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The U.S. pro-family movement and sexual politics in Africa

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Department of Sociology
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Compulsory Declaration: This dissertation submitted for the fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (by publication) in Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2018. I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree, part of a degree or examination at this or any other university.

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Haley McEwen 25 August 2018

Declaration

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Haley McEwen 25 August 2018

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Project Overview - PhD by Publication 1

PhD by Publication: A reflection 2

Thesis Overview 2

Research Problem 3

Rationale 5

Literature Review 7

Theoretical Framework 16

Method and Design 27

Overview of Findings 41

Article 1

Prelude 51

Transatlantic Knowledge Politics of Sexuality 52

Article 2

Prelude 75

76

Nuclear Power: The family in decolonial perspective and 'pro-family' politics in Africa

Article 3

Prelude 89

Weaponising Rhetorics of 'Family': The mobilization of pro-family politics in Africa 90

Article 4

Prelude 115

Fabricating Power: Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa 116

Conclusion 139

References 148

Appendix 185

Glossary of Terms

The U.S. Christian Right and the pro-family movement: Variously referred to in scholarship and media as the 'new right', the 'religious right', and the 'Christian Right' refer to a relatively new, and predominantly Christian, brand of conservative American politics. In embarking not his project, I elected to use 'Christian Right', following Herman (1997), who defined this as "a broad coalition of profamily organizations and individuals who have come together to struggle for a conservative Christian vision in the political realm" (p.9-10). Because the movement is composed of a "diverse collective of conservative Christian believers", Herman explains that she uses "Christian" rather than "Protestant" or "religious" because "it is Christian faith and history as a whole that animates the movement's antigay and anti-feminist activities…not Protestantism per se" (p.10).

In the process of data collection, especially after my attendance at the World Congress of Families IX, I learned that 'pro-family' provided a more accurate term for the movement that I was studying and my approach to it. The presence and status of Mormon activists within the movement, in particular, led to my decision to refer to the movement as 'pro-family' rather than Christian Right. Also, because the discourses and agendas that I was interested in studying were specifically on the family and sexual politics, I found it to be more precise at times to refer to the 'pro-family' movement, which is one (albeit it very predominant) thread of Christian Right politics.

'Family values': This phrase refers to the set of morals and attributes that the pro-family movement ascribes to the 'natural' family. Within the pro-family movement, and the Christian Right more broadly, it is believed that the forms of sexed and gendered discipline associated with the 'nuclear' family are under attack by "feminism, the sexual revolution, gay liberation, excessively generous welfare policies, and escalating demands for social rights" (Stacey, 1994, 59). The decline in 'family values' that the pro-family movement articulates is blamed for "family breakdown", which is in turn linked with an array of social issues "from child poverty, declining educational standards, substance abuse, homicide rates, AIDS, infertility, and teen pregnancy to narcissism" (p.59).

'Natural' family: The 'natural family', according to the pro-family movement, is a particular kinship formation consisting of a mother, a father, and their (preferably biological) offspring. As Buss and Herman (2003) write, "the Christian Right has taken to calling this unit the

'natural family,' distinguishing it from family forms they believe to be unnatural, both socially and religiously. The 'natural' family and its defense they write, constitutes one of the pillars of the Christian Right's global activism (p.2).

Homosexuality: The emergence of 'homosexuality' and the 'homosexual person' have a relatively recent history in western thought, although sexual conduct involving people of the same sex has not been uncommon across cultures in human history (Lind 2005, 337). As Weeks (1977) writes, while same-sex practices have existed throughout history, what have varied dramatically are the ways in which various societies have regarded such practices, the meanings they have attached to them, and how those who were engaged in same-sex intimacies viewed themselves (p.2). In contemporary political homophobias, as Awondo, Geschiere, and Reid (2012) write, "homosexuality" has been used in a general sense by attackers who use the term for their own purposes, and who often refer to anyone who transgresses heteropatriarchal sex and gender norms as 'homosexual' (p.161).

Homophobia: Defined loosely as the fear of homosexuals, the term 'homophobia' was first published by George Weinberg (1972) in his important work, *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. Increasingly characterized by expressions of hate, homophobia does not merely exist as a 'dread' amongst heterosexist about homosexuals, or as verbal attack on homosexuals, but "produces a discourse about homosexuals in order to misrecognise them", giving homophobia potentially violent and fatal consequences (Reddy 2009, p.164). A discourse of "power, dominance and control" (p.164), homophobia not only holds in place heterosexism, but also heteropatriarchy. As Pharr (1997) writes, "heterosexism and homophobia work together to enforce compulsory heterosexuality and that bastion of patriarchal power, the nuclear family" (p.16).

Heteropatriarchy: Heteropatriarchy, as a concept used in queer theory, describes the interlocking power systems of patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality (Van Zyl, 2005, p.76). As Elder (2003, p.4) writes, "Heteropatriarchy is the social power structure that creates and maintains the heterosexist binary of masculinity and femininity and the associated social expectations (gender performances) determined according to biological sex".

Heterosexism: This project understands "heterosexism" as the "assumption that the world is and must be heterosexual", and is the "systematic display of homophobia in the institutions of society" (Pharr, 1997, p.16).

Decolonial: I use the term 'decolonial', as opposed to 'postcolonial', in order to enable a discussion of the coloniality of contemporary knowledge-power contestations about gender, sexuality, and the family. 'Decolonial' allows for a reading of the process through which the west retains its control over the former colonies following the formal termination of colonial rule, acknowledging the enduring inequalities that structure contemporary north-south power relations. (Quijano, 2000, p.544; Mignolo, 2011, p.12).

Modernity/Coloniality: I employ this term, as defined by Arturo Escobar (2004), as a means of addressing 'coloniality' as the underside of 'modernity. This interpretation of modernity makes visible the "subaltern knowledges and cultural practices worldwide that modernity itself shunned, suppressed, made invisible and disqualified", rendering visible the fact that modernity was constituted by coloniality (Escobar, 2004, p.210).

Abstract

This Doctoral dissertation (by publication) is based on a research project investigating the growing influence of the conservative U.S. based pro-family movement and the anti-gay and anti-feminist 'family values' agenda that the movement is working to advance in African contexts. *Why* this so-called 'pro-family' movement is promoting its agendas across the continent, and *how* the movement is mobilized through ideological work and network building, I argue, are questions that need to be addressed in order to understand rising levels of intolerance towards sexuality and gender diversity across the continent. I draw upon research into the mobilization of the pro-family movement in the United States since the 1960s, and its entry into international politics from the 1990s, discussing the ways in which pro-family ideology reproduces modern/colonial forms of power despite its current claim of being an ally to formerly colonized nations. In order to understand the impact of the activities and discourses of the pro-family movement in African contexts, this project engages with research and theory on sexuality, gender diversity, and intolerances towards these across the continent. A range of pro-family texts produced by U.S. and Africa based conservative activists are critically analyzed in relation to a theoretical framework informed by a critical theoretical framework shaped by critical diversity literacy, and takes a critical decolonial perspective on the modern/colonial construction of the nuclear family ideal. Analysis, which is reported in four academic articles, reveals the ideological work of the pro-family movement to articulate modern/colonial notions of 'family values' for African audiences. I conclude that the pro-family movement is working to (re)enforce a dominant lifecourse imaginary that centers the nuclear family. In doing so, they seek to normalize other relations of power and to reinforce the authority, and ultimately the geo-political dominance of, the West and U.S. in particular.

Introduction

Project Overview - PhD by Publication

This doctoral research project on the U.S. pro family movement and sexual politics in Africa takes the form of a PhD by publication. The project consists of four peer-reviewed academic articles, rather than four main chapters, on the stated topic. As per the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Faculty of Humanities) Senate Standing Rules and Orders for *PhD Including Publications* (2016/2229), the final submitted work must include a minimum of six chapters that form a coherent thesis both in content and format - four manuscripts as well as an introduction, conclusion and references section constitute the thesis. The four articles comprising this thesis are presented here in the order in which they have been published: The first article, entitled "Transatlantic Knowledge Politics of Sexuality" (2016), was published in the journal, *Critical Philosophy of Race* 4(2) as part of a special issue entitled, 'South African and U.S. Critical Philosophies of Race'; The second article, "Nuclear Power: The family in decolonial perspective and 'pro-family' politics in Africa" (2017) was published in *Development Southern Africa* 34(6) as part of a special issue entitled 'Family demography research and post-2015 development agenda in sub-Sahara Africa'; The third article, "Weaponizing Rhetorics of 'Family': The mobilization of pro-family politics in Africa" has been accepted for publication by the *African Journal of Rhetoric* Volume 10 and is press for publication this year; the fourth article, "Fabricating Power: Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa" has been submitted to *Critical African Studies*.

The introduction, as stated by the Senate Standing Rules and Orders, must include the aim, rationale, theoretical orientation, selective literature review and research design of the project. In what follows, I present these elements of the project so as to frame the discussion and analysis presented

in the four related manuscripts that form the body of the dissertation. Following the four manuscripts, I synthesize the findings of the project in a concluding chapter and discuss the contributions to knowledge made by the project as a whole.

PhD by publication: A reflection

I elected to undertake this project through the PhD by publication option. I chose this route because of the urgency surrounding the topic of the research and my sense that writing on how the US Christian Right is influencing sexual politics in Africa could make important and immediate contributions towards discussions around sexuality and gender diversity, and ongoing struggles against homophobia. The structuring of my project into the production of four publishable articles was challenging, but made the process rich and interactive through the processes of conference presentations and peer-review. Through the process of trial and error, I learned that the most strategic approach to the publication option was to present a draft paper a conference and submit the manuscript for inclusion into affiliated special issues of academic journals. Through this process, I was able to gain feedback and critique from conference delegates, which I could incorporate and address within manuscripts submitted for publication. The process of peer-review exposed me to valuable critique by anonymous scholars working in the field, enabling me to consider my work from a range of perspectives and to bring my attention to literature, concepts, and counterpoints that I had not previously considered. Therefore, through the publication process, the experience of supervision was diversified to include journal editors, peer-reviewers, and conference delegates which I feel contributed immensely to the research process.

Thesis overview

This dissertation is not capable of providing an exhaustive discussion of how the U.S. pro-family movement is operating in African contexts and to what effects. My ability to capture every visit made to Africa by a U.S. pro-family activist, every pro-family gathering on the continent, every popular media article written either for or against the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Africa, every iteration by a political or religious leader on the topic of homosexuality, or every homophobic Act signed into law was rendered an impossibility due to the very current and continually contested nature of the subject matter. In the four chapters /articles that constitute the body of this dissertation, I focus on

key dimensions U.S. pro-family activism in Africa that can contribute to current knowledge and understanding as discussed above.

The first chapter/article, "Transatlantic Knowledge Politics of Sexuality" examines the epistemic dimensions of pro-family activism, particularly in relation to the LGBTIQ+ activism led by U.S. queer and feminist civil rights groups. This article presents the broad context in which current 'pro-family' activism in Africa is taking shape, concluding that despite their apparent differences, the 'pro-family' and 'gay rights' movements serve (albeit different versions of) U.S. global power. The second chapter/article, "Nuclear Power: The family in decolonial perspective and 'pro-family' politics in Africa", takes an in-depth look at the central concept of pro-family discourse: the 'natural family', from a decolonial perspective, arguing that the notion of the 'nuclear family' cannot be taken for granted as a concept or category in social research. Chapter/article three, "Weaponising Rhetorics of 'Family': The mobilization of pro-family politics in Africa", considers the ways in which the pro-family movement disguises its violent and genocidal ambitions through discourses of 'love', 'development', and 'freedom'. Chapter four, "Fabricating Power: Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa" considers the function of the narrative that homosexuality is 'unAfrican', which the US pro-family movement has been directly involved in circulating, within social imaginaries in decolonial contexts.

Research Problem

This project took the form of an investigation into the growing influence of the U.S. Christian Right and the anti-gay and anti-feminist 'family values' agenda that the movement is working to advance in African contexts. While there has been a tendency to exceptionalize Africa as a 'homophobic continent' (Awondo, Geschiere, Reid 2012; Ndashe, 2013) subsequent to the rise of homophobic hate speech and violence in many countries since the early 2000's, much of the 'anti-gay' rhetoric currently circulating in African contexts have featured within the U.S. political landscape since the 1970s. As researchers who have studied the 'family values' agenda in the U.S. have shown (Buss and Herman 2003; Martin, 1999; Croft, 2007; Marsden, 2008), the U.S. Christian Right has, indeed, expanded its horizons beyond North America since the 1990s. Within their globalizing imperatives, Africa has become a strategic site where the U.S. Christian Right is working to promote 'family values' (Kaoma, 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013; 2014b). Why and how the pro-family movement is promoting its agendas across the continent were the questions I sought to answer through this project.

In approaching these questions, the project has pursued two objectives: First, to provide empirical insights into the networks that the U.S. Christian Right has grown in African contexts, and the discourses they are advancing in these contexts. Second, to provide a deeper understanding of the intersections between heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and western dominance as the pro-family movement resists social and political changes brought about by feminist, queer, and decolonial social movements. In pursuing these objectives, I historically locate 'family values' discourses in relation to the modern/colonial construction of the two-sex gender binary and hierarchy that informed the normalization and institutionalization of the nuclear family model as a civilizational ideal. Reading the idealization of the nuclear family from a historical perspective that is cognizant of both its function as a mechanism of bio-power accompanying capitalist development (Foucault, 1980 [1978], p.110), and as an instrument of colonial conquest (Kitch, 2009; Oyěwùmí 2002) enables a critical interrogation of the contemporary discourse of "family values" in relation to decolonial power relations. In this project, I employed the concept of 'decolonial' (as opposed to 'postcolonial') in order to name the continuing ways in which colonial systems of forms of power are reproduced in the period following the official end of colonial rule and the termination of colonial administrations. In doing so, I draw on the work of (Quijano 2000, and Grosfoguel 2009, 2013 and Mignolo 2011) to interrogate the ways in which the notion of the nuclear family has been constructed as a universal norm within the ideological work of the pro-family movement. The concept is important to this paper, in that it enables understandings of the colonial histories underpinning contemporary knowledge-power contestations in the domain of sexuality. Contesting the colonial logic that provided the basis for historical conquest and domination, decolonial critique is both an epistemic and political project that can open up possibilities foreclosed by modern/colonial ideologies and systems.

This framework allows for an investigation of how modern/colonial power relations are being contested, challenged, and (re)produced through contemporary knowledge production about about gender, sexuality, and the role of the family in society.

While the project focuses on the U.S. Christian Right's family values agenda and discourses, pursuit of the research questions also engaged with the U.S. gay rights and feminist agendas that have also expanded their political efforts globally and which prompted 'family values' activist and organisations to expand their domestic activities globally. As my review of literature revealed, it is not possible to critically understand pro-family activism in Africa, or globally, without also taking into account, and also problematizing, the promotion of sex and gender based rights internationally through frameworks of western feminism and 'gay rights'.

Rationale

Despite its growing political influence in the U.S. and other parts of the world, the U.S. Christian Right has received relatively little scholarly attention. The few scholars who have investigated the activities of the U.S. Christian Right (Buss and Herman 2003, Croft 2007, Martin 1999, Marsden 2008) have provided important insights into their pro-family activism in the context of U.S. domestic politics and international foreign policy. With the exception of Kapya Kaoma's extensive work (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b), Africa has been largely overlooked within existing literature. From queer African and feminist perspectives, a number of scholars (Awondo 2010, Charles 2013, Chitando and Mataveke, Currier 2012, Epprecht 2013, Hoad 2007, Hofer 2003, Tamale 2007, Vincent and Howell 2014) have made reference to the ways in which religious conservatives from the West have had a role in the formation of homophobic discourses and political agendas across the continent. Their primary focus, however, has been on the ways in which these developments have impacted African contexts politically and socially, rather than the conservative western activists themselves. I have aimed to contribute a perspective to this literature that can provide further insight into the ways in which the 'pro-family' movement is working to advance conservative views on sexuality, gender, and the family, and the underlying, and intersecting, interests at stake. The relative scarcity of academic literature on the U.S. Christian Right reflects a broader trend in which liberals and progressives have dismissed the movement and its discourses as 'fringe' and therefore unworthy of serious engagement.

Since the time of proposing this project, much has changed in American and global politics. That the election of Donald Trump in 2016 came as a shock to many reflects the extent to which the American mainstream media and social sciences have ignored conservative political forces operating in its own backyard. Trump's subsequent appointment of members of the U.S. Christian Right into key positions of government as well as his promotion of 'family values' policy agendas has made it clearer than ever that right wing movements in the U.S, and global north more broadly, must be taken seriously as political agents who threaten to erode the gains made by civil rights, anti-imperialist, queer and feminist activism. While I had some concerns about the ways in which the project re-centers the white, heteropatriarchal West, I hoped that the inves-

tigation could make meaningful contributions to knowledge that would be useful within ongoing efforts to challenge the structures of oppression that are redeployed by 'family values' agendas. Furthermore, the rise in homophobic political discourse and activism across the continent gives urgency to research interventions into this emerging development, particularly because of its real life consequences for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) identified. As African scholars, many of whom are cited in this thesis, artists, activists, and organizations have shown through their work to promote LGBTIQ+ visibility, the trajectories of violence and exclusion extending from intolerance towards sexuality and gender diversity reach all social sectors and spaces, limiting life expectancies, opportunities and possibilities for these groups.

Many of the scholarly interventions, discussed in depth in the literature review to follow, into what has been broadly referred to as 'homophobia' in Africa have focused on the specific, and nuanced, forms of intolerance, exclusion, and violence directed at LGBTIQ+ people and the consequences for these communities. These studies provide insights into the particularities and similarities across and between homophobias in different African contexts, and also reinforce the urgency of addressing these dynamics because of the extent to which they show that LGBTIQ+ identified people suffer violence and exclusion on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The research presented in this dissertation aims to contribute knowledge and understanding of intolerance towards sexuality and gender diversity by examining the role, and interests, of U.S. based conservatives in promoting (hetero)sexist politics and policy agendas in Africa and elsewhere in the global south. In doing so, the research also provides a context from which to consider the intersections between white supremacy and heteropatriarchy in relation to the reproduction of colonial power.

Literature Review

Here I will provide a critical and selective review of literature that locates this project in relation to relevant published works that I consulted throughout the project. While additional works are consulted throughout the articles, here I focus on the key bodies of scholarship informing the research. The review is divided into three sub-sections according to the different bodies of literature that were consulted, namely: literature on the globalization of 'family values' as it took shape in the U.S. in the 1970s, and internationally since the 1990s; U.S. pro-family movement in Africa; and population control, suspicion and the regulation of African reproductivity.

The U.S. Christian Right and 'family values'

Judith Stacey (1994) describes the 'family values' movement as "an interlocking network of scholarly and policy institutes, think tanks, and commissions" that has worked to forge a national "consensus" on family values in response to what they perceive as a 'general decline' in family values driven by feminism, the sexual revolution, and gay liberation (p.53). The 'family values' agenda is mainly concerned with protecting the normative status of the nuclear family structure, promoting "belief in the superiority of families composed of heterosexual, married couples and their biological children" and conviction that families which don't conform to this standard "threaten middle-class tranquility" (p.55). The heterosexism of the anti-gay and anti-abortion movements has been foundational in promoting the idea that non-reproductive sex is a threat to the existing gender power hierarchy and heterosexuality – two pillars of the nuclear family.

Describing the hegemony of the nuclear family in 1990's America, Stacey writes, "The cloying aroma of family values is in the air" (p.52). Certainly not a 'new' aroma wafting through American neighborhoods, "Family Values" has remained a persisting tone within American political discourse since the 1970s. Two main features of the family values discourse today – abortion and gay marriage – have emerged in the last half-century "largely as a reaction to the perceived values of the 'permissive sixties'" (Herman, 1997, p.28). The increase in women's demands for

reproductive freedom (particularly, the Equal Rights Amendment[1]) and intensifying demands of the gay rights movement subsequent to the Stonewall rebellion[2] caused conservative Christians to "wake up and put sexuality issues on their political agenda" (p.28), a narrative which Christian Right activists themselves tell as the origin of the Family Values movement (p.28).

Leaders of pro-family organizations such as Allan Carlson (Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society), Brian Brown (World Congress of Families/International Organization for the Family), Jerry Falwell (Moral Majority), Pat Robertson and Ralf Reed (Christian Coalition), James Dobson (Focus on the Family), Gary Bauer (Family Research Council), and Sharon Slater (Family Watch international), among others, have emerged as leaders in the pro-family movement. These organisations have taken their agendas abroad, alerting the international community to the fact that the ambitions of American religious conservatives are not limited to domestic affairs. Beyond family values, the Christian Right is actively and increasingly involved in efforts to influence a wide range of American policies, including support for Israel, arms control and defense, and restrictions on how U.S. funding for the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations can be allocated (Martin, 1999, p.67).

At the time when much research into the activities Christian Right was being first undertaken by U.S. based researchers in the 1990s, Herman (1997) stated that "few persons of color, and no nonwhite organizations, are to be found at the forefront of national antigay activism" (Herman, 1997, p.11), and for that it is the US population of "White evangelical Protestants, from whom the movement draws most of its members" (Martin, 1999, p.68). While the pro-family movement has expanded its reach globally and has acquired greater numbers of allies and members who are not white or American, the leadership of the movement has remained predominantly white and U.S. based, an observation also made by Herman (2007) and Martin

[1] The Equal Rights Amendment is a proposed amendment to the US Constitution that aims to guarantee equal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. In particular, it was designed to eliminate legal distinctions made between men and women in relation to matters such as divorce, property, employment, and other issues that have historically disadvantaged women. The ERA was originally written and proposed by by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman and was introduced in Congress for the first time in 1921. To date, thirty seven states have ratified the Amendment, leaving it one ratification short of becoming a formal amendment to the Constitution.

[2] The Stonewall Rebellion refers to the series of spontaneous demonstrations by LGBTIQ+ people and communities against a police raid that took place in 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City. The Stonewall Rebellion is widely considered to have catalysed the gay liberation movement and the ongoing struggle for equal rights for gender non-conforming people and sexual minorities in the US.

(1999). The whiteness of the Christian Right today is historically contextualized by the racial anxieties which ran as subtexts "to the entire history of family-crisis discourse in the U.S" (Stacey 1994, p.65). As Stacey and others (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995; Kitch, 2009) have shown, it is possible to trace contemporary family discourses back to early European settlers in North America who were fearful of indigenous kinship practices, discourses of the "family" legitimated the enslavement of Native American and African people. The rhetoric of 'family values' was enmeshed with xenophobic fears amongst whites in North America who believed they were on the brink of "race suicide" resulting from high fertility rates among African Americans and "inferior" eastern and southern European migrants, and "selfishness" of white women whose birthrates were declining (Stacey 1994, p.65).

As a technique of both bio- and colonial power, the modern/nuclear family has functioned as a strategic site where the power relations of imperial interventions in Africa and the Americas could be "figured as a linear, nonrevolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children" (Stoler, 1995, p.45). The metaphor thus functioned as an "organizing trope for marshaling a bewildering array of cultures into a single, global narrative ordered and managed by Europeans" (Stoler, 1995, p.45). This creation of a singular narrative of the family makes it "a privileged exemplar of intersectionality", according to Patricia Hill-Collins (1998, p.63). The dual function of the nuclear family ideal as an ideological construction and as a fundamental principle of social organization enables it to accommodate a range of meanings, and be used as a model for the creation of other forms of hierarchy (p.63). Drawing on McClintock (1995) who writes of how social power hierarchies are naturalized through constructions of the "traditional family", Hill-Collins argues that "families are expected to socialize their members into an appropriate set of 'family values'" that reinforce the hierarchy within the assumed "unity of interests symbolized by the family" while, at the same time, maintaining the foundation for multiple social hierarchies (Hill-Collins, 1998, p.64). She argues that it is within the family that individuals are taught their location within hierarchies of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and social class, thus learning to view such hierarchies as the natural order of things. In this sense, these hierarchies become "naturalized" because they are associated with seemingly "natural" processes of the family (p.64). Predicated on the assumption of heterosexism, male authority is naturalized with masculinity positioned as a source of authority (p.64).

Attacks on single mothers, as the cause of 'decline' in the 'American' family make the racist implications of family values explicit. In her analysis of the racism and sexism of the discourse of 'family values', Perry (1995) argues that the term "single mothers" itself has become linked to welfare, becoming "a code word for race just as 'welfare dependency, 'inner city', and 'the urban underclass,' have. There is an implication that black families, especially those headed by single mothers, do not share the values of the rest of society and do not pass on to their children the kinds of values that most Americans believe are important (Perry 1995, para. 17). This body of literature shows the ways in which 'family values' are racialized in relation to U.S. society, betraying the efforts of the 'pro-family' movement to present itself as non-racial and universally applicable. "Values" therefore serve not only as a technique of cultural control and regulation that are appealed to in times of change, but "also serve the socially constructive function of making the crucial distinction between those persons whose lives are inscribed only in economic value and those who have values and so are empowered to be agents in relation the market and economic value" (Jakobsen 2002, p.61). Poor, and especially black, single mothers, LGBTIQ+ people, those who cohabitant and/or choose to forego marriage and reproduction, are groups that have been constructed as lacking in values and as having economic consequences within 'family values' discourses, while the nuclear family formation is constructed as being imbued with 'proper' values and economic value.

The globalization of family values in Africa

Since the 1990s, international 'family values' activists have deployed measures to 'strengthen the family' through opposition to birth control, the use of condoms in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and hostility for the recognition of gay rights (Croft, 2007, p.44). Furthermore, "Religious activists have consistently opposed any foreign-policy initiative that might weaken parental control over children, facilitate abortion, expand the rights of homosexuals, or devalue the role of the conventional homemaker and mother" (Martin,1999, p.74). 'Family values' has been mobilized internationally through mediums such as radio, television, the internet, direct mail, the pulpit, personal networks, and gatherings (Martin, 1999, p.71). In 1999, Martin reported more than 200 Christian television stations and nearly 1500 Christian radio stations internationally, the majority being evangelical. Pat Robertson's *700 Club*, for instance, has approximately 1 million daily viewers, and his Christian Broadcasting Network is available in 90 nations in over 40 languages, and James Dobson's (Founder of Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council) produces a daily half-hour radio show called *Focus on the Family*, reaching an estimated 5 million listeners each week around the world. The broadcasts

"deliver a clear and highly partisan theological and political message" about the family and society (p.71).

The Christian Right also mobilizes against international governing bodies such as the World Trade Organization, the International Criminal Court, the European Union and the United Nations (UN) because they are seen as the foundations of a New World Order prophesized in the Bible in which one world government will rule the earth. Seen to be "controlled by Marxists, secular humanists, and radical (often homosexual) feminists bent on eradicating traditional Christian values" (Martin, 1999, p.78), the UN in particular is considered a "mechanism that allows a secular elite to threaten family values worldwide"(p.74). Since the time of Martin's writing, pro-family activists and organisations have increasingly worked within the UN context despite this belief in order to promote their values globally" (Croft, 2007, p.703). It has been through their influential participation in the UN that the Christian Right has successfully mobilized against initiatives that would fund programs seen to threaten "Family Values". The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, and the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women are often cited as the two gatherings where the pro-family movement put its agendas on the map. Christian Right (Buss and Herman, 2003, p.xv) campaigns against international bodies are mainly concerned with how much US foreign spending is allocated to these organizations and the conditions attached. Martin writes that in 1998, Christian Right opposition to the UN resulted in the US not contributing to the UN Population Fund, jeopardizing a programme that provides contraceptives to nearly 1.4 million women in 150 countries (Martin, 1999, p.75). As Martin discusses, House Republicans aligned with the religious right have held US debt owed to the UN "hostage", insisting that US dollars paid to the UN not go towards organizations that seek to legalize or fund abortions (p.75).

Rev. Dr. Kapya Kaoma, a Zambian researcher based at Political Research Associates in Massachusetts has written prolifically on the ways in which U.S. Christian Right activists are working to promote anti-gay and anti-feminist agendas in Africa (2009; 2010; 2012; 2013; 2014b). Through interview and documentary data, he has shown the ways in which pro-family organizations have "formed relationships and partnerships with mainstream US evangelical groups working in Africa and initiated relationships with African religious leaders, with offices in various African countries" (Kaoma, 2012, p.13). The impact of these relationships was further elaborated upon in his 2012 report, Colonizing African Values: How the U.S. CR is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa", in which he discusses the creation of the Ugandan 'kill the gays' bill. This direct intervention through 'mentorship,' as Kaoma shows, has facilitated the transplanting of current U.S. culture war debates to Uganda and other African countries. For instance, draft legislation proposed in many countries "bars same-sex

marriage and adoption of children by same-sex couples even though marriage and adoption of children are not yet on the radar of most African sexual minorities" (p. 9).

African Homophobias

Nearly a decade ago, Marc Epprecht (2008) wrote that the most notable feature of the study of same-sex intimacy and partnership in Africa had been its absence. An extension of the fact that Western scholars have been by far the loudest and most prolific voices in the large canon of formal knowledge on that diverse array of practices, behaviors, and beliefs that have been brought under the monolithic banner of "African sexuality", Epprecht argues that there had been a profound silencing of the history of same-sex intimacy and partnership across the continent (Epprecht, 2008). In this sense, Epprecht finds social science to have been complicit in the idea that homosexuality is 'unAfrican', arguing that there seemed to have been a "prior, unspoken commitment to promoting a uniquely heterosexual Africanness that overr[ode] open-minded scholarship on the issue" (p.21). Pointing to the result that homosexuality has come to be seen as an "exotic white gay disease from the west", he argues that the silencing of non-heterosexual sexualities within scholarship conducted by westerners across the continent have further entrenched heterosexism (p.17). It is to these gaps that Epprecht addresses his own work (2006, 2008), making important archival interventions into the perception that homosexuality is 'unAfrican'. These works have provided extensive evidence that same sex intimacy and relationships were integrated into pre-colonial traditions and belief systems, countering the essentialising and exclusive claim that to be African is to be, always and already, heterosexual.

The silences that Epprecht draws attention to have become increasingly addressed by queer African researchers, activists and artists since the time of his writing, making a number of critical interventions in the notion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' by speaking to the lived realities of LGBTIQ+ people across the continent. From a range of disciplines and through various frameworks, scholars have discussed a number of country contexts including Uganda (Hofer, 2003; Tamale, 2007; Cheney, 2012; Nyanzi, 2013; Müller, 2014), South Africa (Msibi, 2009; Brown, 2012), Zimbabwe (Epprecht, 2005; 2007; 2012); Cameroon (Awondo, 2010; Ndjio, 2012; Geschiere, 2017), Ghana (Tettey, 2016); Namibia (Currier, 2012), Kenya (Finerty, 2013), and Senegal (Niang, 2003). Scholars have also provided critical readings of homophobia across the continent more broadly (Reddy, 2009; Epprecht, 2008; 2012; 2013; Awondo, Gesciere and Reid, 2012; Chitando and Mataveke, 2017; Ireland, 2013; Ekine, 2013; Ndashe, 2013). The documentation and publication of the lived experiences of same-sex desire and non normative sexualities and gender identities in Africa have vocalized and visibilized diverse African sexualities, as well as the forms of violence experienced by those who transgress heteropatriarchal social norms. Gevisser and Cameron's (1995) collection of essays by South African

gays and lesbians did much to highlight the challenges, issues, and contradictions faced by these groups at the dawn of democracy, and Morgan and Wieringa's (2005) collection of life stories by African women about their intimate relationships with other women has become an important point of reference in writing about queer identities and experiences in Africa. More recently, Morgan, Marais, and Wellbeloved's (2009) collection of transgender life stories from South Africa, as well as Abbas and Ekine's (2013) and Matabeni's (2014) collection of art, photography and essays that document and interrogate what it means to be queer in Africa have provided rich and diverse examples of how people across the continent are subverting heteropatriarchal sex and gender norms and resisting homo- and transphobias in their contexts. These contributions speak to the challenges, and possibilities, for Africanising discourses on sexuality and gender, as discussed by Chitando and Mateveke (2017), and countering political homophobia, which Currier (2012) and Ndjio (2012) discuss in relation to the construction of post-independence African identities.

Theoristion of homophobic hate speech (Reddy, 2009) and discourse (Vincent and Howell, 2014; Tettey, 2016) has provided important critical discussions of the role of language in circulating and constructing homophobia and heterosexism, but also how language can be used as a vehicle through which negative stereotypes and prejudices can be confronted and transformed. The many, and varied, moral panics over homosexuality across the continent have fueled, and have also been fueled by, homophobic discourse, especially in the media and by religious and political leaders (see Ndjio, 2012; Tettey, 2016; Geschiere,2017). The impact of the circulation of homophobic discourses and attitudes in different contexts has become an important area of investigation, including schools (Msibi 2012; Bhana 2015); the public health sector and in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment especially (Epprecht, 2012; Petros et al, 2006), and the law (Tamale, 2014).

At the same time that these studies have been important in discussions of African homophobia and analysis of the forms of oppression experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, Ndashe (2013) as well as Awondo, Geschiere and Reid (2012), have provided important discussions of the danger of the essentialising single narrative of Africa as a 'homophobic continent'. While Ndashe (2013) writes that it has become increasingly expedient for certain political interests in Africa to denounce calls for equal recognition and rights for sexual minorities "as another form of colonialism and something that should be rejected as a matter of principle" (p.160), one is also reminded that homophobia, and activism working to counter it, are varied across the continent, making any attempt to construct a 'single story' of African homophobia a misleading and often politically dangerous endeavor (p.156). And, as Awondo, Geschiere and Reid (2012) argue, the simplistic and stereotypical image of a "homophobic Africa" is often contrasted with the image of a "tolerant or depraved west" (145) also reinforces

the binary of "homo" versus "hetero" (p.160). This co-construction ultimately limits discussion of sexuality and gender diversity across the continent, which becomes a debate about whether same-sex desires and sexual practices were imported, or indigenous, to the continent (p.161).

