that birth control associations were needed to provide "education regarding the value and

[74] A colonial governing body that was formed in 1920, it did not have an African representative until 1945. The other woman who was African was Florence Lubega.
[75] She was the vice chairperson of the Uganda Council of Women, a founding member of the Muslim Women's Association, Indian Women's Association, and a member of the Young Women Christian Association.
[76] Tripp, *Women and Politics.*
[77] CGA, Box 125 Folder 2193, Gates to Visram, May 15, 1963.
[78] The all-female committee was composed of Sugra Visram as President, Mrs. T. Parekhji as Vice President, Dr. G.K. Jivani, as Secretary and Mrs. T Dastoor as Treasurer.

availability of family planning"[79] asked Visram to form an association "for the purpose of conducting educational programs and clinical services in methods of family planning that will improve the health of mothers and children and thus build more healthy families."[80]

FPCK, which was led by Visram, had only two middle-class African women from Buganda, Mrs. Rita Nansi and Mrs. Mulira as members.[81] The explanation given for having few African women on the committee was that "African women were all afraid to participate for political reasons." Due to aforementioned demographic concerns, Buganda's indigenous government did not approve of the birth control project, making it dangerous for African elite women to join the FPCK. Because of this, "it was decided to organize with an Asian group until Africans could be brought into the executive committee."[82] In 1961, the FPCK officially became the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU) and Visram and her colleagues registered it with the Uganda Council of Voluntary Social Services (NCVSS) as a 'voluntary, charitable and educational welfare organization.'[83]

[79] Gamble, The Initiation of Contraceptive Services, 364.
[80] The aims of the association were "to impress upon the public the necessity for family planning and to give guidance on reliable methods of achieving it, to establish centers where married couples could get advice on: a) spacing the birth of their children. b) Use of scientific reliable contraceptive methods. c) advice to childless couples and treatment where and when feasible." CGA Box 125, Folder 2188 miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings), Uganda, 1962. Family Planning Association of Kampala, Uganda April 10, 1961. See also, CGA, Box 125, Folder 2181, Uganda: slight 1958-1959, Corres and report of Family Planning Committee for 1958 Date: 1958-1959 , Constitution of the Family Planning Association of Uganda, Box 125, Folder 2188, Uganda: 1962 miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings).
[81] She was the wife of eminent Buganda politician, Eridadi Mulira. In an interview with Rhoda Kalema, she stated that family planning was mostly used by educated middle class women in women's organization and that FPAU was considered an international organization, not an indigenous organization. Interview with Rhoda Kalema, Kampala, 2016.
[82] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2188, Uganda: 1962 Miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings) The Family Planning Association of Kampala.
[83] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2183, 1961 Corres with Family Planning Committee Date: 1961.

Visram used her position to recruit politicians and their wives and other key figures in Buganda.[84] In an undated letter to Gates, Visram wrote that:

> as you are aware, I know many Africans and have personal contacts with them and their families and as I know their language, I can reach them easily. My position as a Member of Parliament helps me in all my activities. Since I know all the ministers of both the governments [Buganda and central] my position is ideal to enhance the cause of Family Planning outside Kampala.[85]

Visram used her connections to get Gates invited to tea by the *Nabagereka* Lady Damalie Kisosonkole, wife of the Kabaka, Edward Mutesa II, the King of Buganda and future President of Uganda. According to Gates, this event "set the seal of approval for Africans to participate"[86] in the association. The *Nabagereka* appeared as guest of honor at a few FPAU events, where they promoted FPAU's activities as part of maternal and child health services. The appearance of the *Nabagereka* helped FPAU earn its place as one of the legitimate women's organizations.

Visram registered FPAU as a member of the Uganda Association of Women's organizations which helped FPAU to advertise its activities beyond the small circle of middle-class women. It also helped it to access all leaders and members of the women's organizations, some of whom became unpaid volunteers of the association.[87] From early on, women's organizations were seen as key to recruiting women for Gamble's project. Writing to Visram in 1961, Gates reasoned that "if you could go into various women's clubs and associations and tell them about your clinic, I am sure

[84] Membership was limited to those who were 18 years and above, patrons who were usually politicians (like city mayors) or wives of politicians had to pay shs. 50/= per year. Ordinary members had to pay an annual subscription fee of shs 5/= per year.
[85] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.
[86] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2188, Uganda: 1962 Miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings).
[87] Women's organizations were able to secure trips abroad for their members where in addition to their other work as leaders of women, they squeezed in family planning related activities. For example, Eseza Makumbi, used her status as a leader of YWCA and member of other women's organization to get invited for a conference on 'newspapers and publicity' in the USA. She used the opportunity to visit the Margaret Sanger Research Centre in New York where she shared with members of the Research Centre the state of family planning in Uganda.

that your work would expand."[88] The registration of FPAU as a women's welfare organization legitimized the activities of the association. The leaders of the association got women's organizations to help raise money through social activities, notably dances, and 'coffee mornings and tea afternoons.' During these events, women from various women's organizations baked treats and auctioned them off to politicians, their wives, and other highly placed civil servants.

FPAU leaders did more than organize dances. After medics refused to offer foam tablets, Gamble and Gates began sending birth control (foam tablets and diaphragm) to FPAU leaders who distributed it from their homes in the leafy suburbs of Kampala. However, because living spaces in Kampala were designated 'European,' 'Indian' or 'African' with minimal social interaction among the races,[89] it became clear that African women and especially those living in the slums could not access these homes.[90]

Gates suggested that FPAU leaders do home visits. She wrote to Visram in 1962 that, "home visiting will be essential to introduce family planning to the African women. This is such a new idea and they are not yet impressed with economic advantages of it as well as the value in health to the family."[91] There was another reason for home visits: Gates and Gamble were worried that without follow-up, patients would stop using birth control and Gamble would have no way of knowing if his birth control experiment was working. Thus, to ensure that patients were taking birth control, she suggested home visits as "the only way that we can be sure that people continue

[88] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: mailing lists and stickers Date: 1961.
[89] The hilly leafy suburbs catered for Europeans and well-to-do Indians while the Africans (and some poor Indians) were settled in the swampy edges of the city. See https://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/PeoplePower/How-Kampala-was-designed-by-colonialists/689844-1913894-mrxuum/index.html
[90] While using birth control activists' homes provided an intimate place for activists to meet and discuss birth control, African women were discouraged from coming to FPAU leaders' homes.
[91] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda:1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.

to practice family planning. Otherwise they may run out of form tablets or get disgusted with the diaphragm or the husband may object, and we will not know anything about it."[92]

However, they did not have enough manpower to recruit African women and perform home visits. Luckily Visram came up with a plan. Recognizing the role played by the nurses and midwives (who in the case of Uganda were mostly women) in providing health care, Visram enlisted the help of her African friend, Mrs. Musana, a mid-wife and member of the African Nurses and Midwives Association. They convinced leaders of the association to make it a member of the FPAU[93] and by default, all nurses and midwives became members of the FPAU.[94] As Anne Saxton explained, "to have midwives interested in this was a most remarkable turn of affairs."[95] As pointed out above, Gamble and Gates had found it difficult to recruit doctors who were put off by birth control experimentation and the fact that their employers (the government and missionary societies who owned the hospitals they worked in) did not approve birth control. Nurses and midwives who were paid less than medics were attracted to FPAU partly because they could clandestinely buy and sell birth control and make a small profit to supplement their small salaries. The recruitment of nurses and midwives temporarily solved the distribution problem as they could easily go to the homes of African women to distribute birth control.

To expand family planning, FPAU leaders determined that in addition to visiting homes and giving talks to members of women's organizations, they should organize propaganda films such as *In your hands* and *Planned parenthood is happy parenthood*, to be shown to both African and Indian women (and men). Because the films, originally made for Indian audiences, were in English and

[92] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2183, Uganda: 1961 Corres with Family Planning Committee Date: 1961.
[93] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda:1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[94] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda:1963 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1963.
[95] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda:1963 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1963.

Gujirati, Gates suggested that the sound be switched off when broadcasting them to indigenous Ugandans. In addition, 50 copies of a Swahili booklet called *Wasima wa Muszi* were ordered from Kenya. In 1962, Gates instructed Visram to distribute a book called *The Doctor Talks to the Bride and Groom* to "young married couples when they are just being married or after having been married a year or so."[96] The use of salvaged and recycled films, booklets and posters, was an attempt by Gamble to cut costs. However, they were not able to deliver the message.

They were later replaced by Luganda and English language pamphlets made specifically for a Ugandan audience. *"What Every Mother Should Know About Family Planning*" was written for women (mothers) and touted the benefits of child spacing to babies and the mothers' health, and the health of the whole family. On the other hand, "*What Every Man Should Know About Family Planning"* targeted men. It promised them that they would save money if they had fewer children. It added their actions (having fewer children) would benefit the nation. The pamphlets attempted to market birth control as a patriotic duty for men and a family obligation for mothers. There are no figures about how many of these pamphlets were distributed, and how many men and women read them. What is clear is that they were distributed to only those who had been vetted: the married and those about to get married. This indicates that FPAU was trying not to antagonize men who had a greater say in matters of reproduction.

During the initial visit, women were handed the above pamphlets about family planning and a typed form. They were told that "the husband should sign the permission slip below if he is unable to accompany his wife to the clinic… the permission had to be signed by both and a witness.[97] As explained by George Saxton to Gamble in January 1964, this was done "because of the delicate

[96] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.
[97] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda: 1964 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964.

nature of the subject of FP [family planning] here." He added that asking husbands to sign permission slips gave them "a little greater feeling of security, for what it's worth."[98] However, this policy continued in the 1970s even after the government had officially embraced FPAU. This prevented a great number of women from accessing birth control and gave men greater control of women's bodies.[99]

Although FPAU leaders played an important role in Gamble's project, he misunderstood the complexities of providing birth control in Uganda and as a result, he undervalued the work done by activists like Visram. Gamble was known for not taking better care of his field educators. Scholars show that even his overworked American field workers like Gates "were given only a minimal subsistence wage and were obliged to haggle with Gamble over very unplanned expense, however small."[100] Ugandan birth control activists fared worse. Although Gamble provided some educational materials and birth control, he outrightly refused to provide funds to pay salaries to the women activists or even rent an office. He left women to devise their own ways to store and distribute birth control and recruit volunteers.

As a leader in various organizations and a member of parliament, Visram found it hard to stay on top of FPAU activities. In June 1962, after being elected as a representative in the National Assembly, Visram wrote a hurried note to Gates in which she explained that she was not able to write to her because "I was so much involved in politics that I has [sic] no time to reply to you…."[101] In another letter she apologized for not sending a detailed account of family planning activities.[102] Gates wrote back congratulating her on her election and suggested a 'tea-party' in

[98] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda: 1964 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964.
[99] See Chapter 4.
[100] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 94.
[101] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.
[102] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.

honor of her election.[103] She told Visram not to "lose your attention to your 'first love' for the family planning program is just as necessary now as ever." [104] However, Gates and Gamble continued to undervalue the work done by Visram for the association. When Visram asked for a secretary to help her coordinate family planning activities, Gamble refused to pay the secretary. Gates, who, compared to Visram was a highly compensated 'volunteer,' confided in George and Anne Saxton that Ugandans "are not schooled in volunteer work as we Americans are from childhood! So, it takes a long time."[105] This patronizing remark did not reflect the reality on the ground for women like Visram, who spent their time and resources trying to sell a controversial program to a pronatalist country.

While Gamble elevated women as capable of making changes in the field of medicine, he also left them with little to work with. Frustrated by Gamble's lack of understanding of the challenges faced by the association, Visram appealed to Gates. Although as shown above Gates had privately confided to the Saxtons that Visram and others did not fully understand volunteering, she decided to appeal to Gamble to refund Visram for money spent while undertaking FPAU work. She explained to Gamble that:

> Mrs. Visram does quite a bit of travelling within Uganda in connection with the Muslim Women's Society, of which she is chairman or prominent in some way, and the Kabaka Yekka Women's organization in which she is the leader as well. She usually weaves family planning into her trips at various meetings, if not specifically scheduled for FP as such. Consequently, our Uganda budget is reimbursing her about 400-700 sh./month. Since it is so difficult for her to extricate the F.P work from the others we have approved of this but have asked her to keep it down. As things have been going, we'll be able to manage.[106]

[103] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 196.
[104] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, Uganda: 1961 Mailing lists and Stickers Date: 1961.
[105] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda, 1963. Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1963.
[106] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2198, Uganda: Mostly 1965 corres with George and Anne Saxton Date:1965.

However, 400-700 shillings did not come close to covering the basics. Gates explained to Gamble that Visram was concerned about the financial situation of the association because "we did not give them any assurance of continued help."[107] When a frustrated Visram demanded that Gamble clarify their position on funding family planning activities. Gates told Visram that "Dr. Gamble feels that Pathfinder must gradually withdraw its general support but that it will continue support for any aspect of the work that will contribute to the intrauterine [IUD] program."[108] This shows that the activities of FPAU were only important if they contributed to Gamble's experiments and that he valued birth control experimentation over providing scientifically tested birth control. After this, Visram turned to IPPF which accepted to fund FPAU activities.

Public opposition to birth control and Gamble's project in Uganda

In 1964, George Saxton noted that despite clandestinely integrating family planning into maternal and child welfare services in Kasangati, women were not embracing birth control. He wrote that:

> between 1963-64, when this approach was introduced, during two years virtually no mothers were seen to cross the room to inquire about family planning or to sit in on a class on this subject. A few returned for family planning advice on a different day without their infants, thus defeating the object of the combined service [birth control and maternal and child welfare services]. [109]

[107] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2198, Uganda: Mostly 1965 corres with George and Anne Saxton Date:1965.
[108] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda: 1964 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964.
[109] Things improved marginally in 1967. Saxton noted that of the 486 mothers who delivered babies in rural Kasangati in 1967, 147 (30%) returned for post-natal care and 48 (10%) went to the family planning clinic. In urban Kampala, where family planning activities were scheduled to take place at the same time as immunizations, of 764 women who delivered, 555 (72%) returned for immunization, and 46 (6%) returned to the family planning clinic. GASA, George Saxton, "Family Planning in Uganda." IPPF MEDICAL BULLETIN 2 no. 4: October 1968, 7.

Since Ugandan women and girls used traditional birth control technologies including herbal douches**,** abstinence, and long-term breastfeeding to space children,[110] it is possible that these women objected to the new forms of birth control. This becomes clear when we examine other interactions between birth control activists and Ugandan men and women. For example, in 1964, FPAU leaders, including Visram, Anne Saxton and Mrs. Kamanyi went to Madhvani's sugar estate in Jinja to teach family planning to the wives of African employees and Indian administrators.[111] Unlike the Kasangati women who silently protested birth control by refusing to attend the birth control clinics, these women openly expressed their opposition to birth control. They heckled the activists and refused to let them talk. Visram reported that "all were not in favour of family planning so many of them started grumbling. …we had to change our topic and pacified the women and gave a general talk."[112] After hearing the discouraging news, Gates wrote that:

> I hope you will not be discouraged by the reception at the sugar estates, but I think that one of the mistakes in the program was that the manager brought all the people to the meeting. If it had just been announced informally so that the women came voluntarily it would have been better and those opposed to this idea would not have come…. we must make it clear to them that this is entirely a voluntary program.[113]

While Gates' letter suggests that the women resisted because they were forced by the management of the sugar estate to listen to FPAU leaders, evidence suggests that many Ugandans rejected birth control for religious, moral, or even demographic concerns. Opposition to birth control came from individuals such as the young man who heckled leaders of FPAU who were opening the

[110] See Chapter 4.
[111] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda,1964 corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964. There were 10,000 African workers and 800 Indian administrators. See D. Pal S. Ahluwalia. *Plantations and the Politics of Sugar in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1995), 136.
[112] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.
[113] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.

Association's first branch in Fort Portal in June 1965,[114] and from pronatalist groups including the Catholic church and *Bawejjere.*

The Catholic church which owned many of Uganda's hospitals and health centers vehemently opposed the use of artificial birth control.[115] It instructed its medics not to distribute birth control in the hospitals it controlled. In 1964 George Saxton wrote that he had to work "quietly and slowly" because he had found that the head of the maternal and child welfare clinic was a Catholic. He told Gamble that "the fact that the [in-charge] of this clinic was an ardent Catholic necessitates careful handling."[116] In one incident, after he fitted a mentally disturbed woman with a coil,[117] George Saxton reported that "the Catholic nursing sister, European, in charge of the ward complained bitterly against this plan, saying the state would care for her babies!"[118] That the Catholic church was monitoring FPAU's activities was reiterated by Visram who wrote to Gates that "at present we have to be very careful of [sic] our work and we will go slowly as catholic [sic] are not much in favauver [sic].[119] Two years later, Gates wrote that "we run up against this idea of one group like the Catholic church trying to stop all family planning because they object to certain aspects."[120]

While the Catholic church objected to birth control on religious and moral grounds, a new pronatalist group which called itself *Bawejjere* (the Common Man Association) were concerned about the demographic impact of birth control. While the Catholic church expressed its opposition to birth control privately or in its newspapers such as *Leadership,*[121] the *Bawejjere* took the fight

[114] Box 125, Folder 2198, Uganda: mostly 1965 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date:1965.
[115] See Chapter 1. Also, CGA, Box 125, Folder 2188, Uganda, 1962. Miscellaneous materials re FPA (incls summary of development, annual report, minutes of meetings) Date: 1962.
[116] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194, Uganda: 1964 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1964.
[117] The patient was brought to him by a Butabika Mental Hospital administrator.
[118]GASA, Saxton to Granny, November 10, 1966.
[119] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2184, 1961.
[120] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda, 1963. Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[121] See Chapter 2.

against FPAU and birth control to the public. Unlike the powerful Catholic church, *Bawejjere* was a rag tag group of slum dwellers. *Bawejjere* leaders were mostly poor men working as drivers, mechanics, and milk sellers in Katwe slum.[122] Unlike Ganda pronatalists who perceived Obote as a threat to Ganda culture,[123] *Bawejjere* leaders positioned themselves differently, not as promoters of Ganda interests but of the *common man*, the low-ranking member of society. *Bawejjere* represented class, not ethnic concerns. They were united by the desire to hold politicians who had failed to deliver the much waited-for benefits of independence accountable. They saw themselves as advocates of the interests of the poor against a government which neglected the health of Africans and tolerated foreign funded companies like FPAU which, they alleged, promoted the extermination of Africans

Although Obote did not officially support FPAU, the *Bawejjere* disapproved of his seemingly tolerant attitude towards FPAU activities. They used Obote's perceived relationship with FPAU as a launch pad for their campaign against FPAU and Obote. A few months after independence in 1963, FPAU organized a dinner party for prominent citizens, including government officials. The aim was to publicize FPAU. Visram wrote that "we had advertised for this meeting, so we gained good publicity.[124] However, this success alerted the leaders of *Bawejjere* who seized on the

[122] Despite their public confrontation with FPAU, there is very little information about *Bawejjere*. The limited evidence shows that they may have been one of the outspoken youth groups that was expelled from the ruling party of Apollo Obote (Uganda People's Congress, UPC). In the late 1960s/early 1970s, they joined the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), an anti-Obote and Amin political group led by Yoweri Museveni. Museveni listed the leader of *Bawejjere* Abbase (aka Abbas, Abasi) Kibazo as one of "four comrades" who crossed with him into Tanzania and helped FRONASA to mobilize 'the common people' for the struggle against Idi Amin. On the role of *Bawejjere*, Museveni writes that Abbase and other *Bawejjere* formed the Kampala base of operations from where FRONASA leaders. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 48, 54 and 57. On UPC youth, Taylor writes that following a racial incident involving British expatriate workers, "Obote purged troublesome youth" from UPC. See Edgar Curtis Taylor, "Affective Registers of Post-colonial Crisis: the Kampala Tank hill party," *The Journal of International African Institute,* 89 no. 3 (Aug. 2019):541-561.

[123] Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility."

