The Transnational Politics of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill: Competing Networks and Movement Dynamics

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On my honor
I have neither given nor received
unauthorized aid on this thesis.

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Abstract

Transnational advocacy networks (TANs) play an important role in restructuring global governance and maintaining international norms. Recent literature has amassed highlighting the role of transnational advocacy networks, movements, and coalitions in the promotion of international human rights norms. Drawing on social movement theory and literature on transnational advocacy networks, this paper analyzes the dynamics of transnational movement activity surrounding Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill. I argue that Ugandan human rights activists strategize with international actors to both strengthen the local movement and conceal Western power. Secondly, the case in Uganda highlights the presence of competing networks working to both promote and limit LGBT rights. Although Ugandan human rights activists are able to overcome traditional North-South power imbalances to a certain extent, they rely on the international community's implicit pressure and structural power to exhibit influence over the Ugandan government.

"I remember the moment when my friend David Kato, Uganda's best-known gay activist, sat with me in the small unmarked office of our organization, Sexual Minorities Uganda. "One of us will probably die because of this work," he said. We agreed that the other would then have to continue. In January, because of this work, David was bludgeoned to death at his home, with a hammer. Many people urged me to seek asylum, but I have chosen to remain and fulfill my promise to David - and to myself. My life is in danger, but the lives of those whose names are not known in international circles are even more vulnerable. Still, I continue to hope…" – Frank Mugisha, Ugandan Human Rights Activist

International human rights organizations, governments, and domestic movements work to expose instances of human rights violations throughout the world and restore justice to victims of discrimination. In a globalized world, increased communication and capital flows provide human rights activists with the resources and framework to advocate transnationally. Research analyzing how globalization affects our traditional understanding of social movements has greatly expanded over the past ten years, with a particular emphasis on new forms of transnational activism (Garner 1994; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 1998).

Recognized as a powerful way to promote international norms, transnational advocacy networks (TANs) are networks of actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services (Keck and Sikkink 1998). These networks are prevalent in issue areas characterized by high value content, such as human rights. Recently, powerful and dynamic TANs have emerged in response to Uganda's draft Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB). Introduced in 2009 by Ugandan Member of Parliament David Bahati, the proposed legislation seeks to protect the "traditional family values of the people of Uganda against the attempts of sexual rights activists seeking to impose their values of sexual promiscuity on the people of Uganda" (Preamble of the AHB, 2009). The draft

Bill would impose the punishment of life imprisonment for the "offense of homosexuality" and declares individuals that commit "aggravated homosexuality" to be "liable on conviction to suffer death" (AHB, 2009). Among several additional egregious stipulations, the Bill outlaws the failure to disclose an "offense" of homosexuality to relevant authorities within twenty-four hours.

Although five countries impose the death penalty for homosexuality and seventy-six countries consider homosexuality illegal (Dicklitch 2012), the Ugandan AHB has garnered unprecedented international attention and media coverage. This notoriety can be partially attributed to the U.S. religious right's involvement in the instigation of the Bill. After losing credibility within the American political system, U.S. religious conservatives involved in the domestic anti-gay movement partnered with prominent Ugandan religious leaders in a campaign to restrict the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. However, competing with this campaign is a transnational advocacy network committed to promoting global LGBT rights and ensuring the removal of Uganda's AHB from parliamentary consideration. The coordination of the Ugandan LGBT activists and their ability to create a resonant frame, mobilize resources, and take advantage of political opportunity structures enabled them to build, and most importantly lead, a strong transnational advocacy network. While there has been significant media coverage of Uganda's AHB, literature examining the networks of actors involved in the movements to both promote and defeat the Bill has been limited. Drawing on theoretical formulations from social movement theory and literature on transnational advocacy networks, this paper examines the movement activity surrounding Uganda's draft Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