Further discussions of the transnational dynamics shaping sexual politics in Africa can complicate simplistic dichotomizations of 'homophobic' Africa and the 'depraved' or 'progressive' west. These approaches, as Kaoma's work shows, can reveal the complex and contradictory ways in which anti- and pro-gay Western political interests have influenced sexual politics and policies in Africa. Ugandan anti-gay legislation, and the widely publicized trial of American pastor Scott Lively who was on trial for crimes against humanity for his alleged role in inspiring the 'Kill the Gay's bill', has become a site where the involvement of western activists and organisations in African sexual politics have been made highly visible (Nyanzi, 2013; Müller 2014). In article one, I elaborate further on why these dynamics are in need of discussion, situating contemporary African sexual politics within broader international literature and theory on the ways in which western 'culture wars' over gender and sexuality are influencing international politics and are taking shape in the global south.

Population control, suspicion and the regulation of African reproductivity

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, I became aware of the theme of 'population' and 'population control' within pro-family discourses in their opposition to homosexuality and women's reproductive choices. Specifically, the argument made by some pro-life activists is that that homosexuality, like birth control and reproduction, are agendas of the U.S. progressives to reduce global fertility. Certainly not a 'new' theme within pro-family discourse (see Buss and Herman, 2003, p.56-75), international population policy continues to bring together many of the issues motivating pro-family politics (abortion, contraception, women's rights), having brought homosexuality into the fold as an alleged form of population control and 'attack' on the 'natural' family.

I pursued the theme of population in order to better understand its historical trajectory, and the ways in which the recent history of population control agendas driven by the international population movement across the continent have lent credibility to the suspicion that homosexuality, too, is an effort of the West to regain control over African populations. This involved the review of work that is critical of population science (Johannson, 1995; Grimes, 1998; Cordell, 2010), and the International population movement (Hodgson and Watkins, 1997; Girard, 2009; Ahlberg and Kulane, 2011), the

sexed and gendered notion of population as it relates to modern constructions of the nation (King, 2002; Weinbaum, 2004), Foucaudian approaches to the ways in which population policy is a site where sex has been put into discourse at the level of international governance (Girard, 2009), and critiques of western population control interventions (Mamdani, 1976**)**. This research revealed that the notion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' and a form of population control has an ancestry in ongoing suspicions and rumors that have circulated for decades in relation to western public health interventions (Rutenberg and Watkins, 1997; Geissler, 2005; Yahya, 2006; Kaler, 2009;). This body of literature is further elaborated upon in article four, in which I also discuss the role of the narrative that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' and a form of population control within social imaginaries of geo-political power relations between Africa and the west.

Theoretical Framework

This investigation into how the US Christian Right is influencing sexual politics in Africa through the promotion of 'family values' required an interdisciplinary theoretical framework capable of processing complex and often contradictory intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and geo-politics in the decolonial context. The conceptualization of this project has been made possible by poststructural theorisation of the ways in which these and other dimensions of difference, and the relations of power that act upon them, do not exist objectively, but are constructed through language and ideology. Extending the tradition of critical theory, poststructuralism draws attention to the ways in which taken for granted concepts, categories, and material arrangements are constituted through discourse. In understanding how and why pro-family discourses are traveling transnationally from between U.S. and Africa, I employed a critical approach in order to uncover the power relations and interests at stake within these dynamics. Of the many subfields within poststructural theory, I bring critical theorisations on the nuclear/modern family and the sexed/gendered binary into conversation with critical theory and philosophy engaging with the heteropatriarchal dimensions of modernity/coloniality. In what follows, I provide an more detailed discussion of the theoretical concepts shaping the project's theoretical orientation towards the pro-family movement and the discourse of the 'natural family' it promotes.

Critical Diversity Literacy

The theoretical framework of this project is grounded in the framework of Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) (Steyn, 2015), which is interested in the theoretical, as well as practical, imperatives for studying systems of dominance and privilege. A CDL approach to dynamics of privilege, power, and difference can challenge systems oppression by exposing and naming the systems of dominance at work and interrogating underlying hegemonic interests and power relations in a social context. Here, I employ CDL as "an informed analytical orientation that enables a person to 'read' prevailing social relations as one would a text" so that it is possible to "recogniz[e] the ways in which possibilities are being opened up or closed down for those differently positioned" within pro-family discourse (Steyn, 2015, p.381). This reading practice centers an analysis of power relations as constitutive of the ways in which differences are imagined and positioned in relation to one another in a historically, economically and politically contingent social context. This mode of critical social research therefore aims to contribute towards imperatives of social justice by exposing the ways in which "differentiation and power are reproduced and used as tools to exacerbate marginalization" of certain groups (Scheyvens et al, 2003, p.167).

Unlike modes of inquiry designed to capture the perceivable or measurable, the analytic framework

of CDL has been instructive in that it sets out to expose and explain often difficult to detect power relations at work in social contexts. Specifically, CDL allows one to identify the:

> relatively smooth reproduction of existing power relations – such as those that invisibilize the norm, naturalize the status quo, construct ambiguities, promote patterns of forgetting and remembering, render some things unthinkable, [and] discourage envisaging other possibilities (Steyn, 2015, p.384).

According to Steyn, inequitable social arrangements such as white supremacy and (hetero)patriarchy rely on constant ideological work to support and maintain the appearance of these hierarchies as natural and inevitable (p.385). This project approaches the notion of the 'natural family' and the pro-family movement as a site where ideologies constituting unequal power relations are being actively reconfigured and reconstituted through discourses seeking to normalize and reaffirm the two-sex gender system and hierarchy.

Queer Theory

The idea of heteronormativity as "the set of norms that make heterosexuality seem natural or right and that organize homosexuality as its binary opposite" is the problem to which queer analysis addresses itself (Valocci, 2005, p.756). From this approach, heterosexual normativity can be made visible through queer analysis. In the context of this project, the production of heteronormativity is made explicitly within pro-family discourse, making this a particularly privileged site for analysis of how the gender binary and heterosexuality are actively constructed through discourse and meaning systems that serve racialized power interests. While productive in making heteronormativity and its production visible, queer theory, as an academic practice that emerged in the context of the global north, cannot be uncritically applied in relation to sexual politics and identities global south (Epprecht, 2009; Valocci, 2005). Implicit assumptions about sexed and gendered meaning systems and identities that largely inform queer theory limit the extent to which it can be relevant or reliant beyond Euro-America. Furthermore, the incorporation of homosexuality into U.S. and European nationalisms and imperial projects accompanying the post-9/11 'war on terror' have shown how 'sexual exceptionalism', or 'pinkwashing' have enabled the "glossing over" of other forms of violence perpetrated by imperialist states the emergence of 'homonationalisms' (Puar 2007, 9), indicating that critical scholars in the global south must proceed with caution when consulting queer theory.

Bearing these limitations in mind, this project draws upon poststructural queer analytical approaches (Butler, 1990, 1993; Foucault, 1977; 1978) that have emphasized the "generative character of all

sexual identities" in order to make visible the processes of heteronormalisation operating through pro-family discourse (Namaste, 1994, p.220). A recognition of how power relations operate in relation to sex, sexuality, sexed and gendered identities and performativities are foundational to these approaches. In the context of the global south, historical cognizance of colonialism is necessary for grasping the power relations that have produced sexed and gendered identities and social orders. In the global north too, these histories have produced particular entanglements of raced, sexed, and gendered power and performativities. As Judith Butler (1993) asks:

> How is race lived in the modality of sexuality? How is gender lived in the modality of race? How do colonial and neo-colonial nation-states rehearse gender relations in the consolidation of state power? (Butler, 1993, p.116-117).

Drawing attention to colonial and neo-colonial states, these questions make colonialism and race visible as a contextual factor shaping entangled constructions and experiences of sexuality and gender.

This project takes a sociological approach to queer analysis through its "material grounding of the discursive constructions of sexed bodies" and identities (Valocci, 2005, p.766). While queer theory has paid much attention to individuals and groups who do not conform to heterosexual and heteropatriarchal expectations, this project applies these approaches in order to interrogate the ideological work of the pro-family movement as a site in which hegemonic forms of power intersect and interlock so as to reproduce the marginality of sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people and re-center heteropatriarchal interests.

While this project is motivated by the exclusionary effects of pro-family discourse on the lives of LGBTIQ+ people, I also take an anti-assimilationist approach that is more interested in challenging 'straight privilege' than obtaining it. In other words, rather than proposing "participatory patriarchy" (Sycamore, 2008, 3) and insisting that LGBTIQ+ people should be seen as 'normal' and therefore deserving of access to the systems that have excluded them, I take an ontological approach that is interested in challenging and deconstructing these systems and structures of exclusion.

The nuclear/modern family and bio-power

This project draws upon a Foucauldian approach to the nuclear family as a form of 'bio-power' that facilitated the development of capitalism in the sixteenth century (1980 [1978], p.110). Bio-power, as defined by Foucault, "brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and

made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life" (p.143). These technologies that could discipline the body and regulate populations were, as Foucault writes, required for the development of capitalism from the sixteenth century. This involved a "great bi-polar technology" that transformed the ways in which modern states exercise power over their subjects (p.139). According to Foucault, this 'bi-polar' technology involved, firstly, efforts by (colonial) states to make maximum use of the capabilities and productivities of the body by integrating it into systems of efficient and economic controls (p.139) and, secondly, measuring and supervising the biological processes (birth, death, fertility) of the body. Located at the juncture of the 'body' and the 'population', sex "became a crucial target of a power organized around the management of life rather than the menace of death" (p.147), and at the heart of the political and economic problems of the "population" as the manpower and labor capacity of states (p.25-6). Fitting the need to discipline bodies and regulate populations, technologies of sex gave rise to an entire micro-politics and whole series of different tactics that "combined, in varying proportions, the objective of disciplining the body and that of regulating populations" (p.146). The nuclear family, or 'Malthusian couple'[3], was a central figure within these efforts to "transform the sexual conduct of couples into a concerted economic and political behavior" (p.26).

While Foucault's writing on bio-power opened up numerous critical avenues into the study of power, gender, and sexuality, he neglected to locate his discussion on the science of sexuality in relation to empire and colonialism. As Stoler (1995) argues, the eighteenth century discourses on sexuality that Foucaut discusses emerged out of, and were shaped by, imperialism. In relation to the four strategies used by the west to deploy sexuality as a technique of power - the Malthusian couple being one (the 'hysterization' of women's bodies, the 'pedagogization' of children's sex, and the 'psychiatrization' of perverse pleasures being the other three), Stoler (p.6-7) asks, "Did any of these…exist as objects of knowledge and discourse in the nineteenth century without a racial erotic counterpoint, without reference to the libidinal energies of the savage, the primitive, the colonized"?

As Stoler (1997) writes, "colonial authority and racial distinctions were fundamentally structured in gendered terms" with gender inequalities serving as pillars within structures of colonial racism and imperial authority (p.344). When accounting for the context of empire's relationship to the colonies,

[3] Foucault (1980 [1978] discusses the Malthusian couple as one of the figures, or objects of knowledge, that emerged with the nineteenth century preoccupation with sex. Corresponding to the strategy of socializing procreative behavior, in which "fiscal measures brought to bear on the fertility of couples" (104), the Malthusian couple was invested in the ways in which women, men, and children made use of their sex (105).

it becomes apparent that Victorian constructions of Euro-American colonial gender norms, the regulation of European family life, and bourgeouis 'respectability' were inextricably linked to notions of (white) racial survival, imperial patriotism, and the political strategies of the colonial state (p.355). These discourses tied the "conduct of private life and the sexual proclivities [of] individuals…to corporate profits and the security of the colonial state...it was thought that unseemly domestic arrangements could encourage subversion as strongly as acceptable unions could avert it" (p.349). In colonial-era Zimbabwe, for instance, colonial missionaries and officials alike frequently blamed African women's "lascivious dtendencies" and influence over African men as the origin of the labor shortage (Schmidt, 1991, p.737). Through the institutionalization of a Christonormative gender-power hierarchy in African societies, "the ideological basis for the domestication of African women masked the broader economic objectives of colonial capital and the state" (p.739). In this sense, the future of the empire came to depend upon the successful erection and maintenance of a system that could justify and implement measures of domination, control, and conquest by Europe over the 'rest' of the world. A system that bell hooks (2004) has referred to as "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy", drawing important attention to the intersecting forms of hegemonic power that constitute "cultures of domination" (xi).

Over five centuries after the regulation of sexual behaviors of populations became linked with colonial regimes of power and control within empire and the colonies, anxieties over states and their economies have remained centered on the ways in which citizens make use of their sex. Within international political spheres such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Health Organization, contemporary global debates over sexual minority rights, women's reproductive health, and sexual health related issues have surfaced within globalized bio-political contestations over populations and their relationships with economic growth and development. It is within this context that current international debates over abortion, same-sex marriage, sexual minority rights, sex education, and sexual health currently unfold.

The modern/colonial construction of the 'nuclear' family

The notion of the 'natural family' employed by pro-family activists directly invokes the modern/colonial construction of the 'nuclear' or 'modern' family, which was heterosexual, monogamous, married, and reproductive. Constructed as a pillar, and measure, of civilization, the nuclear family became a concept in which heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, christonormativity and western dominance were interwoven. In centering heterosexual marriage as a *the* fundamental social unit, the hegemonic positionality of heterosexuality has been construed as having inherent social 'value' in the context of

marriage to the exclusion of 'other' social arrangements beyond this description. The explicit privileging of heterosexuals and heterosexuality translates into the erasure of LGBTIQ+ identities and communities. Heterosexual and hegemonic masculine "subjectivities of entitlement" are comfortably couched in this construction of the "natural family" that has historically served patriarchal interests, and which is currently reproducing "a world that is dominated by, centered upon, identified with [heteropatriarchal] interests and the normalized unearned advantages that accrue to" (Steyn, 2015, p.383) heterosexist and patriarchal forms of power and privilege.

Kitch (2009) provides historical insight into the ideology of the gender binary and hierarchy within racist colonial ideologies of white, European superiority and supremacy over colonized peoples in Africa and the Americas. She shows that white Christian European men, who had already been fully invested in their spiritual, physical, and intellectual superiority over women, sought to construct white men as superior to all men in order to legitimate the geopolitical dominance and authority of Europe in relation to the rest of the world. This was accomplished through the idea of "nation" becoming deeply invested in the idea of sexual 'dimorphism' and gender role complementarity, in which notions of civilization were informed by hegemonic constructions of all men over all women, as well as the superiority of white European men over all other men. As Kitch writes:

> In these ways and others, sexual difference and the gender binary became basic tenets of the ideology of racial hierarchy and white supremacy during processes of nation formation in the West (p.169).

Contained within the idea that the gender binary was a mark of civilization was the argument that indigenous people in the Americas and Africa were savage and uncivilized because they did not practice gender and kinship as "enlightened" European Christians did. This discourse became key in constructing Enlightenment ideologies used to served to justify slavery and colonialism. This project therefore conceptualizes gender as a colonial construction (Lugones, 2007, p.210) that is not only historically linked with, but forms the foundation of, the ideology of race and racial difference (Kitch, 2009). From this perspective, gender relations can be seen as mechanisms of colonialism and as forms of cultural imperialism. Lugones (2007, p.210) argues that the gender binary and hierarchy informed "heterosexism as a key part of how gender fuses with race in the operations of colonial power". Colonialism, she writes

> Imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white bourgeois colonizers. Thus, it introduced many genders

> and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing (p. 210).

The idea of gender dimorphism allowed European men to justify their control and domination over colonized men who became deemed unable to govern themselves due to their inability to control and dominate "masculinized" and hypersexualized African women. Male dominance therefore became a signal of cultural advancement and superiority (Kitch 2009, 43). These ideas were used to justify the superiority of white men over all men, as well as the universal superiority of all men over all women. Consequently, "obsession with gendered racial bodies, blood and citizenship fused concepts of gender and race so completely that it is now difficult to imagine how race could have become such a dominant fault – line in American society without those naturalized gender associations" (p.58). As bell hooks has written, these imperialist racist patriarchal constructions have endured through stereotypes of the "black women as sexual primitive" (1992, p.73) and the black male as "brute, animal, natural born rapists and murderers…untamed, uncivilized, unthinking, and unfeeling (2004, p. xii)"

In challenging modern/colonial binaries and hierarchies, gender and sexual dissidents in Africa "seek to unravel the intersecting colonial legacies for racism, sexism, and heterosexism" (Currier, 2012, p.452). These movements therefore have great capacity to challenge the systems of regulation and knowledge that have upheld coloniality. Given the centrality of the nuclear family within modern/colonial civilizing and colonizing imperatives, moral panic over women's rights and homosexuality as a threat to western civilization should not, therefore, be seen as "irrational" or "insane", but as "the rationality of postmodern nationalism" (Jakobsen, 2002, p.61). If nations are dependent on a particular and narrow understanding of family, "then homosexuality could, in fact, threaten the nation", argues Jakobsen (p.56).

Fears over the weakening or decline of 'the family' have been important themes that have shaped American popular and political discourse in relation to social change. As Stacey (1997) reveals, anxieties about the decline of 'the family' have always taken place against a white heterosexist backdrop in which black people and women are constructed as the perpetrators of this destruction. And, as Smith (2006, p. 71) writes, "heteropatriarchy is the building block of US empire" which naturalized patriarchy as a private and public form of heirarchy throughout the colonization of North America. She argues that "patriarchy rests on a naturalized gender binary system in which only two genders exist, one dominating the other…just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens" (p.71). Smith's work resonates strongly with Kitch (2009) who explores how the gender-power hierarchy and ideology of patriarchy informed the white racist ideologies supporting colonialism and slavery in Africa and North America.

The nuclear family, as an incubator for the modern/colonial two-sex gender binary and hierarchy, explains why it has formed such a central role within feminist thought. For Nigerian feminist scholar, Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí (2002), western feminism has been complicit in the reproduction of the universalization and export of the nuclear family in Africa because of the extent to which the unit of analysis in much feminist theory has been the nuclear family household. She writes, "The woman at the heart of feminist theory, the wife, never gets out of the household. Like a snail she carries the house around with her" (p. 2). Despite being an "alien form in Africa despite its promotion by both the colonial and neocolonial state", the nuclear family problematically remains central to much feminist theorizing (2002, p.2). The centering of the nuclear family within western feminist thought and methodology, she argues, have rendered it largely inadequate for interrogating and theorizing gender, and its related concepts, in African contexts. While this critique speaks to the problems of universalizing western notions of gender, sexuality, and family, it remains important to retain a focus on the nuclear family form, as it is remains a centerpiece of conservative western ideological work that accompanies modernizing projects across the "developing" world. As Baba writes, "the heterosexual, nuclear family…became dominant globally during the rise of capitalism. With the spread of modernism and capitalism around the world this type of family became dominant to a degree that it has been naturalized as the norm" (Baba, 2011, p.57). Extending Sedgwick's (1990) contention that critical analysis of the modern homo/heterosexual binary is essential to any understanding of Western culture, Baba argues that heterosexuality is an "indespensible" part of modernization projects across the non-Western world. Within these processes, "Sexism and heteronormativitiy do not only intersect…but they feed into each other; they are interlocking systems and one cannot address them separately" (Baba, 2011, p.60). Thus, while Oyěwùmí's critique is necessary for theorizing and articulating 'gender' and 'sexuality' from African perspectives, the ongoing ideological work of pro-family activists to reinscribe the 'nuclear family' as a universal norm makes it a necessary site for ongoing critique and analysis within critical queer and feminist research seeking to investigate the hegemonic status of this particular kinship formation, and consequences thereof.

Decolonizing the family

In theorizing the 'colonial matrix of power, Walter Mignolo also discusses the nuclear family model as a project of modernity/coloniality. He argues that a global gender/sex hierarchy "privileged males over females and European patriarchy over other forms of gender configuration and sexual relations" through the invention and institutionalization of sex (heterosexual/homosexual) and gender (male/female) binaries (Mignolo, 2011, p.18). Thus, "a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European

people over non-European people" secured the privileged status of European men over all men and colonized people, as well as European women (Mignolo, 2011, p.18). This hierarchy, he writes, was established upon "two pillars of enunciation: the *racial* and *patriarchal* foundations of knowledge without which the colonial matrix of power would not have been possible to be established" (Mignolo, 2010, p.120).

Thus, colonial expansion was "as much an expansion of forms of knowledge - epistemologies -as it was an acquisition of territories" (Pascale 2016, 220). The claim that the nuclear family unit is 'natural' and 'universal' has also been made possible as a result of the inherently epistemic dimensions of Europe's colonization of Africa (Grosfoguel,2013). The kidnapping of Africans and their enslavement in the Americas was "inherently epistemic", as Grosfoguel tells:

> Africans in the Americans were forbidden from thinking, praying or practicing their cosmologies, knowledges and world views. They were submitted to a regime of epistemic racism that forbade their autonomous knowledge production. Epistemic inferiority was a crucial argument used to claim biological social inferiority below the line of the human (p.84).

As Grosfoguel shows, people in Africa were identified as "those who prayed to the 'wrong God' and construed as sub-human, 'soul-less subjects'" (p.84). The enormous levels of violence inflicted upon African people and collectives and the destruction, appropriation, and erasure of indigenous knowledges and social formations has constituted universalizing claims about the 'natural' family (86). Postcolonial and decolonial scholars have extensively shown how imperial conquest and domination subjected the colonized not only to physical violence, exploitation and surveillance, but also to epistemicide and erasure through the destruction of indigenous knowledge systems an forms of representation. As Stuart Hall (1990) writes, the subjection of black people and black experiences to imperialist "regimes of representation" were not only 'othering' but hegemonizing. A critical trauma characterizing 'the colonial experience' according to Hall, is that "Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'" (p. 225, original emphasis)

Missionary schooling was one instrument of such epistemicide and erasure in that it enforced western gender binary and hierarchy as part of the "civilizing" imperative. Missionary schooling aimed to 'train' African women to maintain nuclear households, which involved lessons on homecraft, cook-

ing, infant care, and personal, household and social hygiene (Burke, 1996, p.445). Similarly, missionary schools for native girls in the Americas "intended to indoctrinate them with the ideals of Christian womanhood – piety, domesticity, submissiveness, and purity" (Devens, 2016, p.281). Consideration of how Eurocentric models of the gender binary and nuclear family functioned as instruments of western colonial dominance and conquest exposes the historical amnesia contained in 'pro-family' mythology that their version of the ideal family structure is universal, apolitical and ahistorical.

This project positions pro-family discourses privileging the 'natural' family as a site where the epistemic dimensions of global and national power relations can be witnessed in action. This approach requires the deconstruction of the coloniality of the 'natural family' and its role within geographies of knowledge production, viewing pro-family knowledge production as "cultural production" that cannot be disassociated from relations of power (Pascale, 2016, p.220). The design of the process of data collection and analysis sought to access the "complex networks of power that infuse the (re)production of culture and knowledge", a project which Pascale (2011, p.155) argues can be achieved through a sociological approach to discourse and narratives that is cognizant of how these link together structure and agency, history and local interaction (2011, p.161).

Method and Design

Understanding why the U.S. Christian Right is interested in African sexual politics and in promoting 'family values' across the continent and how the movement is working to do this were the problematics shaping this project. The project was therefore designed to provide empirical insights into the networks that the pro-family movement has grown in African contexts, and to study the discourses they are advancing across the continent in order to grasp the underlying interests and power relations at work and at stake. This empirical data would not only provide descriptive information about how and why the US pro-family movement is operating in African contexts, but would also open up theoretical insights into how heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and western hegemony are being reasserted and refastened in the context of decolonial power relations between the west, and the U.S. specifically, and African states.

My positionality as an epistemic resource

Paula Moya (2011) argues in her discussion of Enrique Dussel's (2011) provocations around 'who we are and from where we speak', that as researchers our identities shape our engagements with the knowledges we encounter and produce in our work. She writes, "Our conceptual frameworks are inseparable from how we comprehend ourselves" in terms of various identity categories (i.e. gender, culture, race, ability, sexuality, etc.), even when we are not fully aware of the effects of these on, what Linda Martin Alcoff (2005, p.95) calls, our "interpretive horizons". As researchers, she argues that we should view, and be transparent about, our identities and interpretive horizons as "epistemic resources" (Moya, 2011, p.85). In doing so, we can disrupt, refuse, interfere, and resist "the reductive and unitary logic" of 'common sense', standard practices and norms within knowledge production that reproduce modern/colonial structures of power (p.86).

In addition to hopefully satisfying the requirements for the completion of my Doctorate of Philosophy, I intended for this project to also assist me in answering questions that I have lived with for many years. The child of same-sex parents and the product of contraceptive technology and an anonymous donor, I became acutely aware of the centred and privileged status of the nuclear family from a young age. Also, having been raised in a non-normative family structure with extended networks of lesbian identified family friends who were my 'aunts', I entered and came to live the world in ways

that subverted heteropatriarchal norms and ideologies. As I grew into adolescence and encountered the implications of being female in a patriarchal world, particularly though my budding awareness of conservative attempts to restrict access to contraception and abortion in the world of politics, I started to question why there was such a high level of politicization and polarization around what people, and women in particular, did with their sexualities and bodies.

In the course of conducting my literature review, Creed's (2000, p.345) words resonated strongly, speaking to my sense of alienation within the U.S. on account of my family structure, and desire to live an unmarried and childfree life:

> The extent to which one's life experience corresponds to [a single master narrative of the life course] affects one's sense of belonging to the state, which provides the basis of national identity.

At the same time, as a white person living in the midwest, I was centred by my race and I was privileged due to the fact that I was born to middle-class parents. These aspects of my positionality ensured that I would see my reflections in popular culture and media, that people in positions of power would look like me, and that I would have access to quality education and career opportunities. I did not, however, see reflections of my family status, and own queerness, within the world around me. I was alienated by assumptions made by others that I lived in a household comprised of a mother, a father, and siblings, or that I desired to be married or have children. The decision to relocate to South Africa in 2005 was multifaceted, but the presence of the ever lurking U.S. Christian Right and the "cloying aroma of family values" (Stacey, 1994, p.52) was certainly a major 'push' factor that motivated me to seek less imposing conditions elsewhere.

It was approximately four years after moving to Cape Town that I began to hear the haunting echoes of the U.S. Christian Right within suddenly proliferating homophobic discourses: "It's not Adam and Steve, its Adam and *Eve*" became a popular mantra; and the claim that homosexuality is "unAfrican" became increasingly pronounced in popular discourse and reported in media. I was prompted to investigate these seemingly related discourses, and my initial review of articles and reports revealed that U.S. Christian Right activists were, indeed, beginning to mobilize hatred towards LGBTIQ+ people in many African countries. More than surprise or shock me, the realization that the U.S. Christian Right is operating internationally, and in South Africa specifically, terrified me. Knowing the power and influence of anti-gay and anti-feminist conservatives to influence policy and popular belief in the U.S., I became afraid for what lay ahead for sexual politics in South Africa and other African countries.

My background and positionality as an American, as well as my growing experience and knowledge of the South African context acquired through postgraduate study of power, privilege and oppression, became epistemic resources that shaped each phase of the research cycle. These factors motivated me to pursue this project in the first place, made it possible for me to ask the stated research questions, and to employ the research methods that I did. My positionality also gave me a particular experience of collecting and analyzing data which will be elaborated upon further below.

Beyond the frame: Remaining resilient in research

My background, as I have sketched above, made the process of conducting this investigation a haunting one, as I will discuss in the data analysis section. Sitting with pro-family narratives day after day over the five years that it took me to complete the project was an embodied experience given my queer positionalities. A series of 'extracurricular activities', which I will briefly discuss here grounded me in local struggles and conversations amongst queer communities in my context. They therefore played an important role in informing the ways in which I interpreted the data that I collected, although they fall outside of the immediate frame of the projects design and methodology.

Shortly after my PhD proposal was approved, two pieces of anti-gay legislation appearing in Uganda and Nigeria made International headlines. In response to much of the commentary that I was encountering in local South African media outlets, I wrote a piece for the online news site, *The Daily Maverick*, entitled The bigger picture: understanding anti-gay laws in Africa[4]**.** After hearing numerous comments that expressed 'confusion' about why Africa was 'suddenly' homophobic, and accusations that these laws indicated the 'backwardness' of the continent, I was prompted to write something that would contribute the missing pieces of this discussion - the role of religious conservatives in the US who are promoting these agendas. The relevance of my research to the immediate context became further apparent not only because of the legislative developments in Uganda and Nigeria to which I could provide new insights to the pubic, but because of the response to the article. Subsequent to its publication, I was approached by other local and international media outlets for interviews (South African radio broadcasters SAFM, and Power FM, the German public television station Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, and the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala Sweden). The urgency of conducting this research was further confirmed to me through these media requests and the apparent gaps within popular discourse on the topic.

[4] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-01-20-the-bigger-picture-understanding-anti-gay-laws-in-africa/#.WlYF8K2B1R0

As Research Coordinator at the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies, I was involved in the coordination of a joint exhibition between art-activsts Zanele Muholi and Gabrielle le Roux entitled, 'queer and trans art-iculations: Collaborative art for social change', which was held at the Wits Art Museum in Johannesburg for a period of two months in 2014. As part of the exhibition, which was conceptualized as a social justice intervention, I coordinated a three-day south-south dialogue on 'dismantling the gender binary' that included artists, academics and activists from Turkey, Australia, Mexico, Burundi, and South Africa. The exhibition intervention also involved a two-day colloquium, which resulted in the publication of a special issue of the South African feminist journal *Agenda,* which I co-edited with Tommaso Milani. The process of working with a number of queer artists and activists in the coordination of the exhibition, and the experience of Muholi and Le Roux's jointly exhibited works, drew my attention to the power of the gender binary as a taken-for-granted concept, and to the liberatory potential of disrupting it. As an intervention, the exhibition "served as a creative rupture against the prejudice and ignorance directed at people and groups who perform sexual and gender identities that do not 'fit in' normative binaries of male/female, man/woman, homo/heterosexual' (McEwen and Milani, 2014, p.4). As the education coordinator at the Wits Art Museum, Leigh Blanckenberg and I found through analysis of the feedback provided by visitors in the 'talk back station', overall responses written on the comments wall revealed that the exhibition had the effect of opening up people's minds to the possibly that there is more than two genders in the world (Blanckenberg and McEwen 2014, p.70**)**. I was amongst the many who attended the exhibition, and was affectively drawn, and intellectually shifted by the exhibited works and the narratives that accompanied them. Opening up my imagination to gender expressions beyond, or in the spaces between masculinity and femininity, the exhibition broadened my 'interpretive horizons' (Alcoff 2005, p.95) around sexuality and gender. And, in engaging with the lived realities, experiences and struggles of queer and transgender people from around the continent, I was also able to gain critical insight into the violence, and constant threat thereof, that holds the gender binary in place.

I was also involved in two projects relating to faith, gender and sexuality during the process of data collection. These experience exposed me to liberation theology, which taught me that many religious leaders are interested in educating their communities about sexuality and gender diversity, and gave me a more nuanced view of theological and ideological landscapes in relation to these issues.

In my capacity as Research Coordinator at WICDS, I was approached by Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute for Development in 2015 to participate in a workshop on 'Faith, Gender, and Sexuality' to take place in Johannesburg. The workshop involved approximately thirty participants from five African countries, most of whom occupied positions of leadership in their religious communities and

had already been involved with the gender activism of Sonke Gender Justice, as well as a few sex and gender activists who were not affiliated with any religious organization. The intention of the workshop was to raise awareness and deepen sensitivity amongst these delegates of sexuality and gender diversity. Much of the time of the workshop was spent discussing the ways in which fundamentalist Christian and Islamic interpretations of sacred texts are commonly cited justifications for homophobic attitudes, making the religious/faith sector an important site for engagement, intervention and alliance building. The workshop content was also produced into a toolkit which is now available for free online. While I am unable to elaborate upon the experience of the workshop here, it is important to mention that participants were remarkably open to the content of the workshop and expressed a desire to have further engagement around sexuality and gender diversity, and the need for queer and feminist theology that can equip them to sensitize and educate their congregations and communities.

In 2016, I was involved in my capacity as the WiCDS research coordinator in a collaborative project with Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA), Rock of Hope (a LGBTIQ organization in Swaziland), and Matrix (a LGBTIQ organization in Lesotho) that examined religion, gender, and sexuality in these three contexts. The project involved workshops hosted by each partner in their own contexts, followed by a workshop in which we exchanged experiences and ideas. This experience enabled me to gain access to local faith networks that are working to promote inclusive attitudes towards sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people. Through this work, I was also able to learn of the discourses of homophobic and transphobic resistance that these communities encounter within their faith communities and how they are working to counter these.

Finally, in 2017, I contributed a piece to an edited volume entitled 'State of Fracture' (Steyn and Kiguwa, eds., in press) that discusses the controversy over Steven Anderson, who became known as the 'hate-preacher' and was ultimately prohibited from entering South Africa where it was anticipated that he would conduct homophobic sermons as he has done in the United States. In conducting research on Anderson, I was surprised to learned that he does not have any direct connections to the 'pro-family' movement. At the same time, I gained a more critical awareness of how the pro-family movement cloaks its rhetoric in the benign terms of "protecting the natural family" so as to avoid being identified as a group that also fosters hate and intolerance. Unlike Anderson who has been explicitly racist and homophobic in many of his sermons, pro-family activists seek to present themselves and their agendas in far less flamboyant ways, presenting themselves as 'moderate', democratic, and respectable.