[124] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.

moment to force Obote to act. A few days after the party, Abbase Kibazo, the leader of *Bawejjere* published an article titled *"Family Planning is African's Murder."*[125] Published in a newspaper called *Uganda Nation*,[126] the article accused FPAU of murdering Africans. The article was published at a time when some in the USA and India were arguing that birth control would lead to 'black genocide'[127] and that population experts like Gamble were "trying to obliterate the dark races…."[128] Although it is not clear if *Bawejjere* were aware of this rhetoric, Abbase's article echoed similar points as those made in the USA and India, that birth control would lead to the extermination of Ugandans. Writing in 1960s, Makerere scholar R.E. Watts noted that press articles (by *Bawejjere*) denounced family planning because they believed that Africa was "being asked to suffer for the fertility of Asia. Why, it is asked, should Africans restrict their population growth because Asians are too prolific?"[129]

In response to Abbase's article, Visram and the FPAU committee invited a Kampala socialite, Barbara Kimenye to write a report explaining the meaning of family planning and FPAU's aims and objectives.[130] Abbase responded with a private letter to Obote in which he condemned the activities of FPAU and demanded Obote's intervention. To stop Abbase from campaigning against FPAU's activities, Visram wrote to Obote and asked him to intervene. She attached Abbase's article from *Uganda Nation*. She emphasized the last paragraph of the article where Abbase had

[125] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[126] *Uganda Nation* was a short-lived English daily newspaper which was founded in 1962 and ceased publication the same year. I have not been able to get hold of Bawejjere's letter, which fortunately was quoted by different parties.
[127] See Caron, "Birth control and the Black Community"; Darity and Turner, "Family Planning."
[128] Lowy, "Spermicides and their Female Users," 96.
[129] GASA, R.E. Watts, "The Realities of Family planning," *East Africa Journal* 4, no. 5 (August 1967), 23.
[130] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.

warned that "if nothing is done to dislodge them, we know what steps to take."[131] Obote's permanent secretary immediately sent a private letter to Mr. Abbase. He wrote that:

> I refer to your letter dated 5th July 1963, addressed to the Minister of State, on the question of the Family Planning Association, and have to inform you that this association is a voluntary agency which does not enforce its advice on anyone. It is there for guiding anybody who is interested in family planning and it does not force anyone to take its advice. If, therefore, your association feels as strongly as it does about this matter, it is up to your association to advice (sic) its members individually not to take the advice of the Family Planning Association. Your association must understand, however, that there are people in Uganda who are interested in family planning and should not be deprived of this advice simply because your association holds the views it does on Family Planning Association. I am not at all happy about the last paragraph of your letter, because to me it sounds a threat.[132]

The permanent secretary further advised Abbase that "if you feel that this Association is breaking any law, then you should take it to court rather than threaten [it]." Gates, who upon learning about Abbase's letter had written to Visram that she hoped her friends (in central and local government) would "rise up in your defense,"[133] was ecstatic. Gates wrote that she "was delighted to see the letter from the permanent secretary in the Prime Minister's office." She welcomed Obote's "liberal point of view," because "in a democracy people should have a right to choose whether they want to plan their family or not."[134] However, the *Bawejjere* were not done with Obote and FPAU.

Ten days after the *Bawejjere* complained about FPAU, they wrote another letter to Obote in which they criticized his government for neglecting the health of Africans and failing to uplift the poor. Abbase complained about government workers and specifically nurses who neglected patients despite being paid by taxpayers. He criticized the government for "the slow pace of rural health"

[131] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[132] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[133] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.
[134] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2189, Uganda: 1963 Corres with Sugra Visram Date: 1963.

where "82.55 percent of Ugandans are taking native medicines or attended by quacks."[135] He and fellow *Bawejjere* leaders complained about police officers using government vehicles "to visit beer parties" and to "molest the public" leaving doctors with no vehicles to go to rural areas to supply medicine. They also complained about the fact that many areas in and outside Kampala were infected with mosquitoes.

Next, he attacked Obote's government for failing to help the poor. He stated that "it is shocking at this time to find in the streets of Uganda's capital hundreds of people begging merely because they cannot [be] helped to live a decent life by the Government and at the same time find empty public buildings closed to accommodate insects and wild cats.…" He added that the poor conditions extended to the national hospital Mulago where many "houses are kept shut" leaving patients' care takers with no place to sleep. "You can go to Mulago one rainy day and see how the people who come to attend their relatives sleep!!," he wrote.

The *Bawejjere* used their meager resources to tour rural areas to collect evidence of government neglect. Abbase reported that:

> we saw some parts of this country where people are naked; where people sleep under trees; where people never tasted the modern amenities and where men folk have to steal to live and endure unbelievable experiences. The answer to all this, in our opinion, is a fierce drive on nation reshaping…collective farming should be encouraged; public libraries for newspapers and reading materials, and where people could gather to listen to radios; people to be encouraged to attend if at every village a pub is built where a radio is fixed for everybody who does not own a radio could hear news and other educative lectures.[136]

[135] UNA Office of the President, Confidential Collection, Box 45, PMC/C.48: Buganda, political, Uganda Bawejjere Association Aabasi Kibazo chair, to PM Obote, Uganda, 15 July 1963.
[136] UNA, Office of the President., Confidential Collection, Box 45, PMC/C.48.

He added that the government should develop a public transport system, provide "loans to rural people to buy bicycles" and should help develop the talents of singers, artists, writers, and philosophers.[137] It is clear from the above that the *Bawejjere* did not oppose birth control because they mistrusted western medicine.[138] They specifically protested against medicines that they believed harmed Africans.

In addition to threatening the reproductive potential of Africans, birth control was also a reflection of a broken political system. Like many Ugandans, *Bawejjere* were unhappy about the failure of Obote to Africanize the civil service. Scholars show that various groups used racial issues to attack the government for breaking the social contract. Taylor has stated that "Youth Wingers who were alienated from aristocratic patrons generated support by dramatically exposing Uganda's compromised sovereignty and politician's failure to command non-African deference."[139] When in November 1963 a group of British civil servants held a racist party that mocked newly independent Africans in what became known as the "Tankhill Affair," Youth Wingers reacted by demanding that organizers of the party be deported, and the civil service Africanized.[140]

Like their contemporaries, the UPC Youth Wingers, *Bawejjere* sought to generate public support for their cause by dramatically exposing the Obote government's failure to provide for the poor and to remove foreigners from the civil service. In July 1963, *Bawejjere*' Abbase expressed concern that 'whites' were sabotaging Uganda and exploiting Ugandans. He wrote that "besides

[137] UNA, Office of the President, Confidential Collection, Box 45, PMC/C.48.
[138] In the early twentieth century, a religious group known as the Malakites opposed modern medicine. The Malakites believed that "all medicine, both 'traditional' or 'modern,' was…a human conceit," against "divine order." They were eventually defeated, and their leaders exiled. Although the Malakites mounted a strong opposition against mass vaccinations, there is no evidence to suggest that they inspired later generations to question modern medicine. See Derek Peterson, "The Politics of Transcendence in Colonial Uganda," *Past and Present* 230 no.1 (Feb 2016):212.
[139] Taylor, "Affective Registers," 549
[140] Taylor, "Affective Registers."

being tired of bowing to the whites for any assistance, we are very sensitive as to how these unloyal servants can put in action the policies they not only disapprove but contempt.… why should they be fattening on our sweat and pay us back with abuses and exploitations?" He added that "it was better to employ inefficient Africans than to employ foreigners."[141] Their message was clear: despite independence, Ugandans continued to be treated as second class citizens in their country and foreign-led institutions such as FPAU continued to make decisions that harmed Ugandans, while the government looked on.

It is important to note that the relationship between FPAU and Obote was not as imagined by *Bawejjere*. George Saxton described Obote's attitude towards FPAU as "benevolent neutrality."[142] Although his wife, Miria Obote, served as the association's patron, this did not translate into actual support.[143] From early on, Obote's government made it clear that it would not publicly endorse the activities of the association, offer it financial support or allow birth control clinics in government hospitals. When in 1963 FPAU contacted Obote about starting a family planning clinic in Mulago, Obote refused to authorize it.[144] Later in 1964, Anne Saxton stated that although some medics secretly ran birth control clinics for staff in the national referral hospital Mulago, "officially, family planning services have not…been allowed in the government Mulago hospital…"[145] The government began to indirectly undermine the birth control project in Uganda by, for example, levying extremely high taxes on birth control. In 1964, Gamble sent a parcel containing birth control to Reverend Flinn. When Reverend Flinn went to collect the parcel, he was asked to pay a

[141] UNA: Office of the President. Confidential Collection, Box 45, PMC/C.48.
[142] GASA, Saxton, Family Planning in Uganda IPPF Medical Bulletin. Vol. 2: Number 4: October 1968.
[143] It was a common practice for wives of politicians to support and associate themselves with women's organizations. Such arrangements helped the associations raise money.
[144] Anne Saxton wrote that the FPAU leaders "asked Dr. Nsibirwa to go see his good friend Dr. Obote P.M about it [starting family planning clinics] and sound him out and the answer came back negative so we were blocked at Mulago for the present." See CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda, 1963.
[145] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2194.

tax. He returned the parcel to Gamble, stating that "the customs officers are not happy about letting them (foam tablets) in free, and we were told to be charged from 30% to 50% of their value in customs duty. Accordingly, I hope you will forgive me for asking the customs department to return them to the sender."[146]

The main reason advanced for the government's obstructiveness was that the government felt that the public was not ready for birth control. This was made clear to FPAU leaders. During preparations for the official opening of FPAU headquarters, Visram wrote that she had asked the Minister of Health (Dr. Lumu) to officiate the ceremony but he asked FPAU "not to bring the government in the picture as yet though we have their blessing, yet the time is not right as we may meet with opposition."[147] When FPAU leaders approached Mr. Mpyisi, the Minister of Culture and Community development to talk to him about FPAU, they reported that after a long discussion, the minister said that "although he supported the F.P., he thought that we should move cautiously."[148] When Anne Saxton on behalf of FPAU asked the government information Officer to help her design posters, he refused to help them. The reaction from the government forced FPAU leaders to halt some of their activities such as making posters to advertise family planning. Anne Saxton stated that "Dr. Kibuke-Musoke [a member of the newly created Medical committee of the FPAU] warned the members that the time was not yet ripe to go out in the open as we may meet with strong opposition so the best course for us was to go slowly and silently ahead and not to rush, and undo what we have so far attained."[149] In August 1964, the General Secretary of IPPF, Sir Colville Deverell, asked Dr Lumu (the Minister of Health) if the government was in favor of

[146] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2195, Uganda: Other slight 1964.
[147] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.
[148] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193.
[149] CGA, Folder 2196, Uganda: 1964. FPAU; Executive meeting of the FPA of Uganda held on 30th May 1964 at 4pm at Mrs. Saxton's house, pool road Makerere.

birth control. Dr. Lumu replied that "as a medical man, he was fully in favor of it [birth control] but it had to be impressed on the public that family planning was for spacing the family and not for retarding the race.[150] It is clear that *Bawejjere's* narrative about the racial genocide of Africans had gained ground.

In their campaign against FPAU and birth control, *Bawejjere* were aided by the anti-foreign sentiments in Uganda. When in the aftermath of the Tankhill Affair Gates suggested that the Saxtons and Visram give a talk on the radio to teach the public about family planning, the Saxtons and Visram advised against it because of anti-British sentiments which seemed to have elevated the *Bawejjere*'s public profile. In a letter to Gates, Visram wrote that "we have to move very cautiously these days. I am sure you must be aware of the unrestful state in the country, the deportation, and the sensative [sic] feelings of the people. So, we have to be discreet. Besides the *Bawejjere* (common man) are now council members. So, it is best to move cautiously."[151]

Two years after the Tankhill Affair, in 1965, Congo used American air crafts to bomb two Ugandan villages in West Nile. Three days after the bombing, students from Makerere University descended on the American Embassy to protest what they perceived to be America's support of acts of aggression against Uganda. Cheered by onlookers, they shouted "Yankees go home" and "upon reaching the American Embassy, located in Kampala city center, two demonstrators grabbed the American flag, which they dismounted and shredded into pieces."[152] Although the police managed to dispel the students using tear gas, they succeeded in their objective, which was "to make a statement of disapproval to the U.S. government."[153] The bombing aroused anti-American

[150] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2196, Uganda: 1964 Miscellaneous materials from FPA Date: 1964.
[151] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2193, Uganda: 1964 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1964.
[152] Frederick Kamuhanda Byaruhanga, *Student Power in Africa's Higher Education: A Case of Makerere University* (New York & London, Routledge), 53.
[153] Byaruhanga, *Student Power,* 53; Also, Mittleman, "Ideology and Politics,"104.

sentiments which forced FPAU to temporarily suspend some of their activities. When Gates asked Visram and Anne Saxton about publishing posters about family planning, they answered that

> at the present time it is best that we do not publish or advertise publicly, due to some unrest in the country over the bombing incident. For this very same reason we had to post pone the annual general meeting, and at the last executive committee, it was unanimously agreed that we should not hold any annual general meeting this year at all.[154]

Despite Obote's defense of FPAU against *Bawejjere, Bawejjere* seemed to have won over some in the Obote government. During a farewell function for a European doctor leaving Mulago. Anne Saxton reported that in his speech, the Minister of Health Dr. Lumu "carefully avoided saying anything one way or another about FP, assuring us only that he would return some time with his Chief Medical Officer, a stronger silent type who we think doesn't like FP."[155] Later, she added that, "the present M.O [Minister of Health] is not in favor of the F.P."[156] By 1967, FPAU leaders were complaining that some members of the Obote government were actively undermining FPAU. In April 1967, a flabbergasted Anne Saxton noted that:

> We have some strong opposition from some place on top and I don't know where it is from…. Couple of policemen came in + asked for abortion FOR THEIR WIVES! True or trap. Luckily, I can't help anyhow. And every paper and magazine wants to publish something on FP, and some the more lurid the better.[157]

Three months later in July 1967, Anne Saxton wrote that, "there is someone that is actively opposing us but it's like boxing with shadow and you can't quite find out who and what quarter

[154] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2197, Uganda: 1965 Corres with Sugra Visram and FPA Date: 1965.
[155] GASA Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton.
[156] GASA Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton.
[157] GASA, Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton.

and go and talk with them." Noting that the problem seemed to be coming from the Ministry of Health, she added that "when you talk to individual there, they say that they are neutral!"[158]

The fact that on its 10th anniversary, members of the Obote government were actively undermining FPAU attests to Gamble and FPAU leaders' failure to convince politicians that birth control was a defensible platform.[159] As explained by a Makerere scholar in 1967:

> The main argument for family limitation… [was a] Malthusian one. A stream of figures…[were] given of world population, birth rates, death rates, fertility rates and food resources. The gloomy conclusion…[was] reached that eventual widespread starvation…[was] inevitable.…However factual from a world standpoint the Malthusian argument… [could not] be expected to be received favorably in those African countries which still…[had] vast tracts of unoccupied land. Unlike most temperate countries, many parts of Africa…[had] two crop seasons per year.[160]

Thus, for many Ugandans, neo-Malthusian arguments for birth control did not make sense because they had fertile land and two rainy seasons that continued to ensure a healthy harvest of food crops.[161] Land shortages in some parts of the country were solved by relocation.[162] Ironically, even Saxton opposed the Malthusian argument. After moving to Kampala, he wrote to Gamble and Gates that "the need for family planning here, interestingly enough, is not crowding of the land, as is so often on islands…[163] His wife, Anne, agreed with him. In her correspondence with Gamble and Gates, Anne Saxton speculated that Ugandans were against birth control because Uganda

[158] GASA, Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton.
[159] Watts argued that "to be effective in changing deeply rooted attitudes, family planning must be able not only to put up a convincing academic argument but also a penetrating emotional argument. Perhaps the greatest need is to convince the politicians not only that family planning is desirable in itself but that it is defensible on a political platform." GASA, Watts, "The Realities of Family planning," 23-24.
[160] GASA, Watts, "The Realities of Family planning," 23.
[161] On the benefits of Uganda's two crop seasons for agricultural production, see Michiel de Haas, "Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural commercialization in Uganda: Conjunctures of external influences and local realities" (PhD diss., Wageningen University, 2017.
[162] Grace Carswell, *Cultivating Success in Uganda. Kigezi farmers and colonial policies* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007)
[163] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2186, Uganda: 1962 Corres with Dr. George Saxton Date: 1962.

unlike Kenya had abundant land. She wrote: "I'm not sure why they get such good cooperation in Nairobi, but I think there are several factors involved. Kenya has famine and Uganda hasn't. [Second]…Kenya has overpopulated areas and [in] Uganda…[overpopulation] seems to be at its borders where there is a spillover from Kenya or Rwanda, so that politically… [birth control is] not popular.[164]

In July 1968, George Saxton claimed to have heard from an unnamed person that Obote "is definitely impatient that our FP [family planning] work is not getting out to the village level and not helping the young people more!" However, he added that "that doesn't mean that he'd favor slowing the rate of population growth, but he might."[165] Although FPAU leaders had managed to convince some medics in government hospitals to offer birth control in late 1960s, it was not until 1972, after Obote was deposed by Amin, that the government officially embraced FPAU.

Conclusion

In 1973, more than a decade after birth control was introduced in Uganda, a study by the Population Council found that among four African countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda), Uganda had the lowest number of contraceptives on the market. It also found that unlike in countries where "stores—often no more than shacks…"[166] sold birth control, in Uganda, there were strict pharmaceutical laws that limited distribution and access to birth control.[167] What the report did not note was the dark history of birth control in Uganda which involved the unnecessary

[164] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2190, Uganda: 1963 Corres with George and Anne Saxton Date: 1963.
[165] GASA, Private notes of George A. and Anne K. Saxton.
[166] Timothy Black, "Rational for the Involvement of Private Sector Marketing Institutions in Family Planning in Africa," *Studies in Family Planning* 4, no. 2 (Feb. 1973):25-32.
[167] Uganda had the lowest number of pharmacies (18), Kenya had 45, Ghana 299, Nigeria, 185. See Black, "Rational for the Involvement of Private Sector."

experimentation on women. It failed to note that Ugandan women were forced to take certain birth control, which harmed them. A 1969 FPAU report on the methods chosen by African women on their first visit to the clinic showed that African women had consistently chosen the IUD over the pill, diaphragm, condoms and gels.[168] However, as I show above, African women did not choose IUDs, they were forced by Gamble to use IUD's. They preferred the pill because it was cheaper, discrete, and easier to use.[169] However, Gamble instructed the Saxtons not to tell them about the existence of safe, scientifically proven methods of birth control such as the pill.

Thus, instead of helping Ugandan women manage their sexual and reproductive lives, Gamble turned them into guinea pigs for his experiments. He extended this reproductive exploitation to his collaborators—women leaders, whom he refused to pay for their tireless efforts to keep his project going. Because Gamble arrogantly saw his cause as heroic, he was blind to the harm he was causing Ugandan women, and to the fact that the Malthusian argument for birth control did not make sense to most Ugandans. As a result, he failed to convince the government about the need for birth control. Thus, birth control remained experimental and inaccessible to the majority of Ugandans in the 1960s. In the 1970s, after Idi Amin and conservatives took over the institution behind the introduction of contraceptives in Uganda, FPAU, the biomedical project gave way to a more moralistic, less medicalized project whose aim was to control women's sexuality.

[168] The report covered the years 1964-1966.

[169] Table 1. *Methods chosen on first visit (1964-66)*

	1964	1965	1966
IUD	49%	71%	80%
Pill	14%	17%	11%
Diaphragm	23%	10%	5%
Condoms, gels, etc.	14%	2%	4%

Annual General meeting of the FPAU clinic report for 1969

Chapter 4

Moralizing Birth control: Research, Contention, and the Nationalization of the Family Planning Association of Uganda by the Idi Amin Government

On 8 November 1971, shortly before Amin began a national campaign to regulate women's behavior and sexuality, and a few months before he nationalized the Family Planning association of Uganda (hereafter FPAU), Zaribwegirire, the health inspector of Kigezi district in South Western Uganda, received an unexpected letter from the FPAU summoning him for a meeting as the representative of its Kigezi branch. Zaribwegirire had neither applied for the position nor been informed of his appointment prior to receiving the letter. Instead of accepting the invitation as his other colleagues from all over Uganda had done, he declined stating that "I am not conversant with Family planning matters…. In view of this I think it would be better to get somebody else to replace me."[1] At a time when populism and opportunism replaced technocracy, and mediocrity replaced skills and expertise, Zaribwegirire showed great humility when he acknowledged that he lacked knowledge of modern contraception.[2] He was an exception. After the Saxtons and Visram left Uganda, leadership of the association was passed on to conservatives who lacked expertise in birth control, women's sexual and reproductive health rights.

[1] Kabale District Archives, Uganda (hereafter KDA), Box No 2, ref k/mis 5/5, Family planning meeting Fort Portal, 8th November 1971 "Community Development," 1971.

[2] In this chapter, modern contraception or contraceptives is used interchangeably with family planning and birth control.

This chapter examines the conservative's takeover of FPAU and its nationalization by the Amin regime in the context of legislation and gendered rhetoric that portrayed unregulated women's sexuality as a danger to society. It shows how under government oversight and management, a biomedical birth control project gave way to a moralistic project whose aim was to control women's sexuality. The chapter examines the nationalization of FPAU as part of the larger efforts by Amin and conservatives to regulate women's behavior. It shows how FPAU, which was formerly in the hands of medical experts and birth control/women's rights activists, was taken over by (mostly male) non-experts whose agendas and ambitions were moralistic and conservative in character, and who valued moral standing over expertise.