In the following section, I provide a review of the literature on the domestic and transnational dimensions of social movement theory and the theoretical tools used to explain movement success. I then explore the role of transnational advocacy networks in global politics and how the boomerang model is used to depict a TAN's diffusion of international norms. Next, I highlight the presence of two transnational movements with competing ideologies operating to influence the Ugandan government. Within the religious transnational network, I illustrate the U.S. religious right's involvement in the instigation of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. I then explore the dynamics of the transnational advocacy network operating to defeat the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, and the extent to which local activists are able to overcome traditional power imbalances in transnational activism. This paper contributes to the literature on TANs by introducing how competing transnational advocacy networks can interfere with the promotion of international human rights norms.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY: FROM THE DOMESTIC TO THE TRANSNATIONAL

Throughout history, the form and scope of social movements have undergone significant changes based on the availability of resources and modes of communication. While definitions of social movements vary, most conceptualizations are based on three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action, change-orientated goals or claims, non-institutional collective action, a degree of organization, and an element of temporal continuity (Snow et al. 2004: 6). Tarrow (1998) defines social movements as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (p.4). Overtime, attributing the broader political

system to opportunities for sustained, collective action became a central component of movement research (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam et al. 1996; Meyer 2004). This realization eventually led to the emergence of a set of analytical tools to gauge certain factors that affect movement success. These factors are now formally known as political opportunity structures, resource mobilization structures, and framing processes.

The manner in which individuals and groups mobilize is a function not only of their resources but also of the openings, barriers, and resources of the political system (Eisinger 1973). Kitschelt (1986) argued that a nation's *political opportunity structure* helps explain variations in movement impact. Political opportunity structures (POS) are comprised of "specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others" (Kitschelt 1986: 58). The POS concept assumes that while environmental factors can impose certain constraints on political activity and collective action, they can also open avenues for mobilization. According to Meyer (2004), the key aspect of the political opportunity perspective is that "activists' prospects for advancing particular claims, mobilizing supporters, and affecting influence are context-dependent" (p. 126). The understanding that exogenous factors can enhance or inhibit the scope of a social movement helps explain the wide variation in movement success.

The influence of social movements is also inextricably linked to the aggregation of resources, organizational capacity, and the ability of movement actors to develop linkages with external collectivities. *Resource mobilization structures* refer to the

"collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996: 3). Coordination and strategic effort on behalf of social movement organizations are necessary in order to convert resources such as time, effort, and money into a broader strategy resulting in collective action. In addition, the choice of organizational form can directly impact movement efficacy.

The combination of political opportunities and mobilizing structures are inefficient to account for collective action. Applying Erving Goffman's concept of framing to social movements, David Snow (1986) introduced the importance of ideas and sentiments in understanding collective action. *Framing processes* refer to the "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996: 6). Movement actors employ the use of frames to further substantiate their claims, and appeal to a broader audience.

While social movement theory was developed within a domestic context, the emergence of globalization and its effects on transnational communication provided the impetus for theorists to apply the social movement framework internationally. At the end of the twentieth century, Garner (1994) recognized that movements were transitioning from fairly coherent national organizations into transnational networks linked together by new technologies of communication. During this time, world politics involved the interaction and global integration of states, non-state actors, and international organizations (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The increase in non-state actors, new arenas for action, and the blurring of distinctions between domestic and global levels of politics

created an ideal environment for the emergence of a transnational civil society (Khagram et al. 2002).

With increased economic and communication flows, globalization not only enhanced possibilities for transnational collective action but also brought "citizens of the north and west and those of the east and south closer together, making the former more cosmopolitan and the latter more aware of their inequality" (Tarrow 1998: 179). Tarrow (1998) argues that the emergence of a global economy and its associated communication structures resulted in a network of transnational organizations that mobilize around international norms and the inequalities created by economic globalization. Thus, it can be argued that the rise in international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank provide opportunity structures for domestic challengers to contest at an international level (Tarrow 1998; Khagram et al. 2002). Recent scholars have referred to this trend as a "globalization from below," whereby actors from the global South organize in the pursuit of international alternatives and challenge the "elite-driven, top-down form of economic globalization" (Bandy and Smith 2002: 1).