Ethics

As a research initiative seeking to address the social injustices propagated by family values discourses, this project centers agents of systemic heterosexism and heteropatriarchy. This approach led me to numerous cul-de-sacs within my review of the research methodology literature, which presumed that as the researcher, I was more powerful than the researched. Current thinking around research methods and ethics in the social sciences and humanities, I found, presents obstacles, and can even obscure, research that can investigate those in dominant positions, and the ways in which systems of oppression are perpetuated by those with access to power. Consulting the work of Pascale (2011, 2016), I was able to see the ways in which these challenges are related to the ways in which western hegemony has been reproduced through the social sciences. According to Pascale (2011):

> We should not and cannot trust that research methodologies, created by the most privileged and during eras of great oppression, will serve as the basis of socially just research. It is not a matter of good methods applied to bad uses but, rather, academia's ignorance of its own processes of reproduction (158).

While emphasis on protecting vulnerable groups is certainly a necessary emphasis within existing protocols and paradigms around research ethics, its overemphasis is also complicit in the opacities built into social scientific knowledge production "as we construct 'others' who are knowable" (Pascale, 2011, p.158). The importance of getting informed consent and the voluntary participation of the researched, protocols for accessing the field and the emphasis on participatory research methods are not necessarily productive or realistic within research on the powerful, who in any case become obscured as potential 'subjects' through emphasis on these concepts. Attempting to gain informed consent from an individual who actively promotes the oppression, exclusion, or marginalization of groups, or making one's presence known in sites where said individuals gather in order to conduct research on this form of oppression is not only impractical, but is also potentially unsafe for the researcher, especially one who occupies the positionalities are targeted by the subject of research. As I experienced, research that is conducted with the intention of challenging hegemonic ideologies often involves, and can even require, a radically different power relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' in order to achieve objectives that contribute towards social justice.

At the same time, I have also remained aware of the extent to which my own knowledge production through this research is an act of power in itself. In particular, as Gatson (2011) succinctly states, "decisions regarding exactly what tool in one's methodological kit to employ often hinge on power—that of the researcher, the researched, and the shifting power relations between the two over time" (246). While Gatson admits that decisions about the research questions and parameters of the study

are "basic" forms of power, citing Markham (2005) she reminds one that "the power in method is the power of representation of others" (Gatson, 2011, p.246). Reminded by Pascale (2011) that "research will never be an ideal process", I designed this project so as to make it effective and accountable (p.163) as an intervention into the reproduction and universal privileging of the modern/colonial nuclear family.

In order to grasp the complex networks of power operating and circulating through pro-family discourse, I was required to expand data collection beyond localized contexts of pro-family interaction and speech utterance. The shape of the pro family movement, as a collective of individuals and organizations who are geographically dispersed and who share a set of values and political ideologies, required the use of methods capable of accessing the multiple sites and strategies used to proliferate its discourses, as well as analytic techniques capable of grasping the relationships between these. Below, I discuss the methods of data collection that were employed, as well as the analytic techniques that were applied in order to pursue the stated research objectives.

Data Collection

Network ethnography

While traditional social science methods were designed for the study of physically bounded, territorially specific, social interactions in which the dominant means of social organization took place in physical space (Howard, 2002, p.554), new communications technologies have created a new set of challenges and demands for researchers:

> How can we qualitatively study culture produced in situations of decentralized human interaction with the high ethnographic standard of first-hand experience and produce generalizable theory? How can we qualitatively study culture in such a way as to strike a palatable balance between macro-structure and micro-agency?

In order to address this challenge, Howard proposes 'network ethnography' as as a synergistic and transdisciplinary method that is especially useful for studying hypermedia organizations, such as global activist movements. As a method, network ethnography is interested in "the complex fabric of associations between members with very different roles in very different organizations" who share deep ideational commonalities (p.570-1). Network ethnography, he writes, amalgamates traditional ethnography and social network analysis, although in doing so it presents unique methodological considerations related to the dispersed nature of the research site and the multimodal forms of interaction between members. While social network analysis alone can identify key organizations, events,

and people, network ethnography extends this method by applying ethnographic field methods on cases and field sites that the former can assist in identifying and selecting (p.561).

As a movement that can be compared to Howard's (2002) definition of a 'hypermedia organisation', ethnography or social network analysis, alone, would be insufficient to understand the pro-family movement's multifaceted efforts to expand its epistemic community to include African membership. Comprised of individuals who form a community, but are not members of the same formal organization, the pro-family movement has "adapted in significant ways by using new communication technology to conduct the business of social organization over large areas and disparate time zones, and at all hours of the day" (p.552). Within these forms of social organization, members do not likely have equivalent or comparable organizational roles, but rather "constitute a knowledge- based group, or 'specific community of experts sharing a belief in a common set of cause-and-effect relationships as well as common values'" (Haas, 1990 in Howard, 2002, p.564).

Online Ethnography

The pro-family movement broadly, and the World Congress of Families in particular, employ the communications technologies made possible by the internet in order to promote and disseminate their knowledge. This meant that much of my data collection involved online ethnographic methods. As Davies (2008) writes, "The changing nature of anthropological understandings of the field and of expectations regarding what constitutes fieldwork has greatly enhanced the acceptability of some forms of internet based research as ethnography" (p.159). Developments in social research that require ethnographic fieldwork across multiple sites, the growth of the ethnography of organistions, and the acceptance of a role for network and discourse analysis as well as the use of narrative have created a great potential for online ethnographic methods. Because one of my intentions was to collect the discourses of the pro-family movement as an 'epistemic community', the material produced by pro-family organizations that is published online was an appropriate and accessible site where I could collect relevant texts.

As Gatson (2011) discusses, the internet is ideally situated to be a part of extending the reach of traditional, auto-ethnographic, and multisited/extended-case forms of ethnography (p.247). The fact that online forms of ethnography, or cyber-anthropology (Paccagnella, 1997), may involve 'fields' that are not physical and may be "little more than a state of mind because…there is no physical entry into or exit from the community….no territorially-based field site, and…social cues that are available

are unbundled from much of the context in which the content was produced" (Howard, 2002, p.559), has generated critique concerning the rigor of such methods. While some such as Travers (2009) and Hine (2008) have dismissed the innovativeness and legitimacy of online ethnography, claiming that it can only produce 'thin' description, Gatson and others have maintained that online research "can provide either the same level of depth as a one-shot, one-hour interview, or the same level of depth as that produced by the daily participating, embedded online ethnographer. It may also provide the same level of in-depth analysis as any historical or comparative historical text-based analysis, wherein the text is gleaned from archival sources" (p.250).

Participant Observation and Autoethnography

In addition to accessing the pro-family movement online, I sought to gain first hand, lived experience of its discourses in action. In order to do so, I attended the ninth World Congress of Families, which took place in 2015 over a four-day period in Salt Lake City, Utah. During the event, I made auto ethnographic reflections that I recorded in video and written diaries. I also collected additional texts in the form of speeches and documents, while the process itself also provided me with an embodied understanding of how the pro-family movement operates, organizes, and deploys 'family values' discourses.

Autoethnography can be defined as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, p.1). Overtly challenging the idea that it is possible to produce 'objective', apolitical, or 'value free' knowledge, autoethnography works to deepen awareness and researcher engagement with the social, cultural, and political aspects of the research process, and acknowledges the power relations inherent in knowledge production. Thus, in the context of investigations into the operation of hegemonizing forms of power, autoethnography enables one to bring into discussion findings that do not conform to, and even reveal the limitations of, the empiricist tradition. Because power and privilege "does not leave a trail of evidence in the same way that oppression does" (Pascale, 2011, p.157), their interrogation often requires consideration of whom, and that which, is *not* present in research site and broader conceptualizations of what constitutes the 'field', rather than that which is necessarily evident in a bounded research site. In this sense, autoethnography stands as a radical challenge to systematized knowledge production which, surfacing that which has been concealed in the reproduction of dynamics of power and oppression (Pascale 2016, p.222). "Refusing the terms of formalization all together", autoethnography and performative scholarship "is not predicated on the systematic collection of data but rather uses systematic

self-reflection, which is grounded both theoretically and experientially" in order to understand a social context (Pascale 2016, p.222-223). As a method of data collection and analysis, autoethnography therefore opens up avenues for interrogating "the historical, cultural and biographic conditions that shaped the subjects experience of the events being studied, which themselves occur in sites where structure, history and autobiography intersect" (Denzin 2014, p. x).

Hauntings, as Gordon tells, are important in studies of social dominance and control in that they notify one that abusive systems of power supposedly "over and done with" continue to haunt social relations (p. xvi). Mediating between the visible and the invisible, the living and the dead, the past and the present, 'haunting' is a psycho-social state in which it becomes possible to sense that which modern history has (attempted to) render ghostly (p. 18). The ghost, Gordon writes, "is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure", who takes the of form of "something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes [that] makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way" (p. 8). "The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening" (p. 8). The hauntings I experienced at the WCF IX, and my autoethnographic interpretation of these, involved theoretically grounded reflection on the political and epistemic significance of my identity with regards to pro-family discourse. In doing so, I came to understand the pro-family movement in ways that the other methods I employed could not access. Gordon's theorisation of how hauntings create possibilities for embodied learning experiences vividly captures my own experience in interpreting my experiences at the WCF IX:

> Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against or will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition.

Letting the ghost 'in' on the research can therefore "lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (p. 8). In allowing the witch

Experiences such as disturbances and epiphanies are often the starting places in auto ethnographic writing because they are made possible by one's positionality within a particular context (Denzin 2003, p.34). The epiphanies, or disturbances, that I experienced at the WCF took the form of 'hauntings' (Gordon 2008). These hauntings, I found, were deeply connected to my positionality - I was amongst the social figures systematically singled out as having attacked the 'natural family' and family values, ultimately causing "family dysfunction" and "cultural disintegration" in the West, and

globally. Through a process of interpreting these epiphanies, Denzin (2014) writes, interpretive autoethnography interrogates the historical, cultural and biographic conditions that shaped the subjects experience of the events being studied, which themselves occur in sites where structure, history and autobiography intersect" (p.x). Numerous aspects of my positionality were attacked and erased, factoring into the presentations by speakers at the event that addressed factors that have caused "family dysfunction and cultural disintegration" (theme of day three) in the West, and globally. I check most of the pro-family 'boxes' in terms of the forces that are destroying the 'natural family': Feminists [✓□], homosexuals [✓□], people who forego marriage and children [✓□,✓□], anyone cohabiting or having sex outside of marriage [✓□], and anyone who has been divorced, are said to be perpetrators of the sexual revolution and consequently, forces that weaken economies and nations. Children of same sex [✓□], divorced, and/or single parents and donor children [✓□] were also singled out as 'victims of the sexual revolution' who the pro-family movement must 'protect' through advocacy and policy. Feminists, homosexuals, people who forego marriage and children, and anyone cohabitation or having sex outside of marriage, and anyone who has been divorced, were said to be perpetrators of the sexual revolution and consequently, forces that weaken economies and nations. Children of same sex, divorced, and/or single parents and donor children were also singled out as 'victims of the sexual revolution' who the pro-family movement must 'protect' through advocacy and policy.

Data Analysis

Thematic and Critical Discourse Analysis

In order to uncover the interests at stake in, as well as relations of power operating through, pro-family activism in Africa, this project employed Critical Discourse Analysis as a problem-oriented approach to interdisciplinary research which aims to explain and change the status quo of social injustice and inequality (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2009, p.357). As critical approaches to epistemology have revealed, ways of knowing (and not knowing) are firmly embedded in, and reproduce, unequal relations of power that are raced (see Outlaw, 2007; Mills, 2007; Steyn, 2012;) sexed (Foucault, 1980 [1978]), and gendered (Tuana, 2006). Critical discourse analysis is therefore a vital method of unlocking these dynamics within the Family Values agenda. As Fairclough (2013) writes, discourse analysis is a necessary tool for the analysis of hegemony and ideology because of its power to shape ways of knowing the social world:

> Discourse can generate imaginary representations of how the world will be or should be within strategies for change which, if they achieve hegemony, can be operationalized to transform these imaginaries into realities (p.457).

Fairclough's perspective that language is a material form and investment of ideology (p.67) informs my critical approach to "Family Values" and the power relations informing this discourse in the context of globalization. Through physical presence in communities, proliferation in cyberspace, mass, print and electronic media, academia, national and international government entities, Family Values is actively operationalized through language, across the globe.

As Jiwani and Richardson (2009, p.241) state, "The power of discourse in defining and shaping the realities of minoritized groups in society cannot be underestimated". Here, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as developed through her work on sexism, antisemitism, and racism was instructive in its emphasis on integrating "all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text" (p.364), enabling analysis of codes and allusions contained in discourse (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2009, p.364). Furthermore, because CDA recognizes the dialectical relationship between discourse and social context, it was an effective method for critically interrogating the multiple levels at which the FV agenda operates to mobilize particular constructions of race, gender, and sexuality. Thus, discourse is positioned as a social practice, allowing for an understanding of the dialectical relationship between discursive events and the situations, institutions, and social structures which historically contextualize them.

As the first stage in conducting critical discourse analysis of texts, I conducted a basic coding of the texts to identify key themes within pro-family discourse. These themes and sub themes were consolidated under the following headings and subheadings:

- The "natural" family
    - The attack on the 'natural' family
    - "Civilisation"
    - The universality of the 'natural' family
    - The "benefits" of the 'natural' family
        - Economic
        - Educational
        - Development
        - Psychological
- Same-sex marriage

- Abortion
- Gender
  - "Gender Agenda"
  - Gender difference/sexual dimorphism
  - The family as a site for gender socialization
  - "Demographic winter"
- Africa
  - Western 'progressive' cultural imperialism
  - Development
  - Population control

While these themes are presented as discrete themes above, they were often entangled within pro-family discourse, which assisted revealed the sexed, gendered, and raced intersections at work within pro-family agendas. For instance, the pro-family movement connects the notion of the "gender agenda" with "abortion" and western progressive 'cultural' imperialism in Africa.

The cross-cutting themes of 'violence', 'suspicion' and 'population' emerged later in the process of analysis, as I began to detect particular trends within the data through critical discourse analysis. The theme of 'violence' is further explored in chapter/article three, *Weaponising rhetorics of the family*, while 'suspicion' and 'population' are further explored in chapter/article four, *Decolonial imaginaries of suspicion*.

Overview of findings

Network ethnography

In mapping the different organizations in the movement, both U.S. and Africa based, I uncovered what emerged to be the central organising network of the pro-family movement. The World Congress of Families (WCF) appeared early on in my literature review, particularly through my reading of Buss and Herman's (2003) *Globalisation of Family Values* which was based on their research conducted at the WCF II in Geneva, Switzerland in 1999. In their work, they discuss the WCF as an "unprecedented development" in that it "constitutes the first sustained attempt by the Christian Right United Nations to construct a permanent, global, interfaith institution" (80). Similar to my findings at the WCF IX, Buss and Herman found the WCF II to play "educative, political, and mobilizing roles, acting as a forum for sharing information, [and] providing an interface for Christian Right United Nations intellectuals" (p.80-81). The WCF was also flagged by Kapya Kaoma (2012) in his discussion on how the U.S. Christian Right is promoting family values in African countries (p.6). As will be discussed below, I attended the WCF IX, which took place in Salt Lake City Utah in 2015 where I employed methods of participant observation and auto-ethnography. Below, I trace this network, showing how an understanding of the relationships and flows of resources and individuals between organizations provides insight into the power and interests that underlie pro-family discourses.

The World Congress of Families, was initiated by Allan Carlson as a project of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society in 1997. Before establishing the WCF and the Howard Center, respective founders Allan Carlson and John Howard, co-founded the conservative neoliberal think tank, the Rockford Institute, in 1976, and both have been members of the Mont Pelerin Society, another aspect of this network that I will return to later. The WCF describes itself as "an international network of pro-family organizations, scholars, leaders and people of goodwill from more than 80 countries that seek to restore the natural family as the fundamental social unit and the 'seedbed' of civil society" (World Congress of Families, n.d.). The Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society was founded in 1996 by John A. Howard as a center for research and knowledge production on the natural family, the Howard Center's other main activity involves knowledge generation and dissemination. In 2016, Brian Brown was appointed as President of the the World Congress of Families (replacing Allan Carlson) which now is organized by the International Organization for the Family, which was also launched in 2016 by Brown.

The WCF also receives support from the Heritage Foundation, one of the most influential conservative think tanks in the US. The Heritage Foundation states as its mission: To "formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense". The Heritage Foundation took a leading role in the conservative movement during the Reagan presidency and has continued to have a significant influence in U.S. public policy making.

The WCF network cannot be fully grasped without mentioning the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS), which was founded in 1947 by Swiss businessman Albert Hunold and economist and philosopher Friedrich August von Hayek in Mont Pelerin, Switzerland.The rationale for the founding of the MPS is most evident in Hayek's "The Intellectuals and Socialism". He emphasizes the threat to freedom posed by "the revolt of the masses" and of the threat posed to elite control and capitalism due to the rise of socialism after the end of World War II. Hayek argued that the proliferation of institutions producing intellectuals (universities, insititutes, foundations, and journals), as filterers and disseminators of knowledge, was a new historical phenomenon resulting from the mass education of the non-propertied classes. He thus argued that this problem "could only be overcome if a strong effort was made to rebuild anti-socialist science and expertise in order to develop anti-socialist intellectuals". He sought to achieve this through the Mont Pelerin Society with a strategy to establish anti-socialist centers of knowledge that would be capable of effectively producing and disseminating neoliberal knowledge (Phelwe and Walpen, 2006, 33).

As Plehwe and Walpen (2006) show, neoliberal knowledge has since been produced, filtered, and disseminated through a wide field of discourses and sciences, from a range of sectors and fields. Some pro-family organisations and activists have close ties with neoliberal advocacy think tanks, which Plehwe and Walpen define as "specialized or diversified ideology and knowledge organizations set up to establish and/or defend neoliberal hegemony in diverse social arenas such as the academic system, political consulting, mass media, and general public opinion and discursive and policy fields" (p.41). The authors argue that close links and increasing cooperation between neoliberal advocacy think tanks enables the rapid mobilization of their work the creation of knowledge, policy and discourse campaigns. The authors thus reveal the significance of the fact that the World Congress of Families and the Howard Center both have direct links to the MPS, allowing us to see how Family Values operates as one such "discourse campaign" of neoliberal knowledge production.

Within the network ethnography that I conducted, I was particularly interested in identifying the 'thought leaders' of the pro-family movement so as to understand the prevailing concerns, issues, themes, and keywords that shape the movement's political agendas in Africa, and globally. Key individuals that emerged through online ethnography were as follows:

U.S. based

Allan Carlson (Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society)
Sharon Slater (Family Watch International)
Don Feder (World Congress of Families)
James Dobson (Focus on the Family, Family Research Council)
Cathy Ruse (Family Research Council)
Brad Wilcox (American Enterprise Institute, University of Virginia)
Miriam Grossman (Center for Medical Integrity in Intimacy Education)

Africa based

Theresa Okafor (Foundation for African Cultural Heritage, Nigeria)
Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo (Catholic Diocese of Oyo, Nigeria)
Errol Naidoo (Family Policy Institute, South Africa)
Ann Kioko (Africa Organisation for Families, Kenya)
Ann Mbugua (Kenya Christian Professionals Forum, Kenya)
Peter Hammond (Africa Christian Action, South Africa)

Online ethnography

As an "embedded online ethnographer", I collected electronic texts in the form of video, images, websites, reports, blog and news articles from pro-family websites, and filed them according to the organization that created them. I also subscribed to multiple pro-family newsletters, including Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, World Congress of Families, and Family Watch International. A Google Alert that I set up for 'homophobia + Africa' allowed me to collect relevant news articles that were published online so that I could keep abreast of developments in policy, culture, and media. The collection of texts formed one component of my project, along with autoethnography and participant-observation, which will be further discussed below. Through these multiple forms pro-family discourse operating at the ideological, structural, and everyday levels, I was able to capture a variety of pro-family texts.

Through online ethnographic methods, I eventually collected approximately one hundred and fifty texts in various forms. These were organized and stored in files:

- ‘Pro-family organisations’ (US)
- ‘Pro-family activists’ (US)
- Pro-family organizations (Africa)
- ‘Pro-family activists (Africa)
- ‘US Pro family organizations and activists in Africa’

Subfolders were created to organize and store texts according to organization and individual. Key organizations that emerged through online ethnography were as follows:

U.S. based

Family Research Council (Washington D.C., founded in 1983 by James Dobson)
Focus on the Family (California, founded in 1977 by James Dobson)
Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society (Illinois, founded in 1997 by Allan Carlson and John Howard)
World Congress of Families (Illinois, founded in 1997 by Allan Carlson and relaunched as the International Organization for the Family in 2016 in Cape Town, South Africa)
Family Watch International (Arizona, Founded in 1999 by Sharon Slater)

Africa based

Family Policy Institute (Cape Town, South Africa founded in 2006 by Errol Naidoo)
Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (Lagos, Nigeria; founded in 2014 by Theresa Okafor)
African Organization for Families (Nairobi, Kenya; founded in 2015 by Ann Kioko)
Focus on the Family - Africa (Durban, South Africa; established in 1992)

Participant observation and autoethnography

In early 2015, I learned that the next WCF would take place in Salt Lake City, Utah. I registered for the conference, and arranged to stay in the accommodation suggested on the WCF IX website. In preparation for fieldwork at the Congress, I collected the WCF IX email updates that announced

speakers and followed up with desktop research on these individuals in order to gain a sense of their positionality, and the location of their discourse, within the pro-family movement. I developed a database of these individuals as well as the organisations that they are affiliated with and their publications, and I also searched for online video and audio content featuring the speakers in order to familiarize myself with their backgrounds. I checked the WCF IX website on a regular basis to check for announcements and updates in search of further clues as to what I could expect at the event, and learn key terms, points of reference, and 'thought leaders' within the organization.

At the WCF itself, I audio recorded twenty separate sessions, each comprised of multiple speeches and presentations that I later transcribed for coding and analysis. I also collected a number of pamphlets, booklets, and informational brochures that were available at the information booths of twenty-three WCF "partner" organisations. I kept a field journal with notes and observations, and I recorded two video journal entries daily (one during lunch and one in the evening) in which I documented my thoughts and reflections on the proceedings. I also searched for and collected media coverage on the WCF and followed the official event hashtags (#WCFIX, #WCF9) on Instagram and Twitter throughout the event. The WCF was dense with texts on multiple topics that the movement works to connect to the 'natural family'; namely feminism, the sexual revolution, homosexuality, religious liberty, marriage, gender difference, abortion, and contraception. The advocacy work of the pro-family movement, at local, national, regional, and international levels, was an important point of focus throughout the event.

While the piles of freely distributed pamphlets, documents, and books I collected, as well as audio recordings, notes and photographs provided me with ample textual data, my embodied experience of the WCF also became incisive instrument of data collection and analysis. The insights I gained through participant-observation at the WCF were 'transformative' in the sense that they emerged from a zone of 'disturbance' (Gordon 2008, p.46) in which the historical and contemporary atrocities that are obscured by pro-family discourses became palpably "alive and accessible" (p.66).

A constant, but nonspecific concern of being somehow 'identified' or 'found out' saturated my experience of the WCF, despite the fact that I was an officially registered delegate, and had gained approval from my university's Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct the research. Over the four days, I could not shake the sense that the other delegates would somehow detect my politics and positionality, reminding me of how Roald Dahl's (1983) 'ordinary' witches could sense the presence of their ultimate enemies (children) to be "snuffed out":

> A witch has the most amazing sense of smell. The smell that drives a witch mad actually comes right out of your own skin. It comes oozing out of your skin in waves, and these waves, stink-waves the witches call them, go floating through the air and hit the witch right smack in her nostrils … to a witch you'd be smelling of fresh dogs' droppings (p.26-28).

While my whiteness and middle-classness lent itself to my ability to blend into the mostly white delegation, I excessively monitored myself and my own behavior to ensure that I was blending in. My gender presentation, the eye contact I was making, my body language and facial expressions became points of concern as I navigated the space of the Congress. The reputation of the WCF, and controversy leading up to this particular convening added an additional layer of uncertainty and anxiety to the days leading up to, and during, the event. I spent much time considering which items of clothing would obscure my 'stink-waves' as an 'outsider', and more importantly, as one of the feminist, anti-racist academics that WCF IX speaker Austin Ruse said in the months prior to the event should "all be taken out and shot" (Ruse, 2014).

Sitting in the Grand Ballroom (the conference plenary venue) waiting for the opening ceremony to begin was when I had my first recollection of Dahl's children story, *The Witches.* It was as though I had been transported into Dahl's gathering of finely dressed witches, who surrounded themselves with opulence in order to conceal their sinister plot. The fact that this childhood story appeared, and actually haunted, my experience of the WCF became a point of reflective writing and analysis that provided me with further insights into the epistemicidal dynamics of the pro-family agenda. I also reflected on the appearance of decorative witches in the lobby of the hotel where the WCF took place (which were installed as Halloween decorations), as 'hauntings', and an opportunity to explore "what happens when we admit the ghost – that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present – into the making of worldly relations and into the making of our accounts of the world" (Gordon, 2008, p.25).

In critically reflecting on the haunting of witches at the event, I was able to make connections between my own subjectivity and the historical context from which the pro-family movement emerges. In speaking from the shadows of that which the pro-family movement denies, represses, and renders invisible, the appearance of witches surfaced the work of the WCF to eliminate bodies and knowledges that threaten the hegemonic status quo. The witches also made present the multiple subjects and objects of hatred constellated within pro-family discourse. Like modern day feminists, homosexuals, transgender, cohabitating, nonreproductive, and nonbinary people who are represented as political, religious and sexual threats, the women accused as "witches" hundreds of years ago were scapegoated for a multitude of social crises related to public health, industry, and the fabric of 'civilized'

society at large. The figures that are now remembered as "witches" Ehrenreich and English (1973) show, have been further suppressed by the fact that their histories were "recorded, like all history, by the educated elite, so that today we know them only through the eyes of [their] persecutors" (p. 8). Through a shared word with the witch, it became possible to open up space where I could recognize and engage the historical continuities between bodies and knowledges that are subjugated by contemporary pro-family discourses on the 'natural' family.

Offering a 'shared word' with the ghost is admittedly risky. Giving empirical validation to the fictive, the ghostly is constituted by the 'errors' to be banished from the "objective" and omniscient gaze of western male science and Cartesian dualisms. Thus, to listen to and follow ghosts subverts the basic rules of scientific knowledge production, making it difficult to be "the one whose writing/not writing only came together as she came together with the object, with the reality of fictions and the unrealities of the facts…as those bloodless reified categories became animated through wonder and vexation" (Gordon,2008, p.22). Yet, the benefit of staging a shared word with the historical figure of the witch, as I came to appreciate, was that there is perhaps no one better suited to challenge pro-family universalizing claims about the 'natural family' than witches, as figures seen to embody knowledge that subverts heteropatriarchal, capitalist, and Christonormative power. From the sixteenth century, certain women and their families became deemed dangerous in their "ungodliness" and were seen as direct threats to the power and authority of the Church and state. Witches, in particular, were seen as a subset of a larger group of the undeserving and irredeemable poor, prone to criminal and anti-social acts and susceptible to knowledges deemed socially dangerous (Willis 2013, p.20). Growing emphasis on the threat that Satan posed to families through witchcraft served the purpose of "strengthen[ing] the Protestant project of making the individual household into an instrument of ideological reform" (p.20).

The sixteenth century witch huntings in Europe are also related to the kidnapping of people from Africa and their enslavement in western Europe and North America. As Ramón Grosfoguel (2013) writes, while these two inherently epistemic genocides are rarely brought into conversation with one another, they are connected and inter-related to each other because of their roles in constituting the "modern/colonial world's epistemic structures" that sought to universalize the knowledge of western men to the exclusion of all other knowledges (p.77). In the case of the genocide/epistemicide against Indo-European women accused of being witches, he writes:

> there were no books to burn because the transmission of knowledge was done from generation to generation through oral tradition. The "books" were the women's bodies and,

> thus, similar to the Andalusian and Indigenous "books" their bodies were burned alive (p.86).

Here, bodies and knowledges are brought into intimate proximity as certain women came to embody subversive forms of knowledge that threatened the Church and State's mechanisms of social control. The kidnapping of Africans and their enslavement in the Americas was also "inherently epistemic", although it took a different shape in order for Europe to economically benefit from the forced labour of African people.

The work of the pro-family movement to actively develop knowledge to legitimate their intolerant and violent agendas does not only take place in activist networks and gatherings, but within accredited institutions of higher learning. A number of speakers at the WCFIX are currently based in university sociology departments (Mark Regnerus, University of Texas-Austin), in schools of business (Dave Ulrich, University of Michigan), in the Medical sciences (Monique Chireau - Duke University, Donald Hilton Jr. - University of Texas - San Antonio), in law schools (Scott Loveless - Brigham Young University, Lynn Wardle - Brigham Young University, Josh Craddock - Harvard Law School), political science (Allan Carlson - Hillsdale College), social work (Wendy Sheffield - Brigham Young University) and in 'family studies' departments at Brigham Young University (Kathleen Slaugh Bahr, Jason Carroll, David Dollahite, Janet Erickson, Jeremy Yorgason, Brian Willoughby) and the University of Virginia (Brad Wilcox - University of Virginia). A number of speakers also held positions at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Candi Finch, Evan Lenow, Dorothy Patterson). The ideological work taking place in these contexts enables pro-family activists to claim scientific credibility, and epistemic authority, as they erase, and ultimately aim to eliminate, non-nuclear family forms from existence. The citation of Nobel prize winning American economist Gary Becker's work *Treatise on the Family* in pro-family knowledge production has also provided economic justification for the 'protection' of the so-called 'natural' family. In particular, Becker's argument that "no discussion of human capital can omit the influence of families on the knowledge, skills, health, values, and habits of their children" (Becker, 2008).

Recollection of *The Witches* in such a visceral way gave me pause for reflection on the significance of this disjuncture between the explicitly 'wholesome' messaging, performance, and packaging of pro-family discourse and their oppressive ambitions. Dahl's imagination enabled me to see this performance as a strategy used by the organisation, and the pro-family movement, to make possible an ideology and discourse that is deeply violent. What *The Witches* made apparent to me was that not only was the saccharine language used at the WCF employed to normalise, and render rational their

ultraconservative ideology and "red-hot sizzling hatred" (Dahl 1983, 7) for feminists and sexual minorities, but that it also worked as an alibi to obscure underlying violence. The epistemicidal/genocidal historical trajectory of the event emerged as I waded into deeper reflection of the affective effects of the knowledges that were circulating at the WCF IX. While such "profane" awareness can be frightening and disturbing, Gordon writes that it rests "on not being afraid" or turning away from "lost beloveds and the force[s] that made them disposable" (Gordon 2008, 205). My engagement with witches as figures that made their presence known to me in 'disturbing' ways therefore emerged from "a necessity", stirred by the witches, of "doing something" about the historical losses they conjure (p.205-206). Such ghostly matters are, as Gordon argues, constitutive elements of modern social life, making them important and necessary encounters that should be involved in the crafting of knowledge (p.8). Such confrontations are productive, both requiring and producing "a fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge" (p.7). As scholars interested in describing and interpreting social reality, therefore, we must "learn to talk to and listen to our ghosts, rather than banish them, as the precondition for establishing our scientific or humanistic knowledge" (p.23).

Article 1

Transatlantic Knowledge Politics of Sexuality

Publication information: This article was published in 2016 in *Critical Philosophy of Race* 4(2) as part of a special issue entitled, 'South African and U.S. Critical Philosophies of Race'.

The first chapter/article provides the framework within which I situate pro-family activism. In particular, I examine pro-family discourses and activism in relation to LGBTIQ+ activism led by U.S. queer and feminist civil rights groups. Through analysis of a selection of statements made by American pro-family activists, the U.S. president, and African political leaders, I explore the discursive forces at work within transnational contestations over gender and sexuality. I also consider the underlying interests at stake within them. This chapter/article therefore presents a historical and decolonial view of these contestations, and analysis considers these contemporary discourses in relation to entangled colonial constructions of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy used to justify the conquest and exploitation of Africa.

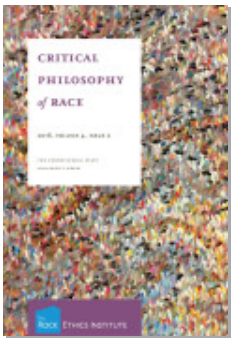
Through consultation with critiques advanced within critical race and critical queer theory, and critical philosophical arguments on the epistemic dimensions of racialized, sexed, and gendered oppressions, it is argued that both 'progressive' and 'conservative' discourses advance U.S. hegemonic interests and reinscribe Western hegemony, despite being opposed at a surface level. It is concluded that struggles for equality among sexual minorities and gender-nonconforming people must be approached as part-and-parcel of decolonial struggles to dismantle white supremacist and Western structures of oppression.

This article presents a critical framework for the interrogation of the role of knowledge of gender and sexuality in relation to global geo-politics, as well as in relation to the reproduction, and resistance of coloniality. It is this framework that informs subsequent articles and their analysis of pro-family texts.



Transatlantic Knowledge Politics of Sexuality

Haley McEwen



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TRANSATLANTIC KNOWLEDGE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY

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Abstract

Contestations over the rights of sexual minorities and gender-nonconforming people in Africa are profoundly shaped by two discourses that both emerge from polarized domestic political debates in the United States: a human rights–centered discourse of "LGBT*I" identity politics that promotes visibility and equal protections and privileges for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and intersex individuals; and a Christonormative "family values" agenda that promotes the heterosexual nuclear family as the foundation of civilization. Analysis considers these contemporary discourses in relation to entangled colonial constructions of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy used to justify the conquest and exploitation of Africa. This article takes particular interest in the power relations that are (re)constituted through these discourses so as to uncover the underlying interests at stake within them. Through consultation with critiques advanced within critical race and critical queer theory, and critical philosophical arguments on the epistemic dimensions of racialized, sexed, and gendered oppressions, it is argued that these discourses advance U.S. hegemonic interests

and reinscribe Western hegemony. It is concluded that struggles for equality among sexual minorities and gender-nonconforming people must be approached as part-and-parcel of decolonial struggles to dismantle white supremacist and Western structures of oppression.