Although the FPAU was one of the many organizations folded into government bureaucracy in the 1970s, its nationalization was a surprising turn of events. Unlike other organizations and programs that were coopted by the state in the 1970s, FPAU offered a service that was opposed by powerful groups such as the Catholic church and *Bawejjere*. Its nationalization coincided with debates in the media and especially the Catholic media about the dangers of birth control which Catholic leaders linked to venereal diseases, prostitution, and abortion. Although the Amin government associated modern contraception with social ills and specifically promiscuity and marital disorder, it also believed that contraceptives were necessary to help married couples space children. While announcing the nationalization of FPAU, Amin stated that he would ensure that birth control and FPAU were managed in a way that did not harm "the culture and morals of our society."[3] Thus, to ensure that the association would reinforce and reaffirm conservative sexual values, he put it under the control of both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture, the latter tasked with protecting Ugandan customs and mores. Because the government and FPAU leadership believed

[3] Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1971/2-1975/6 (Kampala: Government of Uganda, 1972), 76.

that birth control required a patriarchal order to manage it effectively, FPAU was put in the hands of a mostly male leadership. Thus, the chapter elaborates how under the Amin government, at a time when expertise was devalued, men (and some women) who thought themselves empowered to dictate to other people—especially women—how to manage their sexual lives, took over the association and used it to police women's sexuality. Amidst campaigns against women's sexuality and following the passing of the anti-abortion decree which made abortion a crime against the state,[4] the new FPAU leaders pledged to use the association to curb abortion and sexual immorality.[5]

An analysis of the FPAU under Amin's regime also provides broader insights into how in the absence of their founders, formerly private institutions working in the public health sector fared. Recently, scholars have examined how following the departure of expatriates, the withdrawal of international donors and low government funding in 1970s, Ugandan medics and non-medics stepped in and mobilized local resources to keep vital medical programs such as the Cancer Institute and the *Mwanamugimu* Nutrition Program going.[6] Although they provided different services, the FPAU, the Cancer Institute and the Nutrition Program were similar in many ways. They all had a strong expatriate-designed research component that concentrated on how best to use limited local resources to offer medical care; they were, until the expulsion of non-Ugandans, ran by expatriates who worked with Ugandans; they received donor funds; and they were among the few to continue receiving some donor funds during the 1970s economic decline. However,

[4] Decree 26, 1971 penal code, section 136 and 137.
[5] FPAU/RHU Archives, Kampala. Address by the chairperson of Family Planning Association of Uganda, November 1974.
[6] Marisa Mika, "Fifty years of Creativity, Crisis, and Cancer in Uganda," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 50, no. 3 (2016): 395-413; Marisa Anne Mika, "Research is our Resource. Surviving Experiments and Politics at an African Cancer Institute, 1950 to the Present (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2015); Jennifer Tappan, *The Riddle of Malnutrition: The Long Arc of Biomedical and Public health Interventions in Uganda* (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2017).

unlike the Cancer Institute and the Nutrition Program, which continued to be led by (Ugandan) experts after the expatriate staff left, the newly appointed FPAU leaders lacked expertise in birth control. This was partly because while the government and Ugandans agreed that malnutrition and cancer were problems that required medical expertise, birth control and reproduction which in the words of Lynn Thomas, "stood at the heart of people's efforts to cultivate successful families, communities, empires and nations,"[7] required a patriarchal order to manage it effectively.

While explaining the nationalization of FPAU and the government's embrace of birth control, Amin stated that his government wanted to improve the health of Ugandan women through child spacing.[8] However, because Amin and his regime "valued only married women,"[9] he had no intention of making birth control accessible to all Ugandan women. By nationalizing FPAU, Amin and his allies ensured that unmarried women whom they argued were responsible for the spread of venereal diseases, causing divorces, and abortions,[10] would not access birth control. By tying birth control to motherhood and marital status, the association became a weapon with which to control female sexuality. Thus, in addition to highlighting FPAU's role in policing women's sexuality, the chapter provides insights into how women and girls managed their sexual and reproductive lives without access to birth control. It shows how they circumvented FPAU policies to access birth control.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section investigates the state of medical care in Uganda in the 1960s and 1970s. It also contrasts the experiences of well-established medical

[7] Lynn M. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb. Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 186.
[8] Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan, 76.
[9] Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo & Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue in Uganda, 1900-2003* (Oxford: James Currey, Athens: Ohio University Press, Kampala: Fountain Publishers), 162.
[10] Alicia Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War: Subversion, Sabotage, and the Battle to Keep Uganda Clean, 1971-1979," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010), 509.

institutions, the Cancer Institute, and the Nutrition Program, with FPAU. The second section examines the nationalization of the FPAU by Amin. It shows how the association fell into disfunction after government take-over. FPAU's dysfunctionality, which reflected the chaos, opportunism and arbitrary decision making of the Amin regime, left it unable to provide birth control, except to very few married women mostly in urban Uganda. Ironically, then, the association's dysfunctionality which prevented it from delivering birth control services was functional from a moralist perspective: it prevented birth control from reaching unmarried Ugandan women and girls. The third section shows how conservatives took over the association, displaced medical and birth control experts and used FPAU to wage war against sexual immorality. It shows how FPAU changed from being a private association led by medics and women's activists/ birth control activists, with a mandate to test the efficacy and provide cheap birth control to a fully recognized government institution with a mandate to deliver birth control vetted by a group of morally upright men (and women). It also examines the mechanisms used by FPAU leaders to prevent unmarried women and girls from accessing birth control. Finally, the last section examines steps taken by women to circumvent FPAU policies to access birth control. It examines how they managed their sexual and reproductive lives at a time of heightened sexual danger and without access to birth control.

The state and politics of medical care in Idi Amin's Uganda

Scholars have extensively studied the collapse of the health care system during the Idi Amin regime. Makerere Medical School's historian Alexander Mwa Odonga and John Iliffe who chart the development of the medical system in Uganda and East Africa respectively show how a

medical system that was doing fairly well under Obote was brought to its knees in the 1970s.[11] Although the quality of healthcare had already begun to decline in the mid-1960s following drastic budgetary cuts to mitigate the increasing health expenditure,[12] it was in the 1970s that medical care completely disintegrated. Odonga states that within days of the coup, the medical staff at Mulago found themselves being forced to contravene the Geneva convention. Following widespread violence against purported supporters of Obote, "victims who were wounded and admitted to the hospital were picked up and taken to be killed."[13] While Amin released some of the prisoners of Obote including the former minister of Health, Dr. Lumu, who had fallen out with Obote in the mid-1960s, many medical doctors were 'disappeared' i.e. murdered by Amin.[14] Others were bullied, threatened and beaten by Amin's soldiers.[15] The medical care system lost most of their highly trained personnel after the expulsion of all non-Ugandans and Ugandans of Asian origin in 1972. Ugandan doctors who found it difficult to perform their duties under Idi Amin went into exile. Substitutes for the expelled medical experts could not be found, as "recruitment at that time was impossible, because of the uncertain situation in the country."[16] As a result the remaining few African medical doctors found themselves being forced to take on many responsibilities including administrative work at the medical school.[17]

[11] They show how an "ultra-modern" medical care system with properly kept patients records, wards and theaters, and well-paid doctors collapsed under Amin. Alexander M. Odonga, *The First Fifty years of Makerere Medical School and the Foundation of the Scientific Medical Education in East Africa* (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1989), John Iliffe, *East African Doctors. A History of the Modern Profession* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2002).
[12] Iliffe, *East African doctors*, 137.
[13] Alexander M. Odonga, *The first fifty years*, 193.
[14] A gynecologist, Dr. Ebine "was taken away from the theater on 2nd February 1971 where he was carrying out an operation on a patient and brutally murdered at Malire." He was followed by other doctors like V.P. Emiru, Kizito, George Sembuga. See Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*, 193.
[15] Henry Kyemba, *A State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997),122.
[16] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*, 195.
[17] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*, 197.

In 1974, Amin who briefly took charge of the Ministry of Health following the retirement of Dr. Gesa, appointed Henry Kyemba, a non-medic, as Minister of Health. Kyemba, a career civil servant who had previously served in the president's office and as Minister of Culture "found the ministry in a state of growing disorganization."[18] He took charge of forty-eight government hospitals, twenty-eight mission hospitals, one hundred and fifty health centers and three hundred dispensaries. The government hospitals and health centers offered free treatment while mission hospitals charged a small fee.[19] In addition to lack of medical personnel, hospitals were short of equipment: "spare parts for essential things…such as for laundry, sterilization, boilers, laboratory equipment and chemicals were virtually not available, because of shortage of foreign exchange."[20] The medical infrastructure broke down, water pipes, X-rays, refrigerators for the food store and the mortuary, and even buildings went into disrepair.[21] There was no water for the hospital and no food to feed patients, no bandages, uniforms, needles, drugs, and electricity.[22] Because they were underpaid, medics spent most of their time in private practice before the government abolished it in 1974.[23] There was rampant corruption and neglect. According to Shane Doyle, "Amin's government undermined structures of medical direction and supervision, while health workers were so underpaid that moonlighting and theft of supplies became endemic."[24] Research too suffered as many expatriates were expelled and the international community was forced to withdraw funds from Uganda.[25]

[18] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 128.
[19] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 129.
[20] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years,* 201.
[21] Iliffe, *East African Doctors,* 147.
[22] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 130.
[23] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 131.
[24] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 356.
[25] Iliffe, *East African Doctors.*

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) suffered too. Shane Doyle states that the 1950s saw renewed interest in MCH, when Hebe Welbourn, an expert on child health, was put in charge of MCH in Kampala. She created a mobile clinic, gathered data about nutrition among children and, most importantly, started a nutrition program (*Mwanamugimu*) which "would be the model for nutritional rehabilitation efforts throughout Buganda and later Uganda."[26] In the 1960s, the Departments of Preventive Medicine, and of Pediatric and Child Health, worked together to offer MCH services. At the national referral hospital, Mulago, there were two pediatric wards holding 3000 children annually, while many other children were seen at the outpatient's department.[27] MCH started to decline in the 1960s and the decline continued in the 1970s.[28] From 1970 to 1973, USAID sponsored a joint project between Makerere University Medical School and the University of California in Berkeley to teach health practitioners in rural Uganda about MCH. A study done to assess the project found that MCH was not fully integrated in curative medicine and that there was a heavy burden on MCH services because of the high number of women and children.[29] Overall, in the 1970s, Ugandans witnessed a rapidly declining medical system that in the words of Kyemba "reflected the ills of the country and… those affecting other public institutions."[30]

However, some scholars see Amin's rule as spurring creativity. Recently, scholars have begun to investigate how "at a time when the provision of medical care narrowed" due to economic breakdown,[31] Ugandan medics who stayed behind after the expulsion of expatriates creatively mobilized local resources to meet the health needs of Ugandans. Marissa Mika has produced a

[26] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 299.
[27] P. Sorlie, P. Schloesser, E.C. Curtis, D. Serwadda and R. Denis. "Maternal and Child health services in Wakiso, Uganda" *East African Medical Journal*, 54, no. 5 (May 1977): 250-257.
[28] However, family planning was not part of MCH because the Obote government refused to allow it to be integrated into MCH.
[29] P. Sorlie, et al "Maternal and Child health services."
[30] Kyemba, *A State of Blood*, 129.
[31] Tappan, *The Riddle of Malnutrition*, 89.

celebratory account of how amidst economic collapse, medics at the National Cancer Institute found creative ways to publish important research, and feed and treat patients. She shows how Professor Charles Olweny took over from the Americans and led a creative team of Ugandans which managed to keep the institute open despite limited finances and personal risk.[32]

Similarly, Jennifer Tappan investigates the creative efforts of a Ugandan team which managed to keep a nutritional program open to tackle severe acute malnutrition. Despite attempts by the Amin government to change the agenda and operational procedures of *Mwanamugimu* and despite the limited resources, "*Mwanamugimu* program continued against incredible odds to help a growing number of children recover from and avoid severe acute malnutrition."[33] At the helm of the program was John Kakitahi who "took charge of the MRC unit following Whitehead's departure."[34] When Kakitahi left for further studies, two women, Gladys Nansubuga Stokes and Faith Lukwago, took charge until he returned. With limited resources, Kakitahi, Stokes and Lukwago who had worked with Whitehead and other expats in the 1960s managed to keep the nutrition program operational. As explained by Tappan, because "it appears to counter the prevailing narratives of devastation in nearly all aspects of Ugandan life," "it is difficult to make sense of an expanding public health program during Idi Amin's brutal period in power."[35] Public health programs like the one she investigates survived, she argues, because of the creativity of Ugandans.

However, the experiences of the Cancer Institute and the *Mwanamugimu* nutrition program contrast with that of the FPAU. By 1971, FPAU had lost its leadership team which was composed

[32] Mika, "Research is our Resource."
[33] Tappan, *The Riddle of Malnutrition*, 88.
[34] Whitehead was the former head of the malnutrition unit which was established by the Medical Research Council (MRC) in 1951. See Tappan, *The Riddle of Malnutrition,* 89
[35] Tappan, *The Riddle of Malnutrition,* 89.

of the highly trained American medics, George and Anne Saxton, and Ugandan-Asians women's activists. In 1969, in an internal power struggle, Sugra Visram, who had been at the helm of the association was ousted. Other members whom she had worked with resigned in protest.[36] In 1971, George and Anne Saxton had to leave Uganda after the expiration of their contracts.[37] Because the FPAU had been forced to operate clandestinely due to hostility from anti-birth control groups like *Bawejjere* and the Catholic church, and because Obote had refused to officially recognize the association, its leaders did not train replacements the way the Cancer and Malnutrition programs had done. The removal of Visram and the departure of the Saxton coupled with the nationalization of FPAU opened up the association to non-experts, conservatives who valued moral standing over medical expertise and welcomed birth control as long as it did not contravene their moral standards.

The nationalization of FPAU by the Idi Amin government

In 1967, while commenting on the state of maternal child health services under Obote, a medic noted that although FPAU offered birth control in its clinics, "family planning is not integrated with the government's health services as a national programme. Neither does the Family Planning Association receive financial assistance from the government. In fact, the present attitude of the government towards family planning is only tolerant."[38] In the same year, just as Obote was about to unveil Uganda's Second Five-Year Development Plan to the public, *The Milton Obote*

[36] While it is not clear why she was removed, the limited evidence available suggests that internal conflicts over finances contributed to her removal. A letter written by George Saxon in 1969 says that Visram accused George Saxton of taking salary out of FPAU donated funds. Saxton resigned in protest and accepted to return if Visram was ousted. See Private Archives of George and Anne Saxton (hereafter GASA), George Saxton's letter to his family, New York, February 9, 1969.

[37] Mary Okello, "Family Planning in Difficult Times" in *Crisis in Uganda. The Breakdown of Health Services* eds. Cole P. Dodge and Paul D. Wiebe. (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Frankfurt. Pergamon Press, 1985), 234.

[38] GASA, Henry L. Matovu, "A summary of the progress of Maternal and Child Health (M.C.H) demonstrators (June 1966 to February 1966)," Department of Preventive and Social medicine, Kampala, Uganda, September 1967.

Foundation organized a seminar on "The Challenges of Uganda's Second Five-Year Development Plan." One of the presenters was George Saxton, the American medic in charge of FPAU. In a paper titled "Population Growth and Economic Planning," Saxton called upon Obote and his government to "give serious consideration to population growth." He added that a "government which assumes responsibility of planning for the future health and welfare of all its citizens also has a right to suggest how fast they should produce future citizens."[39] In his response, Obote emphasized that "in Uganda population pressure as such is not the critical problem…" and that the high growth rate would be solved by "growth in output and employment."[40] He refused to recognize the need for birth control. Five years later, in 1972, Obote's successor, Idi Amin, publicly embraced FPAU when he unveiled Uganda's third Five-Year Development Plan (1971/2-1975/6).[41]

In her work on reproductive politics in Kenya, Lynn Thomas has stated that in the 1960s and 1970s, despite some politicians' "suspicion that family planning was a "colonial hang-over" and a genocidal plot," Kenyan leaders embraced modern contraception.[42] While in Kenya, the state's adoption of family planning was "funneled by financial considerations as well as nationalist concerns," regarding rapid population growth and limited land,[43] in Uganda, politicians believed that although the country's resources were not threatened by population growth, family planning was necessary to prevent future problems arising from high birthrates. While announcing the government's plan to embrace FPAU and birth control, Amin stated that:

[39] GASA, G.A. Saxton, "Population growth and Economic planning." in "The challenges of Uganda's second Five Year Development Plan, (Kampala: The Milton Obote Foundation, 1967), 37.
[40] Government of Uganda, "The Second Five-Year Plan 1966-1971" (Kampala: The government of Uganda, 1966), 6.
[41] According to Mary Okello, the plan was drafted towards the end of Obote's rule. Mary Okello, "Family Planning in Difficult Times."
[42] Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb*, 179.
[43] Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb*, 179.

> Uganda is not yet in a critical position of population growth outreaching available resources. However, the government is convinced that in view of economic, social and health problems arising from the present high birth rates…, it is necessary to institute a programme of advice to women on family planning and child spacing matters. The Family Planning Association of Uganda (F.P.A.) will be the main agent for implementing government policy in this field in a gradual fashion. The Ministry of Health will take over the co-ordination and administration of the family planning programme throughout the country.[44]

Amin made it clear that his government was promoting child spacing and that the role of FPAU was to help women space their children, not to limit the number of children. To enable FPAU to do its work, in addition to duty-free imports of medicines, vehicles and office supplies, Amin pledged to train medics so that they could "be able to give competent advice" about family planning.[45] He also promised FPAU "a recurrent subvention [of 10 million shillings] from Government" to establish mobile clinics in rural areas. Amin promised free radio, TV, and newspaper airtime to educate the masses about birth control. He stated that "information on family planning will be disseminated by government publicity agencies, and through those ministries in regular contact with people in rural areas."[46] He added that the "Government's main interest at this stage is to make people fully aware of the potential benefit of child spacing to their own family welfare, and to make available to those families who actually demand it the means for regulating their sizes."[47]

However, the nationalization of FPAU had less to do with providing birth control and empowering women as such and more with the need to regulate women's sexuality and behavior. Amin and conservatives may have embraced birth control, but they still feared that birth control could be

[44] "Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1971/2-1975/6 (Kampala: Government of Uganda, 1972), 76.
[45] Some of these promises were never realized. Dr. Sali as a medic trainee during the Amin period told me that he was never trained in birth control/family planning. Interview with Dr. Sali, Ntinda Bukoto, 2016.
[46] "Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan,"76.
[47] "Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan," 76.

misused. Amin made it clear that the government would promote only birth control technologies that would reinforce its standards of sexual propriety and virtues. He emphasized that "every care will be taken to ensure that the programme is not conducted…[in a way that is] detrimental to the culture and morals of our society."[48] This was not the same careful rhetoric that we saw with Obote in Chapter 3. Thus, for Amin, as long as it reinforced and reaffirmed conservative sexual values, birth control was desirable.

Evidence suggests that the nationalization of FPAU which was followed by the co-opting of women's organizations was part of a larger effort by Amin to control women's behavior. Aili Tripp, who has studied women's organization in Africa, states that "to control and limit their autonomy," across Africa "independent women's organization were simply banned and replaced by the government-sponsored organization."[49] She adds that this was done to "create new mass organizations that were tied to the clientelist network found in the state."[50] In Uganda, Amin brought together women's organizations under one body, the government controlled National Council of Women.[51] He followed this with other government policies and actions which targeted women's sexuality such as the anti-abortion and anti-venereal diseases decrees. All this indicates that Amin was worried about women's activities including unregulated sexuality and FPAU was strategically placed to help him reform sexual mores.

To carry out the double role of policing sexual mores and distributing birth control to morally vetted groups of Ugandans, Amin put FPAU under two contrasting ministries: the Ministry of

[48] "Uganda's Third Five-Year Development Plan,"76.
[49] Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 8.
[50] Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda,* 9.
[51] Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda;* A.M Tripp & J.C. Kwesiga. *The Women's Movement in Uganda. History, Challenges, and Prospects*. (Kampala. Fountain Publishers, 2002); Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work & Domestic Virtue.*

Health whose mandate was to manage the health care system and the Ministry of Culture and Community Development which "was charged with the responsibility of ensuring the preservation, promotion and development of Uganda's culture."[52] Under the Ministry of Culture was another body the National Council of Voluntary Social Services (NCVSS)[53] which registered and directly oversaw all associations offering 'voluntary' services like nutrition and child care, health and family welfare, education and "women's morality."[54] Under these ministries, FPAU set about delivering a package of medical care dressed in morality and vetted by conservatives.[55]

FPAU leaders welcomed the nationalization of the association and looked for ways to exploit their new-found relationship with Amin. While addressing the Board of Directors, the treasurer and the chair of the finance committee suggested that they use their favorable position with Amin's government to request rent-free office space. He stated:

> Of late, his excellency the president honoured us when he called upon us to extend our now recognised services to various sectors of the country. We should use this chance to request either his excellency through the Ministry of Culture and Community Development or the governor Central Province to allocate to us a building free of rent, where we can run this vital service to the nation. This will be part of government contribution….[56]

Amin's government used FPAU to criticize the former government of Obote and rally Ugandans behind his government. Dr. E.G.M. Mulira, the director of Medical Services at the Ministry of

[52] Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, "The Uganda National Culture Policy. A Culturally Vibrant, Cohesive and Progressive Development" (Kampala: Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2016), 6.
[53] Also called National Council of Social Services (NCSS).
[54] Tripp outlines women's morality as one of the 'development activities' carried out by women's organizations. Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda*, 15.
[55] Despite delivering health related services, FPAU fell under the Ministry of Culture. Medics and the Ministry of Health played a limited role in the governance of the association.
[56] Unlike the Cancer or nutrition programs which were attached to the nation's referral hospital and therefore had access to Mulago's infrastructure, FPAU leaders struggled to find space for their activities in the 1960s. They operated from their homes and/or rented space. The 1970s FPAU leaders wanted office space befitting a national institution. See FPAU/RHU Archives, Kampala, Board of Directors meeting, FPAU, 26th 03/1977.

Health who represented Idi Amin at a function held by FPAU in 1978, lambasted Obote's government, stating that:

> The former political government did not realize the serious implications of the high population growth in this country and kept a deaf ear to the voluntary activities which were being carried out by the Family Planning Association of Uganda…. [Obote's] government did not realize the great benefits which are derived from a properly planned family. Consequently, the…government did not…[support] the Family Planning Association to open and run clinics in government hospitals and institutions….[57]

Other politicians began promoting FPAU as a true national organization. In their speeches, they called upon all government ministries to incorporate family planning in their activities.[58] As a result, many government organizations became interested in the activities of FPAU. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development ensured that all FPAU imports such as vehicles, bicycles for field workers, birth control, office equipment etc. were exempted from sales tax and customs duties. The involvement of the Ministry of Planning was partly the work of Ugandan population experts and medics such as Dr. Muzira, a former director of WHO Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, who was described as having "special interest" in integrating birth control into maternal and child health.[59] Another key person was the population expert and chief government statistician, Moses Mukasa. Mukasa who trained at the University of Michigan's Centre for Population Control in the

[57] In his speech, Dr Muzira conveyed "the cordial and warm greetings to you all from H.E. Dr. Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, CBE, Field marshal and life President of Uganda who unfortunately was unable to be with you this morning because of many state duties." FPAU/RHU Archives, Speech by Dr. E.G.N. Muzira permanent secretary/director of medical services at the 23rd Annual General Meeting of the Family Planning Association of Uganda on 18th November 1978.

[58] He stated that 'the Ministry of Culture and Community Development should involve FPAU in the projects for youth and women, slums and rural development schemes to prepare the masses for responsible parenthood. Cooperatives and marketing should also take action. Ministry of Planning and Economic Development should involve FPAU in population programs for the betterment of family planning and national economic development. It should advise FPAU on strategies to meet the areas in most need. The government should be sympathetic about FPAU's limited financial resources and implement a policy to remove all duties on commodities receive.' FPAU/RHU Archives, Speech by the Guest of honor, FPAU meeting held on 18th November 1978 at the Uganda Social training center.

[59]FPAU/RHU Archives, Speech by the Guest of honor.

late 1960s became interested in maternal health during his involvement in the 1969 census. While undertaking his studies in Michigan, he was called home to undertake the 1969 census which revealed that Uganda's population was rapidly growing. He disclosed to me during an interview that before he was tasked with the census, he knew nothing about birth control or FPAU. He stated that while undertaking the census, he became aware of "what was happening in family planning, in social work, children's health…women's health…"[60] He added that during the census, he realized how fast the population was growing and he became convinced that birth control was important. Being one of the very few African population experts trained in the West, Mukasa was appointed as IPPF's East Africa regional representative. He used his position at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development to fight for the exemption of sales tax and customs duties on all FPAU imports.[61]

The Ministry of Planning worked closely with the Ministry of Health to integrate family planning into maternal and child health, a process that involved training nurses, midwives, and doctors in family planning. However, this was initially affected by lack of personnel. The expulsion of Asians and other non-Ugandans many of whom provided key services in government hospitals, coupled with the loss of Ugandan personnel who fled into exile and general economic breakdown, temporarily disrupted the plan to integrate family planning. Family planning activities in government hospitals were temporarily halted but other FPAU clinics remained open. This

[60] Interview with Moses Mukasa, USA, 2017.
[61] It is important that although individuals like Mukasa and various ministries offered support to FPAU, what they gave barely made a dent in FPAU's budget. Moreover, there is no evidence to show that the 10 million shillings was ever given to FPAU. Any help from government agencies was meant to help FPAU to further the aim of reforming birth control. Thus, although individuals like Mukasa genuinely wanted to help FPAU, any help they gave ended up helping conservatives to establish their vision. Interview with Moses Mukasa. Also, FPAU/RHU Archives, Speech by the Guest of Honor.

frustrated former FPAU leaders who had fled Uganda but kept an eye on developments in the country. In 1974 George and Anne Saxton wrote that:

> There is a paradoxical situation within the Uganda government in relation to family planning. On one hand, it has been recommended by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development that population growth be stabilized at 2-3% per year. This is quite explicitly set forth in the Third Five-Year Plan (1972-1976) of the present government…. On the other hand, however, the Ministry of Health has not supported the development of family planning services in government hospitals and health centers as would be necessary to implement the recommendations of the economic planners. The doctors responsible in the Ministry of Health are understandably hesitant about supporting family planning, especially when they lack any leadership.[62]

Things gradually changed and with time, FPAU began working with the Ministry of Health to integrate family planning services in government hospitals. The ministry began organizing workshops for medics. For example, in 1977, a two-week course on family planning was organized for midwives and nurses. The closing ceremony was held at Fairway Hotel Kampala. In his closing remarks, Jonathan Gaifuba (the ministry's education specialist) informed the midwives and nurses that their "contribution…[was] vital to the spreading of the family planning concept to the public." He asked them "to pass on the knowledge they have gained to the public."[63] In his speech, the association's executive secretary, E.N. Lukanga, stated that FPAU was "now aiming at training enough paramedical personnel so that every medical unit in the country has a person to pass on the information on the family planning concept to the public." He promised to hold more courses not just for midwives and nurses but also for doctors some of whom, he stated, "had problems with

[62] GASA, George A. Saxton, and Anne K. Saxton, Family planning in Uganda. A Situation Report Based on a Visit from January 27-February 1974.
[63] Sam Serwanga, "Family Planning Course: Family planning and Breastfeeding," *Voice of Uganda,* September 30, 1977.

regard to passing necessary information affecting the concept of planning one's family to the public."[64]

Other government bodies joined in to help FPAU. For example, the Ministry of Information helped FPAU to publicize their activities for free. To get the masses interested in family planning, the government-owned *Voice of Uganda* published several articles about the association. Because of the stigma surrounding birth control and FPAU, which as I argue in Chapter 3, was seen as a western organization and the "burgeoning nationalism of the time…[perceived birth control] as a Western plot to limit the number of Africans,"[65] the articles emphasized that the association promoted 'child spacing' and not 'population control.' In addition, senior members of staff of the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (UBC) "travelled around the country interviewing clients and recording FPAU activities in different districts."[66] They also printed booklets in English although it is not clear for whom they were intended, how many were distributed or what their message was. They abandoned the idea of printing booklets in local languages because "printing the same material but in different languages was costlier than having it done many times all in one language."[67] Sending UBC staff who were not trained in birth control activities is a reflection of the government of Idi Amin which ruled by improvisation. Since there is no recording of their field work, it is impossible to know if this had any impact on attitudes of the people towards FPAU. Nevertheless, because of their standing as members of a government entity, their interest must have sent a signal to Ugandans that FPAU was a vetted national organization.

[64] Serwanga, "Family Planning Course."
[65] Okello, "Family Planning in Difficult Times," 233.
[66] FPAU/RHU Archives, Board of Directors' Report to the 20th Annual General Meeting Held at Jinja town hall, Kampala, March 4, 1977.
[67] FPAU/RHU Archives, Family Planning Association of Uganda Annual General Meeting Held at Kabale T.T.C. Kabale, Kigezi, January 10, 1976.

FPAU leaders described the relationship between FPAU and Amin's government as smooth and beneficial to the association most of the times. For example, while addressing the 20th Annual meeting of the association, the chairperson of FPAU-Busoga District stated that: "today for your information, the association is working hard with government medical institutions. This symbolizes the co-operation the association enjoys with government."[68] The FPAU Board of Directors expressed similar sentiments. In 1977, the Board praised Amin's government and the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting, Health, Culture and Community Development and the NCVSS for aiding FPAU.[69]

However, the intervention of the various ministries was not always welcomed and sometimes exacerbated internal conflicts. As I will show below, FPAU was cash trapped, mismanaged, chaotic and consumed by the politics of morality. There were conflicts among leadership, paid staff and volunteers, misuse of resources, and dubious elections. Volunteers were mistreated, some branch managers were misappropriating funds from the sale of birth control, failing to remit funds from their branches to the headquarters in Kampala. Some even disappeared with the money. FPAU leaders hired an unqualified accountant who later misused FPAU funds. Instead of firing him or reporting him to the police, they made excuses for him, called for his training, and ignored calls by some members to employ a competent accountant.[70]

Some of the problems were caused by government officials. For example, in April 1974, elections were held in Gulu. According to FPAU policies those elected to represent a district had to hail

[68] FPAU/RHU Archives, Speech by the Chairman Busoga District Council Given at the 20th Annual General Meeting, Jinja Town hall, March. 4, 1977.
[69] FPAU/RHU Archives, The Board of Directors' Report to the 20th Annual General Meeting, Jinja town hall, March 4th, 1977.
[70] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting of the FPAU Board of Directors Held in Speke hotel, August 10, 1974.

from and work in that district. Still, some of those elected to office were not from Gulu. They also elected a Ministry of Culture official as treasurer although the elected official was aware that ministry officials could not "hold office in voluntary organization because it creates conflict of interest."[71] In addition, "some district councils were allowed more representatives than they were entitled to have."[72]

Ministry officials used the above irregularities to justify government intervention. In 1974 anonymous members of FPAU wrote to Amin's government regarding misuse of funds and unconstitutional election of office bearers. In response, the NCVSS (Ministry of Culture) set up a commission of enquiry to investigate FPAU. The commission of inquiry headed by S.P. Wabulya, the commissioner of NCVSS, found that FPAU did not have a body of trustees, and duties of some of the staff such as the executive secretary were not clearly outlined in the constitution. He found that volunteers who were given an unspecified honorarium felt that they did more work than staff and that "they are above and better than the paid staff." Wabula declared that this was not the "spirit of a true volunteer." He also found that volunteers were "being deprived of their rights, such as leave…housing allowances" and the chairperson withheld funds for approved projects. Wabulya added that "interference by the chairperson has hindered the smooth running of the association" and that "financial problems arose because of conflicts in the duties of the chairman and the executive secretary" as it was not clear who the accounting officer was.[73]

[71] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.
[72] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency meeting.
[73] FPAU/RHU Archives, Address by the Commissioner of Social Services, Mr. S.P Wabulya. Family Planning Association of Uganda: Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting of the FPAU Board of Directors Held in Speke Hotel on August 10, 1974.

Government intervention in the affairs of FPAU upset some members of the association. Bitalabeho, who represented Kigezi, asked for clear guidelines such that "members would know exactly what to do without waiting to be told like children." He added that "I would not be happy to come here and then be told that NCSS [NCVSS] or Ministry of Culture or any other person had decided this or that for the association…. Such things could hinder the spirit of volunteers however much they may feel to sacrifice their services."[74] When another member asked for guarantee that "the minister will not dissolve any future discussions of the board,"[75] Wabulya informed members that it was internal fights and misuse of funds that forced the government to intervene. He stated that NCVSS which "served as a connecting link between government and voluntary organizations" had "powers to look into the affairs of any voluntary organization and to act as a mediator when complaints are made." He added that he had received numerous complaints from FPAU volunteers and paid staff and "because of the complex nature of these complaints, the NCVSS had requested assistance from the Ministry of Culture in trying to find workable solutions for the satisfaction of all involved."[76] Dankaine who represented the Ministry of Culture added that the ministry "could not sit back and look [on as the members fought each other]." The ministry tightened its hold on the association, assigned to FPAU a representative from the NCVSS "to keep the minister informed of all the affairs of the association."[77] It also replaced FPAU's constitution with one written by NCVSS (Ministry of Culture). Dankaine stated that the new constitution had "been planned with the view of the prevailing problems in the country and to fit in the development of the country."[78]

[74] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.
[75] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.
[76] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.
[77] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.
[78] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the Special and Emergency Meeting.

The government's amendment of the FPAU's constitution was protested by FPAU members. A member of the association, Akankwasa, stated that "under the old constitution the only body that made amendments to the constitution was the board of directors of the FPAU." He asked, "where [it is written] in the [FPAU] constitution [that] the NCSS or the representative of the Minister of Culture and Community Development could amend the constitution."[79] The ministry's representative replied that the directive to amend the constitution came from the minister himself. He was supported by the chairperson of FPAU who stated that although the power to amend the constitution lay with the FPAU Board of the Directors (which was made up of district council representatives), FPAU was answerable to NCVSS (Minister of Culture).[80]

Finding no relief from the Amin government and tired of the internal conflicts that were swept under the rug by FPAU leadership, some members decided to write to IPPF. FPAU leaders implored those writing letters "to solve our FPAU problems domestically and through the right channels instead of writing to the [IPPF] regional director in Nairobi or to the secretary general in London directly."[81] While minutes from a 1978 meeting indicate that IPPF temporarily withheld funds when FPAU leaders failed to send in reports on time, it is not clear if IPPF took any steps to intervene in FPAU's internal problems. Under Idi Amin, FPAU remained a largely ineffective and mismanaged watchdog of public morals. In many ways the ineffective and mismanaged bureaucracy of the FPAU was very much in keeping with the general history of the 1970s, a time when academic knowledge and expertise was devalued, and loyal men and women were rewarded with leadership positions vacated by experts.

[79] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the special and Emergency meeting.
[80] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the special and Emergency meeting.
[81] FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU Annual General Meeting held on 16th November 1978 at the Uganda Social Training Centre, Kampala.

Moralizing birth control: conservatives' takeover of FPAU

Although by 1972, East African governments had all embraced birth control, politicians and ordinary citizens still believed that modern contraception threatened moral order. In Kenya, Lynn Thomas states that Kenyans believed that modern contraception "would promote immorality and promiscuity and skew gender and generational relations."[82] In Uganda, because conservatives in the 1970s perceived unregulated birth control as a threat to moral order, they put in place measures to ensure that unmarried women would not access birth control and married women could only access it with their husband's permission. To ensure that only the approved groups would access birth control, the Idi Amin government nationalized FPAU. Because modern birth control technologies were perceived as capable of subverting the prevailing asymmetric gender relations that gave men an upper hand, FPAU had to be managed by a carefully selected group of morally upright men and women.

Started by women's rights, birth control activists and population experts in the 1950s and 1960s, FPAU struggled to get men interested in family planning as either leaders or as clients. Although male doctors were among the first to be recruited by Gates and Gamble in 1956, within a year, many had stopped offering birth control, leaving women medics and non-medics such as Dr. Jivani and Visram to offer birth control. Early reports of the association suggest that it was hard to attract men to provide birth control or to even use it. In 1958, the presence of a male doctor, Dr. Thankker, in a FPAU meeting was greeted with excitement and was said to enlighten "the members with the

[82] Thomas, *The politics of the Womb,* 180.

male side of family planning work."[83] However, men continued to shun the association which was considered a women's organization.

The situation changed in the 1970s as men came to dominate FPAU leadership. FPAU's leadership team in the 1970s was comprised of men (and a few women) described as "highly educated figures,"[84] who attended prominent schools like Busoga Mwiri College.[85] They had distinguished careers as civil servants, politicians, religious leaders, university professors etc..[86] FPAU leaders were overwhelmingly men at the peak of their careers or in retirement.[87] Some were volunteers receiving an allowance but not a salary while others were paid a full salary. A list of members who attended various Board of Directors meetings held between 1976 and 1978 shows that of the twenty-seven members of the board, there were only six women. Well-attended general meetings of sixty-three members, had only twelve women.[88] Although FPAU leaders did not write biographies from which we could understand their motivation, we know that such a position was an opportunity for one to expand their curricula vitae (CVs), to participate in a national organization sanctioned by Amin and to help in reforming women's morals. These men were not chosen because of their commitment to and expertise in birth control, women's sexual and

[83] CGA, Box 125, Folder 2181, Uganda: Slight 1958-1959 Corres and Report of Family Planning Committee for 1958. Half yearly report of the Family Planning committee of Kampala from June 1958 to December 1958, (FPAU's first news latter).
[84] Daring to Change, Embracing the Future: The Story of the Family Planning Association of Uganda. http://www.rhu.or.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=75
[85] FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU Meeting Held on 18th November 1978 at the Uganda Social Training Centre, Kampala.
[86] FPAU/RHU Archives, The First Board of Director's Meeting held at Ntwalo DFI Mukono on 11th February 1978, Kampala, 1978.
[87] They represented the administrative districts of Busoga, Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Masaka, Teso, Ankole, Acholi, Mubende, Kigezi, Lango, Sebei, Karamoja and Bukedi. See FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU meeting held on 18th November 1978 at the Uganda Social Training Centre, Uganda.
[88] FPAU/RHU Archives, Minutes of the FPAU Annual General Meeting Held at Ntwalo DFI Mukono.

reproductive health rights but because they had distinguished themselves as morally upright citizens.

While the FPAU drew its leadership from all parts of the country, the fact that men overwhelmingly dominated FPAU leadership and women its clientship, meant that women were excluded from making decisions about their bodies. Men decided who could use birth control (married women) and as a result they prevented single women from accessing birth control. They decided which birth control technologies were appropriate and because men viewed themselves as the protectors of Ugandan mores, they excluded certain technologies that they believed promoted sexual promiscuity and endangered public morality such as abortion.

FPAU leaders were concerned after it came to their attention that some medics were allegedly prescribing abortion as a form of birth control. The general perception in the 1970s was that abortion was widespread. While the Catholic church reacted by initiating debates about abortion in its magazines and newspapers[89] and the Amin government passed the anti-abortion decrees, some medics were inspired to dig more to find out how widespread the problem was. Among them was Dr. C. Lwanga, a member of the FPAU's understaffed, underfunded, and marginalized medical advisory committee. In the early 1970s, Dr Lwanga requested funds from FPAU to conduct research into abortion "to find out whether or not criminal abortion cases are reaching Mulago."[90] Although his request was denied, he used his own funds to undertake research into the subject of abortion, the result of which he published in 1977.[91] Lwanga's work provides us with insights into how medics and the public talked about abortion, birth control and women's sexuality

[89] See Chapter 2.
[90] C. Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital Kampala," *East African Medical Journal* 54, no. 3 (March 1977),142.
[91] He interviewed patients seeking post miscarriage/abortion care between November 1973 and November 1974 and also examined the medical records from 1967 to 1969.

in general. As the case of Jane who after suffering two miscarriages was accused of criminal abortion by her husband shows,[92] Ugandans including some public health officials, religious leaders and politicians tended to conflate miscarriage (spontaneous loss of a fetus), induced abortion (the medical removal of a fetus to protect the health of the mother) and criminal abortion (the medical and non-medical removal of a fetus at the request of the woman as a form of birth control).

It is clear from Lwanga's work that sometimes the lines between spontaneous abortion (miscarriage), induced medical abortion and criminal abortion were blurred. In his paper, published in the *East African Medical Journal*, Lwanga began by stating that it is "not possible to assess accurately the number of pregnancies which end in abortions as a natural phenomenon. It is harder still to assess the number of abortions which are provoked by interference."[93] He observed that before 1967, "there was no report of criminal abortions," but "two maternal death occurred in 1968 and nine maternal deaths were reported in the following year. These deaths followed severe infections associated with abortion. Clear history of interference was also obtained."[94] Between November 1973 to November 1974, of the 1377 women seeking post-abortion care, he identified 164 cases of what looked to be criminal abortion. Of these, fifty-two were induced abortion "using crude instruments, such as pieces of metal, wood, and stems from certain creeping plants" and were treated by non-medical persons. [95] Sixteen women induced abortion by "drugs supplied by non-medical person," eight women were "treated surgically by professionals" and eighty-eight were "treated by someone with knowledge of modern medicine."[96] Lwanga stated that although

[92] See Introduction.
[93] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 142.
[94] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 142.
[95] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 143.
[96] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 143.

only 11.9% confessed to criminal abortion, the number was "possibly higher...and many of the so-called spontaneous abortions are in fact induced."[97] He added that because not all criminal abortions ended with complications, it was impossible to establish the exact number of criminal abortions from hospital records.[98]

Although Lwanga stated that his aim was to highlight the dangers of abortion including infections and maternal death which he argued were on the rise, he did not use his findings to advocate for women and girls who had no access to birth control. He did speak out for a fellow medic, a Dr. Karim, whom FPAU leaders suspected of researching emergency contraception, or what they believed was 'abortion pills.' While there is no evidence that an abortion pill or emergency contraception existed in Uganda in the 1970s,[99] there were rumors, some even reported in *Leadership,* that an unnamed medic was looking into an 'abortion pill.'[100] While the identity of the medic researching the so-called abortion pill was not revealed in *Leadership*, FPAU leaders were convinced that that medic was Dr. Karim, and Lwanga confirmed his identity. We know very little about Dr. Karim. There is no mention of him in the Gamble, Saxton archives or even FPAU minutes prior to the panic around abortion, most likely because his work had nothing to do with birth control. While it is not clear what kind of research Dr. Karim was undertaking,[101] Lwanga sheds light on it. He stated that he:

> felt very strongly that Dr. Karim's research was very useful both to the mother and the child. The method was being used quite successfully in the case of a mother whose period is overdue, or who has blood pressure or whose delivery is

[97] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 148.
[98] Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital."
[99] Although George Saxton's press clippings from American newspapers indicate that he was aware of debates about IUD as a form of emergency contraception, there is no evidence that IUD was used as emergency birth control in Uganda. There is no indication in both Gamble and Saxton archives that Saxton worked with Dr. Karim and Dr. Lwanga on the IUD project.
[100] See Chapter 2.
[101] He disappears from the records immediately after.