Keywords: homophobia in Africa, family values, sexual politics, heteropatriarchy

Sexual politics in the contemporary world are shaped by the racist legacy of colonial constructions of sex, sexuality, and gender. This article is concerned with the ways in which current African debates on sex and gender-based rights have become terrain upon which white racial projects are deployed and Western interests are advanced. Critical philosophies of race, sexuality, and power provide powerful insight into the forms of knowledge and ignorance used by U.S.-based political actors to (re)constitute Western dominance in the decolonial era through prevailing discourses on sex, sexuality, gender.[1] This paper focuses on the rise of homophobia in African states and the role of both "conservative" and "progressive" U.S. knowledge-conquests into African sexual politics, prompted by the worrying rise of hate crimes, murders, and homophobic legislation targeting those who do not conform to heteronormative social expectations. Increasingly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender*, and intersex (LGBT*I) people have been subject to physical, systemic, and epistemic forms of violence and oppression. Denis Nzioka, a prominent gay rights activist from Kenya, vividly describes proliferation of intolerance toward sex and gender diversity across the continent: "We have seen an upsurge of violence, of discrimination. . . . You've got guys in Cameroon being arrested; you've got guys in Nigeria being killed for being gay. It's happening all over Africa. We're under siege.[2]

The West, and the United States in particular, has had a complex and significant role in these developments. For instance, while U.S. president Obama and various human rights activists and organizations publicly condemned the proposed Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality bill in 2009, an American pastor was charged with crimes against humanity for having encouraged the bill, and dozens of "pro-family" U.S. organizations have been identified as supporters of homophobic legislation across the continent. As so-called "progressive" American voices, including the U.S. president, have promoted the rights of sexual minorities in Africa, U.S. political actors who brand themselves "conservative" have advanced notions that

the very existence of sexual minorities, let alone their claim to equal recognition and rights, threatens so-called "traditional African cultures," economies, and societies.

These debates are more broadly contextualized by contestations over sexual politics that have been on the rise internationally since the 1990s and have been entangled with neoliberal and post-racial ideologies of "color-blindness" that have sought to suppress and silence race as a political concept. According to Goldberg, neoliberalism has enabled and depended upon "racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it."[3] As will be illustrated in what follows, contemporary U.S. contestations over homosexuality in Africa silence and neglect "race" and the oppressive legacies of colonialism. These contestations over sexual rights in Africa emerge as epistemic practices that center Western interests and power in the context of international power relations.

The silences on the racialized power relations underlying both LGBT*I identity politics and pro-family movements are made audible when brought into conversation with the voices of African political actors who have explicitly invoked the history of colonialism and slavery in response to Western reprisals. Explicitly informed by the historical legacy and contemporary experience of Western coloniality, discourses rejecting homosexuality and sexual rights deployed from African podiums have pointed to the violent legacy of European and U.S. conquest and exploitation. For instance, when President Obama "cautioned" that should the Ugandan government pass the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill into law international aid could be withdrawn, Ugandan Parliamentarian David Bahati responded,

> Don't remind me that you took me as a slave. Don't remind me that you took our resources to enrich your countries. Don't tell me you're more superior than I am. . . . How can you continue to act like slave masters? The suggestion that Africa can only exist with America's help is wrong. Africa was here before you.[4]

Drawing on the brutality that has historically characterized the relationship between Africa and the West, Bahati defends Uganda's entitlement to creating anti-gay laws through an anti-imperialist logic that seeks to assert self-determination for the Ugandan state. Ugandan president

Yoweri Museveni similarly invoked a critique of the coloniality of Obama's warning, asserting,

> Countries and Societies should relate with each other on the basis of mutual respect and independence in decision-making. "Valued relationship" cannot be sustainably maintained by one Society being subservient to another society. There are a myriad acts (sic) the societies in the West do that we frown on or even detest. We, however, never comment on those acts or make them preconditions for working with the West. Africans do not seek to impose their views on anybody. We do not want anybody to impose their views on us.[5]

Despite being of African descent himself, President Obama is reprimanded as an agent of the imperial state as the American president. Challenging President Obama on the forcefulness of his remarks, President Museveni draws attention to the fact that authoritarian instruction on national policy only travels in one direction between the West and Africa. For President Museveni, the U.S. president's statement is received and denounced as an iteration of Western expectations that African countries will and must subordinate to their demands. Anti-imperial sentiments resound within popular discourse too, and make race audible through the notion that homosexuality is "unAfrican." Yet, while Bahati and President Museveni construct the prohibition of homosexuality as an anti-Western political tactic, they also facilitate ignorance of the whiteness, and white interests historically and contemporarily served by the heteropatriarchal and homophobic ideology they promote.[6]

In order to make sense of why many African leaders have so readily embraced the view that homosexuality is "immoral," "unnatural," and "untraditional," it is necessary to recall the history of colonial mission work and schooling across the continent. It was through Christianizing curricula in particular that social status and privileges became attached to heteronormative values through the institutionalization of a gender binary and hierarchy.[7] Within colonial mission schools, women were taught domestic skills such as caregiving and housekeeping while men were taught civic skills such as law and politics. "Civilized and 'proper' men were expected to behave like European men in everything including sexual conduct," while "civilized and 'proper' women were those whose sexual conducts were in line with Victorian codes."[8] Correspondingly, "Heterosexual marriage was

seen as normal, and the natural assertiveness, leadership disposition, and aggressive sex drive of the male were endorsed."[9] Epprecht explains that much of the current political leadership, and that which emerged during African liberation struggles, were often the second or third generation in their families to be educated in this system.[10] As the dawn of independence began to rise across African horizons, the "ideology of respectability as a marker of modernity and progress remained powerfully attractive to those Africans hoping to rise above both the crumbling traditional moral economy on the one hand, and rampant urban indiscipline on the other."[11] After the demise of official colonial rule, this ideology was compatible with African middle-class aspirations to assume leadership of new, independent states. Some of the most influential intellectual and political voices (i.e. Kwame Nkrumah, Idi Amin, and even Nelson Mandela) have argued that homosexuality, like colonization and slavery, threatened the survival of African "traditions" and "cultures," thereby suturing power, privilege, and "Africanness" to heterosexuality and patriarchy.[12]

Contextualizing the Rise of Homophobia in African States

Intolerance toward those who do not conform to heteronormative expectations of sex, sexuality, and gender expression have been on the rise in Africa since the mid-1990s. As Ndjio writes of Cameroon, the rapid increase in homophobia "makes it hard to believe that up to the early 2000s . . . state officials in Cameroon did not perceive same-sex relations as a social problem so threatening to Cameroonian society that it necessitated the state's home-front war against these practices."[13] Cameroon is not unique in its recent launch of anti-gay campaigns, with national leaders from Zimbabwe, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Libya[14] advancing similar rhetoric of "homosexual peril" in which gay people are seen to be a threat to the foundation of the nation's moral, economic, and social orders.[15] In these countries, people who transgress heteronormative social expectations have endured harassment, assault, blackmail, extortion, arbitrary arrest, and illegal detention.[16] These violent forms of oppression have in part been justified through anti-imperial and often nationalist rhetoric that constructs homosexuality and rights for sexual minorities as foreign impositions, excluding same-sex loving and gender-nonconforming people from the full rights of citizenship.[17]

The notion that homosexuality is "unAfrican" carries unprecedented levels of currency in popular discourse, and is frequently pronounced by African state and religious leaders. Yet this argument has not emerged in cultural isolation or a political vacuum, as popular opinion often suggests. Rather, debates over sexual minorities in Africa have taken shape within an international political context where gender, sex, and sexuality have become increasingly heated areas of contestation.

The United Nations has been a significant arena through which these competing knowledges of sex, sexuality, gender, and family are articulated and advanced. The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women are typically remembered as two key moments marking the arrival of sexuality in international policy debates. Equality and protection from discrimination for sexual minorities accompanied other issues such as the elimination of sexual violence and harassment, forced pregnancy, and rape.[18] These debates also developed in close conversation with the global fight against HIV/AIDS, which brought homosexuality to the fore within international political arenas.[19] Advocacy work around HIV/AIDS prevention was largely taken up by Western organizations seeking to advance the legal rights of women and sexual minorities and improve access to information and services pertaining to sexual health in efforts to stem the spread of the virus. Yet, as gains for these groups were made, U.S. "conservatives" grew increasingly suspicious that UN conferences were becoming spaces where "progressives" could pursue domestic social policy agendas through the "backdoor" of international law.[20] Advances made by feminist and queer activists in promoting sex- and gender-based rights prompted U.S. conservatives to "wake up and put sexuality issues on their political agenda" so as to "protect" American law and society against UN policy making.[21] Nyanzi writes that it was at the 1994 Cairo conference in particular that a division between anti- and pro-gay rights camps emerged at an international level through the debate over whether the definition of family should be restricted to heterosexual marriage.[22] Advocates for an exclusively heterosexual definition of family introduced "pro-family" politics and the notion that the "traditional" and "natural" family needed to be defended against non-heteronormative redefinition.

Since then, these opposing agendas have deployed decades-old U.S. culture wars abroad in efforts to achieve international influence and power. For culture wars over sexual rights and the family have raged on in the

United States, beginning with concerns over reproduction of the white race over a century ago,[23] continuing on through nineteenth-century immigration anxieties resulting from high fertility rates among "inferior" Eastern and Southern European migrants, and mid-twentieth-century fears that equality for women, gays, and youth as well as popular culture promoted "immoral" sexual behavior and the perceived breakdown of "God's plan for the family."[24] In this sense, the UN created a space where decades-old U.S. debates over sex and sexuality could expand into the international political sphere, and a site where competing knowledge systems and political interests could be advanced globally.

Making Sense of Homophobia in Africa

Scholarly attention to homophobia in Africa has largely drawn on intersecting anthropological, sociological, historical, and political frameworks. These interrogations have drawn heavily on feminist, gender, and queer theoretical insights as well as the discourses and logic of human rights and democratic citizenship. Through these various approaches, scholars have explicitly located their respective intellectual projects within the struggle for equal rights and recognition of sexual minorities. In the literature, the politics of knowledge and ignorance and the power relations underlying them have emerged implicitly, but have not yet received adequate attention.

Engagements with knowledge-power and ignorance in this context have primarily interrogated the increasingly popular notion that homosexuality is "unAfrican."[25] Acknowledged as a construction that depends upon the silencing and ignore-ance of the reality of same-sex intimacy and partnerships in African societies, denial of queer African genders and sexualities are understood as having a "xenophobic logic"[26] that is "wielded rampantly as a tactic for othering."[27] As Reddy shows, these views have translated into the denial of citizenship rights on the basis of a particular sexual orientation through the mobilization of moral panic that has no basis in evidence of danger or consequence posed to the populace by same-sex practices.[28] According to Ndjio, Afrocentric political doctrines "have been instrumental in the effort of post-colonial nationalist elites to constitute an exclusive African selfhood."[29] These constructions have focused on what he refers to as "efforts to 'Africanize' the sexuality of the masses in a global context."[30] In Cameroon, Ndjio writes that these discursive efforts have been

widely successful in that "both men and women have come to believe that in order to be 'good' citizens or 'real' Africans, they have to . . . limit their sexuality solely to heterosexual desires, but also have a natural aversion to other forms of sexuality such as same-sex relations."[31] These critiques of attempts to essentialize sexualities in Africa provide important insights into how denial of same-sex practices and partnerships within African societies and their histories have been produced "on a mass scale for striking enforcements,"[32] functioning to exclude and victimize thousands across the continent.

Constituting sexuality as a structure of exclusion, political leaders promoting homophobic attitudes and legislation attempt to permanently fasten heteronormative identities to democratic values and nationhood. These values serve not only heterosexist privilege, but male privilege as well. According to Pharr, homophobia is fundamentally created by heterosexism "with its assumption that the world is and must be heterosexual and its display of power and privilege as the norm."[33] Heterosexism and homophobia, she writes, "work together to enforce compulsory heterosexuality and that bastion of patriarchal power, the nuclear family," which, in turn, is used to justify male dominance over women at all levels of social organization.[34] Many African feminist scholars have documented and theorized how heterosexism and patriarchy not only oppressed women and sexual minorities in the West, but also served as weapons of Western modernizing projects. British colonialism in Nigeria for instance entrenched a system that explicitly privileged men and disenfranchised women as "unable others" whose supposed subordinate and inferior femininity cast male authority as the natural order of things.[35] As Izugbara writes, the colonial government emphasized "able-bodied men" within criteria for employment as guides, servants, tax collectors, cleaners, and stewards for the colonizers.[36] This system continues in post-independence Nigeria, where heteronormative "forms of sexual identity and family life have been discursively produced as the norm, and made to function as metanarratives for national identity."[37]

As McClintock,[38] Tamale,[39] and Kitch show,[40] heterosexist political values were also justifications for European conquest. As Jackson demonstrates, colonial discourses of racial and gender difference became fused within European constructions of sexuality.[41] The ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality intersected in these discourses, as sexologists of the late nineteenth century "drew on fantasies of black female embodiment as

their model of sexual deviancy and gender nonconformity" in constructing "healthy" and "pathological" sexualities:

> Racial comparative-anatomy methods were used to determine sexual definition, with a presumed similitude between "deviant" white bodies and the black body. The word *homosexual* itself seemed to conjure some anxieties about miscegenation, as the "barbarously hybrid word" was a mix of Latin and Greek, even referring to "shades of gender" and "sexual half-breeds."[42]

Here, Jackson makes apparent the inextricability of raced, gendered, and sexed ideologies of difference within colonial knowledge systems. In turn, the construction of sexual deviance among African people became the constitutive "Other" within middle-class European performances of respectability in the form of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.[43] Within Western nation building projects, it was believed that homosexuality weakened the virility of the nation, while lesbianism compromised women's ability and desire to produce the next generation of patriots who would expand the empire further into Africa.[44] Thus, homosexuality was not only constructed as "sick" and "sinful," but as politically and economically dangerous too. As current Western conquests into African sexual politics reveal, the control, regulation, and reproduction of a nation's population through sexual regulation endures as a mechanism of reproducing global inequalities of power.

The Bible and the Gun (Version 2.0)

Attempts to understand the rise of homophobia in Africa have increasingly noted the influence of conservative U.S. discourses within contemporary debates over rights for sexual minorities across the continent. Mainly, it has been argued that the rise in homophobic laws and hate speech in African countries has been strongly encouraged by U.S.-based conservative Christian organizations and activists.[45] As Kaoma finds, The U.S. Christian Right has sought legitimacy through by Africanizing local leadership of their operations and have also leveled "charges of neocolonialism against Western governments and international human rights groups" that promote sex and gender based rights.[46] These charges carry bitter irony given the history of how Christian Right actors have

supported colonial regimes in Africa, and because of their current influence in driving homophobic agendas on the continent.[47]

These developments have emerged within a broader context in which conservative Christonormative discourses of sex, gender, and the so-called "natural" family have gained momentum within international political spheres. In rejecting calls for recognition and rights for LGBT*I communities, "pro-family" advocates have characterized Western progressives as "bullies" trying to gain "special rights" for sexual minorities. A common conservative description of queer and feminist politics, the framing of sexual rights activists has been long standing within the U.S. culture wars. As self-identified gay Christian activist and scholar Justin Lee writes, for those in the conservative Christian community, gays are seen to be "'homosexual activists" and even "homofascists" seeking to undermine the family and the moral fabric of our society, all in the name of their selfish, perverse, and unhealthy lifestyles."[48] Prominent U.S. pro-family activist James Dobson (founder of Focus on the Family[49]) provides an illustration of this discourse in his response to the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage equality: "For more than 50 years, the homosexual activist movement has sought to implement a master plan that has had as its centerpiece the destruction or redesign of the family. Many of these objectives have largely been realized, including widespread support of the gay lifestyle."[50]

Sexual minorities and their demands for recognition and rights are characterized as dangerous to society not only within the U.S. context, but abroad as well. Mathew Staver, founding member and chairman of the Liberty Counsel[51] (a conservative American organization focused on "advancing religious freedom" and the "family"), illustrates the ways in which pro-family discourse constructs deviation from the heteropatriarchal gender binary and hierarchy as dangerous to *all* economies, governments, and societies:

> When you destabilize the institution of marriage, you make the economy poorer and you make the society unstable . . . that's what we're going to see here in America and around the world. . . . When you tinker with the very basic foundation of family and you assume that gender doesn't matter, you ultimately affect the rest of society and the strength of civil government.[52]

Constructions of sexual minorities and their claims to rights and recognition as dangers and liabilities denies the equal humanity of LGBT*I people, advancing heteropatriarchal claims to power and authority in the name of "broader" national, and economic interests. These claims also deny the injustices that these groups continue to face because of heteronormativity and patriarchy.

As U.S. conservative activists have exported "pro-family" discourses to African contexts, this underlying episteme is retained, "stirring" Christonormative notions of so-called "traditional" African cultures and families into established heterosexist equations of national prosperity and peril. Family Watch International founder Sharon Slater's warning to a group of delegates at the 2011 Nigerian Bar Association Conference demonstrates how conservative discourses originally applied to the U.S. context are translated for an African context. According to Slater, "powerful organizations and individuals" work in the United Nations in efforts to "advance fictitious sexual rights that destroy religious and cultural values, break down the institution of the family, denigrate the role of mothers and destroy the innocence of children."[53] She warns, "Whatever you do, do not listen to those who are telling you that you need to limit your families to one or two children. . . . Do not be manipulated by rich Western countries and allow them to import the worst of their culture to you."[54] These discourses echo profoundly in popular local discourses across the continent that homosexuality is a form of Western neocolonialism and that Western progressives use financial muscle to drive "gay agendas."

The construction of sex and gender diversity as dangerous to society invokes Euro-American historical obsession and moral panic over sex, the gender binary, and the "family." As shown by Kitch, colonialism and colonial ideologies were central within constructions of the role of "family" within the projects of empire building, along with investment in the notion of "sexual dimorphism" and the naturalization of male dominance.[55] The classification and ranking of people according to race took shape within this framework, constructing the idea of European superiority on the premise that male domination over women was a marker (and foundation) of so-called "civilized" societies. Constructing colonized men as inferior on account of their supposed inability to control and dominate "masculinized" and "hypersexualized" women, European male scientists and intellectuals simultaneously established their superiority over all men, as well as the superiority of all men over all women. Used as a signal of

cultural advancement, the practice of heteropatriarchy served to legitimate Western conquest and rule over African people.[56] What the extracts above powerfully illustrate is that colonial-era ideologies of the gender binary and hierarchy are being redeployed within contemporary conservative U.S. discourses promoting heteropatriarchal discourses of the "natural" family and intolerance of sexual and gender diversity.

The Globalization of "LGBT*I" Identity Politics

Despite the implicit coloniality of claims that homosexuality is "unAfrican," these perspectives cannot be simply dismissed as "irrational," and whitewashed as evidence of "backward" African states and politicians. These problematic popular reactions resurrect colonial subjectivities of superiority and racist colonial fantasies of the Dark Continent, conveniently denying the legitimacy of African suspicions of Western governments. At the same time, critiques of Western "sexual rights" agendas come not only from conservative U.S. and African standpoints, but also from critical perspectives that have examined the hegemonic Western interests served by international LGBT*I advocacy[57] and its limitations in creating substantive justice for sexual minorities located in the social, economic, and geopolitical margins.[58]

Anti-assimilationist queer critiques of Western LGBT*I identity politics and political agendas have identified neoliberal roots sustaining this global movement. Before considering critiques of Western LGBT*I global politics, one must first acknowledge the numerous successes of the movement at domestic and international levels in terms of advocating for equal rights for women and sexual minorities, and making important contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The globalization of LGBT*I identity politics has also created opportunities for political intervention through globalized coalition politics, and the articulation of LGBT*I identities and demands have certainly been important within processes through which sexual minorities constitute demands for rights within heteronormative societies.[59] Yet, as numerous queer movements and scholars around the world have shown, LGBT*I global politics are but one of many other possible ways of articulating and framing demands for acceptance of sex and gender difference and diversity.[60] In this sense, the articulation of LGBT*I identities and the construction of the self and politics in these terms has

become the globally dominant lens through which sexuality and gender diversity are understood and contested. The hegemony of Western articulations and constructions of LGBT*I identity politics, as a way of interpreting human sexuality and gender diversities, has asserted a Euro-American centered framework that "defines the terms by which anyone can become intelligible as a sexual being as well as a political being."[61] Thus, alternative expressions and practices of "gender" and "sexuality" have been subordinated, rendered unintelligible by a hegemonic Western identitarian politics and sexual epistemic framework.

While the expanded terrain of LGBT*I identity politics holds many possibilities for the advancement of sexual minority rights, it has also been critiqued for having "become complicit with neocolonial logics, to the extent of mobilizing significant new forms of cultural imperialism."[62] Beyond the realm of identity politics, the practice of "pinkwashing," which constructs a nation's recognition of sexual rights as evidence of the degree of its advancement as a "civilization," has become used to "justify the need for intervention, education, or training, as well as the tendency to chart the alleged "backwardness" of culturally or ethnically marked others based on their attitudes toward sexual diversity as defined by LGBT global politics."[63] President Obama's remarks regarding international sexual rights captures these knowledge politics in action. In 2011, he promised that under his administration "agencies engaged abroad have already begun taking action to promote the fundamental human rights of LGBT persons everywhere. Our deep commitment to advancing the human rights of all people is strengthened when we as the United States *bring our tools to bear to vigorously advance this goal.*"[64]

Three years later, and in response to the Ugandan president signing the Ugandan Anti-gay bill into law in February 2014, he articulated the fulfillment of this promise, remarking in an official statement that

> the United States has consistently stood for the protection of fundamental freedoms and universal human rights. We believe that people everywhere should be treated equally, with dignity and respect, and that they should have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential no matter who they are or whom they love. That is why I am so deeply disappointed that Uganda will shortly enact legislation that would criminalize homosexuality. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda, once law, will be more than an affront and a danger to the

> gay community in Uganda. It will be a step backward for all Ugandans and reflect poorly on Uganda's commitment to protecting the human rights of its people.[65]

The United States is not the only country that delivered official statements condemning anti-gay legislation in Africa, with political leaders in the UK, France, Australia, and Canada also decrying the new laws. Furthermore, the United States and other Western governments have spoken out against homophobia in other contexts including Russia, India, and across the Middle East. And, political leaders have not been the only ones to denounce the laws with organizations, high-profile media figures and journalists speaking out against the legislation. What makes the statements of the U.S. president particularly relevant and noteworthy is the gravitas of his words within the international political landscape, and because of what his official statements reveal about the ways in which the U.S. government positions itself in relation to African countries through the articulation of a colonial geo-political moral landscape.

Obama expresses "disappointment" with the Ugandan law, resurrecting colonial constructions of "childlike" African people and leaders who require the guidance of Western nations. At the same time, he frames the development of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality bill ahistorically, ignoring the legacy of homophobic, patriarchal ideology and systems imposed by, and inherited from, colonial governments as well as the role of contemporary American conservatives in backing the bill. Further, in juxtaposing the United States as a people and nation that has "consistently stood for the protection of fundamental freedoms and universal human rights" with Uganda's new legislation, Obama generates ignorance of the fact that U.S. debates on sexual rights have been likened to war since the 1960s, enabling him to accomplish an assertion of American moral superiority. In foregrounding the protection of sexual minorities in America, this discourse aims to protect the international identity of the United States as a moral "superpower" through attempts to obscure its own perpetration of human rights violations.

Not a new technology of Western imperialism, the agenda of "saving gays" joins existing "saving women" narratives that emerged as a theme within the post-9/11 "war on terror."[66] As Bracke writes, while the "war on terror" claimed to be "waged in order to protect women's rights and in particular to liberate Muslim and Arab women from the yoke of their

misogynist cultural backgrounds and religious traditions," the rhetoric of rescuing gays from homophobic societies carves out new terrain for "civilizational politics."[67] The rendering of "gay rights" as part of revised national identities in unprecedented ways reworks national memory and history in ways that make white supremacy and the legacies of colonial power seem innocent or even absent.[68] In addition to enabling homonationalist[69] constructions of certain governments as problematic and inferior, LGBT*I politics mingle with xenophobic and Islamaphobic discourses that have developed in the West. As Bracke writes, homonormativity lends itself to homonationalist Western discourses that articulate "civilizational" sexual politics in relation to racialized others.[70] Constructions of "backward" homophobic African leaders are echoed within contemporary Islamaphobic homonormative discourses in Europe that figure Muslim populations in Europe and Islamic states alike as threats to LGBT*I people and democracy more broadly. Consequently, a "racial, civilizational knowledge" of sexuality has become embedded within counterterrorism discourses that "draw on processes of quarantining a racialized and sexualized other."[71]

Neoliberalism and Contemporary Knowledge Politics of Sexuality

Western epistemologies of the body, pleasure, sex, and reproduction have been fertile terrain upon which racialized struggles over power, knowledge, and truth have been waged.[72] Africa has historically functioned as physical and conceptual terrain upon which Western power struggles have been fought. As contestations over sexual minorities emerge within decolonial contexts in the global south, gender and sexuality resurface as sites where Western interests are advanced.

Contemporary U.S. interventions into sexual rights in Africa reinvigorate colonial ideologies that were used to justify Euro-American conquest and domination of African people, land, and natural resources. When viewed through the lens of critical approaches to the epistemic aspects of oppression, it becomes apparent that "pro-family" and LGBT*I identity politics effectively crowd out alternative discourses and ways of understanding and talking about sex and gender diversity, reinscribing the hegemony of Western knowledge systems. And, while on the surface, these agendas appear to contradict one another, their avoidance of race and colonialism as points of discussion and interest reveal a common

epistemic thread—avoidance of "race" so as to subdue it as a concept both conceptually and politically. Akin to what Winant refers to as "white racial projects," dominant U.S discourses on sexual politics in Africa and globally reproduce colonial relations of power through the silencing of the history of race, racism, colonialism, and slavery.[73]

In managing knowledge and ignorance on sex and sexuality in Africa, dominant U.S. "progressive" and "conservative" discourses demonstrate what Mills[74] and Steyn[75] describe as white "epistemic inversion." The avoidance of race, racism, and the history of colonialism work to disguise deeply racialized ideologies of sex, gender, and sexuality as post-racial or color-blind so that they are seen to be benign, well-meaning, and most importantly, not racist. As Kim writes, ignoring the presence of systemic racism within the global capitalist order is an important facet of liberal multiculturalism and individualism, in which the prevailing sentiment is, "if one is colour-blind and incapable of seeing race, he or she cannot be guilty of racism."[76] As the "logic" of hegemonic whiteness, color-blindness is "becoming a defining hallmark of not just the US, but the 'global village.'"[77] As Hughey writes, the examination of white racial projects working to constitute this logic is "germane for those concerned with [hegemonic whiteness's] ability to obfuscate the material realities of racial inequality."[78]As Ferguson and Hong argue, "anti-racist" and "color-blind" discourses and politics such as these have actually *exacerbated* racial violence, dispossession, exploitation, and impoverishment . . . facilitat[ing] racial capital as much—or, perhaps more accurately, in even more brutal and efficient a manner as—White supremacy did in an earlier era."[79]The mutual color-blindness of these competing discourses illustrates that "sexual rights" and "family values" knowledge practices are not distinct or even separable. Rather, they "share a common allegiance to dominant racial (and often racist) ideologies that transcend differing belief systems."[80]

This critical interrogation of Western knowledge conquests into sexual rights in Africa has not sought to position "progressives" or "conservatives" as being "closer to the truth" on sexuality, or to compare the weight of their influence in Africa. Rather, examination of the ways in which knowledge and ignorance operate through these competing discourses has sought to uncover the ways in which constructions of sex, sexuality, and gender shape, and are shaped by, global power relations that are inescapably racialized as a result of hundreds of years of white supremacist violence, theft and exploitation in the form of colonization. Furthermore, consequences

of these contestations are experienced at the level of lived reality for sexual minorities in Africa. As Kwabila writes of Malawi, approaches to sexual diversity and rights lack grounding in "homegrown and owned discourses" and are "anchored on polarized binaries" that only create tensions within communities.[81] In making sense of the insertion of U.S. discourses into sexual politics in Africa and globally, it is critical to see that these debates do not have sexual liberation or repression as their final objective. Rather, what emerges is that international contestations over rights pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity seek to maintain the global dominance of the West and the authority of Western epistemologies and social constructions in relation to other ways of knowing and doing sex and gender diversity. In the context of globalization, the imposition/transmission/exchange of knowledge is unavoidable. However, awareness of the intersections between colonizing ideologies and systems of race, sex, and gender-based oppression enables more incisive approaches for confronting them and creating a more socially just world.

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NOTES

1. I employ the term "decolonial" rather than "postcolonial" in order to enable understandings of the coloniality of contemporary knowledge-power contestations in the domain of sexuality. "Decolonial" allows for a nuanced reading of the process following the formal termination of colonial rule, acknowledging the multiple and enduring inequalities that structure contemporary north-south power relations. Seeking to rupture and challenge the universalizing colonial logic that provided the basis for historical conquest and domination, decolonial critique approaches social justice as a political and epistemic project (Quijano 2000, 544; Mignolo 2011, 12).

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3. David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 23.
4. R. Adams, "I Spoke to the Author of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill," *Vice*, 2 June 2014, http://www.vice.com/read/an-interview-with-the-author-of-ugandas-anti-homosexuality-bill.
5. "Museveni Responds to Obama on Anti-Gay Bill," *New Vision* 21 (February 2014), http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1337946/museveni-responds-obama-anti-gay.
6. Heteropatriarchy describes the interlocking power systems of patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality (Van Zyl 2005, 76). As Elder (2003) writes, "Heteropatriarchy is the social power structure that creates and maintains the heterosexist binary of masculinity and femininity and the associated social expectations (gender performances) determined according to biological sex (4)."
7. Marc Epprecht, *Sexuality and Social Justice in Africa: Rethinking Homophobia and Forging Resistance* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 123.
8. Otutubikey Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria," *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series 2*, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Lagos (2004), 21.
9. Ibid.
10. Epprecht, *Sexuality and Social Justice*, 124.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 127.
13. Basile Ndjio, "Post-colonial Histories of Sexuality: The Political Invention of a Libidinal African Straight," *Africa* 82, no. (2012): 613.
14. Stella Nyanzi, "Homosexuality in Uganda: The Paradox of Foreign Influence," MSIR Working Paper (Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University (2013), 18.
15. Ndjio, "Post-colonial Histories of Sexuality," 610.
16. Ibid., 613.
17. Nyanzi, "Homosexuality in Uganda," 16.
18. Ibid., 6.
19. Patrick Awondo, "The Politicization of Sexuality and the rise of Homosexual Movements in Post-colonial Cameroon," *Review of African Political Economy* 37 (2010): 315.
20. Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Perspective* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 45.
21. Didi Herman, *The Antigay Agenda: Orthodox vision and the Christian Right* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 28.
22. Nyanzi, "Homosexuality in Uganda," 6–7.

23. Judith Stacey, "Scents, Scholars, and Stigma: The Revisionist Campaign for Family Values," *Social Text* 40 (1994): 65.
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25. The history of same-sex practices and partnerships in pre-colonial and contemporary African societies have been extensively documented. See Roscoe and Murray (1998) *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities*; and Morgan and Wieringa's (2005) *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men, and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa*.
26. Vasu Reddy, "Perverts and Sodomites: Homophobia as Hate Speech in Africa," *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 20 (2009): 172.
27. Nyanzi, "Homosexuality in Uganda," 1.
28. Vasu Reddy, "Homophobia, Human Rights and Gay and Lesbian Equality in Africa," *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 16, no. 50 (2001): 85.
29. Ndjio, "Post-colonial Histories of Sexuality," 609.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. N. Tuana, "Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance," in *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*, edited by Robert N. Proctor and Linda Schiebinger (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 109.
33. Susan Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (Berkeley: Chardon Press, 1997), 16.
34. Ibid., 17.
35. Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality," 21.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 23.
38. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
39. Tamale, "Researching and Theorizing Sexualities in Africa," 11–36.
40. Sally Kitch, *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: SUNY Press, 2009).
41. Zakiyyah Imam Jackson, "Waking Nightmares." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17, nos. 2–3 (2011): 261.
42. Ibid.
43. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.
44. Epprecht, *Sexuality and Social Justice*, 125.
45. Nyanzi, "Homosexuality in Uganda," 30.
46. Tarus Ramos, "Foreword," in Kapya Kaoma, *Colonizing African values: How the U.S. Christian Right Is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa* (Boston: Political Research Associates, 2012), iii.
47. Ibid.
48. Justin Lee, *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays vs. Christians Debate* (New York: Jericho Books, 2012), 6.
49. On its website (http://www.focusonthefamily.com/about_us.aspx), Focus on the Family describes itself as "a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families

thrive. We provide help and resources for couples to build healthy marriages that reflect God's design, and for parents to raise their children according to morals and values grounded in biblical principles."