> complicated. The method is used to induce labor as needed to save the life of both the mother and child.[102]

From the above, we can surmise that Dr Karim was researching labor inducing medication and not the abortion pill. That FPAU leadership thought differently points to their own misconceptions about birth control, emergency birth control and reproduction. They ignored those with expertise in reproduction and sexuality such as Dr. Lwanga, thereby rendering the medical committee useless.

Lwanga's research, like that of Karim, was considered dangerous. The then FPAU chairperson, J. Okonde, ordered him to abandon such research and to instead work with African traditional doctors who "have cured diseases that have defied modern medicine."[103] Quoting the book of Genesis, she stated that "when God first created men, he gave them the ability to think, and even told them to "go and multiply."" She explained that despite this, it was left to man to determine how many children to have. Africans had answered this call by practicing birth control methods that were geared towards "proper spacing of children and ensuring the health of the mother" including polygamy, abstinence, and long-term breastfeeding. She emphasized that FPAU was about spacing and not limiting the number of children. She ended by pledging' to solve the problem of abortion by teaching the youth about the dangers of sex,' to discourage the 'indiscriminate use of pills or other forms of contraceptives by girls' and 'to discourage research (by medics like Karim) which encouraged abortion among young girls.'[104] With this, Okonde silenced medical expertise, linked some modern birth technologies like the emergency pill to abortion, and called for a return to birth control technologies that were in line with narrowly defined African traditions and culture. Her

[102] FPAU/RHU Archives, Address by the Chairperson of Family Planning Association of Uganda, November 1974.
[103] FPAU/RHU Archives, Address by the Chairperson of Family Planning.
[104] FPAU/RHU Archives, Address by the Chairperson of Family Planning.

views reflect not only a tendency by FPAU leadership to ignore expertise in favor of their own conservative views about reproduction, birth control and sexuality but also the perception that unregulated modern birth control was a threat to public morality.

Because FPAU leaders were worried that birth control would promote promiscuity if left unregulated, they put in place mechanisms to limit access and to ensure that men continued to manage its use. They tied birth control to motherhood and marital status by targeting as clients married women who already had a child or children and who with their husbands' consent wanted to space rather than limit the number of children. They recognized the husband as the head of the family, and they made him central to decisions about when and how to use birth control. While addressing nurses and midwives who were attending a two weeks' course about family planning at Makerere University, the then assistant information and education officer at FPAU, Molly Okalebo, told them that for family planning to work, they must seek the consent of both the husband and wife and that when teaching about family planning, they must emphasize child spacing and not fertility control. She explained:

> But before carrying out a family planning programme for any person, there must be consent from both parties-wife and husband, or in case of grown up girls, consent should come from their parents. In this case, family planning programmes help individuals or couples to avoid unwanted births, bring forth birth of wanted children, regulate interval between births, control the time at which births occur in consideration to ages of parents, and determine the number of children in a family.[105]

Okalebo's statement that girls can be given birth control with the consent of the parents contradicted FPAU policy and was quickly corrected by other members. In the 1960s, women who visited birth control clinics were given a typed consent form which they took to their husbands to

[105] Sam Serwanga, "Mutual Consent helps in Family planning," *Voice of Uganda,* September 12, 1977.

sign. They were sold or given birth control after turning in the signed form. This practice continued into the 1970s where it was vigorously enforced. However, due to lack of resources, the consent form was replaced by a hand-written letter or verbal consent from husbands who accompanied their wives. Heads of birth control clinics were tasked with ensuring that a wife had "the consent of the husband, written or verbal"[106] before they were given birth control. To ensure that those who ran the clinics followed the rules, they were cross-examined during meetings with FPAU leadership. In one meeting, the head of the Jinja FPAU branch was tasked with explaining "whether the clinic was dealing with un-married girls."[107] The head of the branch, Kagoro, explained that her clinic which had about 400 members distributed birth control to married women only and specifically those with at least one child or more.[108]

FPAU took other steps to prevent unmarried women and girls from accessing birth control. When it became clear that many poor women could not afford the 5/-shs membership fee, the medical advisory committee suggested cancelling the fee and opening membership to all. Although, as pointed out by the medical committee, the membership fees would help the financially-struggling FPAU raise funds, the suggestion was rejected on the grounds that if membership was removed, "wrong people" that is, unmarried women and girls, would "infiltrate the association."[109] FPAU leaders made it clear that the association would do everything in its power to prevent unmarried women from accessing birth control.

[106] Jinja District Archives, Uganda (hereafter JDA), Box No. 1, File No. 8, Old Ref No. C.SCW 1: 018/WS4/2, Voluntary Organizations in Busoga Province 1976. Social Welfare-Policy-Community Development, 1976-1977.
[107] JDA, Box No. 1, File No. 8, Old Ref No. C.SCW 1: 018/WS4/2, Voluntary Organizations in Busoga province.
[108] JDA, Box No. 1, File No. 8, Old Ref No. C.SCW 1: 018/WS4/2, Voluntary Organizations in Busoga province.
[109] FPAU/RHU Archives, Family Planning Association of Uganda, Annual General Meeting Held at Kabale T.T.C. Kabale, Kigezi, 10th January 1976.

As stated above, FPAU leaders believed that a carefully chosen group of morally upright citizens should manage birth control. They thus, partnered with the Anglican Church (and Mothers Union),[110] appointed some of the Anglican priests as members of FPAU and invited them to the association's activities.[111] In one meeting, an Anglican priest argued that giving unmarried women and girls contraceptives would "encourage street running" and that 'unmarried single women and girls would break up married couples.'[112] Although two members disagreed with him stating that denying them birth control would create social problems, they were overruled by the majority.[113]

FPAU leaders ignored the 1960s policy of recruiting women including nurses, social workers to distribute and teach women about birth control and chose to use male birth control field educators instead. Field educators were described as (primary and secondary level) "school leavers" who with funds from IPPF and USAID underwent a conservative nine months crash course in maternal and child welfare at Mulago hospital. After training, they were sent out and moved from door to door talking to "parents."[114] Field educators were key to the organization because they were the ones who got to talk to clients and potential clients about family planning.

Despite the training, it was reported that many field educators lacked knowledge about birth control and female sexuality in general. An FPAU report showed that they "had no idea about how

[110] Church of Uganda Archives, Uganda (hereafter CUA), Provincial Secretary (PS) General file, Box/folder 67/3, Appeals WCC, 1969. The Anglican church unlike the Catholic church believed that birth control was important to prevent overpopulation. The Church of Uganda, through its 'home and family life' program, encouraged child spacing, and put aside some funds for 'public health and family planning.'

[111] On May 4, 1974, the chairperson of FPAU addressed the annual FPAU general meeting held at Sir Samuel Baker School in Gulu, Northern Uganda. In attendance was the Anglican priest, Reverend Okodi, the Provincial Secretary of Northern Uganda Anglican Diocese. After a prayer led by Reverend Okodi, the Chairperson, J. Okonde launched a strong speech condemning medic who encouraged abortion as a form of birth control.

[112] JDA, Box No. 1, File No. 8, Old Ref No. C.SCW 1: 018/WS4/2.Voluntary Organizations in Busoga province 1976. Social Welfare-Policy-Community Development, 1976-1977.

[113] JDA, Box No. 1, File No. 8, Old Ref No. C.SCW 1: 018/WS4/, Voluntary Organizations in Busoga province.

[114] Musa Dawha, "A Review of the activities of Voluntary Health Organizations in the Central province of Uganda" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1978).

to talk to clients," and "how to make the necessary reports and/or how to send information to the headquarters in good time." They were not "conversant with what they are supposed to do."[115] Although it was found that "male field educators…[were not] as efficient as female ones"[116] and it was recommended that FPAU cut down on male recruits and recruit more female field educators, the association continued to use male educators. The few women who worked as female field educators left FPAU because they were underpaid compared to the work they were doing (they had to work both in the clinic as well as in the field).[117] FPAU tried to recruit new female educators to replace them but they refused to work for a low salary. It is clear from the above that in the 1970s, expertise and efficiency in the delivery of birth control were second to apparent efforts to enforce morality.

Women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health outside the official apparatus

When birth control was first introduced in Uganda, the aim was to enable women have control over their sexual and reproductive lives through the use of self-administered birth control made from common ingredients found in women's kitchen. Gamble hoped to eliminate medics and other authorities from decisions about birth control. Ironically, the Idi Amin regime which devalued expertise fulfilled his second goal but not the first. Instead of controlling their own sexual and reproductive lives, birth control was turned into a tool by the state and conservatives who managed FPAU to control women's sexuality.

[115] FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU Annual General Meeting held on 16th November 1978 at the Uganda Social Training Center.
[116] FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU Annual General Meeting Held on 16th November 1978.
[117] FPAU/RHU Archives, FPAU Annual General Meeting Held on 16th November 1978.

Official statistics show that by the end of the 1970s, only 50,000 adult women had access to birth control.[118] Charles Rwabukwali, who worked with FPAU and undertook research about attitudes towards family planning in the early 1980s, observed that "in many districts, certain traditions and cultural beliefs particularly those that give men a greater say in the affairs of the family, including the right to decide whether the wife can or cannot practice family planning are a major constraint in attempts to popularize family planning services."[119] Thus, instead of helping women access birth control, the FPAU reinforced patriarchal control of women's sexuality.

Ironically, men derived their power to make decisions about birth control and their wives' sexuality from cultural beliefs (men as heads of the family) and not from their role as bread winners.[120] Research about family planning undertaken in the 1970s shows that women were motivated by 'economic factors,' that is, lack of financial contribution from husbands and partners to seek birth control. The main reason for seeking birth control was economic (39.58%): 7.8% took birth control to space children, and 8.33% stated that they had enough children; 20% took it for 'convenience.' 16.67% gave family instability or breakdown as the reason for using birth control; 6.67% used birth control as a health recommendation and 1.67% gave no reason.[121] That lack of financial contribution should top the list is not surprising. In their work on the lives of women in Uganda, Kyomuhendo and McIntosh who examine the burden placed on Ugandan women by what they

[118] This figure is taken from FPAU minutes. See, FPAU/RHU Archives, The Board of Directors FPAU Meeting, Mar. 26, 1977. Also, Dawha, "A Review of the activities,"59.
[119] Rwabukwali. "A Report on Family Planning," 15.
[120] On men's financial and material contribution to run the family, one study in Mbale found that 51.53% of the surveyed women said they got minimal or inadequate contribution from their partners; 7.90% said they got no contribution. 9.30% felt that their partners were giving equal or satisfactory financial and material contribution and 31.28% got enough contribution from their partners. Thus, "59.42% acceptors had partners who showed either no or quite inadequate material contribution to the family running." Of the 240, 42. 50% were housewives, 12.50% were secretaries, 7.92% were teachers, 4.58% were nurses, 7.50% were bar/hotel attendant, 2.50% were students and 22.50% were in other occupations. See, G.P. Yossa. "Characteristics of Acceptors of Planned parenthood at Mbale Family Planning Clinic" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1979), 30.
[121] Yossa. "Characteristics of Acceptors," 45.

call the domestic virtue model show that women were expected to run the household; to feed, clothe and educate the children.[122]

However, other evidence suggests that changes in attitude towards sex and sexual violence against women also motivated women to use birth control. Scholars of women, gender and sexuality consider the 1970s as not only a time of increased sexual exploration by women and girls but also a period of sexual danger. Meri Kisekka found premarital sex to be rampant in the 1970s, with the majority of secondary school children in Kampala (97% boys, and 69% girls) having had sex.[123] While commenting on the 1970s, Doyle writes that "sex was occasionally coerced, more often it had been strategic, but primarily, it had been pleasurable and exciting."[124] However, scholars of women and gender have stressed that the 1970s was a period of heightened danger for women's sexual lives. Due to general insecurity, rape by Amin's soldiers and civilians became common. According to Kyomuhendo and McIntosh, "rape by soldiers became so common that a raped woman was often told she had only herself to blame for getting caught [raped]—soldiers were rapists and women were expected to know how to avoid them."[125] In one incident, nursing students who were on their way from a dance were raped by Idi Amin's soldiers.[126] A former government prosecutor narrated to me a case he prosecuted where school girls who refused to return the affections of boys from a neighboring school were raped en masse by the boys who broke into their dormitories.[127]

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[122]Bantebya Kyomuhendo & Marjorie McIntosh investigate a situation where women were not allowed to work outside accepted domestic jobs but were expected to be responsible for running the household. See, Grace Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue.*

[123] Mere Kisekka, "Sexual Attitudes and Behavior among Students in Uganda," T*he Journal of Sex research* 12, no. 2 (May 1976): 104-116.

[124] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 332.

[125] Kyomuhendo & McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue*, 150.

[126] Decker, *In Idi Amin's shadow;* Kyemba, *A State of Blood.*

[127] Interview with Emesu, a former government prosecutor who prosecuted the case, Kampala Uganda, 2016.

A Central Police Station (CPS) file on the rape of a student clearly illustrates not just the dangers faced by women and girls in the 1970s but the fact that the public blamed them for sexual violence in which they were the victims. In August 1977, 20-year-old nursing student Caroline Nankya[128] walked from her dormitory at Mulago nursing school passing Makerere university to Wandegeya police station to report that she was raped by a stranger she paid to drive her to school. The officer who took her statement doubted her story. He wrote to his superiors that:

> the complainant is 20 years of age and she stated that she was raped on the 8/10/77 and yet she reported to Wandegeya on 26/10/77 (18 days after the alleged rape) and now she claims to be under pregnant which to my experience cannot happen though I am not a doctor. To me I have the feeling that the complainant got pregnant before the alleged rape and now she is trying to cover up her mistake by reporting her pregnancy to the police.[129]

The police officer, while acknowledging that he was not equipped with the necessary training to know whether Caroline was raped or pregnant, nevertheless accused her of making up the rape to cover up her pregnancy. Caroline's file did not contain a medical form which was a standard procedure for all victims of assault and rape. It ended with the words "put away case papers as undetected." The lack of police response to rape allegations played into the prevailing view about women's sexuality: that women made up stories about rape or aborted fetuses (as Kay Adroa's case in the introduction shows) to cover up their own sexual immorality.

While it is not clear what happened to Caroline, other unmarried women like Idi Amin's ex-wife Kay Adroa, turned to illegal means to manage their sexual and reproductive lives. As shown above, when Lwanga conducted his research, he found that some women were using abortion as a form

[128] Central Police Station Archives, Uganda (hereafter CPSA), P1120761 Wandegeya Police station – SD/57/26/10/77 – SDF/10/77.
[129]CPSA, P1120761 Wandegeya Police station – SD/57/26/10/77 – SDF/10/77.

of birth control. The story of Kay Amin as told in the introduction indicates that some women were turning to abortion out of desperation, for fear of their (ex-)partners. Other extenuating circumstances that may have forced some women to seek abortion include rape, lack of birth control, abandonment by boyfriends and husbands, and fear of expulsion from educational institutions as some female readers of *Leadership* magazine had indicated.[130]

Scholars have argued that abortion was widespread in Uganda in the 1970s. Notably Shane Doyle citing Lwanga's figures, states that in the 1970s induced abortion "was the most common form of fertility control around Kampala at this time." He adds that "in the 1970s, it was estimated that around a fifth of all pregnancies in this region were terminated, presumably as a means of postponement more than spacing…."[131] However, a closer look at Lwanga's study and statistics from FPAU suggests this may not have been the case. Existing data from FPAU indicates that Ugandan women's preferred form of birth control in the 1970s was the pill.[132] Lwanga's study, while highlighting a jump from eleven cases of criminal abortion at the end of the 1960s to one hundred and sixty four in the mid-1970s, does not show that abortion was the most common method of birth control, let alone that it happened on an epidemic scale. Lwanga found that most women and girls were forced by economic and social pressures to terminate the pregnancy. Of the 164 cases, ninety-one were young (school) girls who "after discovering that they were pregnant, resorted to induced abortion" and the rest were unemployed women who "without financial support resorted to induced abortion."[133] Of the fifty-two cases of criminal abortion, eleven had

[130] See Chapter 2. Dr. Sarah Namutebi told me that her colleague a medical student, had an abortion to avoid being expelled from the medical school. Interview with Dr Sara Namutebi, Mulago, 2016.
[131] Shane Doyle, "The Politics of Fertility and Generation in Buganda, East Africa, 1860-1980" in, *Parenthood between Generations: Transforming Reproductive Cultures. Fertility, Reproduction and Sexuality*, eds. S. Pooley & K. Qureshi. (New York: 2016), 21.
[132] FPAU/RHU Archives, The Board of Directors FPAU meeting, March. 26, 1977; Also, Dawha. "A Review of the Activities"; Rwabukwali. "A Report on Family Planning."
[133] C. Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital," 146.

surviving children which suggests that for some of these women, abortion was a form of child spacing.[134]

Besides abortion, other women practiced natural family planning including abstinence and breastfeeding.[135] According to Mary Okello:

> the practice of sexual abstinence during the period of breastfeeding was commonly understood to be beneficial both to the mother and child and often observed. The use of abortifacient herbs was more common in birth control than in child spacing but was widespread. Various rituals—for example, "cursing" a young girl or hiding away her first menstrual blood—were practiced by particular ethnic groups to prevent unwanted pregnancies.[136]

While such methods may have been common in rural areas, in urban areas modern birth control was available to married women, and some unmarried women found a way to access it as well. Letters written by female readers (nurses) in *Leadership* show that nurse trainees stole birth control from the hospital stash.[137] Other women forged letters purported to be written by husbands and others got their male friends to forge letters to get around FPAU's policies. Sylvia Tamale who studies sexuality in Uganda recounts how as an unmarried undergraduate student in the 1980s, when she went to the FPAU clinic Mulago to get birth control, the nurse asked her "for a letter from my husband permitting me to take the pill." Tamale "sat under a tree and scribbled a letter

[134] C. Lwanga, "Abortion in Mulago Hospital."
[135] Christine, a nurse, she stated that some women used chloroquine to abort. In another interview, Akiiki stated that women would use herbs such *akasingolezo* and *Ekiteza* which were crushed and applied in the vagina. Interview with Christine, Naguru, 2015, Akiiki, Ntinda, Kampala, 2015.
[136] She adds that "such herbs were sometimes used by jealous wives in the prevention of the pregnancy of a co-wife." See Okello, "Family Planning in Difficult Times," 234.
[137] See Chapter 2.

with a fake name of a non-existing husband and received the contraceptive pill!"[138] Other women whom I interviewed had a similar experience.[139]

In addition, some girls and women got birth control from clinics where FPAU policies were not enforced because of lack of supervision. While FPAU strongly discouraged its branches from offering birth control to unmarried women and girls, some of its branches in rural Uganda clandestinely offered birth control to unmarried women (most times because they were not aware that it was against FPAU policies). A study done in rural Mbale in 1979 by G.P. Yossa found that unmarried women and girls took advantage of some FPAU clinicians' ignorance about FPAU policies regarding access to birth control. Yossa stated that while "family planning services…[were] intended in theory for the married couples,"[140] in Mbale, a few unmarried women and girls were able to access birth control.[141] However, this practice was not widespread and when found out, the leaders of these branches received a stern warning.

Yossa's study was motivated by, among other reasons, "the increasing percentage of young users of contraceptive techniques who fear or are not allowed to purchase these items freely by the community whose attitude is not favorable.[142] In Mbale, he found that desperate mothers whose daughters fall pregnant sought birth control for other daughters who were not yet pregnant. Yossa met three teenagers all below the age of sixteen. A 14-year-old explained that she "was advised to attend the clinic by her mother" after her sisters fell pregnant. The other two, aged fifteen, "were

[138] Sylvia Tamale, "Controlling Women's Fertility in Uganda," *International Journal of human Rights* 13, no. 24 (2016), 119.
[139] Interviews with Rose, Ntinda Kampala 2015; Christine, Naguru, Kampala, 2015.
[140]Yossa. "Characteristics of Acceptors," *52.*
[141]Yossa who was undertaking a post graduate diploma in public health at the time argued that birth control should be made available to all women. He observed that of the 240 women who attended the clinic, 63.33% were married, 10% were divorced, 20% single and 6.67% widowed. See, Yossa, "Characteristics of Acceptors."
[142] Yossa, "Characteristics of Acceptors," 20.

attending secretarial courses in Mbale and indicated that their friends advised them to attend the clinic to prevent getting unwanted pregnancy."[143]

Yossa stated that access to birth control by unmarried women and girls was limited and FPAU's "fear that widespread free use of contraceptives would [lead to] the development of a promiscuous society"[144] left these at-risk groups with limited options to manage their reproductive health. Yossa was not part of FPAU and there is no evidence that FPAU leaders took his findings into consideration. FPAU's policies, coupled with lack of finances, general economic and political instability, prevented the majority of Ugandan women and girls from accessing birth control.

Conclusion

To mark fifty years of service in Uganda in 2007, the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU) changed its name to Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU) to reflect "the broadening of services delivered by the Association, beyond family planning, to cover the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights."[145] To mark the occasion, its leaders also published a historical account of its activities since 1957. In the section entitled "Troubled Times: 1970-1979," the FPAU leaders wrote that:

> The 1970's will remain etched in the minds of supporters of family planning as the most difficult period…. [Idi Amin] banned family planning, [he] did not accept FPAU to open and run clinics in government hospitals and institutions…the 1970s saw the gains made in the 1960s on the family planning front being eroded systematically and at a very painful and rapid rate…. Indeed, it is during this troubled period the total fertility rate and maternal mortality increased to levels that threatened attainment of safe motherhood and threw the population-economic

[143] Yossa, "Characteristics of Acceptors," 28.
[144] Yossa, "Characteristics of Acceptors," 62.
[145]Daring to Change, Embracing the Future: The Story of the Family Planning Association of Uganda. http://www.rhu.or.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=75

> balance into disarray…. Advocates of family planning remained resilient and refused to allow what they had toiled for over the years to go down the drain. They went underground and continued to offer services to those in need.[146]

While the above account highlights the difficulties FPAU faced during Idi Amin's regime, it masks FPAU's own role in policing women and girls' sexuality and in preventing most women and girls from accessing birth control. While the relationship between Idi Amin, his ministries and FPAU was not without problems and the support from the government was too small to make a huge difference, there was no contradiction between FPAU policies on women and girls' sexual and reproductive rights and those of the Idi Amin's government. While FPAU was under the supervision of government bodies, where it suited them, FPAU leaders defended the association and spoke out against government interference. However, when it came to the issue of provision of birth control, they had no problem enforcing laws requiring women to be married and to have the consent of their husbands in order to access birth control. Contrary to their statement, FPAU made little gains in both the 1960s and 1970s. The reasons for FPAU's failure to reach most Ugandans are complex. They include the general political and economic disturbances of 1970s, lack of financial support coupled with internal mismanagement and the deep-rooted conservative views about sexuality, specifically female sexuality in the organization itself and the Ugandan society at large.

FPAU and the Amin government's policy on birth control had far reaching consequences for women and girls in the 1970s. Some like Kay Adroa turned to backstreet abortionists and lost their lives, others had to rely on other strategies such as forging letters, stealing birth control to manage their sexual and reproductive lives. Although some managed to work around FPAU policies to

[146]Daring to Change, Embracing the Future: The Story of the Family Planning Association of Uganda.

access birth control, the majority of women had no access to birth control. Ironically, by denying women and birth control, FPAU and the Amin government exacerbated some of the problems they were trying to solve, including, abortion.

Chapter 5

'Reservoirs of Venereal Diseases': Women and Medico-moral Discourses in the 1970s

In September 1977, Idi Amin revived a colonial era venereal disease law to tackle what his government believed was a venereal disease epidemic. The Venereal diseases decree gave sweeping powers to medics to detain and treat any individuals suspected of having a venereal disease and to force them to name their sexual partners.[1] While the wording of the decree did not single out women, it soon became clear from comments made by Amin, medics and ordinary Ugandans that women were the primary target. The signing of the decree led to public attacks of women's sexuality which various groups associated with prostitution, abortion, marital disorder, among others. Decker writes that "several days after the decree went into effect, the newspaper [*Voice of Uganda*] published a follow up article encouraging men to identify the women who infected them so that they would not go on "playing sex and supplying the disease unwittingly.""[2] In letters to the editor, men were presented as victims, "lured" and "ambushed" by immoral women who infected them with venereal diseases.[3] The letters made it clear that ""dirty" women spread [venereal diseases]" and men were victims.[4] While only a few letters were published in the

[1] Decree 16, Venereal Diseases Decree, 1977.
[2] Alicia Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War: Subversion, Sabotage, and the Battle to Keep Uganda Clean, 1971-1979" *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010), 511.
[3] Decker, Idi Amin's Dirty War," 510.
[4] Decker, Idi Amin's Dirty War," 511.

mainstream media,[5] the most revealing discussions about female sexuality and venereal diseases took place in medical articles and theses, written by the very people empowered by the Amin government to tackle the epidemic. While all medics were by law required to identify and treat those suspected of being infected, evidence shows that some of the most vocal supporters of the venereal disease decree were graduates of Makerere Medical School's newly created Institute of Public Health.

The medics at the forefront of the 1970s campaign against venereal diseases were products of the Medical School's effort to contain a venereal disease epidemic that was believed to have broken out towards the end of the 1960s. Four years before Amin signed the anti-venereal disease decree, in 1973, O.P. Arya, a venereologist and a member of the Medical School's Department of Preventive Medicine argued that alongside malaria, Tuberculosis and other communicable diseases venereal diseases "should rate among the higher priorities" and thus must be dealt with quickly.[6] He suggested "setting up facilities to train…V.D. auxiliaries as well as giving post graduate training in V.D. for doctors in the future."[7] In reference to the steps being taken by the medics to contain the venereal disease epidemic, he observed that Uganda was "going through a period of 'renaissance' in the campaign against venereal disease."[8] He indicated that in addition to setting up a venereal disease laboratory, the Medical School had expanded its curriculum to train students in venereal diseases.[9] Among these students were medics who were undertaking a post-

[5] The signing of the venereal disease decree was not followed by the same press fanfare as the miniskirt decree. As argued in the introduction, debates about sexuality were limited especially in the main press and by 1977, only the government mouthpiece, *Voice of Uganda,* was operating alongside the Catholic-owned press, *Leadership*.
[6] In 1977 *Voice of Uganda* compared venereal diseases to cancer and Tuberculosis 'Decree Signed' *Voice of Uganda,* September 19, 1977, 3.
[7] O.P. Arya, "Changing Patterns in the Organization of the Venereal Diseases and Treponematoses Service in Uganda. *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* 49, no. 134, 136 (1973), 136.
[8] Arya, "Changing Patterns,"136.
[9] Arya, "Changing Patterns,"136. It is not clear if efforts taken by medics and their findings about venereal disease, some of which were published in reputable local and international journals such as the *East Africa Medical Journal,*

graduate diploma course in public health, under the newly created Department of Preventive Medicine which in 1975 became the Institute of Public Health. It is these students who emerged at the forefront of the fight against venereal diseases in 1970s.

This chapter examines the role of medics (public health officials) in the 1970s anti-immorality campaign. It investigates the campaign against venereal diseases as a political, medico-moral, and epidemiological project, socially constructed, but with real consequences for women. It shows how public health officials' agendas overlapped with the initiatives of moral reformers, leading them to approach the issue of venereal diseases through a gendered lens. While scholars have recently argued that in the late 1960s, as part of "a broader shift within Ugandan medicine," there was recognition that women were not the only group with a high prevalence of venereal diseases,[10] I argue in this chapter that this shift did not extinguish the medico-moral language that portrayed female sexuality as mostly responsible for venereal diseases. In the 1970s, medics used the medico-moral discourse to bring attention to what they perceived to be an epidemic that threatened public health. In the process they helped to make women subjects of bureaucratic regulation and aided the Amin government in its efforts to reform female sexuality. The chapter argues that public health officials' concern about venereal diseases among women mainly reflected their (and the public's) anxieties about new forms of birth control and changing sexual mores, new fashions (miniskirts), and social activities such as frequenting night clubs and bars which, they argued, were responsible for the high prevalence rate of venereal diseases. Although these medics saw their own work as nonpolitical, in their surveys they endorsed conservative views about sexuality and

Makerere Medical Journal and British Journal of Venereal Diseases, had anything to do with the passing of the anti-venereal diseases decree. We do know, however, that some of the medical students they trained to fight against venereal diseases did not only undertake their own studies into venereal diseases, but also worked with the government to contain the epidemic.

[10] Shane Doyle, *Before HIV: Sexuality, Fertility, and Mortality in East Africa, 1900-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 315.

targeted certain groups, which they and the Amin state identified as dangerous to social order. They used a moralistic language, and, in the process, they helped to sustain the perception of venereal diseases as 'illnesses of immorality'[11] and thus contributed to its criminalization. The chapter shows how, by singling out women, medics prevented female patients from seeking treatment, increased self-medication, and shielded men from public discourses on venereal diseases, which reinforced patriarchal control of women.

Scholarship on post-colonial Uganda identifies medics as one of the groups that was heavily affected by the violence of the Amin regime. They were underpaid, lacked equipment and medicine, were forced to perform autopsies, and in some cases were even murdered by Amin's soldiers. Some medics went into exile, joining the expatriate staff who had been expelled by Amin in 1972.[12] Due to insecurity, lack of financial resources and Amin's hostility towards the academic elite, it became difficult for scholars to undertake research in Uganda. After the expulsion of non-Ugandans, some of whom oversaw medical research projects, these projects were either abandoned or relocated to other countries. As a result, scientific publications fell by 90 percent.[13] Recently, scholars have shown how in the absence of expatriates and senior researchers, their Ugandan trainees took over the research and treatment of patients, which they did with little resources.[14] Thus, this chapter also examines how, amidst a perceived venereal disease epidemic, in the absence of equipment, and research funds, medics continued to generate research and to campaign against

[11] This view was held by colonial medical doctors and indigenous authority in colonial Uganda. See Michael W. Tuck, "Venereal Disease, Sexuality and Society in Uganda" in *Sex, Sin and Suffering: Venereal disease and European Society since 1870*, eds. Roger Davidson & Lesley A. Hall (Routledge: London, 2001).
[12] John Iliffe, *East African Doctors: A History of the Modern Profession* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2002); Doyle, *Before HIV;* Alexander Odonga, *The First Fifty Years of Makerere Medical School and the Foundation of the Scientific Medical Education in East Africa* (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1989); Henry Kyemba, *A State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997).
[13] Iliffe, *East African Doctors*, 147.
[14] Marisa Mika, "Fifty Years of Creativity, Crisis, and Cancer in Uganda," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 50, no. 3 (2016): 395-413.

venereal diseases. Most importantly, it shows how, like their predecessors in colonial Uganda who were motivated by the politics of morality rather than objective science.[15] Despite unreliable diagnostic measures, medics in the 1970s singled out female sexuality as a problem and described women as "reservoirs of venereal diseases." Through their work medics managed to create long-lasting narratives about venereal diseases and sexuality, and careers for themselves. Notably, one of the medics involved in Idi Amin's anti-venereal disease campaign, Jackson Kakembo, currently works as a medical expert helping the government to identify and prosecute 'sexual deviancy.'[16]

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines the response to venereal diseases in colonial Uganda and the period immediately after independence. It shows how colonial officials, missionaries and African chiefs used a medico-moral language to express their fears about loss of authority over women, population decline and moral degeneration. The section provides background for understanding the medico-moral politics in Idi Amin's Uganda. It establishes continuity in discourses about venereal diseases and helps us see why despite finding venereal diseases in other populations, medics in the 1970s singled out women as "permanent reservoirs of venereal diseases." The second section examines the role played by medics in the campaign against venereal diseases in Idi Amin's Uganda. It shows that medics like Kakembo used their studies to call attention to the dangers of female sexuality and venereal diseases and the lack of personnel and medical equipment to treat venereal diseases. Through their work, medics created

[15] While commenting on colonial medicine in Uganda and Tanzania, Shane Doyle has stated that "Medical interventions were frequently shaped by racial or political rather than objectives, scientific motivations, and their consequences could be destabilizing rather than hegemonic. Moreover, doctors were not always blind to the limits of their understanding of indigenous societies." See Shane Doyle, "Social Disease and Social science: The Intellectual Influence of non-medical Research on Policy and Practice in the Colonial Medical Services in Tanganyika and Uganda" in *Beyond the State, Colonial Medical Services in British Africa*, ed. Anna Greenwood (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 126.

[16] https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/12/dignity-debased/forced-anal-examinations-homosexuality-prosecutions

careers for themselves, but in the process contributed to the public perception of venereal diseases not just as a *medical* condition, but also as a *moral* disease. The section shows how despite identifying other groups as contributing to the venereal disease epidemic, medics scapegoated women (mostly working women and single women) as carriers of venereal diseases. Like the editors of *Leadership* who presented abortion as a female problem,[17] medics who were almost all male, shielded men's behavior from discussions about venereal diseases and contributed to the perception that female sexuality endangered public health and morality.

'Diseases of immorality:' a history of misdiagnosis and moral panic over venereal diseases in Uganda up to 1970

Considered a moral disease, an outcome of Westernization, venereal diseases were one of the most diagnosed and researched groups of diseases in both colonial and post-colonial Uganda. Medics and colonial officials believed that syphilis, first observed in Uganda in 1863, was so widespread that it threatened to wipe out entire populations. Thought to be the cause of infertility and infant mortality, colonial officials and medics were so concerned about the effects and spread of syphilis that they commissioned a venereal diseases expert, Colonel Lambkin, a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps, to investigate its prevalence in Uganda.[18] In his report, Colonel Lambkin painted a bleak picture. He reported that syphilis, if not contained, would lead to the extinction of Baganda.[19]

[17] Chapter 2.
[18] According to W. D. Foster, an article was published in the medical journal the *Lancet* declared that "the entire population is in danger of being exterminated by syphilis in a very few years." W.D. Foster, *The Early History of Scientific Medicine in Uganda* (Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam. East African Literature Bureau, 1970), 79.
[19] Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills. Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 132.

Lambkin blamed Westernization and Christianity for the scourge. Quoting the Anglican missionary and anthropologist, John Roscoe, and Buganda intellectual and prime minister, Apollo Kagwa,[20] Lambkin blamed missionaries who had campaigned against the enslavement of women, polygamy and severe punishment for sexual crimes, stating that "the resulting emancipation of women had led to sexual promiscuity and the spread of syphilis."[21] Colonel Lambkin identified the reason for the epidemic as dangerous out of control 'female passions.'[22] The problem as summarized by Megan Vaughan was that, "under traditional rule, these dangerous 'passions' had been kept under 'surveillance'—now with the coming of Christianity, the abolition of severe penalties for adultery, and the opening up of the country to traders from the East Coast, there was no longer any effective controls over 'female passions.'"[23] Lambkin's observations would go on to define discourses about venereal diseases throughout the colonial period and even after independence. Linking venereal diseases directly to immorality due to loss of chiefly/male authority, the main question that guided medical research and diagnosis in the colonial period and the period following independence was "*who* rather than *what* was responsible for the illness."[24]

While the church, colonial governments and medics concurred with Lambkin's assessment that uninhibited female sexuality was to blame for the spread of syphilis, they disagreed on the underlying causes, that is, Christianity and Westernization.[25] Bishop Tucker, the leader of

[20] John Roscoe authored several books including *The Baganda; An Account of their Native Customs and Beliefs,* 1911, *The Bakitara or Banyoro: The First part of the Report of the Mackie Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa*, 1923. Apollo Kagwa wrote *The Customs of Buganda* in 1934.
[21] Foster, *The Early History*, 81.
[22] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills*, 133.
[23] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills*, 133.
[24] John Orley, "Indigenous Concepts of Disease and their Interaction with Scientific Medicine" in *Health in Tropical Africa during the colonial period. Based on the Proceedings of a symposium held at New College, Oxford 21-23 March 1977*, eds., E.E Sabbe-Clare, D.J. Bradley, and K. Kirkwood (Oxford. Clarendon Press 1980), 135.
[25] Vaughan states that "Although there was a general consensus among commentators that female sexuality was responsible for the syphilis problem in Buganda, the underlying causes of the 'unleashing' of this sexuality were disputed in missionary and medical circles," Vaughan. *Curing their Ills*, 133-134.

Anglicans defended Christianity and instead "blamed the government for breaking down the old feudal system which led to moral laxity."[26] The missionary medic, Dr. Albert Cook, defended Christianity by blaming civilization, specifically the railway which brought "large numbers of small Indian traders….possessing very little morals at all."[27] He accused Lambkin of exaggerating figures and blamed the spread of syphilis on "the entire absence of a national conscience against sins to immorality."[28]

It is important to note that Colonel Lambkin partly based his observations on Cook's own research about the high prevalence of venereal diseases among the Baganda. According to Foster, in Cook's clinic in Mengo, "Syphilis was a common cause of admission in 1903 amounting to about 10 percent of patients."[29] Believing that syphilis was a result of immorality, in addition to injections, Cook subjected his patients to spiritual treatment, which involved attendance of religious services every morning and evening. Even after it became clear in 1940s that what Cook and others thought was syphilis was in fact yaws and endemic syphilis, Cook continued to argue that syphilis was widespread. According to Foster, "Cook's epidemiological notions were led astray by his missionary's keen nose for sin."[30] A high diagnosis of syphilis helped missionary medics like Cook to justify their work to their sponsors in Britain.

For the colonial government, scholars have argued that the moralization of venereal diseases and the pathologizing of African sexuality was part of a larger effort to construct the "African" as a colonial subject.[31] Vaughan argues that the 'medico-moral' language used in discussions about

[26] Foster, *The Early History*, 81.
[27] Foster, *The Early History*, 81.
[28] Foster, *The Early History*, 81.
[29] Foster, *The Early History*, 50.
[30] Foster, *The Early History*, 83.
[31] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills*.

venereal diseases, the singling out of women and the treatment of their sexuality as dangerous show continuation with the metropole's anxieties about venereal diseases and the sexuality of women.[32] However, she states that despite the influence of the metropole, "the medical discourse on sexuality in Britain was not merely transferred but also transformed by colonial circumstances."[33] In particular, colonial officials were concerned that "the populations under their control were undergoing a crisis of biological reproduction—they were simply not reproducing themselves at a sufficient rate to ensure the economic viability of the colonies."[34] Other scholars have also argued that concern about syphilis was driven by anxieties about the colonial economy. Nakanyike Musisi argues that panic over Ganda extinction due to syphilis was tied to the perceived role of Ganda women in the colonial empire.[35] This is supported by Carol Summers who writes that a "declining population meant a labor shortage capable of threatening the prosperity and viability of the protectorate."[36]

However, as argued by Vaughan, the medico-moral discourse about female sexuality was produced in dialogue with African elders (indigenous authorities) who had their own agendas. She states that "the problem of sexually transmitted diseases in colonial Africa created a direct, biomedical interest in African sexuality and a discourse on that sexuality which was produced not only 'about,' but in dialogue with, certain groups of Africans."[37] In Buganda, William Tuck who has investigated the long history of venereal diseases in Uganda states that "as early as 1899, they [Ganda chiefs]

[32] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills,* 132.
[33] Vaughan, Curing *their Ills,* 132.
[34] Vaughan, Curing their Ills, 141.
[35] Nakanyike Musisi, "The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945" in *Women in African Colonial Histories,* eds. Susan Geiger, Nakanvike Musisi and Jean Allman (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).
[36] According to Summers, it was from Buganda that the British colonialists hoped to get agents to rule the rest of Uganda. Carol Summers, "Intimate Colonialism: The Imperial Production of Reproduction in Uganda, 1907-1925," *Signs* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1991), 788.
[37] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills,* 129-130.

saw uncontrolled women as a threat to their society and undoubtably also to their position in that society, and thus they took steps to ensure that women's sexuality was carefully guarded."[38] Between 1902 and 1904, they passed laws to prevent women from running away from their husbands, and against abortion, fornication and rape.[39] They passed laws to prevent women from fraternizing with foreign men, including Europeans[40] and in 1913, they worked with the colonial government to pass an anti-venereal disease law. In Buganda, in addition to rounding up their subjects for mass treatment,[41] Ganda authority "diverted tribute labour of their peasant clients to building the CMS hospital Mulago hospital, which was to include two isolation wards for 'males and females of the better classes' suffering from what were now termed in official reports 'contagious venereal diseases.'"[42] In Western Uganda's Bunyoro, "chiefs were also very anxious about the 'ravages of venereal disease' and were 'prepared to offer every inducement within their power to Government to commence an anti-venereal scheme."[43] In 1911, the chiefs pleaded for British intervention to alleviate the epidemic which they argued threatened the Nyoro population.[44]

In the mid-1940s, syphilis and gonorrhea were rapidly spreading and threatening to incapacitate servicemen.[45] To mitigate the situation, the indigenous government worked with the colonial government to prevent Ganda women from having sexual relations with European (Italian)

[38] Michael William Tuck, "Syphilis, Sexuality, and Social Control: A History of Venereal Diseases in Uganda," (PhD dissertation, Northwestern, University 1997), 89.
[39] Tuck, "Syphilis, Sexuality, and Social Control," 91.
[40] Tuck, "Syphilis, Sexuality, and Social Control," 88.
[41] According to Shane Doyle, Buganda in early colonial period relied on "a combination of morality campaigns and coercive mass treatments" but mass treatments were discarded in 1920s after the British feminists protested criminalizing STDs and prostitution. See Doyle, *Before HIV*, 313.
[42] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills,* 136.
[43] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills,* 136.
[44] Maryinez Lyons, "Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the History of Uganda," *Genitourin Med,* 70 (1994), 139. Throughout the colonial period, Nyoro elders continued to argue that sexual immorality threatened the Nyoro population. See Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda 1860-1955* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).
[45] Vaughan, *Curing their Ills,* 145.