50. James Dobson, "High Court on Verge of Destroying the Family," *WND Commentary*, 3 May 2015.
51. On its website (http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?pid=14096) the Liberty Counsel describes itself as "an international nonprofit litigation, education, and policy organization dedicated to advancing religious freedom, the sanctity of life, and the family since 1989, by providing pro bono assistance and representation on these and related topics."
52. Matthew Staver, "This is the beginning of end of western civilization," *WND Faith*, 7 October 2014.
53. Sharon Slater, "Human Rights Gone Awry: Myths and Facts Regarding International Human Rights Affecting Women and Children," paper presented at the Nigerian Bar Association Conference (Lagos, Nigeria, 2011).
54. Ibid.
55. Kitch, *Spectre of Sex*, 38.
56. Ibid., 43.
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68. Ibid., 245.
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Article 2

Nuclear Power:The family in decolonial perspective and 'pro-family' politics in Africa

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This article takes an in-depth look at the central concept of pro-family discourse: the 'natural family', from a decolonial perspective, arguing that the notion of the 'nuclear family' cannot be taken for granted as a concept or category in social research. In this article, I highlight some of the key organizations and individuals working to build pro-family networks in Africa, outlining the discourses the comprise 'pro-family' activism collected through online and network ethnographic methods.

This article argues that the normative construction of 'family' in heteronormative 'nuclear' terms is infused with power relations, and therefore must not be taken for granted as an analytical category or concept (in demography and other social sciences disciplines). Not only a site where racialized and patriarchal western notions of sexed and gendered hierarchies have been naturalized and institutionalized, the 'nuclear family' model was positioned as a signifier of modernity, civilization and progress within eurocentric knowledge construction that served colonial interests. Discussion reviews decolonial thinking on the nuclear family, as well as anti-imperialist literature on the colonial history of the nuclear family ideal. These perspectives are brought into conversation with current developments in which the nuclear family model is being reinvigorated by the conservative US-based 'pro-family' movement. The 'family', it is concluded, is entangled in multiple relations of geo-political power that should be taken into account in research and the production of knowledge around kinship in African contexts. I conclude by discussing the ways in which the idealization of the 'natural' family serves neoliberal capitalist interests of reducing the responsibilities of the state towards citizens, who become configured as responsibilities of the family unit within pro-family discourse. In order to develop policy and theory that speaks to the needs of African societies, I argue, the family must be de-linked from the racist and sexist logic of imperialism.



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Nuclear power: The family in decolonial perspective and 'pro-family' politics in Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that the normative construction of 'family' in heteronormative 'nuclear' terms is infused with power relations, and therefore must not be taken for granted as an analytical category or concept. Not only a site where racialised and patriarchal western notions of sexed and gendered hierarchies have been naturalised and institutionalised, the 'nuclear family' model was positioned as a signifier of modernity, civilisation and progress within eurocentric knowledge construction that served colonial interests. This discussion reviews decolonial thinking on the nuclear family, as well as anti-imperialist literature on the colonial history of the nuclear family ideal. These perspectives are brought into conversation with current developments in which the nuclear family model is being reinvigorated by the conservative US-based 'pro-family' movement. The 'family', it is concluded, is entangled in multiple relations of geo-political power that should be taken into account in research and the production of knowledge around kinship in African contexts.

KEYWORDS

Nuclear family; coloniality; pro-family; Africa

1. Introduction

'Family', as a category within scholarly and popular discourse, is often referred to in ways that imply it to be a self-evident and apolitical concept. Yet, as this article discusses, 'family' when imagined as strictly heterosexual, married and monogamous is far from neutral and is infused with power relations. While a diversity of kinship systems certainly has existed throughout history and across the globe, it is the nuclear family model which has achieved privilege status in modern social imaginaries and development imperatives. As the history of colonial conquest reveals, the dominance of the nuclear family model is entangled with other modern classificatory schemes such as 'gender', 'race' and 'nation' that became the epistemic building blocks of western modernity as strategies of empire building (Stoler, 1995). The variously termed nuclear/modern/bourgeoise family, consisting of a married, monogamous and reproductive man and woman, was positioned as a mark of civilisation, a notion used to classify people and societies that did not practise this particular order of kinship as uncivilised (Kitch, 2009). As Oyěwùmí (2002:1) writes of the legacy of the 'nuclear family' model in African contexts, although this model of kinship is a specifically European form it has

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yet to be seriously interrogated as a colonial concept, and as a result continues to be the source of many falsely universalised concepts that inform gender and kinship research in Africa. In this article, therefore, my aim is to advance a critique of the nuclear family ideal in ways that connect feminist critiques of the multiple hierarchies held in place by 'nuclear' power relations (Stacey, 1990; Hill-Collins, 1998) with decolonial perspectives on how geo-political inequalities are reproduced in the absence of a formal system of colonial administration.

Currently, debates over what constitutes family are ensuing in the context of international policy (Martin, 1999; Buss & Herman, 2003; Croft, 2007). These debates have extended decades-old 'culture wars' between 'progressives' and 'conservatives' in the West over women's rights, homosexuality, abortion, contraception and sex education. As western feminists and sexual minority activists have globalised their international advocacy to gain equal recognition and rights, so too have western conservatives who, in opposing progressive agendas, have asserted efforts to protect a heteropatriarchal social order that is centred upon male authority and dominance over women and women's reproduction as well as compulsory heterosexuality. The rights of people who do not ascribe to this order, namely lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, have become central to these globalised contestations increasingly over the past two decades (Cruz-Malave & Manalansan, 2002).

In African contexts such as Cameroon (Ndjio, 2012, 2013), Zimbabwe (Campbell, 2003; Epprecht, 2005), South Africa (Reddy, 2001; Msibi, 2009; Mkhize et al., 2010), Namibia (Currier, 2012), Nigeria (Izugbara, 2004; Lewis, 2011; Okanlawon et al., 2013), Kenya (Finerty, 2013) and Uganda (Tamale, 2007; Cheney, 2012), calls by non-heterosexual people to have the right to make families that are recognised by the state have been resisted by conservative claims that homosexuality is a form of western imperialism and is therefore threatening to African cultures traditions. Kaoma's (2009, 2012, 2013) research has provided important empirical evidence showing that the rejection of sexual minorities in these terms is connected to well-resourced US organisations working to drive 'pro-family' agendas in their own domestic contexts, and internationally through strategic global partnerships and networks.

Organisations such as the Family Research Council, Family Watch International, Focus on the Family, and the World Congress of Families (WCF) are developing inroads across the continent and have 'mentored' local politicians and activists around the necessity of maintaining the nuclear family unit as the only traditional, legal and permissible form of expressing one's sexuality and gender, within policy and society. Yet, as African scholars have made clear, no such 'nuclear' family structure has been practised on the continent as a 'norm', historically or currently (Oyěwùmí, 2002). Rather, African kinship systems have taken a diversity of forms in relation to various contexts, cultures, religious practices and belief systems. The existence of pre-colonial art depicting same-sex intimacies (Epprecht, 2004) as well as anthropological research (Nkabinde with Morgan, 2005; Epprecht, 2008) has provided important evidence that Africa is not the heterosexual continent that some politicians and political leaders would like their constituencies to believe. In promoting 'family values' in Africa, the conservative pro-family movement advances a singular narrative of the African family that absorbs Christianity and colonisation as part of what they characterise as being traditionally African. In doing so, not only do these discourses enforce a singular and hegemonic notion of what the family is, but they also close

down possibilities for the articulation and acknowledgement of the diversity of ways in which kinship has, and currently is, practised in Africa (and elsewhere).

Given these historical and contemporary dynamics, the notion of 'family' must be engaged critically when it is invoked in African contexts. In discussing 'family' and kinship in the Global South, we must take cognisance of the ways in which these notions, when deployed uncritically, reinforce eurocentric norms and knowledges rather than reflecting or responding to the realities and needs of African people. This article seeks to contribute an understanding of the concept of 'family' from a decolonial perspective in order to illustrate the analytical dangers of reproducing the Euro-American model of the nuclear family in policy and scholarship on families or kinship relations in Africa. It is argued that the notion of the 'family' must be de-linked from its colonial heritage and reframed in ways that accommodate and acknowledge contemporary realities of diversity and complexity in ever-changing African societies.

2. Method

Literature and documentary sources referred to in this article have been sourced as part of a broader project on the role of the US pro-family movement in influencing sexual politics in Africa. In this article, I refer to pro-family texts collected through desktop research, although I have also employed ethnography as a method of data collection. In making sense of the interest that the pro-family movement has in Africa, in particular, I have drawn on literature and theory from a range of critical perspectives, namely decolonial theory, queer theory, critical feminist theory, African feminist theory, intersectional feminist theory, critical race theory, critical diversity studies, critical discourse studies and critical perspectives on development.

This investigation has revealed that the pro-family movement's deployment of a singular definition of 'family' is central to their efforts at destroying the diversity of other ways in which kinship/family/community have, and continue to be, known and practised. In enforcing a eurocentric norm, such as the nuclear family model, as a universality, the pro-family movement works to reinforce the global power and authority of white western Christians. In this discussion, I bring critical perspectives on the family that have emerged from development studies, gender studies and decolonial theory into conversation with one another in order to reveal the ways in which normative constructions of the family – namely, the nuclear family ideal – code hegemonic practices (Steyn, 2015:386) of heterosexism and the global dominance of the West.

3. The international pro-family movement

A US-driven theo-political movement calling itself 'pro-family' is working to advance policy agendas in Africa, Eastern Europe, India and Asia through the establishment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and increasing advocacy work at the United Nations (UN). As Croft (2007) and Martin (1999) have revealed, pro-family foreign policy involves measures to 'strengthen the family' through opposition to birth control, the use of condoms (even in the fight against HIV/AIDS) and denial of the rights and dignity of sexual minorities. Furthermore, 'Religious activists have consistently opposed any foreign-policy initiative that might weaken parental control over children, facilitate

abortion, expand the rights of homosexuals, or devalue the role of the conventional homemaker and mother' (Martin, 1999:74). The growing influence of an international 'pro-family' movement has been noted by scholars who have studied the rise of discourses of the 'natural' or 'traditional' family within domestic contexts in the West at first, and more recently their advances within the UN and across Africa and the Global South (Buss & Herman, 2003).

Drawing on Christian beliefs about the sanctity of marriage, pro-family organisations work to actively 'preserve and promote' the nuclear family model, which is positioned as the ideal kinship structure. For instance, the US-based organisation Family Watch International works with the UN and internationally to:

> Preserve and promote the family, based on marriage between a man and a woman as the societal unit that provides the best outcome for men, women and children.[1]

Similarly, Focus on the Family – which is US based but which has associate offices in 13 other countries across Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa – sets itself out as:

> a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive. We provide help and resources for couples to build healthy marriages that reflect God's design, and for parents to raise their children according to morals and values grounded in biblical principles.[2]

The WCF, a project of the Illinois-based Howard Centre for Family, Religion and Society, was established in 1997 as an initiative to consolidate various pro-life and anti-gay advocacy organisations, and to bring together global conservatives (and elites) who can advance 'family values' at the levels of national and international policy. The WCF gives global expression to the notion that the nuclear family is universal to all of humanity and history, arguing that the family is 'based on the marital union of a man and a woman, is the bedrock of society, the strength of our nations, and the hope of humanity … the ultimate foundation of every civilization known to history'.[3]

In 2016, the WCF launched the International Organisation for the Family in Cape Town, South Africa, where delegates signed the Cape Town Declaration, confirming their efforts to 'firmly resis[t] every push to redefine marriage: to include same-sex or group bonds, or sexually open or temporary ones'. Prominent African signatories to the declaration include the head of the African Christian Democratic Party, Kevin Meshoe, and the Nigerian ambassador to South Africa, Uche Ajulu-Okeke. A few months prior to this gathering, the WCF collaborated with the Africa Organisation for Families, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Kenyan Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, the Cameroon-based Global Institute for Family Integrity and the Nigerian-based Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH) to host the African Regional Conference on Families. Anne Kioko, President of the African Organisation for Families, explained that comprehensive sex education was amongst the concerns of Kenyan pro-family advocates, arguing that such 'programs go way beyond regular sex education and are designed to change all the sexual and gender norms of society' (Nyambura, 2016).

[1] http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/about_us.cfm Accessed 25 April 2016.
[2] http://www.focusonthefamily.com/about Accessed 25 April 2016.
[3] http://www.wcf11.org/principles.php Accessed 25 April 2016.

'Pro-family' discourses advocating for the nuclear family model to be protected in national and international policy as the only legally recognised form of family are becoming increasingly influential within international policy debates and imaginaries. The growing influence of the pro-family movement has been enabled not only by advocacy work in civil society and politics, but also in academia. In the United States, for instance, W. Bradford Wilcox (cited later in this article) is the Director of the National Marriage Project, which is based at the highly ranked University of Virginia. Other pro-family advocates who are based in academic departments include WCF Founder Allan Carlson (Professor of History, Hillsdale College), Mark Regnerus (Professor of Sociology, University of Texas-Austin), Everett Piper (Oklahoma Wesleyan University) and Monique Chireau (Duke University). Beyond universities, a number of pro-family advocates work from US-based think tanks that are notoriously conservative, including the Sutherland Institute, the Witherspoon Institute, the Population Research Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

Increasingly, popular discourse across the continent construes people who do not subscribe to the heterosexual nuclear family model not only as 'unAfrican', but also as socially and economically threatening to the developing state. Within these discourses, non-heterosexuals, single mothers and childfree women, those who engage in pre-marital and extra-marital sex and reproduction, and alternative family forms are scapegoated for various social challenges, and therefore experience forms of oppression, namely marginalisation, victimisation and exclusion (Young, 2009).

4. Decolonising the family

As Oyěwùmí (2002:1) writes, the enforcement and institutionalisation of the European concept of the 'family' formed the ideological basis of gender and race 'as two fundamental axes along which people became oppressed' in colonised African societies. As one of the 'scientific designs' of modernity, the nuclear family ideal was not created by Africans but by Western Europeans and Americans, responding to the needs and visions of these places, not those of Africa (Mignolo, 2011:130). As decolonial scholars (Smith, 2006; Lugones, 2007; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011) reveal, there is scope to decolonise the family, given that this Christian and bourgeois kinship model was an instrumental axis through which colonial power was implemented institutionalised. The control of sexuality and gender that this model enabled was reinforced by European control of knowledge (Quijano, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2013). Within the pro-family movement, the 'logic of coloniality' (Quijano, 2007) is reinvigorated in that the normative ways in which the eurocentric nuclear family model is used reinforce western authority while also protecting systems of domination that can be legitimated through the nuclear family's modelling of sexed and gendered hierarchies as natural.

Mid-twentieth-century literature on kinship in Africa (Hunter, 1936; Krige, 1936; Schapera, 1940; Phillips, 1953; Reuter, 1963) largely offered descriptive accounts that constructed African kinship systems as located along a linear path of 'progression' towards 'advanced' family forms associated with modernisation (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998:408). Christonormative European thought constructed the gender binary and hierarchy as evidence of enlightened society, with any other form of indigenous sex and gender practice constructed as 'savage' and, further, as an indication of the need to evangelise and

modernise these societies (Kitch, 2009). Howard Washington Odum's 1910 publication, *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro*, illustrates the ways in which racist ideology drew on patriarchal constructions of 'civilization', reporting that 'in his home life, the Negro is filthy, careless, and indecent … as destitute of morals as many of the lower animals [and with] little knowledge of the sanctity of home or marital relations' (Stacey 1994:66). Such sociological and anthropological scholarship on 'family' and kinship in Africa provided the epistemic resources used to justify conquest, colonisation and domination of the non-European world.

Thus, colonised men were constructed as being unable to govern colonised women, and therefore unable to govern themselves (Kitch, 2009). Employing the nuclear family model as a means of measuring 'savagery' or 'civilization', enlightenment ideology erected a system of racial classification and ranking through a gender/sex hierarchical order that positioned male dominance as a signal of cultural advancement (2009:56). African men, fated to become slaves, were considered to lack fully formed souls, like women, and the institution of marriage offered a gendered biblical model that could justify the capture and enslavement of African people (2009:52). What pro-family accounts of the universality of the 'nuclear family', such as those quoted earlier, further obscure is the extent to which African kinship systems were destroyed throughout the period of colonial conquest. At the same time that European scholars were constructing African kinship structures as inferior through the normative modern ideal of the nuclear family, they were actively destroying the kinship systems of colonised people. The idealised western nuclear family model is therefore implicated in economic and knowledge practices of modernity that have justified racism and constructed some human lives as inferior and dispensable (Mignolo, 2011:6).

Mignolo reinforces the salience of heteropatriarchy within a power relations, arguing that a global gender/sex hierarchy 'privileged males over females and European patriarchy over other forms of gender configuration and sexual relations' through the invention and institutionalisation of sex (heterosexual/homosexual) and gender (male/female) binaries (Mignolo, 2011:18). Thus, 'a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European people over non-European people' secured the privileged status of European men over all men and colonised people, as well as European women (2011:18). These systems were held in place by privileging of western knowledges over non-western knowledges (which were often targeted for eradication) and a spiritual/religious hierarchy that privileged Christianity over non-Christianity and other non-western spiritualities (2011: 18).

5. The pro-family movement in Africa

As already discussed, western pro-family political actors and discourses have taken a particular interest in Africa, as made evident by the establishment of African branches of US-based organisations such as Focus on the Family and Human Life International, as well as the activities of conservative activists from the West across the continent. As Zambian theologian Dr Rev. Kaoma (2012) found, pro-family activists and organisations have played a supporting role in attacks on sexual minorities and women's reproductive rights in many African countries in their promotion of the nuclear family model as a universal norm.

The recent rejection of the Gender and Economic Opportunities Bill by the Nigerian National Assembly provides one illustration of the influence of the pro-family movement in influencing policy in Africa, along with insight into some of the international networks involved. The Bill, which set out to 'incorporate and enforce' certain provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women into national policy, was opposed by the FACH, which is a coalition of conservative civil society groups (Premium Times, 3 April 2016). The Director of FACH, Theresa Okafor, is an influential figure within the international pro-family movement, and was awarded 'Woman of the Year' at the ninth gathering of the WCF which took place in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2015. The objectives of the FACH mirror those set out by US-based pro-family organisations as can be seen in their mission statement. As stated on the FACH website, the organisation aims to:

> promote the sanctity and inviolability of human life from conception … foster the equality in dignity between men and women through the rejection of false norms and notions of equality that diminish the very dignity of the woman … [and] uphold the family as the natural unit for the upbringing of children while protecting and preserving healthy family values, and Nigerian cultural heritage.[4]

Echoing the mission statements of US-based pro-family organisations that employ notions of 'tradition' in efforts to justify the oppression of women and sexual minorities, the FACH clearly positions itself as a defender of 'family values' which the organisation connects to an oversimplified and singular construction of 'Nigerian cultural heritage'. Similarly, Pastor Errol Naidoo has brought pro-family advocacy to South Africa through lobbying of government. After the legalisation of same-sex marriage in South Africa in 2006, Naidoo went to the Washington DC-based Family Research Council (FRC) where he received mentorship, later returning to establish the Family Policy Institute in Cape Town. The Family Policy Institute boasts its status as a partner-member of the WCF, and at its ninth gathering in 2015 Naidoo addressed delegates on the issues of pro-family scholarship, research and policy, speaking to 'the status of the natural family in South Africa'.[5] The Family Policy Institute has also weighed in on the White Paper on Families, advocating for a heterosexual definition of marriage to inform that which is recognised as a 'family' (Charles, 2013:15). Regarding the draft legislation, Charles (2013:16) warns that the heteronormative ideals of marriage coupled with heterosexist attitude are cause for concern with regard to social development. It is evident, she argues, that there are 'appropriate' genders or sexualities that are being promoted and that the closer or further one is to these norms, the more or less access one will have to material wellbeing' (2013:16).

6. Exceptionalising 'family'

In centring the importance of the 'nuclear family' model and heterosexuality, pro-family discourses exceptionalise the family as a social institution capable of carrying the lion's share of responsibility for ensuring the (re)production and maintenance of healthy and prosperous societies. This discourse resonates with neoliberal efforts to deflect

[4]http://www.fach-nigeria.org/index.php/objectives
[5]http://www.familypolicyinstitute.com/news.html

responsibility for social and economic policy away from the state and towards individuals. In positioning the heterosexual nuclear family unit as the custodian of a 'moral', healthy and economically thriving society, the state is able to outsource its responsibility towards its citizenry.

As Rwezaura et al. (1995:56) write, western neoliberal interventions into so-called 'developing' economies on the continent have encouraged states to view the family as a unit of social protection and production, with families expected to support their members economically, physically and emotionally. Yet structural inequalities continue to be widely acknowledged as major obstacles faced by families and their members in their efforts to make livelihoods. Commenting on the work still needed to attain the now lapsed 2015 Millennium Development Goals, the UN Economic Commission for Europe allude to some of the effects of inequality on kinship and family systems, arguing that 'High levels of inequalities … have subsequent effects on health, nutrition and child development … crime, disease and environmental problems are also found to be exacerbated by inequality' (ECE et al., 2012:7). Economic insecurity, health and health care of parents and children, and environmental degradation all affect families in multiple ways, resulting in 'rapidly changing family structures and declining family support systems', and therefore create major obstacles to achieving development goals as noted by the United Nations (UNDESA & UNFPA, 2012:4).

Today's economic precarity and insecurity are legacies of the colonial era in which kinship systems were fragmented, destroyed and impoverished as part of a project of conquest and colonisation. Rwezaura et al. (1995) provide a comprehensive discussion of the ways in which colonial land theft, entry into the wage labour system by men and integration into the cash economy across southern and eastern Africa impacted familial practices and relations between those connected by descent and community. The resulting 'in/security' regimes created conditions of extreme precarity for the majority of the population, and irrevocably transformed African kinship relations (Budlender & Lund, 2011:926).

The rhetoric of 'pro-family' advocates ignores the legacies of inequality entrenched by colonial conquest via claims that the 'natural family' is the key to unlocking neoliberal promises of prosperity. As Sharon Slater, founder of Family Watch International and active UN lobbyist, told a group of lawyers at the annual Nigerian Bar Association conference in 2011, 'Children are Nigeria's greatest asset. They are your wealth, they are your future. It is no accident that Nigeria, the most populous African country, is also one of the wealthiest.' She elaborates, explaining that children are needed as future 'workers to fuel their economies and support their older populations' (Slater, 2011). She warns the delegates that:

> Nigeria will eventually face the same problem if you adopt the anti-child values of the West. As Nigeria continues to develop, we urge you to preserve your strong family values. Embrace your children and invest in them by strengthening your families. (Slater, 2011)

According to Slater (2011), when sex outside of heterosexual marriage occurs 'the family unit disintegrates, children are hurt, economies decline, and nations are weakened'. At the same time, Slater advances the notion that Nigerian people can uplift their economy and nation through individual choices around sex, marriage and reproduction. The enduring legacy of western exploitation of Africa that has created conditions of extreme insecurity

across the continent is rendered invisible, and economic prosperity is said to be achieved through adherence to particular (heterosexual) norms and desires.

Within this logic, those who do not conform to the nuclear family ideal – single parents, LGBTI people, divorced people and those who engage in sex outside of marriage – are all presented as elements that undermine and threaten these developmental imperatives. Sex and gender identities and expressions are thereby inscribed with economic value within a capitalist framework. In this sense, as Jakobsen (2002:61) argues, 'Family Values not only serve as a cultural control on the market, the stable discourse of regulation to be appealed to in times of change', but they also inscribe sexed and gendered practices and identities with economic value, establishing a 'crucial distinction' between those persons whose lives are seen to create wealth from those whose lives are seen as economic liabilities.

Offered as a solution to multiple and intersecting crises within the contemporary context, 'family values' can be persuasive because they provide convenient scapegoats for economic instability, an 'amoral market' and the supposed 'decline of national cultural values'. W. Bradford Wilcox, (Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies) summarised this relationship at the ninth WCF gathering in 2015, presenting findings published in the recently released report *Strong Families, Prosperous States*. He explained:

> there's a connection between strong families and state prosperity because marriage, family life, have deep connections to the labour force, they boost family income access, and they encourage the accumulation of capital in today's contemporary world. (Wilcox, 2015)

While pro-family discourses construct the 'natural' family as being a god-given and biological/natural 'truth', the movement also advances neoliberal ideology in which economic value is attached to the sex and gender identities, expressions and practices. Furthermore, the approach illustrated by Wilcox hides the splintering effects that increasing inequality and precarity created by neoliberal growth imperatives have had on practices of kinship, as discussed earlier.

As one can learn from Stoler's (1995) historical research, contemporary pro-family discourses on the 'natural family' regenerate two contradictory elements characterising nineteenth-century social Darwinist constructions of the 'family'. As a 'metaphoric figure' that enabled a unified narrative of race, class and gender distinctions, the nuclear family ideal was a 'curious paradox' in the sense that it was 'figured as existing, naturally, beyond the commodity market, beyond politics and beyond history proper. The family thus became both the antithesis of history *and* history's organizing figure' (Stoler, 1995:44; emphasis added). With regards to the first aspect of this paradox, Stoler argues that the family created a figure through which social hierarchies could be portrayed as natural and familial through the naturalisation of the social subordination of women and children (1995:45). This patriarchal order was rendered a 'natural fact', providing a social hierarchy through which other differences could be classified, ranked and rationalised according to 'categories of nature'.

Figured as an 'organic element of historical progress', the family image could be translated into other forms of exclusion and hierarchy within 'nonfamilial social forms such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism' (Stoler, 1995:45). With regards to the second aspect of the paradox, in portraying the patriarchal family as 'natural and

inevitable' rather than as a product of situated histories and cultures and therefore subject to change, the 'organic family' trope also 'became invaluable in its capacity to give state and imperial intervention the alibi of nature' (1995:45). Thus, the power relations of imperial interventions in Africa and the Americas could be 'figured as a linear, nonrevolutionary progression that naturally contained hierarchy within unity: paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature children'. The global application of the family metaphor constituted an 'organizing trope for marshaling a bewildering array of cultures into a single, global narrative ordered and managed by Europeans' (1995:45).

In universalising the 'natural family', pro-family discourse constructs the nuclear family model as a mechanism that can assist developing nations to achieve economic prosperity. Through profound historical erasure of colonial conquest and its enduring social effects, these discourses attempt to achieve a forgetting of the violent mechanisms used by an empire to amass its own power and wealth. In doing so, the structural inequalities created over hundreds of years of the intentional underdevelopment of Africa and theft of its resources by the West (Rodney, 1972) are obscured. Furthermore, the nuclear family – said to be a natural and divine universal norm – is sutured to capitalism, which is further reinforced as 'natural', God-given and universal, in turn.

7. Conclusion

This article set out to highlight the coloniality of normative notions of the patriarchal nuclear 'family' as an ideal that centres western-centric and Christonormative ways of knowing and doing family. The global activism of the 'pro-family' movement is working to universalise the so-called 'natural' family as a strategy of re-centring the West as an international power and source of authority. Uncritical use or application of heteropatriarchal notions of the 'family' as a category of analysis are at risk, therefore, of engaging the family (in academic research and in policy) in ways that reproduce colonial subjectivities and power relations.

The social consequences of falsely universalised notions of the nuclear family have been discussed by scholars interested in the relationship between family policy and the state. As Creed (2000:345) shows, policies and laws pertaining to marriage, taxation and other state prerogatives produce 'a single master narrative of the life course', with 'The extent to which one's life experience corresponds to that scenario affect[ing] one's sense of belonging to the state, which provides the basis of national identity'. Moreover, May (2003:19) discusses the consequences for public life and engagement brought upon by the diminishing of the state's responsibility towards communities: civic participation and faith in the political process, she argues, wanes with the reduction in government responsibility for the well-being of citizens. She writes that US public opinion polls have shown over the past several decades that 'as the government has retreated from supporting the needs of citizens and responsibility has shifted to families, faith in public institutions, particularly the government, has eroded' (2003:19). At the same time, individual engagement in the political process has declined, and 'desires for personal happiness have increasingly focused on private life, often at the expense of participation in, and obligation to, the larger community' (2003:19).

While May writes from, and of, the US context, the conditions she describes (such as inadequate state support for the populous, the loss of faith in government and the political

process) also resonate African contexts. Across the continent, independent African states struggle to become economically competitive in the global neoliberal market that has simultaneously encouraged them to minimise social support systems through economic growth and restructuring programmes. May's argument therefore stands as a warning to other nations that efforts to reduce the economic responsibilities of the state result in declining faith in the political system.

Knowledge production on 'family' needs to be actively and consciously de-linked from the racist and sexist logic of imperialism in order to produce research and policy outcomes capable of furthering, and supporting, the project of liberation. If scholarship on family and kinship intends to contribute towards imperatives of creating equitable and socially just societies through the development of policy or theory, it must reject and challenge attempts to define the family in singular and universal terms. Areas for future research should include efforts to challenge the ways in which 'family' has been normatively defined by western interests, and provide critical discussions that can speak to, rather than deny or exclude, the complexities of kinship and community in societies in which life, for the majority, is precarious and characterised by insecurity. The widening gap between those who hold wealth and those who do not is becoming so extreme that it 'threatens to pull our societies apart' (Oxfam 2017: 2). In this context, it is likely that informal networks of support amongst the 'have nots', such as those provided by kinship and community, are to remain vital for survival and social cooperation. Should we focus exclusively on the heterosexual, married and reproductive nuclear family model in our research and knowledge production, we are at risk of closing down possibilities for imagining and creating societies and futures that are better, and more just, for all.

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Article 3

Weaponizing Rhetorics of 'Family': The mobilization of pro-family politics in Africa

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This article considers the ways in which the pro-family movement disguises its violent and genocidal ambitions through discourses of 'love', 'development', and 'free speech'. Drawing on data collected at the World Congress of Families IX, as well as through online ethnography, this article employs critical discourse analysis to unveil the violence underlying seemingly 'benign' pro-family discourses. Considering the rhetorical strategies used by the pro-family movement to conceal the forms of exclusion and violence that their agendas actually promote, it is concluded that these strategies are required in order to make the 'pro-family' movement appear to be 'common-sense' and congruent with democratic values and the economic imperatives of capitalist growth and accumulation. In order to access the intersecting power relations and interests embedded within pro-family discourses, I argue, it is necessary to remain cognizant of the historical and geo-political context from which they emerged. Specifically, it is necessary to remain aware of the ways in which colonial ideology mobilized the nuclear family model and gender binary as a justification for empire building in Africa.

Here, I extend the discussion initiated in the previous article, examining the rhetorical strategies used by the pro-family movement to normalize its deeply violent ideology. Through data collected at the World Congress of Families IX and online ethnography, I examine the ways in which the movement mobilizes the rhetoric of 'love', 'development' and 'free speech' to make their oppressive and exclusive agendas appear benign and compatible with democratic values and economic prosperity.

Weaponizing Rhetorics of 'Family': The mobilization of pro-family politics in Africa

Introduction

Rhetoric surrounding sexuality and gender diversity in African contexts has grown increasingly politicized in recent decades. As numerous scholars have noted, new political and ideological faultlines have emerged as sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people have advocated for inclusion, equal rights and recognition under the law. Responses by political and religious leaders in many countries that same-sex sex, intimacy and partnership is 'unnatural', 'unAfrican' and "another form of colonialism…that should be rejected as a matter of principle" has created a complex discursive and political terrain (Ndashe 2013, 160). While the rejection of sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people is often framed, or 'owned', as an African response to activism and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and/or queer (LGBTIQ), this rhetoric is linked with transnational discourses that have similarly opposed homosexuality and gender identities beyond the 'male'/'female' binary.

As Martin (1999), Buss and Herman (2003), Croft (2007), Kaoma (2012) and others have shown, rejections of homosexuality and gender non-conformity on the basis that they threaten societies, economies, and nations are not unique to the African continent. On the contrary, these discourses can be found within current debates taking place in international political arenas (especially at the UNFPA as discussed by Girard 2009) and at the national level in relation to the rights of women, sexual minorities, and definitions of the 'family' in many parts of the world. These discourses, which actively oppose equal rights for sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people, have gained increasing influence globally since the 1990s, and in African countries since the early 2000s. The growing influence of this rhetoric internationally, and anti-gay rhetoric on the continent, has been attributed to the increasing activities of the U.S. based 'family values' or 'pro-family' movement (Kaoma 2009, 2012; McEwen 2016). Much of this literature has acknowledged the irony that many conservative African political and religious leaders have rejected homosexuality on the basis that it is 'unAfrican', yet align themselves with ideologies that have historically functioned to uphold systems of colonial oppression. However, as research has shown, there are numerous reasons why the rhetorical strategies employed by U.S. pro-family activists have been successful in gaining support in the formerly colonized world. These include the legacy of colonial missionary education through which many African religious and political leaders were educated (Epprecht 2013); the global power of

whiteness, white privilege and Americanness (Kaoma 2012); and the ability of the pro-family movement to position itself as an ally of the global south (Buss and Herman 2003). In light of these findings, it is important to further unpack how these explanations come to fruition. Here, I propose that a critical discourse analysis of pro-family rhetoric can enable an unpacking and more nuanced understanding of how this 'new right' movement is gaining global traction.

In this article I identify some of the rhetorical strategies that help to explain how 'pro-family' ideology has become so prolific, despite the logic of coloniality that it reproduces. Three rhetorical strategies are identified: The use of a rhetoric of 'love' in order to disguise an ideology of intolerance; The couching of hate speech in the rhetoric of 'free speech' ; and the positioning of the 'natural family' as congruent with development imperatives. The use of these rhetorical strategies, I argue, seeks to accomplish the objective of presenting pro-family agendas as benign, well meaning, and commonsense so as to obscure the forms of exclusion it promotes. Before proceeding to discuss these rhetorical strategies, I will present the theoretical framework that informs my understanding of the gender binary and the construction of the heterosexual, nuclear family in relation to the historical context of global power relations between Africa and the West. I will also provide historical background on the rise of the pro-family movement in the U.S. preceding its globalization in the 1990s. This geo-political and historical contextual factors, I argue, are critical for understanding the significance of pro-family discourses and activism, and for seeing the consequences of the movement's activities for sexual and gender minorities and in relation to geo-political power relations.