Prisoners of War in Entebbe.[46] Colonial officials passed legislation to prevent Ganda women from travelling to Mombasa, fearing that, the women who they believed were prostitutes, would spread gonorrhea among servicemen.[47] More legislation was passed by indigenous governments with the approval of the colonial government to prevent young unmarried women from "seeking employment which would keep them away from their parents' homes at night."[48] This was considered a war time measure to prevent the spread of venereal diseases among troops.[49]

With women increasingly being targeted by medics, the colonial and indigenous governments, it is not surprising that during the colonial period and after independence, the public came to see women as responsible for spreading venereal diseases. Even when the laws were not being enforced, their very existence continued to haunt women, who intermittently found themselves being accosted in public places by strangers who accused them of spreading venereal diseases. For example, Doyle writes that the laws passed to prevent the employment of women:

> remained largely quiescent until 1951 when male fears about the increase in female industrial employment resulted in a generalized assault on independent women in Buganda. Women travelling alone to Kampala were removed from buses and forced to return to the countryside, others were randomly arrested on the city's streets and carried off to be tested for STDs, and a number of schools were unable to open for the new academic year as so many unmarried school teachers had to be charged with prostitution.[50]

He adds that after protests from Mothers Union and the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, the new governor, Andrew Cohen, "reassured the pressure groups that harassment of women by the police would soon be brought under control."[51] According to Doyle, Governor Cohen never

[46] Uganda National Archives, Entebbe (hereafter UNA), Secretariat Minute Papers F.23/127/23, 1944.
[47] UNA, Secretariat Minute Papers No. C. 2724/1, "Prostitutes. Exclusion of African Prostitutes from Mombasa."
[48] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 314.
[49] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 314.
[50] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 314.
[51] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 314.

managed to intervene because the 1954 Kabaka crisis undermined his authority. As a result, sporadic attacks against women who were believed to be responsible for, among others, spreading venereal diseases continued.

Meanwhile, among medics, although by mid-1940s, it had become clear that what was thought to be venereal syphilis was yaws and endemic syphilis,[52] medics continued to pathologize female sexuality. Medics in the 1950s still used the unreliable Kahn and Wasserman test on all women attending antenatal clinic in Kampala. According to Doyle, the test "produced false negatives where patients had been recently inoculated or in cases of yaws, endemic syphilis, leprosy, malaria, anemia, tropical ulcer, relapsing fever, trypanosomiasis, and ironically pregnancy."[53] The moralization of venereal diseases and pathologizing of women continued until the late 1960s, when medical researchers began producing scientific papers which identified diverse groups as having a high venereal diseases incidence. According to Doyle, in the late 1960s, there was "recognition that prostitutes, and barmaids were not the only social groups with high STD prevalence. The police, army, truck and bus drivers, and university students were all identified as having particularly high levels of infection."[54] He states that the change in the medics' outlook was part of "a broader shift within Ugandan medicine which endeavored to explain variations in a wide range of (medical) conditions… on the basis of geographical and ethnic differences. Researchers therefore focused less on the moral causes of STD infection…."[55] However, as I will show below, this change did not last long. A few years later in the 1970s when medics and the state believed

[52] And that malnutrition, malaria, pneumonia, meningitis, and other parasitic diseases were responsible for the high child mortality. See Doyle, *Before HIV*, 307.
[53] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 306.
[54] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 315.
[55] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 315.

that Uganda was once again witnessing another epidemic, medics reverted to earlier tropes about female sexuality and adopted the medico-moral language to describe the epidemic.

The role of medics in moralizing venereal diseases in Idi Amin's Uganda

In 1977 when Idi Amin signed the anti-venereal disease decree, he empowered medics to identify, detain and treat those suspected of having venereal diseases. Some of the medics who welcomed the decree and participated in enforcing it were graduates of the Makerere Medical School's Institute of Public Health. Public health as a profession or medical specialty did not become popular until the 1960s. This is because in the colonial period, public health was perceived as 'political,' a coercive mode of medical practice, and Ugandan medics perceived it as offering them little in terms of career growth. After acquiring a diploma in public health in England in 1951, Dr. N.N. Kanyarutoke, who was one of the few Ugandan medics to go abroad for further studies in 'tropical medicine and hygiene,' or 'public health' refused to return to Uganda upon completion of the course. Odonga states that this was because "he was not satisfied with only public health qualifications" and "he would gain nothing if he returned only with it."[56] Although Kanyarutoke did finally return to Uganda where he worked as a principal medical officer in the Ministry of Health and the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization's point of contact in Uganda in the 1960s,[57] his reluctance to return to Uganda provides a window into the state of the profession of public health.

[56] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*, 114.
[57] FAO referred to Kanyarutoke as their point of contact in Uganda. http://www.fao.org/3/21453e/21453E15.htm, http://www.fao.org/3/31879e/31879E12.htm

Despite their role in containing and eradicating diseases, Ugandans associated public health officials with coercion. They came to see public health officials as the embodiment of the colonial government's highhandedness, disrespect of traditions and intrusion into people's private lives. A graduate in the public health who worked as a public health inspector in Northern Uganda stated that because of the coercive nature of public health, communities retained a negative image of public health officials. He quotes incidences where communities were forced to build separate kitchens, raised cooking places and latrines. Ugandans argued that building separate kitchens would take warmth away from them at night. Millet eating communities objected to raised kitchens because they needed to sit on the ground to be able to mingle/stir the starchy millet bread. Some rejected the idea of a latrine, stating that 'only animals defecate in one place.'[58] Public health officials came to be seen as government functionaries whose job was to convince communities to abandon what they considered sensible ways of life for an incomprehensible 'western' way of life. As a result, in some parts of Uganda "where latrines were provided for fear of being prosecuted, labels were often written on many latrines reading "Ot pa dakatal oil paco," meaning "The house for the health inspector." They never used these latrines."[59] When the government passed sanitary bylaws to force people to construct latrines, they renamed latrines "Bylaws."[60]

Although medics were often called upon by the colonial government to contain epidemics, the Makerere Medical school was reluctant to teach public health to students. In 1928, the first principal of the Medical school and medical superintendent of Mulago hospital, Dr. H.B. Owen, refused to include preventive medicine in the school curriculum because "hygiene and sanitation

[58] Louis Ochero, "An Assessment of the Performance of the Home and Environment Improvement Program in Uganda: A case Study." (diss., Reading University, 1975), 14.
[59] Ochero, "An Assessment," 18.
[60] Ochero, "An Assessment," 18.

was still at its rudimentary stage in the country…"[61] Although lack of resources may have played a role in this decision, by reducing preventive medicine to hygiene and sanitation, the leaders of the Medical school helped to strengthen the belief that preventive medicine was not as important as curative medicine, and therefore not a glamorous, fulfilling profession. It was only in the 1930s after long negotiations among the Board of Directors of Medical Services in East Africa, that medical students began studying preventive medicine alongside curative medicine. In 1959, the department of Preventive Medicine was established and in 1965, a graduate of public health, Dr. J.S.W. Lutwama, became the first African graduate of Makerere Medical School to head the department (of Preventive Medicine).[62] In 1969, the department became one of the first to offer a post graduate course (in public health). These developments coincided with increased collaboration with international agencies like WHO, FAO and UNICEF which sponsored various research projects in the Medical School. Evidence shows that these international organizations which needed medics with training in public health even sponsored some of the medics to do a post graduate course in public health. For example, Louis Ochero was given a fellowship by WHO to study public health.[63] It is therefore possible that the involvement of these organizations and the promise of a rewarding career contributed to the popularity of the profession of public health.[64] The attainment of a certificate, diploma or degree in public health opened up opportunities for

[61] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years,* 121.
[62] He was a senior lecturer in preventive medicine and one of the only three Makerere Medical School graduates out of the staff of fifty-eight. In 1968, he became the dean of the Medical School, a position he held until 1975 when he became the vice chancellor of Makerere University. Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*
[63] Ochero, "An Assessment"
[64] A 1985 assessment on the state of medical care in Uganda noted that public health/ preventive stated that "doctors have tended to gravitate to the cities to open private practice, or to emigrate to other countries. In fact, our friends in preventive medicine, public health and social pediatrics have waved this banner for years and now wave it with the support of WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the IMF." William Parson, "Medical Education in Uganda today" in *Crisis in Uganda. The Breakdown of Health Services* eds. Cole P. Doge and Paul D. Wiebe (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Frankfurt. Pergamon Press, 1985), 251.

medics to advance their careers as administrators, policy makers and researchers, and to work with major international organizations to effect change in whole populations.

In 1969, the department admitted its first cohort for a post graduate diploma in public health. Introduced at a time when the majority of students aspired to go for further studies, which they envisaged would lead to well-paid work near or at the top of their profession,[65] the post-graduate course in public health was welcomed by medics who wanted to obtain post-graduate certificates.[66] According to Alexander Odonga, the second Makerere Medical School graduate to be appointed Dean of the Medical School, although medics wanted to go for further studies, until the 1950s, few Ugandan doctors were awarded scholarships to study abroad.[67] He adds that going for post graduate studies was "a thing that was not talked about or even dreamed of" by many Makerere Medical school students as they could not afford to fund their own studies. [68] After years of negotiations with university officials to begin post graduate courses, in the 1960s, the Medical School was allowed to start post graduate studies to meet the demand from medics who could not afford to travel abroad. The Medical School began offering a Master's in medicine (MMed) in 1967 and two years later a post graduate diploma in public health. It was some of these graduates of the public health program who went on to implement some of the government policies on venereal diseases.

[65]A study about Makerere students in the 1960s found that students were highly motivated, the majority students aspired to go abroad for further study which they envisaged would lead to "important, well paid work at or near the top of the chosen profession" J.E. Goldthorpe, *An African Elite. Makerere College Students 1922-1960* (East African Institute of Social Research, Oxford University Press, 1965), 57-58.

[66] Before this, medics who wanted to obtain additional or post graduate training in public health had to go abroad to the London School of Hygiene and other institutions. A total of 147 East African medical doctors were trained at London School of Hygiene over a period of 25 years between 1935-1960. See John Farley. *Bilharzia, A History of Imperial Tropical Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[67] This was because the colonial government did not have the funds to send doctors for further studies.

[68] Odonga, *The First Fifty Years*, 132.

By the time Amin came to power in 1971, medics from the department of Preventive Medicine were already strategizing on how to make public health a vital component of the country's medical care system. While addressing the Annual Scientific Conference of the East African Medical Research Council, Dr. J.H. Gesa, a member of staff in the department of Preventive Medicine used the opportunity to highlight the importance of preventive medicine. He observed that:

> In most countries of the world when health services have been considered, emphasis has traditionally been placed on one aspect, namely the curative services. We know very well today that this approach is not correct…we…need to combat the numerous factors which come into play in the causation of ill health long before the onset of overt disease. Among these are environmental factors which may be physical, biological, or social.[69]

Dr. Gesa welcomed the Amin regime which he saw as a "a fresh beginning, free from the 'vagaries of politics and other weaknesses of our society.'"[70] When he was appointed Minister of Health by Amin, Dr. Gesa promised a "purified health service" that was "rural" and "accessible to all people."[71] Although the economic collapse following the 1972 expulsion of Asians and other non-Ugandans ended Gesa's hope of establishing a vibrant medical system in which preventive medicine played a central role, the profession of public health continued to be embraced by medics. In 1975, Dr. Lutwama became the vice chancellor of Makerere University and the Department of Preventive Medicine became the Institute of Public Health. However, because of the economic breakdown, the institute, which had no buildings or budget, continued to operate under the Medical School.[72]

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[69] "Speech by the Permanent/Chief medical officer Dr. J.H. Gesa, at the Opening of the Annual Scientific Conference of the East African Medical Research Council on Monday, 25th January 1971" *East Africa Medical Journal* 48, no. 8 (August 1971).
[70] Iliffe, *East African Doctors,* 145.
[71] Iliffe, *East African Doctors,* 145.
[72] Iliffe, *East African Doctors.*

The development of the Institute of Public Health in the 1970s went hand in hand with the perception that there was a public health and a moral crisis caused by the venereal diseases. Studies show that while respiratory infections were the number one cause of hospital admissions, followed by digestive disorders, anemia and tetanus, in both government and mission hospitals,[73] there was also an increase in cases of venereal diseases among outpatients from the mid-1960s.[74] In government and mission hospitals, venereal disease cases increased from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s.[75] In mid-1970s, just as the Institute of Public Health was being inaugurated, medics observed that the prevalence rate had again increased.

The research produced by the graduates of the Institute reflects its large efforts to play a key role not only in producing scientific knowledge about treatment and prevention of venereal diseases but also in changing the behavior of Ugandans. Ugandan medical and public health personnel in the 1960s and the 1970s were increasingly becoming frustrated that despite the wide range of curative services they offered to patients in hospitals and clinics, more people were getting sick. It was not enough to treat people, they needed to change their behavior. The graduates of the Institute of Public Health did not only believe in scientific medicine to eradicate venereal diseases but also in social and legislative action. They believed that eradicating diseases required the toughest measures. They did not just stop at producing research about venereal diseases, they worked with the Amin government to monitor the behavior of Ugandans and treat venereal diseases.

[73] Kanti M. Patel and S.K. Lwanga, "A Study of Medical admissions to Mulago Hospital," *East Africa Medical Journal* 48, no.2 (Feb 1971).
[74] Maryinez Lyons, "Medicine and Mortality; A Review of Response to Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Uganda in the Twentieth century" in *Histories of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Afric*a eds. Philip W. Setel, Milton Lewis and Maryinez Lyons (London: Greenwood Press, 1999).
[75] Doyle, *Before HIV,* 362.

One of the graduates of the institute was Dr. Kakembo, the first Uganda Police Force Director of Medical Services. Although Kakembo operated an understaffed and ill-equipped medical department that oversaw the treatment of policemen and women and their families, he described his work as rewarding.[76] Established in 1960s, the Uganda Police Medical Service was run by nursing officers, who were trained as police officers upon recruitment. In 1974, Kakembo, was appointed as the service's first medical officer. He was assisted by one doctor and several nursing officers. Kakembo had been working for the police for three years when he joined the Medical School's post-graduate diploma in public health. As a requirement for the attainment of a diploma in public health, in October 1977, almost a month after Amin signed the anti-venereal disease decree empowering medics and institutions like the police to fight against immorality, he undertook a study of venereal diseases among policemen and women.

His study was partly inspired by the recurring venereal disease infections among the policemen and women under his care. During his research, he was supported by both Uganda Police Force officials and the Institute of Public Health. The Uganda Police Force provided him with police officers who were tasked with ensuring that all police officers not on duty reported to Kakembo's clinic. The Institute of Public Health provided equipment, two clerks and a technician to collect and analyze samples.[77] While the clerks interviewed officers and filled in the questionnaires, the technician swabbed patients and collected blood. Policemen and women were lined up and taken into a room where after being questioned, their genitals were inspected, "squeezed "for discharge

[76]Jackson M. Kakembo, *"*A Study of the Prevalence and Incidence of Venereal Diseases in the Uganda Police Community*"* (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1978), 12
[77] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 13

and swabbed. While blood was collected from every tenth person, all pregnant policewomen had their blood drawn.[78] Notably, high ranking police officers were excluded from his study sample.

Of the 485 policemen and 59 policewomen he examined, Kakembo found a prevalence rate of 4.8% and 4.6% of gonorrhoea and syphilis respectively among policemen and 23.7% and 3.4% among policewomen. His most important finding was that policewomen had a higher prevalence rate compared to policemen and that the prevalence of venereal diseases was high among single women compared to married women.[79] Kakembo admitted that his study had some serious flaws. He acknowledged that the majority of policemen had sought treatment before his study, and the methods he and others used to diagnose venereal diseases were not ""very practical," especially when it came to women, with every suspicious case that involved discharge labelled "gonococcal infection." Nevertheless, he went ahead and stated confidently that "the female population within the police forms a permanent reservoir of gonorrhea."[80] He also stated that "82% of all venereal disease is contracted from prostitutes who could be street girls, barmaids, purported girlfriends or even open door prostitutes."[81] Kakembo was not the only medic to label girlfriends and bar maids as prostitutes. A study in the *Makerere Medical Journal* published in 1979, two years after the passage of the anti-venereal disease decree,

> concluded that bar maids were "great disseminators of STDs." The study suggested that disease prevalence was highest among women who worked in bars that sold Western drinks. Such women, the authors concluded, were "prostitute incognito." Brewers of local spirits, however, had low infection rates because they were in stable marriages and worked out of their homes.[82]

[78] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 13-14.
[79] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 31
[80] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 31.
[81] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 31.
[82] Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War," 511.

Such conclusions were loaded with meaning. Ugandans associated urban, unmarried, and working women with prostitution.[83] They were also associated with foreign men ('imperialists'), who were in turn thought to be carriers of venereal diseases.[84] As a result, as stated by Decker, "women associated with "imperialist influences" were also imagined to be [venereal] disease carriers."[85]

Although the measures outlined in the anti-venereal diseases decree were already too intrusive, some Ugandans felt that the measures in place did not go far enough. Decker states that after the signing of the decree, the press published a letter that singled out prostitutes as carriers of diseases, and blamed divorced women for spreading venereal diseases. The writer proposed that all unmarried women and working women be forced to attend venereal diseases clinics and be given certificates 'of fitness' and that unmarried women and girls be sent to rehabilitation camps.[86]

Similarly, some medics felt that the measures in place were not enough to deter Ugandans from engaging in risky sexual practices. For example, while welcoming the legislation against venereal diseases, Kakembo stated that, although the existing legislation established responsibility, it was not enough to eradicate venereal diseases. He argued that "statutory means to control venereal diseases should be almost mandatory in the case of syphilis and rigorous for gonorrhea…[and should cover] notification, contact-tracing, antenatal examination, medical examinations required before visa and employment."[87] He called upon the government to regularly check "prostitutes and

[83] Christine Obbo, *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence*. (London: Zed Press, 1980).
[84] While commenting on the newly passed anti-venereal disease decree, an editorial in *Voice of Uganda* stated that venereal diseases were brought to Uganda by "English men" and that when Buganda elders put in place laws in 1913 to tackle the epidemic, "the British colonial government in Uganda did their best to render that Buganda law impotent." It added that "venereal diseases "killed off thousands of people without the British colonial masters lifting a finger to combat that disease." 'Decree Signed' *Voice of Uganda,* September 19, 1977, 3.
[85] Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War," 511.
[86] Decker, "Idi Amin's Dirty War," 511.
[87] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence,*"* 35.

homosexuals." [88] He called on health officials and police officers to "comb suspected areas" and arrest those who were infected. He called for the prohibition of sale of antibiotics and self-medication and treatment by individuals who were not licensed health officials and physicians. [89]

Kakembo's recommendations and actions went beyond the existing government recommendations. Although not stipulated in the law, after interviewing his subjects, Kakembo forwarded the names and badge numbers of those who were found to be infected to their superiors.[90] The majority of those infected were women. We do not know if any were in fact suspended, but we know that the 1977 decree did not oblige medical officers to report those suspected of having venereal diseases to their employers. Medics were supposed to detain, treat them, and compel them to provide the names of those who infected them and bring them along for treatment. However, as argued in the introduction, the Amin government gave overzealous conservatives opportunities to enforce their will on others. As the head of the police's medical services, Kakembo used his discretionary power to punish policewomen and men by forwarding their names to their superiors. Although he stated that he did not include the diagnosis in the information he passed on to the police leaders, it was obvious that everyone on the list had a venereal disease. The only thing they did not know was whether it was gonorrhea or syphilis.

Medics proposed drastic measures, which would overwhelmingly affect women, because they were convinced that the sexual practices of women threatened not just public health but also public morality. In their studies, medics, some of whom were not even investigating women, focused their commentary on women's sexual behavior. For example, in his study of venereal diseases

[88] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence,*"* 35.
[89] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence,*"* 35.
[90]Although the actual diagnosis was not included in the information forwarded to their superiors, it was made clear that they were infected with venereal diseases. Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence."

among women in Jinja, Dr. Nyanzi blamed contraceptives which he argued not only "contributed to the increase in casual sexual relationships by removing the fear of getting pregnant,"[91] but also permitted "promiscuity and spread of gonorrhea."[92] He concluded that gonorrhea was lowest among stay-at-home housewives, more prevalent in married working women, and highest in single unemployed women. He recommended pre-employment and pre-marital screenings to curb the spread of venereal diseases and to ensure accountability. If enforced, these recommendations would have overwhelmingly affected women, who would be refused work or found unfit to marry. In fact, in Jinja, where Nyanzi carried out his study, scholars show that in the 1950s, the African council voted to refuse the employment of women, whom they argued would become sexually promiscuous.[93] Two decades later, medics like Nyanzi were still promoting the same narrative; that working women and single women were a danger to society and their sexuality needed to be monitored.

Although studies done in the 1960s and even in the 1970s indicated that venereal diseases were prevalent in various populations including men,[94] medics continued to blame women and especially urban women for the spread of venereal diseases. For example, Dr. Wandira, who studied urethritis among men in Jinja used his study to chastise women and girls whom he stated were out of control. Wandira stated that because of the "difficulty in finding (urethritis) among the females, who unfortunately are the main reservoirs of the infection, the survey was done on male patients only."[95] Despite not being able to examine women, he used his study to promote narratives that portrayed women as responsible for the venereal disease epidemic. Medics like Wandira based

[91] J.S Nyanzi, "The Prevalence of Gonorrhea among Women of Jinja, Uganda" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1977), 6.
[92] Nyanzi, "The Prevalence of Gonorrhea,"7.
[93] Christine Obbo, *African Women*, W. Elkan, *The Employment of Women in Uganda* (EAISR, 1955).
[94] Doyle, *Before HIV*.
[95] S.N. Wandira, "Urethritis in Jinja" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1971), 2

their observations on studies done by other medics such as Dr. Rutasitara who found a venereal disease prevalence rate of 33% among bar maids in Mombasa, Kenya. Dr. Rutasitara, another graduate of public health, argued that the rapid urbanization in East Africa had culminated into the rise of 'problem groups' such as prostitutes and bar girls. He blamed low lights in bars and miniskirts which encouraged casual sex and led to the spread of venereal diseases.[96]

The medics' narratives about female sexuality and venereal diseases fit into ongoing public debates about women's sexuality which the church, the Amin state, and ordinary Ugandans believed threatened public health and public morality. But medics also had other reasons for focusing on female sexuality. In addition to the fact that uninhibited female sexuality has since colonialism been identified by medics as responsible for venereal disease epidemics, medics needed to justify their findings which they hoped to use to leverage support from the government. Medics went to great lengths to show that venereal diseases were a threat to public health to leverage funds from the government. For example, Kakembo stated that he found fewer cases of venereal diseases because of lack of equipment and personnel. He argued that the results "would have been more impressive if all the diagnostic procedures could have been performed on the spot."[97] He added that "proper laboratory diagnosis is not only beneficial to the patients but a source of considerable satisfaction to all concerned."[98] He made clear his intentions by stating that "while this study is regarded as an academic exercise, for my diploma in public health, at the same time, I view it as a study from which the medical personnel working in the police force in general, and the high police authorities in particular can learn about the weak areas in our medical establishment."[99] Kakembo

[96] W. K. Rutasitara, "Mombasa Bar Girls. A study of Prostitution and Venereal Disease in a Kenyan Sea Port." (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1970).
[97] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 30.
[98] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 31.
[99] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence,"12.

called upon his superiors to buy the needed equipment and to recruit medical technicians to ensure proper laboratory diagnosis.

Evidence suggests that some medics were worried that some of their colleagues did not believe that there was a venereal disease epidemic and they felt that the cases of venereal diseases did not justify the drastic measures being taken to contain the diseases. For example, Konde-Lule who examined syphilis among pregnant mothers attending Mulago recounted a story about a colleague, an obstetrician in Mulago, who insisted that there were no syphilis cases in the ante-natal clinic he oversaw. The obstetrician is said to have stated that "the problem is not as big as some people are trying to say. The very few cases that are detected by our screening tests are always treated and none of the babies delivered in this hospital ever gets congenital syphilis."[100] Such declarations worried medics like Konde-Lule and Kakembo who believed that the incidence of venereal diseases was high but the lack of diagnostic tools and trained staff made it appear to be low.[101] While it is clear from the above story that some medics disagreed with their colleagues about the prevalence of venereal diseases among women, there is no evidence that they publicly contested the gendered narrative about venereal diseases. Although some medics like Konde-Lule did mention that venereal diseases were present among other population, they made no attempt to counteract the gender stereotypes being promoted in the press and in medical academic writing.[102] Instead they continued to make a case for high prevalence among women. Their findings were supported by their tutors and senior medical researchers (venereologists) such as O.P. Arya who believed that venereal diseases were a threat. When pressed for statistics to support their claims,

[100] Y.K. Konde-Lule, "Syphilis in Pregnant Mothers at Mulago Hospital" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1977), 3.
[101] Konde-Lule, insisted that there was a venereal disease epidemic, that many cases treated in private clinics, although he himself did not have a private clinic. Interview with Dr. Konde-Lule, Ntinda, 2016.
[102] He stated that syphilis was not only present among mothers, but also among prisoners, school children and Kampala urban dwellers.

they attributed the lack of "reliable figures on the incidence of venereal diseases throughout the country," to "lack of diagnostic facilities and adequately trained staff."[103] They speculated that 1% of Ugandans had venereal diseases.[104]

Conclusion

Epidemiological studies done in the 1970s fed into the prevailing discourses that women's sexuality was dangerous to both the public and private moral order. They erased male sexuality and the behavior of men from the discussion about venereal diseases, although as stated by Shane Doyle, men did not only maintain a risky lifestyle but "formed the majority of patients seeking treatment for all STDs."[105] Although there was a male STD clinic in Mulago, men usually sought treatment earlier and in private clinics where they escaped the gaze of the moralist doctors. Often, they also sought treatment without informing their wives, girlfriends, and mistresses.[106] According to Doyle "in 1970, only one in six male patients at Mulago was accompanied by their wives or girlfriends."[107] In cases where men did take their wives to the clinics or invited doctors to come to their homes to treat them and their wives, they would often instruct their doctors not to reveal to their wives the nature of the illness.[108] Medics often agreed to conceal the disease from the wives. This way, men were able to conceal their infidelity. A former police officer who contracted a venereal disease in the 1970s explained to me during an interview that when men found out that they had contracted a venereal disease, they abandoned all their lovers without letting them know

[103] Arya, "Changing Patterns," 135.
[104] Konde-Lule, "Syphilis in Pregnant Mothers,"49.
[105] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 311.
[106] Interview with Joy and Mary, Kamwokya and Bukoto, 2015.
[107] Doyle, *Before HIV*, 311.
[108] Doyle, *Before HIV*.

about their status and sought treatment from private doctors who would keep their secret.[109] Sometimes men even hid the disease from doctors. They would claim to be suffering from acute tonsillitis after they found out that medical workers were treating both gonorrhea and tonsillitis with procaine penicillin (PPF).[110] The availability of private clinics and the fact that men had access to financial resources to afford private doctors meant that their venereal disease infections remained hidden and therefore men's sexuality was spared public scrutiny.

The perception of venereal diseases as a female problem impacted the health of women. Because some men refused to inform their wives and girlfriends about the infection, and women with gonorrhea were often symptomless, they went untreated, which sometimes led to infertility. Although some women were eventually able to determine that they had a venereal disease, they feared seeking treatment because of stigma. Some of the women informants told me that women who were found to have venereal diseases were often accused of being *Malayas* (prostitutes).[111] Some medical and public health workers publicly shamed patients in the hope that this would deter them from engaging in sexual behavior that put them at risk of venereal diseases or unwanted pregnancy. Researchers found that in some government and mission hospitals, when patients went to seek treatment, medical personnel would shout at them in front of other patients. Many of these were women who could not afford to see a private doctor. This prevented some of them from seeking medical help from government hospitals.[112] A medic noted a case of a young educated mother with syphilis who refused to seek treatment from Mulago hospital and instead went to a city health center. He wrote that "she was scared from going back to the same hospital by hostile

[109] Interview with Michael Abigaba, Kampala, 2016.
[110] Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence," 37.
[111] Interview with Joy and Mary, Kamwokya and Bukoto 2015.
[112] Nyanzi, "The Prevalence of Gonorrhea,"11.

attitudes which some midwives and nurses adopt towards such patients. They look upon such a person as a criminal, not a patient."[113] While this case points to ways and means adopted by women to navigate the double standards of sexual morality, it also shows that venereal diseases were criminalized, and women were singled out as a threat to public health. The chapter has argued that public health officials were a part of an activist medical establishment, that had its beginnings in campaigns against venereal diseases and other illnesses. Although they saw their work as apolitical, guided by both pragmatism and moralism, they willingly participated in constraining and interfering with women's freedom and autonomy in the name of public health and public morality.

[113] J.W. Owange-Iraka, "Congenital Syphilis as seen at Mulago Hospital" (Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1976), 24.

Conclusion

'Taking us Back to Amin Times': Moral Regulation and Debates about Sexuality and Attire in Contemporary Uganda

In 2014, the government of Uganda shocked the world when it adopted the *Anti-Homosexuality Act* which proposed life imprisonment and the death penalty for Ugandans convicted of being homosexuals. It followed this with the *Anti-Pornography Act* which targeted suggestive music, pornographic publications, miniskirts, and other revealing clothes. The laws reignited debates about sexuality, fashion, dress, morality, and human rights in Uganda.[1] For international observers, these events were unprecedented, especially since the Ugandan government had since the 1990s built a record of accomplishments in human rights and gender equality.[2] While activists framed the homosexuality issue as a human rights issue, scholars looked in a different direction, seeking to trace the roots of homosexuality in African societies to challenge the idea of a "heterosexual Africa."[3] In the process, scholars failed to place the Ugandan government's efforts to curate morality in the context of long-term anxiety about sexuality and sexual deviancy as demonstrated

[1] Kristen Cheney, "Locating Neocolonialism: "Tradition" and Human Rights in Uganda's Gay Death Penalty," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 2 (September 2012): 77-95. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26351087;https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/05/uganda-ban-miniskirts-womens-right;https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2014/0307/Along-with-gays-Uganda-bans-the-miniskirt

[2] On gender equality, see Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2000); Aili Tripp and Joy Kwesiga, eds. *The Women's Movement in Uganda: History, Challenges and Prospects* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2002).

[3] Marc Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008); Cheney, "Locating Neocolonialism." Other scholars have offered a non-human rights analysis of anti-homosexuality by situating it in Ugandans understanding of family, sexuality, and reproduction. For example, Joanna Sadgrove et al., "Morality Plays and Money matters: Towards a Situated Understanding of the Politics of Homosexuality in Uganda," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012):103-129.

by the 1970s moral reform project by the Amin government.[4] It was women, the subject of the 1970s anti-immorality campaign, who immediately established a link between the current debates and laws about sexuality and sartorial choices and earlier efforts to enforce morality by the Idi Amin government. Aware of the dark history of moral reform projects, upon the introduction of the two laws, Ugandan women staged protests and authored articles in newspapers warning against taking Uganda 'back to Idi Amin times.'[5]

Figure 5: "Women activists gather at National Theater a head of their demonstration against the anti-pornography law."

Source: Agatha Ayebazibwe, Daily Monitor, February 26, 2014

[4] In "Locating Neocolonialism," Cheney refers to colonial attempts to reform sexual deviancy. However, she does not show how this was done and who else was involved. Kristen Cheney, "Locating Neocolonialism"

[5] Their message was clear: current attempts by the Ugandan government to curate morality is a continuation of earlier efforts by the Amin government to regulate sexuality and sartorial expressions of Ugandans. See Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi, "Miniskirt' Law Takes Us Back to Idi Amin," *The Observer*, Mar 10, 2014; Agatha Ayebazibwe, "Women Activists demonstrate over the pornography law," Feb 26, 2014 https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Women-activists-demonstrate-over-the-pornography-law/-/688334/2222788/-/ntmewkz/-/index.html

This dissertation has used interviews and a wide range of archival materials to examine the 1970s anti-immorality campaign which targeted women's sexual, reproductive, and sartorial choices. I have argued that efforts to enforce sexual and sartorial morality in the 1970s, which were driven by generalized anxieties about new contraception, new forms of sexual expressions, and new fashions, were rooted in gender politics that emerged in the early twentieth century, a time when East Africa's competitive political arena judged men's competence by their ability to keep orderly homes.[6] I have shown that while the Idi Amin government took a leading role, the work of policing women's morals was undertaken by disparate actors whose agendas overlapped with Amin's. Thus, the anti-immorality campaign found supporters among medics, newspaper editors, religious leaders, civil servants, birth control activists, and ordinary people who had long associated women, and especially urban women, with moral disorder. While the Amin government provided moral conservatives with new resources (police, decrees, courts) to pursue their moral agendas, conservatives nurtured and sustained a vocabulary and a gendered rhetoric of moral decadence, which they had conceived in an earlier time. By looking at the actions of these institutions and individuals alongside those of the state, we are able to understand the cultural and social logic that was behind the anti-immorality campaign.

The dissertation makes several contributions. It sheds light on the Idi Amin regime and provides scholars of Africa with an understanding of the mechanics of dictatorships. As argued in the introduction, scholars in the 1970s treated the Amin dictatorship as "exceptional," and as a result they dismissed the anti-immorality campaign as a media stunt. They ignored non-state actors and failed to see continuities in debates about women's behavior. The dissertation has shown that when

[6] On the politics of respectability in East Africa, See Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c.1935 to 1972* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

it came to issues of morality, the Amin regime was far from exceptional, and that the anti-immorality campaign was built on widespread anxieties about women's behavior which predated his regime. While scholarship has painted the Amin regime as a disorganized blood-thirsty network where soldiers violently dragged off citizens from the streets and out of their home to torture chambers, the dissertation has shown that the work of policing women's morality was largely conducted through a legal framework. The orderliness of enforcing the anti-immorality decrees contrasted with the spectacular violence of the Amin regime as portrayed in scholarship. Rules about the treatment of female suspects, police bond and fines etc. were typically followed.[7] Amin's government made it clear to Ugandans that the work of policing women's morals had to be done in a way that reflected the orderliness of the modern state, in which action was only taken after going through the motions of legality. Dragging wailing women out of the slums, streets and vehicles, dressing them in sacks and bundling them into lorries to be carried back to their tribal lands as had been done in the past and as was requested by Ibrahim when he went to report what he believed was the crime of abortion by his girlfriend, had become unacceptable in a modern state.[8] When in 1973 some military officers ordered soldiers to hunt down prostitutes and all unmarried women who were alleged to be prostitutes "to vacate their homes in the towns (and return to their villages….)," Amin ordered them to stop "this practice." [9]

However, the Amin government generally lacked resources to evenly implement the decrees and ensure that the laws were followed. While Amin's government rejected the violent act of repatriation, women were still subjected to other forms of violence on the streets where soldiers

[7] For example, female suspects were processed by female officers. See chapter 1.
[8] On Ibrahim and Jane, see introduction. On the repatriation of women, see Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism;* Christine Obbo, *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence* (London: Zed Press, 1980).
[9] Obbo, *African Women*, 10.

and mobs verbally and physically assaulted them. In the police stations, women had to strip off their dresses, endure groping hands trying to measure the hems of their dresses and they were kept in cells until bailed out. Thus, despite the orderliness in the enforcement of the decrees, the Amin government also created opportunities for overzealous and sometimes violent individuals and organizations who wanted to impose their will on others.

By examining the rhetoric, the mechanics and the implementation of the anti-immorality campaign, the dissertation highlights continuities in moral panic in Uganda. It underscores continuities on two levels: in the moral discourses about sexuality and attire and in historical actors (institutions and individual actors) that are central in initiating, providing, and sustaining discursive frames and narratives of moral decadence. I show that the church and especially the Catholic church has been central in initiating and sustaining discourses about sexual morality. Religious bodies continue to play an important role in the politics of sexual morality in Uganda by supporting the current government's efforts to curate the morals of Ugandans. They have supported the controversial anti-homosexuality laws,[10] and a Catholic priest Fr. Simon Lokodo,[11] who is the State Minister for Ethics and Integrity, has been instrumental in enforcing both the anti-homosexuality and anti-pornography laws. In scholarship, civil societies like the church emerge as the anchor that hold society together, especially in times when the state fails to provide or protect civil liberties.[12] However, it is clear that when it comes to issues of morality, the interests of the

[10] The church and its priests who while opposing the death penalty have unanimously supported the anti-homosexuality law. On the church's support of the anti-homosexuality law, See Ward, Kevin. "Religious Institutions and Actors and Religious Attitudes to Homosexual Rights: South Africa and Uganda," *in Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender identity in The Commonwealth*: *Struggles for Decriminalization and Change*, eds., Corinne Lennox and Matthew Waites (London: University of London Press, 2013).

[11] https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1224763/church-suspends-priest-appointed-minister

[12] Kevin Ward, "The Church of Uganda Amidst Conflict. The Interplay between Church and Politics in Uganda since 1962," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, eds., Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1995); M. Louise Pirouet, "Religion in Uganda Under Amin," *Journal of Religion*

church and those of the state converge. This was the case in the 1970s and even before and remains the case today.

There are also continuities in individual actors. Jackson Kakembo, the medic who in the 1970s subjected Ugandans to invasive medical exams and labelled women "reservoirs of venereal diseases," was at the center of the recent anti-homosexuality campaign in Uganda.[13] Human Rights organizations singled out Kakembo as one of the medical doctors conducting forced anal exams on alleged homosexuals on behalf of the government. When Human Rights Watch confronted him about his role in the anti-homosexuality campaign, Kakembo implied that he was an unwilling participant. When asked about his role, he answered that "the police bring them [suspected homosexuals] for exams….They ask me to fill in the form." He added that "I just examine them because they are being sent to me, but what they do in their bedroom is not my business."[14] However, evidence from 1970s suggests that Kakembo did in fact consider what Ugandans were doing in their bedroom his business. Even though the Amin government did not single out homosexuality, Kakembo called upon the government to regularly check "prostitutes and homosexuals."[15] He argued that the existing anti-venereal laws which gave powers to medics to detain, forcibly treat and force those suspected to be infected to name their sexual partners, were not enough. He called for mandatory testing, contact-tracing, antenatal examinations, and even the testing of prospective employees and travelers.[16] Kakembo has been at the forefront of attempts to

in Africa 11, no. 1 (1980): 13-29; J.J. Carney, "The Politics of Ecumenism in Uganda, 1962-1986," *Church History* 86, no.3 (September 2017): 765-795.

[13] "Dignity Debased" Forced Anal Examinations in Homosexuality prosecutions, Human Rights Watch 2016" https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/12/dignity-debased/forced-anal-examinations-homosexuality-prosecutions

[14] "Dignity Debased."

[15] Although a colonial anti-homosexuality law existed, debates in the media about sexuality and the decrees signed by Amin did not single out homosexuals. See Jackson M. Kakembo, "A Study of the Prevalence and Incidence of Venereal Diseases in the Uganda Police Community" Post graduate diploma diss., Makerere University, 1978), 35.

[16] Kakembo. "A Study of the Prevalence," 35

reform sexual deviancy for over forty years, not because he is coerced by the state, but because he believes that public health and public morality are under threat from sexual deviancy. Kakembo's story, therefore, reminds us that the current politics of sexual and sartorial morality are embedded in longstanding attempts by various groups to build moral communities by controlling the behavior of women, LGBTIQ[17] and other groups.

[17] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/transsexual, Intersex, Queer.

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Comboni Missionary Archives, Mbuya, Kampala, Uganda.
Church of Uganda Archives, (Online) Mukono, Uganda.
Jinja District Archives, Jinja, Uganda.
Soroti District Archives, Soroti, Uganda.
Kabale/ Kigezi District Archives, Kabale, Uganda.
Kabarole District Archives, Fort Portal, Uganda.
Moroto District Archives, Moroto, Uganda.
Clarence J. Gamble Archives, Harvard University, USA.
George and Anne Saxton Archives, New York, USA.
University of Michigan Library, Interlibrary Online newspaper collection, USA.
African Studies Center Archives, Leiden, Netherlands.
Melvin Perlman Collection, SOAS, London, UK.

Newspapers and Magazines

Munno

Taifa Empya

Leadership magazine

The People

Uganda Argus

Voice of Uganda

DRUM magazine

Interviews

Because some of my interviewees provided me with sensitive personal information about their sexual and reproductive health, I have use pseudonyms and first names for some of individuals who asked me not to identify them.

Cecilia Ogwal, Kampala March 30, 2016

Henry Kyemba, Ntinda, March 23, 2016

Rose (pseudonym), Ntinda, November 19, 2015

Komukyeya, (pseudonym), Kampala, August 3, 2016

Christine, (pseudonym), Naguru, November 3, 2015

Namutebi, Naguru, November 4, 2015

Moses Mukasa, USA, August 1, 2017

Kaddu Wasswa, Ntinda, July 8, 2014

Rhoda Kalema, Kampala, August 22, 2016

Emesu (pseudonym), Kampala, March 6, 2016

Judge M (pseudonym), Ntinda Auguts 4, 2016

Katinti Kironde, USA , December 5, 2015

Joy, (pseudonym), Ntinda, November 18, 2015

Micheal Abigaba, (pseudonym), Kampala, August 8, 2016

John Epotu, Soroti, September 16, 2015

Keturah Kamugasa,Kampala April 3, 2016

Mary (pseudonym), Kamwokya, November 18, 2015

Hajjati Kisa (pseudonym), Bukoto, July 30, 2015

Moris, Bukoto, July 30, 2015

Father Sergio (pseudonym), Moroto, September 23, 2015

Dr. Sarah Namutebi, (pseudonym), Mulago, March 3, 2016

Dr. Konde Lule, Ntinda, March 3, 2016

Nora, Entebbe Road,Kampala March 6, 2016

Dr. Bahweyo, (pseudonym), Makerere, March 3, 2016

Josephine, Jinja Road, March 6, 2016

Mama Kiwa, Nakawa, March 6, 2016

Jaja Bena, Nankulabye, March 6,2016

Mbarara, (pseudonym), Ntinda, March 7, 2016

Baki, (pseudonym), Makerere, March 7, 2016

Mulongo, (pseudonym), Mulago, March 7, 2016

Akiiki, (pseudonym), Ntinda, November 5, 2015

Hajjati Masitula, (pseudonym)Kampala, July 31,2015

Nankya, (pseudonym) Kampala, August 5, 2016

Byarugaba, Kampala, March 9, 2016

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