This paper is based on my Doctoral research which investigates the ways in which the U.S. pro-family movement is influencing sexual politics in African countries. Here, I draw on texts in the form of documents, speeches, and statements produced by pro-family organizations which were collected through online ethnography. I also draw on data that I collected at a pro-family gathering called the World Congress of Families (WCF). The WCF, which took place in Salt Lake City, Utah over a period of four consecutive days in October 2015, was selected as a site for data collection because of its centrality within the pro-family movement, and its importance as a mechanism through which the pro-family movement consolidates and grows its international networks. The event provided a site where I was able to deepen my understanding of the movement and the rhetorical strategies used by its 'discourse elites' to gain international relevance, influence and power. I was also able to identify the significant leaders, issues, and organizations that constitute the pro-family movement, which was a significant area of investigation within the overall research project. As members of dominant groups

and organizations who have "a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power", individuals who have "special access to discourse" are of particular relevance within studies of social inequality and power (van Dijk 1993, 303).

Decolonizing gender, family and sexuality

While pro-family activists have labelled same-sex sex, intimacy, and partnership as western neo-colonial inventions, historical evidence points to the contrary - sexuality and gender diversity have formed a part of pre-colonial societies around the world, and it is the contemporary rhetoric of 'family values' and the 'natural family' that is rooted in what Quijano (2007) refers to as the 'logic of coloniality'. The works of anti-imperialist feminist scholars such as McClintock (1995), Stoler (1997), Oyěwùmí (2002), Lugones (2007), Kitch (2009) and Tamale (2011, 2013) have shown that the idea that there are only two sexes (male and female) which correspond to gender identities (man/masculine and woman/feminine) and a default desire for the 'opposite' sex is neither neutral or universal. Rather, they show how the gender binary and hierarchy were constructed by white European Christian men to establish their own authority and control over women and colonized people as part of the process of colonization. As Mignolo (2011) writes, the patriarchal and racial foundations of knowledge enabled the establishment of the 'colonial matrix of power', or "a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European people over non-European people" and white men over all colonized men (18). Thus, while colonialism is often remembered for its racialisation, it was also a gendering process that entrenched and institutionalized modern notions of the male/female gender binary and patriarchal gender hierarchy. Activists and scholars around the world have also shown through their lives, work, and historical evidence that the gender binary is not a 'natural' category for human differentiation, but an oppressive myth that holds in place sexed/gendered and racialised social arrangements and power relations. Through their work, they have shown that gender identities and heterosexuality are not 'natural' or biological realities, but are produced by heteropatriarchal social constructions and practices (Steyn 2015, 385) that systematically assign greater social value to cisgender heterosexual white male bodies than to 'othered' bodies. Resistance to efforts to expand notions of gender, sex, and the family have been met with resistance, particularly by those who seek to protect privileges associated with heterosexuality, Christianity, and patriarchy. In the following section, I discuss the history of the U.S. Christian Right which has led these efforts to reinforce heteropatriarchal social systems and norms, initially in north America and also across the global south more recently.

Globalizing Family Values

While 'pro-family' organizations and activists can now be found around the world, the impetus behind the movement, its leadership and its resources have been largely mobilized by U.S. based anti-

abortion and anti-gay activists that associated with the U.S. Christian Right. A widely used phrase in US political and popular discourse, the term "Christian Right" has come to describe a relatively new, evangelical, brand of conservative American politics. Referring to "a broad coalition of profamily organizations and individuals who have come together to struggle for a conservative Christian vision in the political realm", the CR is composed of a "diverse collective of conservative Christian believers " (Herman, 1997, 9-10). They are actively and increasingly involved in efforts to influence a wide range of American policies, including support for Israel, arms control and defense, and funding for the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations (Martin, 1999, 67). The international mobilization of the family values agenda is not surprising, as Martin writes, given that "The very term by which most conservative Protestants identify themselves – "evangelical" – announces their intention to carry their message, as Jesus instructed, "unto the world" (67).

The growing activities of the U.S. Christian Right to promote family values internationally, and its consolidation under the banner of the 'pro-family' movement has been documented by Stacey (1990), Herman (1997), Martin (1999), Buss and Herman (2003), and Croft (2007). These scholars provide important insights into why 'homosexuality' has become such a politically contentious issue globally, and why discourses and debates have become polarized in particular ways. Evidence of close relationships between U.S.-based pro-family organizations and African based leaders has been extensively documented by Kapya Kaoma (2009, 2012). Kaoma's research has been significant through its provision of empirical evidence of the work being done by U.S. conservatives to mobilize homophobic and anti-feminist pro-family agendas in Africa. His work reveals the ways in which U.S. "mentorship" of African political and religious leaders has politicized issues of sexuality, gender, and the family in African contexts.

The interest that the pro-family movement has taken in promoting its politics in African countries is part of the movement's broader efforts to advance anti-gay agendas globally. Since the 1990's, the U.S. Christian Right pro-family movement has been "intent on both internationalizing its domestic concerns and shaping its domestic activism in light of Christian Right global understandings" (Buss and Herman 2003, xv). This includes efforts to insert an anti-abortion and anti-gay ethos into international population and foreign aid policy, providing an extensive critique of the perceived "global liberal agenda", as well as the explicit denunciation of feminism and "sexual rights" (xv). As Croft (2007) writes, the rhetoric of 'family values' has been carried through the U.S. Christian Right's foreign policy measures and promotes measures to 'strengthen the family' through opposition to birth control, the use of condoms in the fight against AIDS, and hostility towards sexual minorities (44). Such political rhetoric on 'strengthening the family' also involves opposition to any foreign-policy

initiative that can be construed as weakening parental control over children, facilitating abortion, expanding the rights of homosexuals, or devaluing the role of the conventional homemaker and mother (Martin 1999, 74).

The interests of the U.S. Christian Right in growing the pro-family movement internationally has involved efforts to gain consensus and support in the global south, and amongst racial minorities in the global north. In relation to African countries in particular, U.S. pro-family activists have found much currency in the narrative that homosexuality is a form of neo-colonialism, and that activists promoting LGBTIQ+ rights are colonial agents attempting to simultaneously 'destroy', and gain control over, African societies. Through the language of anti-imperialism the pro-family movement has "laid claim to a progressive stance that says it is more authentic, more compassionate, and more sensitive" than that of feminists and LGBTIQ+ activists (Buss and Herman 2003, 77). These narratives also appeal to existing conservative Christian ideologies sewn into African societies through Christian missionary education, which have been receptive to pro-family 'warnings' about the 'dangers' of homosexuality and homosexuals, referring them to the so-called 'negative' effects of the sexual revolution in the 'decadent west'. In order to bypass the colonial history that they reproduce through their activism and ideology, pro-family activists construct a connection between themselves and African audiences, positioning themselves as aligned with African people in their experience of oppression by powerful forces in the west.

Method

The rhetoric of pro-family movement activists and organisations are analysed through the framework of Critical Diversity Literacy (Steyn 2015), which enables one to see through 'pro-family' rhetoric that appears benign and allied with the interests of the global south. As a framework for reading social relations as one would a text (381), Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) addresses the difficulties of seeing power at work and provides analytical strategies that can uncover practices and expressions of dominance and control that "will never name themselves as such" (Steyn 2015, 386). CDL therefore involves a recognition that oppressive systems such as racism and heterosexism are current social problems (rather than relics of the past) that are reproduced through contemporary social relations and institutions (384). In reading 'pro-family' rhetoric from this perspective, I understand knowledge and discourse as social practices that are linked to the production of social identities and power relations (Steyn 2015, 385). This level of engagement with issues relating to systems of oppression and how they are reproduced and resisted is pursued as a project of deepening social justice at all levels of social organization (387). While CDL has ten elements as set out by Steyn, I am particularly guided

by the seventh criteria in this investigation, which is "The ability to 'translate' (see through, coded hegemonic practices so as to interpret the ways in which social control is being exercised (386).

Van Dijk's (1993, 1995, 2006) work provides helpful tools for mechanizing an analysis of the ways in which ideology and power is encoded through language. He argues, "since people acquire, express and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk, a discourse analytical study of ideology is most relevant" (van Dijk 2006, 115). Moreover, van Dijk's work is particularly helpful for understanding the rhetorical strategies used by elite groups, which "are known to de-emphasize social inequality by semantic strategies that aim to legitimate, justify, naturalize, rationalize, etc. injustice and to transfer it to other groups or blame the victim" (van Dijk 1995, 26). This approach resonates with Steyn's (2015) view that power will never announce its presence but rather, it operates through "hegemonic language that obfuscates the ways in which social control is being exercised, how powerful groups may be benefiting, or how the options of others are curtailed" (387). This hegemonic language, it is argued, often involves attempts to render something as 'natural' or 'common sense', providing clear warning signs of coded hegemonic practices that are likely at work (387). From this perspective, 'common-sense' is not the absence of ideology, but its most powerful achievement and expression. Efforts by the pro-family movement to construct the nuclear family formation as apolitical, universal and ahistorical are made explicit in their construction and use of the phrase 'the natural family'. Defined as a particular kinship formation consisting of a mother, a father, and their (preferably biological) offspring, the pro-family movement has taken to calling this unit the 'natural family' so as to distinguish it from alternative family forms they believe to be unnatural, both socially and religiously (Buss and Herman 2003, 2).

This article considers texts sourced through network ethnography (Howard 2002), online ethnography (Davies 2002, Gatson 2011), and autoethnography (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) in order to understand the rhetorical strategies that the pro-family movement employs to bypass the colonial legacies in which it is embedded so as to gain allies in the the formerly colonized world. Texts are considered through a framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is a problem-oriented approach to language that is concerned with social injustice and inequality (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011, p.357). CDA, in combination with the 'reading practice' of Critical Diversity Literacy discussed above, provided analytic techniques capable of decoding the power relations that are constructed and sustained through 'pro-family' rhetoric.

Critical discourse analysis provides the analytical tools for interrogating the ways in which language operates as a material form and investment of ideology (Fairclough 2013, 457). Understanding discourse as a social practice, Critical Discourse Analysis allows for interrogation of the ways which language operates in relation to power, defining and shaping the realities of oppressed groups (Jiwani and Richardson 2009, p.241). Techniques of Critical Discourse Analysis were applied to pro-family texts, which took the form of speeches, reports, statements, blog posts, and articles on pro-family websites.

Discussion and Analysis

In what follows, I will discuss the rhetorical strategies used by the U.S. based pro-family movement to promote heteropatriarchal ideological systems and policies in African contexts. Three rhetorical strategies are analysed: the strategy of disguising the movements intolerance towards LGBTIQ+ people as 'love'; the construction of hate speech as free speech; and the construction of the notion of the 'natural family' in relation to development imperatives. Each of these strategies has a function within the efforts of U.S. based pro-family activists and organisations to gain international consensus and support.

Disguising hate as love

The argument that the pro-family movement promotes violence and intolerance towards sexual minorities, gender non-conforming people and families that do not conform to the nuclear family model is not new. Organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC) have spoken out against the discursive tactics of the WCF to obscure its heterosexism. As the first WCF to be hosted in the U.S., the ninth Congress attracted much resistance from organisations that promote human rights and social justice. The HRC issued a report about the WCF, stating its danger to women and sexual minorities everywhere, arguing that the organization is:

> one of the most influential American organizations involved in the export of hate… under the guise of protecting the "natural family." It is connected to some mainstream conservative organizations and to the very highest levels of government in the countries where it operates (Human Rights Campaign, 2014).

Similarly, in their report on the WCF released in the days leading up to the event, the SPLC warned that the project is:

> one of the key driving forces behind the U.S. Religious Right's global export of homophobia and sexism…WCF pursues an international anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ agenda, seeking to promote conservative ideologies—and codify these in regressive laws and policies—that dictate who has rights as "family," and who doesn't (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015).

In response to the HRC, the WCF claimed that it does not advocate violence against sexual minorities. In rejecting the accusations of the SPLC and the HRC in a report entitled, *A Call for Civil Dialogue and Constructive Engagement*, the WCF stated that it "strongly opposes violence and would never advocate violence or hatred toward any group of people, regardless of differences". According to the statement:

> The WCF *only* takes issue with LGBT activists in their attempts to undermine the natural family by redefining marriage in the law and to ignore or distort the overwhelming social science, psychological, medical, and demographic evidence that the two-parent, mother-and-father family is the optimal unit for social stability and raising children (Word Congress of Families 2014).

While the WCF attempts to deny its implicit intolerance through claiming "strong opposition" to violence, the qualification of the organization's opposition to LGBTI activists advances an argument that constructs sexual minorities and non-nuclear families as illegitimate and dangerous to society and therefore a legitimate exception to its otherwise 'good-natured' intentions. Sexual minorities are accused of 'distorting' family and imperiling children and society at large. The author(s) also makes a general reference to 'evidence' that the only family/kinship structure that can ensure social stability is the nuclear family unit. Because hate, like all emotions, cannot "positively inhabit *any-body* or *any-thing*", but circulates "across or between subjects, objects, signs and others, which themselves are not locatable or found within the present" (Ahmed 2001, 348) it is possible for the WCF to reject the label of hatred by refocusing attention towards interest in protecting objects of 'love' – heterosexual marriage and the "mother-and-father family" as "*the* optimal" social unit.

In the wake of being labelled as a 'hate group', a deliberate effort is being made by pro-family activists to manage their image to appear as advocates for 'love', rather than 'hate'. The claim to serve the purposes of protecting children further serves to bolster this claim. At the WCF IX, John Henry Western (LifeSite News), spoke directly to the importance of 'coding' through language, within the pro-family movement as part of its effort to survive and broaden its support. Telling of the pro-life/anti-abortion movement's success in transforming its language and messaging, Western explains:

> the pro-life movement underwent a metamorphosis some years ago…it was first about the children, they're killing children, so there was a natural outrage…But, over the years, we've learned a new language - a language of love (Western 2015).

The "language of love", according to Western, had effectively replaced the pro-life movements original language that focused on harm and condemnation as ways of deterring people from having abortions or supporting the right to an abortion. In arguing that the pro-family movement must also refer to "love", rather than explicitly reject those it opposes, Western implies that this suggestion will take a degree of conceptual effort, alluding to the fact that pro-family advocates are likely inclined to condemn sexual minorities and same-sex marriage:

> We need to take that love and apply it also in the fight for family… we need to answer the question of same-sex marriage all over the world. "If these two ladies or these two guys loveth one another how come they can't get married? … And if our answer back can't be love, we're going to be in deep trouble (Western 2015).

It is possible for Western to suggest that delegates transform their hateful sentiments into the language of love because of the ways in which these 'affective economies' constitute one another. As Ahmed writes, "in hating an other, [the] subject is also loving itself" and those who make up the community of similar others that are loved as if they were the self (Ahmed 2001, 353-4). In other words, in aligning oneself with some (who can be loved), one also aligns themselves against others (who can be hated), through affective attachments, alignments and investments (354). The co-constitution of love and hate creates ambivalences, making it possible for pro-family advocates to code-switch between them, or code the latter as the former. As unveiled by Western, an imperative exists and a concerted effort must be made within the pro-life movement to transform its homophobic discourse in ways that can repel the label of 'hate'. Western continues, explaining how the packaging of "love" can disguise condemnation with a thin cloak of compassion:

> tel[l] these young men and young women, 'We love you enough to tell you that this behavior harms you, it harms your body… it harms you psychologically, it harms your soul'. We can say, we know many of them aren't Christian believers at all, but we say…that we believe that it causes you to lose your eternal salvation, and we don't want that. We want eternal happiness for you (Western 2015).

Instructing listeners and the pro-family movement to deploy a "language of love", Western proposes this as a strategy for concealing the genocidal tendencies of the conservative religious pro-family movement that constructs homosexuals as people with insufficiently formed souls who are destined for eternal damnation.

Theresa Okafor, quoted above, who is the World Congress of Families Regional Director in Africa, has similarly positioned Nigerian opposition to same-sex marriage and rights for LGBTIQ+ people through the language of love. At the WCF IX, she opened her speech with the following statement:

> "We in Africa see the family, as well as marriage, as something divine and ordained toward life and love and so we are very protective over anything that seeks to undermine the family, religion and culture (Okafor 2015)

Claiming to speak on behalf of all African people, Okafor constructs African understandings of family and marriage as universally oriented towards "life and love". In doing so, she presents the heterosexual family that she argues is in need of protection as something that is 'natural' amongst African people. In addition to excluding LGBTIQ+ Africans from her conceptualization of "we in Africa", and therefore the right of these individuals to also participate in the "divine" institution of marriage, Okafor subordinates other dynamics that have undermined African family, religion, and culture. Namely, the extent to which Christianity and capitalism functioned to erode pre-colonial societies, knowledges and belief systems. The patterns of remembering and forgetting that Okafor articulates conceal the colonial legacy of heteropatriarchy and the heterosexual nuclear family as forms of cultural imperialism.

Scholarship on kinship in Africa has clearly shown that there is no 'traditional' African family structure, and that the natural family formation has never been a norm on the continent. Rather, African kinship systems have constellated in various ways, and in relation to diverse contexts, cultures, religious practices and belief systems. While the nuclear family formation has certainly not been a norm in African pre-colonial societies, this is not to say that sexed and gendered power relations did not exist in these contexts. Rather, it is to indicate that heterosexism and patriarchy, as colonial ideologies, activated the gender binary in a particular way through the institution of laws that explicitly privileged men. For instance, Sylvia Tamale (2000) writes that colonial occupation in Nigeria involved British imposition into existing monarchal structures by defining women as objects of men's rule through their recognition of only

the male monarch (*obi*), to whom they offered a monthly salary, while ignoring the female monarch (*omu*) entirely. Izugbara (2004) further discusses the institutionalization of patriarchy in Nigeria throughout colonization, writing that through an emphasis on "able-bodied men" (as the most important criteria one needed to work as guides, servants, tax collectors, cleaners, and stewards for the colonizers), colonial rule locked women out as "unable others", thereby "cast[ing] femininity as subordinate and inferior" and positioning male rule as the proper order of things (21). This order was taught through colonial schools in which women were taught domestic skills such as caregiving and home keeping while men were taught civic skills, such as law and politics, to prepare them for leadership (22). "Civilized and 'proper' men became conditioned to behave like European men in everything including sexual conduct" while "Civilized and 'proper' women were those whose sexual conducts were in line with Victorian codes" (21). Colonial governments also instituted anti-sodomy laws in many African countries, many of which have remained fixtures within post-independence democratic constitutions and have been used as the basis for the creation of new anti-gay laws.

Correspondingly, "Heterosexual marriage was seen as normal, and the natural assertiveness, leadership disposition, and aggressive sex drive of the male were endorsed" (21). In attempting to universalize, and Africanize, the natural family, Okafor's rhetoric advances a singular narrative of the African family that absorbs Christianity and colonization as part of what is characterized as essentially African. In doing so, not only does this rhetorical strategy enforce a colonial/modern notion of what the family is, but it contributes to eurocentric notions that Africa was a 'dark' continent until the arrival of European explorers, missionaries, and colonial administrations.

In disguising 'hate' as 'love', Western and Okafor attempt to create ambiguities about the exclusionary and oppressive intentions of the pro-family movement by softening its oppressive edges and inoculating the movement against being labelled as a 'hate' group. Yet, violent undercurrents of the movement become evident in such efforts to eradicate and 'invisibilize' hated bodies so that other loved bodies (namely, Christian, heterosexual, cisgender, middle class bodies) can retain hegemonic social status. As made evident by their influence in African countries over the past two decades, the violence of pro-family ideology gains expression not in the confines of the opulent spaces in which they gather for engagements such as the WCF, but in the communities where sexual minorities and people who do not conform to the gender binary become scapegoated, alienated and victimized.

Hate Speech as Free Speech

In addition to efforts to couch intolerant and oppressive heterosexist logic in the language of 'love', the pro-family movement also articulates the 'natural family' in relation to the democratic principle of 'freedom of speech'. This strategy claims that censorship of homophobic and transphobic hate speech is a form of 'reverse discrimination' against those who believe in the supremacy of the 'natural family'. In doing so, pro-family activists draw attention away from the implications of their rhetoric, towards their right to express their beliefs which discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people and their families. A discourse of "power, dominance and control", hate speech is not merely a kind of linguistic oppression, but a "performative communication" that produces a discourse about particular 'Others' - in this case homosexuals, in order to misrecognize them (Reddy 2002, 164). Homophobic hate speech, as discussed by Reddy, has violent and fatal consequences.

In expressing their right to publicly pronounce discriminatory statements towards and about LGBTIQ+ people, pro-family activists attempt to recenter the historically privileged status of cis-gender[1] positionalities and heteronormativity. Here, the pro-family movement exploits the idea of 'freedom of speech' in order to protect their ideology and policies that exclude, oppress, and engender multiple forms of violence against LGBTIQ+ people. At the time of writing this article, the International Organization for the Family (IOM) in partnership with the U.S. based National Organization on Marriage (NOM) is touring New England (including a stop over at the Trump Tower) with their #FreeSpeechBus, promoting what they say is the "truth of gender". According to the director of the IOF, what people should be "free" to speak about is that "Men and women were created equally, each given a gender that is fixed, immutable and complementary. Rather than perpetuate a lie that gender can be changed based on emotions and feelings, we should encourage people to embrace and love who they were made to be" (Brown 2017). The bus, pictured below, makes visible the ways in which the pro-family movement is working to position heterosexism as a "freedom of speech" in an effort to normalize an oppressive ideology by aligning it with a pillar of democracy:

The enormous orange bus states in white text: "It's biology: Boys are boys…and always will be. Girls are girls…and always will be. You can't change sex. Respect all". At the bottom of the bus is an appeal: "Sign Now To Defend Freedom of Speech: www.FreeSpeechBus.com". On both sides of the text are silhouette images of a 'girl' and a 'boy' figure, marked by chromosomes on their torsos - XX and XY, respectively. The genders of the figures are also marked by the appearance of a pig-tail hairstyle and a dress on the figure marked 'XX', and the absence of these on the figure marked 'XY'.

[1] The term 'cisgender' refers to those whose gender identities align with the sex they were assigned at birth

The printed link to the Free Speech Bus, and the hashtag "#FreeSpeechBus" invites the public to engage with the messaging of the bus, reflecting the ways in which the pro-family movement makes use of social media and the internet, as well as physical presence, to disseminate information and grow its support base.

The silhouette images of the 'boy' and 'girl' figures resembles the signs often marking gendered bathrooms, alluding to the current debates in the U.S. about the right of transgender people, in particular, to use the bathroom facility that they feel most comfortable with. In marking the figures with 'XX' and 'XY' chromosomes, the images refer to "biology" to legitimize the 'common-sense' appeal in the phrases boys are boys…and always will be, "girls are girls…and always will be". While the intervention presents itself as the #FreeSpeechBus and claims to 'respect all', the remaining text and images center freedom of speech around cisgender privilege, and the right to discriminate against those who do not conform to, or identify with, the two-sex gender binary. The right to proclaim gender as fixed equates to the right to deny equal rights and freedoms to those who do not conform to 'male' or 'female' and/or the sex and gender identity they were assigned at birth. This rhetorical strategy reconfigures the struggle for equal rights amongst LGBTIQ+ people (and transgender, queer, and intersex people especially) as a matter of 'speech', and freedom of those who oppose their causes to



refuse recognition to these groups.

The ideological work of positioning discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people as a form of expression that should be protected under the democratic principle of 'freedom of speech' has also taken shape in African contexts. Recently, in South Africa, the proposed Hate Speech Bill came under attack by Christian groups who argued that the legislation would criminalize parts of religious texts. Founder and Director of the Family Policy Institute, Errol Naidoo, has been at the forefront of the opposition

#FreeSpeechBus Source: https://profam.org/1016

to the inclusion of hate speech in the Hate Crimes Bill. Naidoo is well connected into the international pro-family network, making regular appearances at World Congress of Families events. In an inter-

view with *Joy! Magazine*, Naidoo also admitted to having received mentorship by the Family Research Council (FRC), which he said inspired the creation of the Family Policy Institute, telling "the strategy and organizational structure for FPI was more clearly defined during my time with FRC. My experience in America, gave me a deeper understanding of the principles of the public policy think tank dynamic" (Naidoo 2007). Naidoo echoes Brown's rhetoric on freedom of speech as stated above in his comments regarding the proposed Hate Speech Bill in South Africa. Naidoo. He remarked:

> The reason why I believe this bill is dangerous is because of the very broad definitions of what constitutes hate speech. There are a number of categories listed of protected people groups, but the definitions are so broad that it would have a chilling effect on freedom of speech, expression, and religion (Naidoo 2017).

Concerned that the Bill would have a "chilling effect" on the freedom of religious groups to express their beliefs, Naidoo refers to the broad range of people who would be protected under the Bill and who could ultimately lay charges of Hate Speech against religious leaders for particular preachings. It becomes apparent that Naidoo does not see all of those protected as equal threats, singling out 'homosexuals' as those who would ultimately 'discriminate' against religious leaders for preaching the idea that homosexuality is a sin. He stated:

> [Homosexuals] have said that people who preach that [homosexuality is a sin] have blood on their hands and that attacks on homosexuals, for example the raping of lesbians, is a result of the church preaching that homosexuality is a sin from the bible (Naidoo in Voice of the Cape 2017).

Naidoo fears that the bill will criminalize the preaching that homosexuality is a sin, a preaching that he himself uttered, because it is seen to have given rise to an increase in hate crimes against homosexuals, something that he does not explicitly dispute or express concern about. Freedom of speech and expression for religious leaders such as himself becomes centered, while victimized LGBTIQ+ people are positioned as agents of censorship and oppression. Justifications based in religious belief have, of course, been widely used to oppose equal rights for LGBTIQ+ identifying people in African countries such as Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania and others, and the West alike.

Natural family and development

In their 2003 publication on the globalization of the U.S. Christian Right's family values agenda, pro-family Buss and Herman were doubtful that the movement could articulate a pro-family politics in relation to development imperatives. At the time, they hypothesized that the movement would not be

able to reconcile its construction of the United Nations, as "an agent of the Antichrist, playing an important role in the consolidation of world power into a single, global government" that threatens the 'natural' family, religious values, and U.S. sovereignty (33), with a development-friendly politics (78). However, as I found in my study over a decade after Buss and Herman's investigation, the pro-family movement has made noticeable advances in articulating 'family values' as compatible with economic growth and development. In doing so, they speak to the concerns of the global south, while also finding an avenue through which they can present their anti-democratic agendas as 'mainstream'.

In constructing the 'natural family' as something that must be 'protected', and concealing the violence and exclusion contained within their agendas, the pro-family movement dedicates much effort to articulating the synergies between heteropatriarchy and economic development. Within pro-family discourse, the 'natural family' is said to aid in the capitalist imperative of accumulating wealth, an argument that is warranted by the concept of the "marriage premium", as defined by Janice Shaw Crouse in her opening address of the World Congress of Families:

> Economists use a very revealing term... it's called "Marriage Premium" and that describes the benefits of marriage in financial terms...There's a clear and inextricable link between the breakdown of marriage, the slowdown of economic growth, and the increasingly burdensome taxes that are required to finance the exorbitant growth in the need for social safety nets and there's an unprecedented increase in dependency (Crouse 2015)

The concept of "marriage premium" frames the argument that heterosexual marriage is economically productive for individuals and the state, with decline in heterosexual marriage presenting economic liabilities for all. Within this discourse, those who do not participate in heterosexual marriage and reproduction are framed as economic 'villians', while those who do are elevated as the 'heroes' driving growth. As Crouse and others employed this concept as a 'scientific' justification for pro-family political agendas, the discourse of the 'marriage premium' functions as what Desai (2006) calls, a discursive "fig leafs of intellectual respectability" to conceal "the most naked pursuit of the interests of capital and property" (222). Furthermore, the notion of 'marriage premium' renders blindness to the ways in which the heteropatriarchal social order privileges heterosexuals while oppressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people.

The National Marriage Project, based at the University of Virginia, provides one example of a site where scholarly rhetoric on the 'natural family' is produced as a strategy of gaining academic credibility. Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project, has generated a significant amount of material that attempts to secure a scientific rationale capable of obscuring the anti-democratic impact

of the ideology of the 'natural family. Discussing the recently released report, Strong Families, Prosperous States that he co-authored in association with the American Enterprise Institute, a U.S. based neoliberal think tank:

> "we're hypothesizing there's a connection between strong families and state prosperity because marriage, family life, have deep connections to the labour force, they boost family income access, and they encourage the accumulation of capital in today's contemporary world." (Wilcox 2015)

Here, neoliberal imperatives of economic growth and individual wealth are given as reasons why individuals should choose the 'natural family' model. He also constructs the 'natural family' as instrumental to "state prosperity" in its capacity to reproduce the labor force. Within pro-family rhetoric, heterosexuality and parenthood is rendered as a 'common-sense' choice, folded neatly into the already hegemonic common-sense notion that there is no alternative to the current neoliberal economic order. The natural family therefore becomes aligned with the ideals of capitalist accumulation and prosperity. Sexual minorities and gender non-conforming people, and their struggles for inclusion and equal recognition under the law are rendered invisible, are cast as silent, yet co-constitutive, 'others'. Neoliberal ideology, which claims that we are all "simply individuals who control our own destinies through our worthiness, entrepreneurship, self-belief and positive attitudinal toolkit", is therefore extended through pro-family discourse which claims that this 'worthiness' is fixed to one's conformity to (hetero)patriarchal social expectations and norms (Steyn 2015, 383).

In African contexts, homosexuality has been constructed as counter-developmental, and linked to U.S. development agendas that carry political ideologies. According to African pro-family activists, the West is attempting to force African countries into legally recognizing the equal rights of LGBTIQ+ people through the instrument of international aid. In response to former U.S. President Barack Obama's plea for Kenya and other African countries to equally recognize LGBTIQ+ people, Anne Kioko, president and founder of the African Organization for Families stated:

> Evidently, Obama's priorities differ from those of Africans. What Africa needs now is not abortion, homosexuality, or destructive comprehensive sex education. Africa needs better education services, healthcare, infrastructure, food, and of course preservation of our own cultural heritage. Most of the foreign aid that Africa receives has ties that are directed at the exportation of the more destructive aspects of Western "civilization" (Kioko 2015).

Kioko has also been a spokesperson for the natural family in Africa at numerous World Congress of Families events. Here, Kioko constructs homosexuality, abortion, and comprehensive sex education as "destructive aspects of Western 'civilization'" that contradict Africa's material needs. This argument is aligned with the notion that the natural family is compatible with the imperative of economic and social development while homosexuality is destructive of these objectives.

When considering contexts in which this rhetoric is presented to audiences coming from contexts in the global south, the violent historical legacies and contemporary realities of colonial extraction, exploitation and genocide through which the West established its economic power are rendered invisible. As scholars of the U.S. Christian Right's international activities have shown, pro-family discourses are at the center of conservative international advocacy work propagating a gospel of American values, namely self-help, prosperity, private enterprise, and individualism.

According to Marsden (2008), "The impact of such teaching and preaching is not intended as an extension of US foreign policy", but is rather a form of soft power in that it "present[s] an image of American prosperity and success that is attractive to audiences in developing countries" (60). Slavery and economic exploitation of the same countries that the pro-family movement seeks to build partnerships with are silenced and erased as the means through which the U.S. has accumulated its power. This whitewashed neoliberal messaging of the pro-family movement further reinforces the movement's interest in positioning the U.S. as the most legitimate site from which to control transnational capitalism (Jakobsen 2002, 62). As a product of the North Atlantic imagination, the 'natural family' and discourses to protect it reinforce eurocentric ways of knowing and arranging individuals within society that serve western interests.

Conclusion and Implications

The rhetorical strategies used by the pro-family movement provide insight into how this movement, which was once considered a 'fringe' and parochial political element in the U.S., has expanded its support base domestically and internationally. Specifically, the assertion of the 'pro-family' movement as a 'common-sense' solution to complex contemporary social and economic challenges, is enabled by the rhetorical strategies discussed in this article. These strategies serve the purpose of obfuscating the ways in which hegemonic heteropatriarchal systems of privilege and power operate through the oppression of sexual minorities and women. As analysis using Critical Diversity Literacy and Critical Discourse Analysis has revealed, pro-family discourses frame the issue of the 'family' in a way that bolsters prevailing heteronormative and patriarchal interests. Furthermore, the rhetorical strategies that the movement employs "co-opt, contain and curtail" (Steyn 2015, 386) decolonizing

imperatives in the global south by positioning U.S. conservatives as allies of formerly oppressed people.

The argument that the "natural family" can solve the multiple and intersecting crises faced by nation states are persuasive because they provide a scapegoat (feminists and LGBTI rights activists) for the economic instability, an "amoral market", and the supposed "decline of national cultural values" while simultaneously offering an option that contributes to "a sense of individual agency to change one's personal economic or social position" (Dingo 2004, 176). Alleviating anxieties and providing individuals with a sense of agency and control over their own destinies and the destiny of the nation, the 'common-sense' and familiar terms shaping pro-family rhetoric – specifically, "truth, responsibility, and family" are linked to anxieties about the morality of national cultures and economic prosperity (2004, 176).

In constructing the 'natural family' as universal, apolitical and ahistorical common-sense, this transnational class of elites who are predominantly white Americans and European mobilizes 'pro-family' discourse in efforts to protect and normalize the privileges already accruing to them on account of their privileged positionalities as middle class/elite/bourgeoise white Christians in the global North. These interests require the 'pro- family' movement to disassociate itself from the colonial history to which it is so indebted, ideologically and materially in order to gain legitimacy in African contexts.

This paper has considered three rhetorical strategies used by the pro-family movement to conceal the forms of exclusion and violence that their agendas actually promote. These strategies are required in order to make the 'pro-family' movement appear to be 'common-sense' and congruent with the values of liberal democracy and the economic imperatives of capitalist growth and accumulation. In order to access the intersecting power relations and interests embedded within pro-family ideology, it is necessary to remain cognizant of the historical and geo-political context from which they emerged. Specifically, it is necessary to remain aware of the ways in which colonial ideology mobilized the nuclear family model and gender binary as a justification for empire building in Africa. While the pro-family movement constructs the 'natural family' as universal, the nuclear family kinship model emerged in a particular historical moment for the purpose of expanding empire and the global authority of Europe. The reloading of the 'natural family' by contemporary conservatives in the West must be considered in relation to this history, and current dynamics through which the global North seeks to retain power over the global South, in order to understand the interests served by rhetorical strategies to obscure their violent implications.

The pro-family movement's activities in Africa has implications for LGBTIQ+ identifying people, their families, and their allies. The rhetorical strategies that the movement deploys also have implications for the shape of international debates about policy, foreign aid, development, and democracy. These strategies also work to normalize intolerance towards LGBTIQ+ people by presenting the movement as well-meaning, loving, and rational, while it presents sexual minorities as sinister, powerful and reckless in their calls for equal recognition. These discursive strategies, therefore, provide a legitimation for violence against an already oppressed minority.

In addition to operating in grassroots contexts across the continent, the pro-family movement has made its presence known in international policy arenas such as the United Nations. In presenting itself as an ally to the formerly colonized world, and in having a number of spokespersons from the global south, the pro-family movement and the heteropatriarchal ideology that it promotes undermines efforts in African countries to decolonize their societies and to gain substantive sovereignty from the West. The struggle against heteropatriarchy that is being led by LGBTIQ+ activists has the potential to dislodge structures of coloniality through the challenges that the movement is waging against the modern/colonial gender binary and hierarchy. In obfuscating the colonial history of the 'natural family', the pro family movement promotes a decolonial agenda that ultimately functions to uphold pillars of colonial power.

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Article 4

Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa: Social imaginaries of the body and/in global power stratifications

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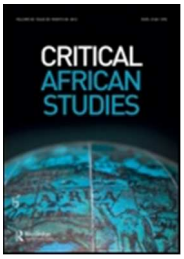
The notion that same-sex sexual practices are 'unAfrican' has been central to homophobic discourse across the continent, and has also been circulated by pro-family activists, making it a key discourse for critical discussion within this project. In addition to showing how contemporary homophobias in Africa are not exceptional, but rather linked to a historical trajectory of suspicion about western efforts to control reproductivity and bodies in Africa, this chapter/article interrogates the ways in which these rumors assist pro-family activists in establishing their own credibility which, in turn, enables them to pursue political objectives. Rather than dismiss these claims as 'irrational', I will pause upon them so as to consider their function within contemporary social imaginaries and expressions of geopolitical power. Here, I consider some recent statements, collected through online ethnography and participant observation, made by people in positions of leadership that promulgate the idea that homosexuality, too, is a form of population control. In addition to pursuing a better understanding of emerging suspicions and rumors about homosexuality in the global south and their global connections, I employ this project as a strategy of confronting them and their violent consequences.



Fabricating Power: Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa

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Fabricating Power: Homosexuality, reproductivity and rumors of population control in Africa

Abstract

This article examines the notion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' as a rumor that emerges from a historical trajectory of suspicion in African contexts about the ways in which western powers exert control over Africa. Suspicions of western population control interventions in Africa and the global south more broadly have been long standing, and have emerged in relation to awareness of reconfigured forms of western dominance and control over the previously colonized. While the west has largely viewed such suspicions as 'irrational' and as barriers to its development agendas, critical approaches have challenged these arguments, arguing that rumor and suspicion play a role in the circulation of knowledge and can provide insights into social imagines, particularly in relation to dynamics of power and inequality. In interrogating the suspicion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' from this perspective, analysis engages with the rise of the international population movement and history of population control agendas in Africa in order to open up new ways of understanding why this notion has gained such a high level of currency. Contemporary narratives of suspicion about homosexuality circulating in African contexts, which were collected through online ethnography and fieldwork, are analyzed in relation to these historical contexts. This article concludes that the notion of homosexuality as 'unAfrican' speaks to an awareness across the continent of the ways in which the West has historically exercised power and control over the continent through African bodies.

Keywords: rumor; suspicion; population control; homosexuality; Africa; pro-family movement

Introduction

Multiple and diverse types of intolerant narratives surround the issue of homosexuality across the continent, yet theories of rumor and suspicion have been largely overlooked within efforts to make sense of intolerance towards homosexuality and those seen to promote equal rights in relation to sexuality and gender diversity. At the same time, critical theory on suspicion and rumor has largely overlooked the pervasive, and dangerous, rumors surrounding homosexuality in Africa. Literature on 'homophobia' in African contexts is replete with references to 'suspicions', 'gossip', 'scandals', 'panics', 'conspiracies', and 'rumours' that have accompanied the various forms and expressions of intolerance and violence towards 'homosexuality' (Reddy 2001; Epprecht 2008; Lewis 2011; Awondo, Geschiere and Reid 2012; Ndjio 2012; Tettey 2016; Geschiere 2017). Here, I argue that rather than dismiss these claims as 'irrational' or ignore them because they are 'false', it is productive to the cause of sex and gender based rights to consider what potential 'truths' they can reveal; about the inescapable entanglements, political, economic, and social, between the West and African

countries, the contemporary experience of decolonization, and the ways in which individual bodies figure into geo-political power relations. This approach can also open up more nuanced understandings of the rejection of sexual and gender diversity in a way that mitigates against a tendency to retrace eurocentric and modern/colonial lines of distinction between ('homophobic') Africa and the ('progressive' or 'depraved') West (Awondo, Geschiere, Reid 2012, 149). Such binaries feed into forms of historical amnesia about the extent to which colonialism continues to inflict violence across the continent, and are reproduced through narratives that are dismissive of African homophobias as 'irrational', 'backwards' and/or matters of cultural difference. Rumors and suspicions have a function within knowledge and imaginaries of how the world works, and taking them seriously can direct one to the historical contexts and contemporary realities that have contributed toward their creation. In this article I will discuss the currency acquired by the notion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' and that a form of imperialism can be historically traced to suspicions and rumors that have circulated in relation to western led policies related to the body and reproduction in African countries since the 1970s. In addition, I call into question the historical context that has contributed to contemporary suspicions about homosexuality as a form of neo-imperialism. I use critical theories of rumor and suspicion to draw attention to the power relations that have created anxieties and uncertainties amongst those positioned unequally within racialized geo-political arrangements.

It is perhaps the urgency of addressing the consequences of these rumors that have left relatively unexamined questions of what these discourses indicate about contemporary African 'social imaginings' (White 2000). This line of questioning may also be avoided for political reasons, in that to take seriously the arguments that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' could be seen to give credibility to this argument, thereby contradicting social justice imperatives. However, given historical evidence provided by sixteenth century European witch-hunting, the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and others, that show how rumors and suspicions can escalate into violence and potentially genocide, I argue that it is necessary to confront and deconstruct the suspicions and rumors about homosexuality, rather than dismiss or ignore them on the premise that they are 'false' and misguided. As theorists of rumor have discussed, these narratives have material consequences and provide insights into deep-rooted beliefs about how the world works (White 2000; Edy, Risley-Baird 2016, 600) and the social realities that make them possible (Kaler 2009 ,1713).

Suspicions and rumors draw attention to the asymmetrical relations of power that have created anxieties and uncertainties amongst those positioned unequally within racialized geo-political arrangements. Far from ushering in an era in which the structures and ideologies of colonial rule would be systematically dismantled, the twentieth century saw a transition from global colonial*ism* to global colonial*ity*, in which old colonial hierarchies and stratifications between 'Europeans' and 'non-Europeans' have been re-articulated and re-inscribed rather than revoked or removed. As 'one of the most powerful myths of the 20th century', the notion that the world would be decolonized upon the dismantling of colonial administrations has remained a pervasive fiction (Grosfoguel 2009, 21).

Anti-imperialist scholars and activists have extensively documented and interrogated the ways in which western powers dominate and exploit the former colonies without the existence of formal structures of governance. Persisting forms of epistemic, economic, and military dominance enable western states to continue channeling resources from the formerly colonized world under "supervision and direct intervention," by international structures of governance (namely, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) established by the world's wealthiest nations after the end of the Second World War (Grosfoguel 2009, 30). In understanding why the rumor that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' has secured such a high level of currency, it is important to recognize that this discourse is unfolding within a context of extremely unequal relations of power between African countries and the west. This article discusses how these relations of power surface in the context of debates over 'population', as a means through which the West has reasserted mechanisms of surveillance and control over the former colonies since the termination of their official rule.

Contemporary narratives that homosexuality is 'unnatural' and a form of western neo-imperialism have not only been articulated by political and religious leaders in African contexts, but also by the U.S. led 'pro-family' movement. The pro-family movement is a conservative Christian political movement mobilized mainly by North American pro-life/anti-abortion, anti-feminist, and anti-gay activists and organizations and has grown in size and power since it appeared on the political radar in the 1970s. As international population policy debates at the United Nations began to invoke many of the issues that had originally motivated the formation of the 'family values' movement in the U.S. (such as contraception, abortion, and women's rights), the movement began to expand its reach and ambitions beyond North America. According to pro-family activists, international measures to address reproduction and reproductive health are part of a global 'death culture,' which seeks to undermine the 'natural family,' the sovereign realm of the state, and the future of Christianity (Buss and Herman 2003, 57). This narrative has been persuasive and relevant in Africa, where there are recent collective and individual memories of colonisation, which included coercive population control agendas and policies driven by former colonial powers since their independence.

The interests that are served by rumors that homosexuality is a western import requires awareness of the ways in which uncertainties, anxieties and ambiguities operate in relation to power. Research documenting suspicion and rumor of public health interventions in Africa and the historical context of the international population movement is consulted in order to locate and critically analyze contemporary rumors about homosexuality. Rumors, as Rosnow (1988) and others have argued, can provide insight into imaginaries of the oppressed, and their function as forms of resistance to domination. The power relations within rumors themselves are also necessary to consider, especially in the context of rising homophobic violence in Africa where suspicions fuel moral panic about homosexuality as a threat that requires management by the state (Tettey 2016). Rather than focus on what is incorrect within rumors, Kaler (2009) argues that it is worthwhile asking 'what kind of truth do they tell?' (1714). Not merely products of miscommunication or lack of information, 'rumors express a social reality which no amount of alternative information can change' (1714). Whilst there

are various rumors about homosexuality in African contexts, here I focus on those that construct homosexuality as a form of population control. Western led population control agendas across the continent centered the sexed and gendered body as a mechanism of colonial power. The rumors and suspicions that circulated in relation to these interventions can be detected within contemporary notions of the neo-imperialist 'threat' of 'homosexuality' to African societies and nations.

The issues of fertility and population bring together matters of sex, the body, reproduction and the nation within an imaginative framework deeply shaped by the history and lived realities of coloniality. The narratives circulating around the notion that homosexuality is a form of population control therefore requires analysis of speech acts and texts on an 'awkward' scale: 'Neither ambiguously "local" nor obviously "global" - but on a scale in between that, somehow, captures their mutual determinations. And their indeterminacies' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 282). For instance, Feldman-Savelsberg et al (2000) write about the sterilization rumor that spread in relation to a vaccination campaign in Cameroon in 1990. 'The rumor and the dramatic events it caused emerged at the intersection of several contexts, involving public health services, the state, a local rhetoric of reproductive threat, and the increasingly strained position of women in a period of economic and political turmoil'; these contexts each have their own history and memories that produce their own actions and interpretations in the present (160). Similarly, Kaler (2009) writes of sterility rumours of public health campaigns, showing fears that vaccinations will cause sterilization have been shaped by factors relating to the history of western biopolitics in Africa, reproductive bodies, collective survival, and asymmetries of power that exist at national-local levels (1715). In relation to the context at hand, such 'awkward' analysis is made possible by locating these narratives in relation to their ancestry - accounts of the ways in which the affluent and powerful West uses new forms of imperialism to siphon off 'the essence of, even appropriating the offspring, of impoverished Others' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, 282), and thereby threatening African futures.

By 'social imaginaries', I refer to that "world-forming and meaning-bestowing creative force" through which individuals and collectives create and recreate the world, forming the present and ultimately, the future (Canceran 2009, 27). Here, I approach the claim that homosexuality is 'un-African' as a window into the social imaginaries that have produced this idea. Thus, while I will be drawing upon the words of individual speakers - most of whom are state and religious leaders - I do not seek to exceptionalize them or their words. Rather, I read them as individuals who are made by historical and social relations, and who create contemporary societies and futures (28). Thus, while I quote certain individuals, I read their narratives as evidence of the imaginaries that produce them, and also consider their social effects. As White writes, "If we can make individual testimony social, we open up historical method to a broader world than personal experience alone might give us" because such stories are negotiated in the speaker's world (White 2000,18).

In an effort to make sense of why the idea that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' has become so prevalent and unbudging, it is necessary to reflect on the trajectory of rumors and suspicions that have

circulated in relation to the West, and western interventions into African reproductivity, in particular. Reproductivity, as it turns out, is a central theme within many of the suspicions and rumors that have been told about how the West continues to dominate and control African collectives and nations. Since western population science and control interventions were put into practice in the mid twentieth century, rumors and suspicions about how the West is attempting to coerce African societies and nations into reducing their fertility rates, particularly through sterilization, have become prolific. Today, these narratives have resurfaced in relation to 'homosexuality' which is constructed as a contemporary form of population control.

Research interventions into homophobia in Africa

The ways in which homophobic rhetoric has been circulated by media, state officials and religious leaders, are important areas of research for intervening in and challenging heterosexism and homophobia in African contexts. These studies, too extensive to review in depth in this article, have been imperative in understanding the variations and resemblances amongst intolerances towards those stigmatized as sexed and gendered 'others'. As many of these studies reveal, while homophobic campaigns and discourses take different shapes and forms across the thirty-four countries across the continent where homosexuality is criminalized, the notion that homosexuality is 'unAfrican' has become an organising trope for multiple homophobic narratives (Hoad 2007; Tamale 2007; Vincent and Howell 2014; Chitando and Mataveke 2017). Research on intolerance towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people in Africa has also unpacked the social implications of homophobic and heterosexist political discourses and agendas, and their violent consequences for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people. Scholars, activists and artists have also made great efforts to correct the misperception that homosexuality is 'un-African' through creative works (see Ekine and Abbas 2013; Martin and Xaba 2013, 2017; Matabeni 2014; Muholi 2014) and archival research (see Epprecht 2004; Morgan and Wieringa 2005). Studies have excavated historical evidence of homosexual practices in pre-colonial African societies, and have also shown how same-sex practices have figured within indigenous metaphysical and spiritual belief systems. This scholarship has made important contributions towards the struggle for sexual minorities to re-gain legitimacy and equality in societies where they have been increasingly denigrated, criminalized and scapegoated.

Despite these research interventions and ample evidence showing that same-sex attraction was present in precolonial African societies and that LGBTIQ+ Africans continue to exist across the continent, the rumor that homosexuality is "another form of colonialism and something that should be rejected as a matter of principle" has been persuasive, and has persisted, in many African contexts (Ndashe 2013, 160). While activists and scholars have made many advances that aim to foster acceptance of sexuality and gender diversity, political and religious leaders have continued to dominate public discourse with heteropatriarchal messages and policies that promote intolerance to-

wards homosexuality and LGBTIQ+ people. Despite these practices of interrogation evidence has not yet shifted deeply felt suspicions of homosexuality as a form of neocolonialism.

Method

This article emerges from doctoral research into the ways in which the U.S. based pro-family movement is influencing sexual politics in Africa. This research has involved a wide sourcing of speeches, documents, and statements issued by 'pro-family' activists through methods of network ethnography, online ethnography, critical discourse analysis, participant observation and autoethnography. This project has also involved the collection and analysis of speeches and statements delivered by African state officials and religious leaders about homosexuality, same-sex sex and same-sex marriage. In the process of reviewing relevant literature and analyzing data, the themes of suspicion and population emerged alongside one another, as pro-family activists construct the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as a site where feminist and LGBTIQ+ interests are forming a consolidated attack on the 'natural' family through the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights. I took interest in the ways in which debates over population figured within pro-family, as well as feminist international politics, and how it was being employed as a narrative to fuel suspicion about homosexuality as a foreign import that threatened to undermine the economic and political sovereignty of African nations. Here, this article shows how the history of the international population movement and the sterility rumors it inspired shape and inform contemporary suspicions that homosexuality is 'unAfrican'. I argue that it is important to keep this historical context in mind when trying to make sense of why homosexuality has become such a politically charged issue across the continent. Furthermore, I discuss how the pro-family movement has exploited these suspicions as a means of gaining credibility in the global south.

As mentioned above, narratives about the 'unAfricanness' of homosexuality and rumors about homosexuals are diverse and prolific and unfortunately cannot all be examined here. Here, I will focus on one narrative that has received relatively little attention in the literature, but which directs one to important aspects of the historical context from which homophobic suspicions and rumors emerge: The suspicion that homosexuality is a western population control agenda that is designed to reduce the size of African populations. This narrative locates homosexuality within the history of western population control interventions and the continuation of western efforts to contain growing African populations. Here, I argue that this narrative speaks to contemporary awareness of how the West uses, and has used, African bodies as a means of establishing its own geo-political dominance and control over the continent and its resources. However, in claiming that intolerance towards LGBTIQ+ people is a form of resistance to the West, those who promote this narrative also participate in, and create new forms of power that also reinforce western economic, epistemic, and geo-political forms of dominance.

I approach this topic from a transatlantic perspective, as an American immigrant who has lived in South Africa for over a decade. It was a political decision to leave United States at the age of twenty-two, where the post-9/11 'War on Terror' and the suffocating effects of pro-family campaigns against LGBTIQ+ people and women's reproductive rights led me to seek less imposing conditions elsewhere. My positionality, in terms of my gender (I identify as female), family background (I am the child of same-sex parents), and sexuality (I identify as queer), were factors that alienated me from the midwestern suburbs where I was raised and ultimately, from the nation. It was approximately five years after relocating to South Africa that I became aware that the very same family values discourses that I experienced as violent and oppressive in the U.S. were beginning to take shape in African contexts.

Imaginaries of the body in global power

In the North and South alike, theories about the mechanisms used by white racial states to retain power over black African people have often focused on threats to the reproductive capacities of individual bodies, and draw together anxieties and fears about current and future social and political dynamics. Narratives that can be broadly defined as 'sterility rumours' (Kaler 2009) are prolific, informed by ongoing inequalities and fears amongst historically disenfranchised and oppressed groups of the sterilization of individual bodies (1714). The influence of these suspicions has been acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO) and researchers from the West who have experienced these perceptions as impediments to the rolling out of public health measures and campaigns (Rutenberg and Watkins 1997). In addition to being informed by global-local and national-local power relations, sterility rumors are also connected to distrust of government and memories of colonial campaigns that used military force to make populations comply with public health measures (Kaler 2009, 1715), especially those that involved injections and/or the drawing of blood (Grietens, et al 2014). Since the end of colonial administration family planning campaigns and fertility surveys have acquired suspicions similar to those surrounding public health campaigns, associated with foreign aid conditions and the condescending attitudes of donor countries towards African nations (Feldman-Savelsberg et al 2000, 172).

Foucault (1978) speaks to these suspicions, writing that 'One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem' (25). 'At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex', which made analysis of birth-rates, the age of marriage, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations and ways of making them fertile or sterile, and the impact of contraceptive practices key within the creation of bio-political interventions and regulatory controls that would give the state power over processes of life (25). This explosion in the techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations marked the beginning of the era of 'bio-power' (140) as an indispensable element in the development of capitalism which required 'the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes' (141). While Foucault does not explicitly articulate the theory of 'bio-power' in rela-

tion to colonisation and empire building, suspicions about population control in Africa speak to the painful history of how Euro-American interests have established their power through the insertion of African bodies into capitalist machinery, and to contemporary fears in the West about 'overpopulation' in now independent African nations (see Richey 2008). Prevailing western assumptions about the economic, political, and environmental consequences of 'rapid population growth' in Africa, Latin America and Asia contrast starkly with how the West understood African populations during the time of colonial rule. At the time of their rule and administration over African nations, colonial powers were concerned mainly with maximizing African reproduction and were focused primarily on the removal of 'impediments' to the ability of African people to produce more Africans (Kaler 2009, 1717; Roberts 2014; Hunt 1999). Eager to grow the population of free labor, colonial policies prioritized issues of labor supply, migration, sanitation, and disease control, along with Christian moral discourses about 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' ways of reproducing and raising children (Kaler 2009, 1717).

As African nations began to win and establish their independence from colonial governments, attitudes towards population growth in Africa shifted towards the prevention of births, which manifested within discourses that promoted birth 'control' and birth 'spacing' (1717). This shift in western attitudes towards African populations was part of the emergence of the international population movement and its development of global population discourse as part of the meta-narrative of neoliberal modernity (Richey 2008, 17). The Neo-malthusian ideology informing the international population movement's definition of a 'population problem' in the global south has 'sought to make fertility reduction an important objective of international policy' through the argument that 'low rates of population growth are beneficial; more rapid fertility declines are better than slower declines; and population stabilization is an ultimate goal' (Hodgson and Watkins 1997, 470).

This vision of population, constructed by American and U.S. trained demographers became *the* global vision of 'population' and ultimately became the point of 'legitimate' state intervention into the intimate and reproductive lives of citizens (Richey, 2008, 1). Since its establishment in 1969, the UNFPA has been a key terrain where matters of gender, sexuality and sexual orientation have become transnationally contested axes where western power has been asserted and resisted. As a foremost international venue where norms and discourses are generated, it is unsurprising that UN conferences on population and women have become a crucial forum where sex and sexuality have been 'put into discourse' (Foucault 1978) and where bio-politics have been inscribed in international policy (Girard 2007, 312). Recently liberated African nations began to adopt population policies from the late 1970s, subsequent to the 1974 World Population Plan of Action, which urged countries to consider adopting population policies that would achieve lower birth and death rates (Obono 2003, 107). The uptake of population policies in the global south is commonly told as a 'seamless' story in which policy makers in developing countries have sought to apply the information about the dangers of overpopulation presented to them by western population scientists. Many scholars have been skeptical of this narrative and have excavated the ways in which power relations

associated with international aid played a role in the adoption of neo-Malthusian population policies (see Watkins and Hodgson 1998; Girard 2009).

Following critiques of the racist and sexist implications of coercive and eugenic western population policy agendas in the global south led by civil rights and feminist activists in the 1980s, the international population movement made efforts to modify population policy for the 'Third World in terminology that was more politically acceptable' (Grimes 1998, 379). 'Birth control' was repackaged as 'family planning','population control' as population 'assistance' or 'stabilization' and the discourse of fertility reduction became conducted primarily within a voluntaristic terminology of 'reproductive rights', 'access' and 'choice' (Hodgson and Watkins 1997; Grimes 1998; Girard 2007, 321). Here, suspicions that associate homosexuality with family planning are 'at least partly right' in their association between women's rights and the gay rights movement as 'the language of women's rights, for good or bad, has proved to be a potential vehicle for securing the international recognition of sexual rights' (Buss 2004, 272). These reformulations did not result in fundamental changes in the ideologies and assumptions informing population debates with neo-Malthusian ideologies still running as a subtext to the work of the UNFPA (Hodgson and Watkins 1997, 469). This shift in emphasis from 'control' to 'rights' has also produced ambiguities about the ways in which the West attempts to impose population control throughout Africa. Fears about the West trying to prevent the reproduction of African bodies have since taken many shapes and forms and rumors 'continue to pop up with a frequency and regularity which suggests that they are not merely isolated occurrences, but express some underlying commonalities' (Kaler 2009, 1712).

The activities of the international population movement informs contemporary ideas about western contamination of African bodies and collectives, within a meta narrative of a global north that is invested in reducing the aggregate reproductivity of African people by 'any means necessary' (1716). The redressing of the explicitly eugenicist language of population control into a more 'politically acceptable' language of sexual and reproductive rights is mentioned by Buss and Herman (2003) as having contributed profoundly to associations between homosexuality and population control in many African contexts (64). Similar to family planning programs that attracted billions in foreign investment, homosexuality is seen to be connected to large amounts of donor funding that enable its implementation as an 'agenda' to reduce population sizes of African countries.

Reproductivity, homosexuality, and fears of national sterility

Yhaya's (2006) study of rumors that took shape in relation to a vaccination campaign in northern Nigeria indicates the ways in which communities on the receiving end of such interventions imagine their own bodies as vulnerable to powerful forces beyond their immediate context or control. Political and religious leaders called on parents not to cooperate with the immunization drive, believing that the vaccines had been 'contaminated with unspecified contraceptive agents and would render young girls unable to reproduce later in life' creating a 'potential catastroph[e] of widespread

infertility' (10). The sterilizing effects of the immunization of female children was seen by some to be 'America's revenge for 9/11' (Duggar and McNeil 2006 in Kaler 2009, 1713). Here, the immunization campaign becomes imagined as a form of control and punishment and as a container of African male power and agency in relation to current and future nations. As a Nigerian doctor said about the immunization campaign, 'we all know that the WHO is just an extension of the US government. We also know that the US feel they can control the rest of the world' (1713(. By controlling the 'reproductivity', a term originally used by Nigerian feminist Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí (1997), of African women in particular and collectives more broadly, the immunization campaign is imagined as an instrument through which the US wields power over bodies and states that are vulnerable within the unequal system of global power relations. Many such examples can be found of rumors that public health programs, pharmeceuticals, food aid, and other interventions (Geissler 2005) imperil individual bodies and ultimately collectives (Feldman-Savelsberg, Ndonko and Schmidt-Ehry 2000; Kaler 2009)

Contemporary narratives of suspicion about homosexuality as a form of western imperialism also draw upon the themes of global power asymetries, the body, and reproductivity. Bishop Emmanuel Badejo from Nigeria (who occupies an influential role as Director of Communications for African Bishops) invokes the history of population control interventions in the form of family planning and contraceptive technologies in Africa in his rejection of homosexuality. He stated:

> I take it all back to the agenda of population control…There has been an inordinate alarm about the exploding populations in Africa. And anything that can be done to decrease or limit the growth of the population in Africa is quite welcome…The United States actually said it would help Nigeria with Boko Haram only if we modify our laws concerning homosexuality, family planning, and birth control (Montagna 2015).

While Badejo's claim that the US offered to provide assistance in the government's repression of Boko Haram was discredited,[1] this reference certainly elevates the threat of homosexuality, family planning, and contraceptive technologies. Above, Badejo constructs a network of signifiers - 'terror', 'homosexuality', 'family planning', 'population control', and Africa - U.S. relations that draw upon historical and contemporary relations of domination and subordination. Homosexuality and family planning become associated as leverage points used by the West to retain control over Africa with the fight against Boko Haram as an incentive offered to convince African nations to adopt particular policy agendas.

While the claim that the U.S. government offered to assist Nigeria in the fight against Boko Haram if they changed their laws about contraception and homosexuality was discredited, there are other documented examples of how the West has, indeed, created aid conditions around family planning

[1] The claim that the U.S. had refused military assistance to Nigeria was denied by the US Department of State in February 2015. See Gaudiano 2015.

and homosexuality which makes Badejo's claim somewhat plausible. For instance, as Watkins and Hodgson (1998) show, Kenya's post-revolutionary government came to adopt and implement a strong family planning program despite its long-standing pro-natalist sentiments. According to the authors, while classic diffusion theorists have written that this process was transparent and involved a receptive population that adopted a beneficial innovation, the adoption 'of neo-Malthusianism was a murkier and more nuanced affair in which [the] powerful global networks disseminating this new population ideology promoted its acceptance with a combination of enticements and threats' and Kenyan officials were influenced by factors beyond the logic of neo-Malthusianism itself (1). When implementation of family planning programs was not happening as successfully as anticipated by the mid 1970's, a World Bank mission sent to assess the progress of the program found that the government had been reluctant to voice objections directly to the international population community, and rather had accepted recommendations that were politically easier to adopt while 'stalling on the implementation of others' (35). Before releasing the second tranche of the Second Structural Adjustment Loan to Kenya In 1982, the World Bank made the establishment of a National Council on Population and Development (to be located outside the Ministry of Health) a condition for its release (Watkins and Hodgson 1998, 47). The forcefulness with which the International population movement advocated for African governments to adopt population control policies continues to inform African perspectives on how the West enacts punishment and control over the former colonies. The body as a unit of reproduction and labour plays a central role in these relations of power and contributes to the development and future prosperity of nations. For Badejo, the matter of homosexuality is a terrain where western dominance in the form of population control can be resisted, and where Nigeria can assert its independence in relation to global power.

Badejo's allusion to the matter of foreign aid in his reference to the U.S.'s alleged offering of assistance in the fight against Boko Haram in exchange for their adoption of sex and gender based rights reveals the sense of boundlessness imagined in relation to western efforts to advance its interests. Threats, and eventual decisions, to withdraw aid from countries where homosexuality is criminalized stoked rejections of homosexuality as 'unAfrican' and as a western conspiracy to reduce fertility in Africa. In South Africa, Errol Naidoo has argued that homosexuality is part of the West's effort to advance a "culture of death" in African countries, stating that 'Western donor nations are now using financial aid as a weapon to force developing nations – especially African nations – to comply with the radical homosexual agenda' (Naidoo, 2012). These allegations are shared by many, leading to crackdown campaigns in countries where homosexual practice and advocacy is criminalized, legislating the arrest and detention of foreigners who are, or who are at least perceived to be, aiding the causes of homosexuals. Approximately one year prior to Badejo's statement, the Nigerian government banned individuals and groups who aid 'the operation and sustenance of gay clubs, societies, organizations, processions or meetings' in a direct measure to criminalize foreign activists, who could face ten years imprisonment if convicted (Same sex marriage (prohibition) act, 2014).

The attachment of aid conditions to homosexuality has deepened these associations in light of the ways in which population control policies were initially advanced in African countries in the mid-twentieth century. Highlighting the ways in which the history of western population control agendas have shaped understandings of how the West retains global power, these suspicions also speak back to power, becoming a means though which African people and states assert identity, agency and center their own realities. Suspicions of homosexuality as a western population control agenda speak to imaginaries of how the West gains and asserts control over the continent: through the subordination, manipulation and demoralization of African bodies. In the next section, I take a closer look at the sterility rumors in order to further explore contemporary suspicions of homosexuality.

In many contexts, the inability of two people of the same sex to conceive children has been used as a "common-sense" explanation for why homosexuality should be rejected as "unnatural" and "abnormal". In African contexts, this argument overlaps with the perception that homosexuality is a foreign imposition, creating suspicions that the legalization of homosexuality will impede African nations from reproducing themselves. In a letter regarding the homosexuality bill in Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni raises this notion, stating that '[…] nature is purposeful. One of the main purposes of man is to perpetuate life. You cannot perpetuate human life without copulation of opposite sexes for the majority of animal species' (Museveni, 2014). Homosexuality, according to Museveni, is therefore unnatural and will cause the 'disorientation' of Ugandan society (Daily Monitor, 2014). Similarly, Robert Mugabe stated in 2013, 'We need continuity in our race, and that comes from the woman, and no to homosexuality. John and John, no; Maria and Maria, no' (Bulawayo 24 News, 2013)) also captures the sentiment that homosexuality is a threat to reproductivity. As Ladô (2011) writes of popular homophobia in Cameroon, the need to 'renew the human species in general and the population of Cameroon in particular' (7) are cited as justifications for the rejection of homosexuals. As one of the participants in his study remarked, 'Homosexuals cannot procreate together and thus do not help to repopulate Cameroon, and increasing Cameroon's population is vital to the country's socioeconomic development' (37). Currier also finds this narrative in her research in Namibia, where she says that they themes of 'ethnic extinction' are used to defend increasing penalties for same-sex sex. Statements made by political leaders, Currier argues, have linked a rise in non-procreative same sex-sex to declining birthrates and heterosexual 'extinction', treating same-sex sexualities as impediments to population growth (Currier 2012, 449).

More recently, Ann Kioko, president of the African Organization for Families in Nairobi, Kenya, compared homosexuality with abortion in a 2016 article, 'It's the West's Agenda to Control Our Population'. Kioko articulates the dual threat of homosexuality and abortion in relation to the ability of the nation to reproduce itself:

> These people must have been imported the other day because I have never come across them before. We are under immense pressure to create liberal laws that allow same-sex unions and abortion. The agenda is to control the population because a big one is a

> threat to the West in many respects. Homosexuality can be a great tool to control population growth as it is the only sure way to have a 'baby-less' union (Kioko 2016).

Referring to anxieties in the West about Kenya's large population, homosexuality and abortion are equated as tools used by the West to reduce fertility in the country. Conflating same-sex marriage and abortion under the banner of "liberal laws", homosexuality is positioned as a threat to the nation not only as a colonial 'import' that has trespassed the boundaries of the nation, but also as a mechanism of disabling individual and collective reproduction. The West's ability to continue controlling African nations, therefore, is imagined as a force that continues to be exerted upon, and through, individual African bodies.

The network of signification created between reproduction, sterility and homosexuality, provides insight into social imaginaries of the forces of power that operate upon and through African bodies. Sterilization rumors, Kaler (2009) writes, are 'born out of, and […] express situations in which an entire community is perceived to be under threat': Bodies are figured as the 'breach-points' where groups face an ontological threat, becoming vulnerable to certain forms of danger that threaten their survival (1714). Thus, narratives of covert sterilization campaigns have a particular symbolic power drawing together socio-political and historical anxieties, ultimately threatening to sever the connection between the present and the future (Kaler 2009, 1713). Sterility symbolizes an ontological threat imperiling 'not only the well-being of individuals and communities as they exist now, but also the future existence of that collectivity' (Kaler 2009, 1713). Hyperbolic arguments that homosexuality will essentially sterilize the nation is a hasty generalization as no society will ever be one hundred percent homosexual, or heterosexual. Such connections create and reflect anxiety about the reproductivity of Kenya, and Africa more broadly.

Reimagining the West: Pro-family alliance building in Africa

In addition to demanding attention to the historical contexts and conditions that have given rise to contemporary suspicions and rumors about homosexuality as 'unAfrican', it is also necessary to consider the current geo-political power relations and inequalities that contribute to their circulation. When considering the epistemic dimensions of power, it is possible to see that the rumors and suspicions of power are themselves located within, and operate in relation to, power relations. Here, I will consider the transnational movement of the idea that homosexuality is a form of population control, particularly as it has been mobilized by U.S. based conservatives who oppose equal rights for LGBTIQ+ people.

As mentioned above, the claims that homosexuality is, a) synonymous with population control, and b) will cause depopulation are not heard, or iterated, in African contexts alone. A growing U.S. based movement that calls itself "pro-family" has begun to propagate this notion through its networks in Africa. The most influential organizations of the movement, such as the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, and the World Congress of Families, are physically based in the U.S.

and operate internationally, growing its global network through conferences, social media, and building networks with African political and religious leaders. Numerous "pro-family" organizations have been established in Africa, such as the African Organization for Families (Kenya), the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (Nigeria) and the Family Policy Institute (South Africa). In December 2016, the World Congress of Families re-launched itself as the International Organization for Family in Cape Town, where the Cape Town Declaration was signed by some of those quoted in this article (Ann Kioko, Errol Naidoo, and Emmanuel Badejo) as well as other African delegates. The following statement summarizes the ambitions and orientation of the pro-family movement:

> A thriving culture will therefore serve marriage—and all society—by promoting purity outside it and fidelity within…and by firmly resisting every push to redefine marriage: to include same-sex….We pledge to resist the rising cultural imperialism of Western powers whose governments seek nothing less than the ideological colonization of the family. (International Organization for the Family 2016)

For U.S. activists who refer to themselves as "pro-family", homosexuality, abortion, and contraceptive technologies are seen to undermine the "natural family", which they define as a strictly heterosexual and patriarchal unit that maintains a heteropatriarchal social order. Pro-family activists have created a narrative that the sexual revolution, with the changing gender relations and sexual norms that it brought about, is to blame for various social problems, declining fertility and weakening economies in the global north.

World Congress of Families founder, and leader in the international pro-family movement, Dr. Allan Carlson provides a clear example of how homosexuality is constructed as a reproductive threat to nations, warning delegates in 2007:

> The Natural Family faces a new time of crisis…Militant secularism would stamp out the religious and spiritual sentiments that animate the family home. Sex radicals would twist and distort the procreative act, turning it away from the creation of new life. Neo-Malthusians would accelerate the disappearance of nations and the depopulation of the earth (Goldberg 2009, 199-200)

The notion of 'sex radicals' is broad enough to include all of those seen to 'twist and distort the procreative act'; namely, those who have sex that does not (intend to) produce offspring. Ultimately, this broad possible range of individuals are blamed for spreading what the pro-family movement refers to as an anti-natalist 'culture of death' that will lead to national and global economic crises. Conflating sexual minority rights with reproductive rights, pro-family advocates argue that both constitute an "anti-family" agenda that dismantles the normative status of the heterosexual nuclear family, gender role complementarity, and ultimately, threaten national prosperity (Buss and Herman 2003, 113). At the time of their 2003 study of the pro-family movement and the World Congress of

Families, Buss and Herman reported that homosexuality was fast becoming incorporated into ongoing international conservative activism against feminism, women's rights and population policy (121). As one of the central figures within the pro-family movement, Carlson brings together the numerous discursive threads that structure the argument that homosexuality is a threat to the future and national reproduction. Intensifying the "threat" of "sex radicals", Carlson elevates the level of danger posed by homosexuality as matter of the survival of the human race at a global scale.

Some pro-family activists, such as Sharon Slater, have articulated this claim for African audiences. Founder of Family Watch International, Slater has been particularly active in the UN and has established strategic networks with African organizations, lobbyists, and activists over the course of the past decade. In promoting family values, Slater has explicitly located population within the message that homosexuality is a western import that seeks to destroy "traditions" and "cultures" in Africa. In 2011, she delivered a keynote address at the Nigerian Bar Association conference in Lagos in which she "warned" delegates of the dangers of the western "sexual rights" agenda. In her speech, a great deal of attention was paid to delineating herself and her message from the "bad West" to be rejected so as to establish herself as a representative of the "good West" that should be accepted.

Throughout her speech, she tells how international government bodies such as the UN, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and UNESCO are working to "destroy families". In explicit denunciation of rights promoting sexual autonomy, Slater argues for the centrality of the nuclear family to the nation and its survival:

> ample research shows when sexual relations occur outside of marriage—it doesn't matter if they are heterosexual, homosexual, premarital or extramarital—the evidence shows that as sexual relations stray from marriage the family unit disintegrates, children are hurt, economies decline, and nations are weakened (Slater 2011).

Drawing a connection between marriage and the family with that of the economy, Slater essentializes all non-reproductive sex as having negative consequences for economies and nations. The 'evidence' to which Slater refers is the declining fertility rates in the West which she argues due to 'sexual relations occurr[ing] outside of marriage', with the Christian institution of heterosexual marriage positioned as central to national survival and prosperity. Slater couches sexual autonomy within a Christonormative pro-natalist ideology, arguing that sex outside of marriage is "anti-family". Specifically, sex outside of marriage, according to Slater, is a direct cause of declining fertility rates and economic decline. In this equation, the expression of sexual autonomy is constructed as being synonymous with western manipulation, meaning that non-reproductive sex is homogenized and essentialized as western "imports":

> […] the world in general, but especially the West, is experiencing a population crisis, meaning, there are not enough children being born to replace the dying…they do not have enough workers to fuel their economies and support their older populations. Nigeria will eventually face the same problem if you adopt the anti-child values of the West.

> Do not be manipulated by rich Western countries and allow them to import the worst of their culture to you (Slater 2011).

Constructing deviance from procreative heterosexual marriage as "anti-family", Slater names sex outside of marriage as the single cause of population decline. In doing so, she separates herself from those in the West who are bringing *their* culture to Nigeria. Disidentifying with westerners who promote smaller families, Slater positions herself, and her message, as being more closely aligned with the Nigerian audience she addresses. In doing so, she disaggregates the West, fingering those she refers to as "anti-child" as the imperialists who are dominant and oppressive over those who are pro-natalist in both the U.S. and Nigeria. This narrative enables Slater and other pro-family activists to brand those promoting smaller family sizes, sexual and reproductive health rights as *those* westerners with colonial tendencies and ambitions; a narrative that is made plausible given the historical associations between women's reproductive rights discourses that pro-family activists have opposed since the 1970s and neo-Malthusian population movement as discussed earlier.

This disaggregation is furthered as Slater instructs delegates to reject western family planning agendas, emphasizing the necessity of reproduction to economic prosperity:

> Please, whatever you do, do not listen to those who are telling you that you need to limit your families to one or two children. Children are Nigeria's greatest asset. They are your wealth, they are your future. It is no accident that Nigeria, the most populous African country, is also one of the wealthiest (Slater 2011).

Thus, the biological production of children in the context of heterosexual marriage becomes sutured to national prosperity. National prosperity is said to be imperiled by family planning programs that promote smaller families. Through this narrative, Slater carves out a subjectivity of western victimhood that is aligned with the African experience of being dominated by western powers. This narrative obfuscates the role of the nuclear family model within colonialism and also ignores the power and wealth of contemporary "pro-family" activists, organizations and their financiers, such as the Heritage Foundation. Slater also ignores the fact that in addition to promoting pro-family political agendas, these organizations also often promote ethno-nationalist and free market policies that deepen inequalities between Africa and the West.

In claiming the position of "victim" for those seeking to retain heteropatriarchal social norms and power relations, Slater dislocates those who have experienced physical and institutional violence on account of their gender, their gender identity, and/or their sexual orientation. She also constructs homosexuality and family planning as twin elements that sustain imperialism, obscuring the other ways in which countries such as Nigeria are oppressed by a global economic system that continues to operate in the interests of the West. It is through the promotion of homosexuality and family planning, according to Slater, that the "bad West" is attempting to exclude Nigeria from equal participation in the global economy.

The imaginary that Slater institutes resonates with anxieties over the strategies used by the West to exploit and control African bodies. In this version of the contemporary world in which sexual minorities and anyone who has sex outside of marriage are labelled as agents of global oppression, the rejection of homosexuality is presented as a relatively easy solution for systemic inequalities that have been entrenched over the past five centuries; one that does not fundamentally disrupt the current system of coloniality.

Theresa Okafor, founder of the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage, illustrates the ambiguities that are fostered within the imaginary of a "good" and "bad" West. Speaking at the World Congress of Families that took place in Salt Lake City in 2015, she said:

> Africa is trying to make sense of all the contradictory messages coming to us from the West. The West that once came to Africa and preached Christianity, we are surprised to see that the West is turning back to the same paganism that they actually condemned (Okafor 2015).

Two Wests are instituted - a "good" West that brought Christianity and which is disassociated from colonial conquest and a "bad" West that has brought 'paganism', contradicting the West's earlier message of Christianity. Okafor continued, further inscribing a binary between the West that can be trusted and the West that must be rejected:

> we know that there are still many good people out there in the West who still believe in those principles of Christianity, fraternity, justice that you taught us, and we're listening, so alert us to these dangers and we will be quick to spring into action (Okafor 2015).

Speaking to those westerners deemed trustworthy and to be listened to, Okafor aligns herself and 'we' Africans who reject changes in heteropatriarchal gender and sexual norms seen to be advanced by the dangerous West. The construction of ambiguity around the West as a potential ally in decolonization opens up possibilities for power relations that serve the interests of the West to be perpetuated while they are simultaneously challenged. Suspicion of homosexuality and anyone advocating for sex and gender based rights as agents of western population control agendas gains legitimacy through western pro-family activists. In creating new social imaginaries in conversation with African opponents of sex and gender diversity, U.S. pro-family activists also seek legitimacy as people who claim to be oppressed by the "bad" West that is subordinating people of the global south. As Buss and Herman (2003) write, in using the language of colonialism, inequality, and racism, the pro-family movement has 'laid claim to a progressive stance that says it is more authentic, more compassionate, and more sensitive' than that of feminists and LGBTIQ+ activists (77). In doing so, they have introduced the question of legitimacy into the international population debate: 'Who speaks most authentically for the third world?' (77).

Slater's speech is representative of pro-family critique of international population policy. As Buss and Herman (2003) write, population policy is seen as 'the globalization of a "death culture", evidence of which can be found not only in the specific practice of abortion, but in other related areas that operate to denigrate the "natural family"' (62). Gay rights and women's sexual and reproductive rights are seen as a 'trojan horse' masking an explicit proabortion, antifamily, and population control agenda (64). In opposing population policy on these grounds, the pro-family movement is able to exploit a tension between the western community of activists promoting women's and LGBTIQ+ rights and the communities in the global south. According to pro-family activists such as Slater, developing countries are 'bribed' and 'coerced' into population control by western countries that hold 'development projects hostage' to Third World compliance with population programs (76). The West's preoccupation with population reduction in the global south, and more recently with the promotion of homosexuality, are said to mask efforts to maintain an unequal balance of geo-political power (76).

Conclusion

The violent legacy of colonialism in Africa and the contemporary context of global inequality and anxieties about the future of African collectives locates African bodies as sites where power operates and is contested. The population control agendas promoted by the West, immediately following five centuries of colonial domination, have created a climate of suspicion around western efforts to retain global hegemony and dominance over African people and nations. As discussed in this article, western family planning programs have created fears of overtly and covertly imposed sterilization and contraception campaigns since the mid twentieth century. The contemporary work of sexual minorities and gender nonconforming people to gain equal rights and recognition in their societies has been related to this history by influential political and religious leaders across the continent who have associated 'homosexuality' with population control.

Existing suspicions in Africa towards western population control interventions have become political currency for the pro-family movement. In asserting themselves as more legitimate and sensitive to African needs than the progressive western organisations promoting family planning, access to contraception and safe abortion, and gay rights, the pro-family movement undertakes ideological work to reconfigure networks of power between African countries and the West in their favor. Distinguishing themselves from those advancing population policy in the global south, the pro-family movement bifurcates the West, asserting themselves as those serving the interests of the poor and historically disenfranchised in contrast to progressives who are isolated as the "neoimperialists" that African people and states should be wary of. Through the protection of the "natural family", pro-family activists argue that African nations can become more competitive within the free market system, thereby leaving key structures of modern/colonial power (that the West stands to benefit from) unquestioned.

Research reveals that new imaginaries and networks of global power are taking shape, as pro-family activists appeal to long standing suspicions about western agendas in Africa. In pursuing the notion that homosexuality is "unAfrican" from a perspective that critically engages with this notion as a suspicion or rumor, analysis has been able to explore the historical and contemporary geo-political dynamics that have given rise to this narrative. Thus, rather than viewing suspicions and rumors as aberrant beliefs that should or can be rectified through the provision of "facts", they can be more productively engaged through consideration of how they function as products of, and responses to, unequal power relations.

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Conclusion

Shifting contexts

At the time of embarking upon this project, my conviction that the U.S. Christian Right was gaining power in the U.S. and internationally was largely met with surprise to those whom I discussed my research with in South Africa. Barack Obama was president, gay-marriage was being nationally legalized, and the U.S. was funding and promoting sexual reproductive health and rights across the world. It seemed as if my concern about the U.S. Christian Right and the homophobic agendas it was advancing in the US and globally were as fringe, and as inconsequential, as the movement itself was seen to be. Most people in South Africa who I engaged with during my research, and continue to meet, are not familiar with the U.S. Christian Right or 'pro-family' movement, although there is growing awareness of the ways in which western evangelical conservatives have had a role in the promotion of homophobia as a result of the charge of crimes against humanity brought by Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) against U.S. preacher, Scott Lively in 2013, and later the thwarting of a visit by 'hate preacher' Steven Anderson to South Africa in by civil society groups who successfully had him banned from entering the country in 2016.

Over the course of conducting this research, understanding of international power relations, and the position of the U.S. within these, has seismically shifted. The election of Donald Trump came as a shock to many Americans and the world, and I was among the many who were shocked and horrified by the fact that an individual with such bigoted views would be leading the nation and ultimately, the world. The 'alt-right', which became visible through the 2016 election run -up and the Trump victory, came onto the radar of U.S. and international media and academics. The fascist positions taken by Trump in relation to international political matters such as agreements and policies, immigration, foreign aid, and the UN have been paralleled domestically by the erasure of environmental regulations, tax reform policies that benefit the wealthy, and his destruction of laws and agencies created to protect and serve vulnerable groups.

The dramatic shift to the political 'right' in U.S. politics has been paralleled across the North Atlantic: The decision of the United Kingdom to exit the European Union, and the growing political

power of ethno-nationalist movements in western Europe was declared "The New Nationalism" by political affairs magazine, *The Economist* shortly after the U.S. election. These developments within the international political landscape led many, including myself, to re-evaluate the position of the U.S. Christian Right as a political force. Despite my awareness of their influence, I was also taken by surprise by the sudden swelling of their power as Trump appointed Christian Right politicians into key positions including Vice President (Mike Pence), Attorney General (Jeff Sessions), and U.S. ambassador to the UN (Nikki Haley). Equally surprising have been the blurring of boundaries between those who have been historically opposed, for instance, conservative lesbian and gay individuals and politicians who support and even lead hardline ethno-nationalist political parties (such as the deputy of France's Front National, Florian Philippot, the deputy leader of the UK Independence Party, Peter Whittle, and Alternatives for Deutschland Chancellor, Alice Weidel).

The shifting context in which I was conducting research had implications for how I understood the role of the U.S. Christian Right and the pro-family movement within the U.S. and internationally. These political changes also had implications for how I saw my research, and its significance, as many of the gains made through the feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements over the past decade in the U.S. suddenly came under threat, with the international implications of these changes being imminent and unpredictable effects.

This project took the form of an investigation into the growing influence of the U.S. Christian Right and the anti-gay and anti-feminist 'family values' agenda is working to advance in African contexts. Network analysis, participant observation and autoethnography were methods used to collect data on the pro-family movement, which was analyzed using techniques of thematic and critical discourse analysis. Contextualizing the nuclear/modern family as a mechanism of bio-power accompanying capitalist development, as theorized by Foucault 1980, and as an instrument of colonial conquest, as shown by Kitch (2009) and Oyewumi (1997, 2002), I sought to understand *why* the U.S. Christian Right is interested in promoting 'family values' in African contexts, and *how* the movement is working to do this. In pursuing the research objectives through these methods, I hoped to achieve two related goals. First, to provide empirical insights into the networks that the pro-family movement has developed in Africa and the discourses they advance in these contexts. Second, I hoped to gain insight into the interests underlying the pro-family movement's overtly heteropatriarchal rhetoric. In pursuing these objectives, it became evident that the pro-family movement has developed strategic networks across the continent and has done a significant amount of ideological work to present itself as an ally of the global south. The emerging discursive and net-

working strategies of the U.S. pro-family movement to grow its international power and influence works to rebuild the modern/colonial structures of power that queer, feminist, and anti-colonial movements have been actively deconstructing. These social movements have significantly advanced the rights of women, LGBTIQ+ people and racially oppressed groups through the naming and challenging of heterosexist, white supremacist, patriarchal, and Christonormative ideologies that have constructed economic, social, epistemic and geo-political systems of raced, sexed, gendered, and spaced systems of privilege/oppression, inclusion/exclusion, domination/exploitation, centering/peripherizing. In constructing these movements as 'dangerous' and threatening, new right wing movements such as the pro-family movement create moral panic so as to motivate for a return to 'tradition'. The U.S. pro-family movement's rhetoric of 'values', 'nature', and 'common-sense' strategically obfuscates its underlying objective to protect the systemic privileges that white, heterosexual, Euro-American, Christian men have unfairly benefitted from over the past five centuries.

The work of historically oppressed groups to name the forms of power that oppress them has been a significant achievement within struggles for equal treatment, recognition, and opportunities. As Steyn (2015) writes, being able to name dynamics of dominance and oppression "is often the first step in changing the power balances" (385). The naming of whiteness, coloniality, patriarchy, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and Christonormativity and their theorization within critical frameworks of power, privilege and oppression have reframed dominant understandings of 'Otherness' in a project that not only redefines social reality, but provides an epistemic resource that empowers historically oppressed groups to challenge these systems of dominance. In response to these advances, movements such as those who organize under the 'pro-family' banner have worked to generate a lexicon that can preserve white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks 2004, p. xi). Terms such as 'natural family', 'family values', 'marriage premium', 'traditional family', 'culture of death', 'demographic winter', and 'sex radicals' have been created by U.S. conservative activists and researchers to develop their own epistemic resources that can reframe the exclusion oppression, and dominance contained in their agendas as 'common-sense', 'natural', and 'traditional'. The pro-family movement has increasingly worked to disseminate its ideological work across the global south since the 1990s, gaining influence amongst political and religious leaders in the global south who have implemented political projects to protect the 'natural family' in their own contexts. The global expansion of the pro-family movement has had consequences for queer people in the global south as the notion that homosexuality is 'unnatural', amoral, and dangerous to society has gained currency.

The project of investigating a transnational movement called for a combination of methods and analytic techniques that would provide me with an in-depth view of the movement's discourses, strategies and networks so that I could critically interrogate how and why pro-family activists and organisations are gaining African allies. In employing critical discourse analysis, autoethnography, network and online ethnography, this research took as its point of departure an awareness of the role of the nuclear family ideal as a modern/colonial construction and mechanism of establishing raced, sexed and gendered hierarchies at local and global scales. This framework, which draws on post-structuralist social theory, centers the importance of language, or discourse, and historical context in understanding the contemporary transnational movement of ideas and knowledge in relation to modern/colonial ideologies and the systems of inequality they entrenched. Critical diversity literacy has provided an incisive lens through which the effects and outcomes of underlying unequal power dynamics can be recognized and named. Specifically, in drawing attention the need to unpack how systems of oppression "interlock, co-construct and constitute each other, and how they are reproduced, resisted and reframed" (Steyn 2015, 383), critical diversity literacy provided tools for interpreting the coded hegemonic practices within the ideological work of the pro-family movement.

In what follows, I will discuss the implications of my research findings in relation to the stated research objectives. In doing so, I will demonstrate how my research has made an original contribution to knowledge in the field of gender and sexuality in the global south, and in relation to decolonization. First, I will discuss the contributions that this project makes towards existing knowledge of the U.S. pro-family movement's work to promote its agendas in Africa, particularly in relation to the emerging strategies employed by pro-family activists and organizations. I will then share my interpretation of pro-family activism in Africa and implications for sexuality and gender diversity and geo-political relations of power.

Contributions to existing knowledge

While a number of scholars (Buss and Herman 2003, Croft 2007, Martin 1999, Marsden 2008) have discussed the pro-family activism of the U.S. Christian Right in the context of U.S. domestic politics, in relation to their international foreign policy, these discussions have dealt little with the work of the U.S. Christian Right in African contexts specifically. The work of Kapya Kaoma (2009,2010, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b) has made the most significant contributions towards this development, providing extensive evidence and discussion of the work of the U.S. Christian Right's 'family values' activism in Africa. While this research is incredibly important to knowledge on the issue, his

theological approach is not capable of answering questions pertaining to the geo-political and epistemic dimensions of pro-family activism, and how these relate to modern/colonial ideologies of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy. Scholars such as Ndashe (2013) and others have made reference to the ways in which religious conservatives from the West have had a role in the formation of homophobic discourses and political agendas across the continent. Their focus has been on the ways in which these developments have impacted African contexts politically and socially, rather than focusing on the conservative western activists themselves. I have aimed to contribute a perspective to this literature that can provide further insight into the ways in which the 'pro-family' movement is working to advance conservative views on sexuality, gender, and the family, and the underlying, and intersecting, interests at stake.

Existing work has made significant inroads into the key issues, organisations, and leaders in the movement and has provided insightful feminist critique of the heterosexism and patriarchy that pro-family activists seek to preserve and reproduce through concepts of 'family values' and the 'natural' family. In this dissertation, I have theorized 'pro-family' discourses and activism as products, and mechanisms, of modernity/coloniality that also seek to establish and maintain bio-political regimes of compulsory heterosexuality. This framework is set out in chapter one where it is the focus of discussion, and I further elaborated upon the discursive and epistemic dimensions of this framework in the subsequent chapters. In doing so, I have aimed to contribute a more nuanced understanding of how modern/colonial knowledge and ultimately power relations continues to be reproduced through pro-family activism and its homophobic agendas in the decolonial era. This investigation has therefore worked intersectionality theory and decolonial theory into one another, showing the ways in which these critical frameworks are enriched and deepened by one another. The contribution to critical theory made by this project therefore emerge from its engagement with an intersectional analysis within a decolonial approach to the study of a contemporary conservative social movement, and brings a decolonial approach to the analysis of the intersecting forms of hegemony at stake within their agendas. In working from a decolonial intersectional framework, analysis was able to unlock access the power relations that are (re)constructed through pro-family agendas, showing the potential of this approach for investigations into the ways in which modern/colonial systems are reproduced in contemporary contexts.

The notion that same-sex sexual practices are 'unAfrican' has been central to homophobic discourse across the continent, and has been fueled by pro-family knowledge production and activists, making it a key discourse for critical discussion within this project. In investigating this discourse, I show

how contemporary homophobias in Africa are not exceptional, but rather extend a historical trajectory of suspicion about western efforts to control reproductivity and bodies in Africa.

Emerging strategies of the pro-family movement

Through critical interrogation of the ideological work of the pro-family movement and its efforts to grow strategic networks in Africa, this project uncovered emerging strategies of the movement to gain international support and power. These strategies took the form of discursive mechanisms that enable the pro-family movement to firstly, position itself as moderate and 'mainstream' and secondly, to position itself as serving the interests of the global south.

In order to position itself as 'moderate' well-meaning, the pro-family movement has used three primary strategies. First, it has greatly shifted its rhetoric from a tone of open condemnation towards a tone of 'love', through its emphasis on preserving marriage and 'family' as heterosexuals - only institutions. Recognizing that same-sex marriage, in particular, is increasingly accepted in U.S. society and internationally, the pro-family movement is beginning to see the disadvantage of explicitly condemning LGBTIQ+ people as it works to remain relevant, especially amongst younger generations. Second, much ideological work is underway at pro-family research centers to articulate 'family values' in relation to development imperatives. Through the use of terms such as "marriage premium" and the construction of connections between 'strong families' and 'prosperity', the pro-family movement constructs the 'natural' family as being best suited to economic development imperatives. This discourse promotes pro-family politics in both the U.S. context and internationally, especially in so-called 'developing' nations in the global south. Finally, the movement constructs itself as being a promoter of 'freedom', and 'religious freedom' more specifically. In doing so, the movement reorients democratic notions of freedom in relation to 'religious values' and away from protections and equal rights for the historically oppressed. These strategies have been effective in the movement's efforts to grow its support base internationally, and have provided a 'common ground' upon which the movement can gain allies from the global south who are in positions of power and who are also being challenged by feminist, decolonial, and queer movements in their own contexts.

In working to grow and strengthen its advocacy networks in Africa, the pro-family movement has worked to position itself as a legitimate voice of the global south, and to position western feminists and gay rights activists as the neo-imperialists who are recruiting African people into their agendas.

Through colorblind rhetoric that universalizes and dehistoricizes the nuclear family unit, the pro-family movement works to align itself with the efforts of African nations to establish economic independence and political sovereignty from the 'depraved' and 'decadent' West. In pegging 'homosexuality' onto long standing suspicions across the continent about western interventions into African reproductivity, the movement enhances its credibility and image of being 'in touch' with African concerns and realities. Furthermore, the opportunities for connection building and information sharing made possible by the internet have not been lost on the pro-family movement. Rather, blogs, social media, and pro-family news sites have facilitated the international dissemination of U.S. pro-family discourse and knowledge.

Colonizing lifecourse imaginaries, reinforcing modern/colonial power relations

Pro-family activism, as I have found in this project, is not only about oppressing particular *categories* of people, such as women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer people. Rather, the movement seeks to prescribe a particular *lifecourse imaginary* that is defined by a specific set of 'choices' that, when placed in a particular sequence, are said to produce outcomes that are economically productive and socially beneficial. This lifecourse imaginary deploys a mechanics of power that can increase the forces of the body in terms of economic productivity, while simultaneously decreasing its forces in relation to political agency (Foucault 1977, 138). The disciplining of the body, as discussed by Foucault, is the art of ranking and circulating individualized bodies within networks of power relations (143), by organizing an analytical space in which the "dangerous multitudes" can be transformed into "ordered multiplicities" (148). As research revealed, the pro-family movement constructs the family as an analytical space in which the bodies of citizens can be disciplined and mechanized in relation to the interests of capitalist accumulation (148). Sex, according to pro-family activists, must put the body to (re)productive use. Sexual activity that is *not* reproductive (i.e. sex with contraception, sex outside of marriage, same-sex sex and casual sex) is constructed a violation of the "principle of non-idleness" which constructs the wasteful use of time as "moral offense and economic dishonesty" (154). For pro-family activists, the family becomes a potentially powerful (re)productivity machine if individuals conform to a particular lifecourse which involves a set of choices made in a particular order: Courtship, then heterosexual marriage, then sexual activity for the purpose of reproduction, and finally parenthood. The linear ordering of this lifecourse, which is centered on the 'natural family', plots out a singular narrative of the 'productive' and 'moral' lifecourse; one that is centered on Christonormative and heteropatriarchal ideas of sex, gender, sexuality, reproduction, and kinship. Pro-family discourses work to naturalize this mechani-

zation of the body, making it appear universal. Consideration of the modern/colonial ancestry of the construction of the 'natural family' enables one to more deeply understand what is at stake in pro-family movement agendas when they are deployed in African contexts. Namely, the preservation and reinscription of eurocentric social and geo-political orders.

In attempting to prescribe that all people follow a particular lifecourse, pro-family activists attempt to dominate life and render it impossible to consider or imagine alternatives that could disrupt the imperialist white supremacist capitalist [hetero]patriarchal (hooks 2004, p. xi) status quo. This linear, heteropatriarchal lifecourse leaves no room for interpretation or reconfiguration within pro-family discourse which asserts this sequence of events as constituting the 'natural' order of life. Any disruption of this sequence, or its reordering in any way, is said to threaten the economy, society, and nation. The universalization of the natural family and the heteropatriarchal lifecourse imaginary normalizes the hierarchies of power that structure the nuclear family (between fathers/husbands, mothers/wives and children) so as to naturalize other hierarchies of power, such as those that structure geo-political relations between the global north, and U.S. in particular, and south. In constructing the nuclear family as a universal norm, the pro-family movement reinforces the epistemic authority and intellectual hegemony of the West. As a construct that has heritage in the bio-political and modern/colonial forms of western power, the nuclear family model has applications at both local and geo-political scales.

As Hill-Collins (1998) writes, the heteropatriarchal family structure functions not only to maintain male, and heterosexual dominance, but also to legitimize other forms of domination and subordination that sustain white, heterosexual, middle-class, and Christian privilege (63). Thus, in addition to reinforcing notions that some forms of family are more moral and economically productive than others, pro-family discourses on the 'natural family' protect and reinforce modern/colonial ideologies that some members of society are more valuable and productive than others. As an ideal produced by Empire and sustained by middle-class religious conservatives, the nuclear family continues to sustain the forms of power that it was originally intended to entrench in the interests of capitalism, despite its contemporary appeals to appear colourblind and decolonial. A "fundamental principle of social organization" (63), the nuclear family enables relations of racial, economic, and geo-political relations of domination and subordination to be reinscribed. In mobilizing the notion that the nuclear family formation is universal and natural, pro-family discourses attempt to transcend the history of colonialism; A strategy that ultimately reinforces the Eurocentric mythology that legitimized imperialist conquest, exploitation, and domination.

In reinforcing raced, gendered, sexed, and classed forms of hierarchy, pro-family discourses also reinscribe knowledge-power relations between the global north and south. In constructing the 'natural family' as a universal 'norm', the pro-family movement repositions themselves and U.S. more broadly, as the most authoritative on how families, and ultimately societies, economies, and nations should be structured. The notion of the 'natural' family protects the epistemic authority of Euro-American white men who are at the forefront of pro-family knowledge production, and who stand to gain the most from its construction as a universal norm. In reinvigorating the idealization of the heterosexual, monogamous, and reproductive family unit and articulating itself as an ally of the global south, the pro-family movement is invested in a global system of power that privileges the West epistemically as the 'inventor' of the nuclear family. The material privileges simultaneously claim the U.S. as the ideal site from which transnational capitalism should be managed (Jakobsen 2002, 62). Through its promotion of the 'natural' family as the kinship formation most compatible with economic growth, pro-family rhetoric is complimentary with the neoliberal free market system that has resulted in the widening of the gap between the world's richest and poorest nations, and people. The ongoing scramble for African natural resources and the extent to which foreign companies are capitalizing on their extraction, remain unmentioned by pro-family activists as causes of this growing inequality. Rather, feminism and gay rights are scapegoated for social fragmentation and increasing precarity. The knowledge-power effects of pro-family activism reveal the ways in which relations of power shape epistemology, as discussed by Pascale (2016, p.219) and also how epistemology shapes relations of power. In its efforts to universalize the nuclear family formation, the pro-family movement reproduces the epistemic authority of white Christians from the West, providing a justificatory basis upon which other white western interests can be pursued.

Thinking ahead

This investigation of the pro-family movement has revealed one form of ideological work that is involved in holding modern/colonial systems of hegemony in place such as white supremacy, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and the geo-political dominance of the West. While it may be more difficult to convince the global south that white supremacist, nationalist and neoliberal discourses and agendas serve their best interests, "family values" discourses laden with affective notions of "love", "common sense", "tradition", and nostalgia, are arguably more palatable and attractive to global south audiences in order to indirectly reinforce, and gain consent, for the protection and advancement of the others.

While anti-colonial, queer, and feminist movements have made important legislative gains, and have opened up new social realities, imaginaries, and possibilities internationally, the advances made by the pro-family movement indicate that the struggle for equal rights, regardless of one's gender, gender identity, race, or sexual orientation, is far from over. Rather, as recent developments in the U.S. indicate, the clock can be quickly set back on the civil rights of these groups, despite the decades of work that it has taken to achieve them. With the election of Donald Trump in 2017 in the U.S. and growing support for white ethno-nationalist movements across Europe, the opportunities for the pro-family movement to advance its ideologies in policy, society, and culture have opened up exponentially, with 'family values' proponents located in some of the highest seats of government. During the process of this project, numerous political and social developments occurred in the U.S. and African countries in relation to sexuality and gender. New pieces of legislation, ongoing anti-gay 'crackdowns', unprecedented levels of violence directed at LGBTIQ+ identified people globally, the arrest and detention of LGBTIQ+ activists by African governments, homophobic and (hetero)sexist remarks made by people in positions of leadership continue to emerge. These developments are actively promoted by the 'pro-family' movement which is working globally to reconfigure modern/colonial structures of power. Therefore ongoing research and investigation into the movement is required as it adopts new strategies in relation to shifting social dynamics and geopolitical power relations.

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