While Tarrow (1998) and Bandy and Smith (2002) place a large emphasis on the role of international institutions in provoking transnational contention, Thayer (2001) recognizes two sides of globalization. Thayer (2001) argues that while economic globalization has exacerbated inequalities and impoverishment, political and cultural globalization offer tools for transformation. The cultural and political influences of globalization facilitate new types of social movements that transcend national boundaries, construct hybrid identities and incorporate global networks of allies (Thayer 2001). These transnational social movements can be conceptualized as, "sustained contentious

interactions with opponents—national or non-national—by connected networks of challengers organized across national boundaries" (Tarrow 1998: 184). Through the progression of transnational social movements, it is clear that local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are able to take advantage of the positive effects of globalization, while still drawing on resources of their own. Often formed as a partnership between actors in the global North and South to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms, transnational advocacy networks (TANs) can emerge from transnational social movements.

Activists' claims around issues amenable to international action do not always produce transnational advocacy networks. TANs are most likely to emerge when channels between domestic groups and their governments are ineffective for resolving a conflict, activists believe that networking will further their mission, and international conferences or contacts create avenues for forming and strengthening networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998). While TANs can incorporate a wide variety of actors, research suggests that international and domestic NGOs play a central role in these networks, usually initiating action and pressuring more powerful actors to take positions (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Conditions under which TANs are most likely to affect political outcomes can be characterized based on *issue characteristics* and *actor characteristics.* Issue characteristics include resonance within existing national or institutional agendas. Evidence suggests that TANs organize most effectively around issues involving physical harm to vulnerable or innocent individuals, and issues involving legal equality of opportunity (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The ability of actors to transmit these messages in an effective way is referred to as actor characteristics (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Thus,

success in influencing policy depends on the strength and density of a network and actors' ability to achieve leverage within a broader political climate. The analytical tools developed in social movement theory such as framing processes, resource mobilization, and political opportunity structures can also be useful to understand certain prerequisites for the success of transnational social movements.

TANs strategically 'frame' issues to make them comprehensible to target audiences, to attract attention and encourage action, and to fit within a broader, political context (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Successfully generating a widely embraced frame that resonates across cultural contexts often depends on the role of mass media. Recently, one of the most successful transnational framing efforts has been the creation of a common transnational conception of human rights (McCarthy 1997). International human rights norms empower and legitimate TANs, and can help domestic actors attract international allies. Khagram et al. (2002) define international norms as "shared expectations or standards of appropriate behavior accepted by states and intergovernmental organizations that can be applied to states, intergovernmental organizations, and/or non-state actors of various kinds" (p.14). Networks play an important role in promoting norm implementation through pressuring target actors to comply with regional and international standards.

Actors' ability to leverage resources and form linkages with external groups is central to their possibility of achieving a broad message that resonates transnationally. Because social movements are most likely to develop around emergent, socially constructed categories of shared identity, informal and formal institutions are important vehicles to facilitate mobilization. Building upon these preexisting social relations and

forming partnerships with external actors are imperative for the success of transnational movements.

In addition to framing and resource mobilization, actors in transnational social movements frequently create and take advantage of political opportunities at the international level. The effectiveness of transnational advocacy networks can be explained by both domestic opportunity structures, and transnational political opportunity structures (Khagram et al. 2002). These "multilayered" opportunity structures are shaped by the characteristics of the international or transnational political environment that provide incentives or constraints for collective action (Khagram et al. 2002). The phrases 'open' and 'closed' political opportunity structures refer to a nation's level of openness to the mobilization of social organizations (Kitschelt 1986). This level of openness exists on a continuum, ranging from very open political environments that assimilate social movements to extremely closed regimes that repress social movements.

International political opportunity structures interact with domestic political opportunity structures, explaining the success or failure of transnational advocacy networks. This interaction is depicted in Keck and Sikkink's 'boomerang model.'

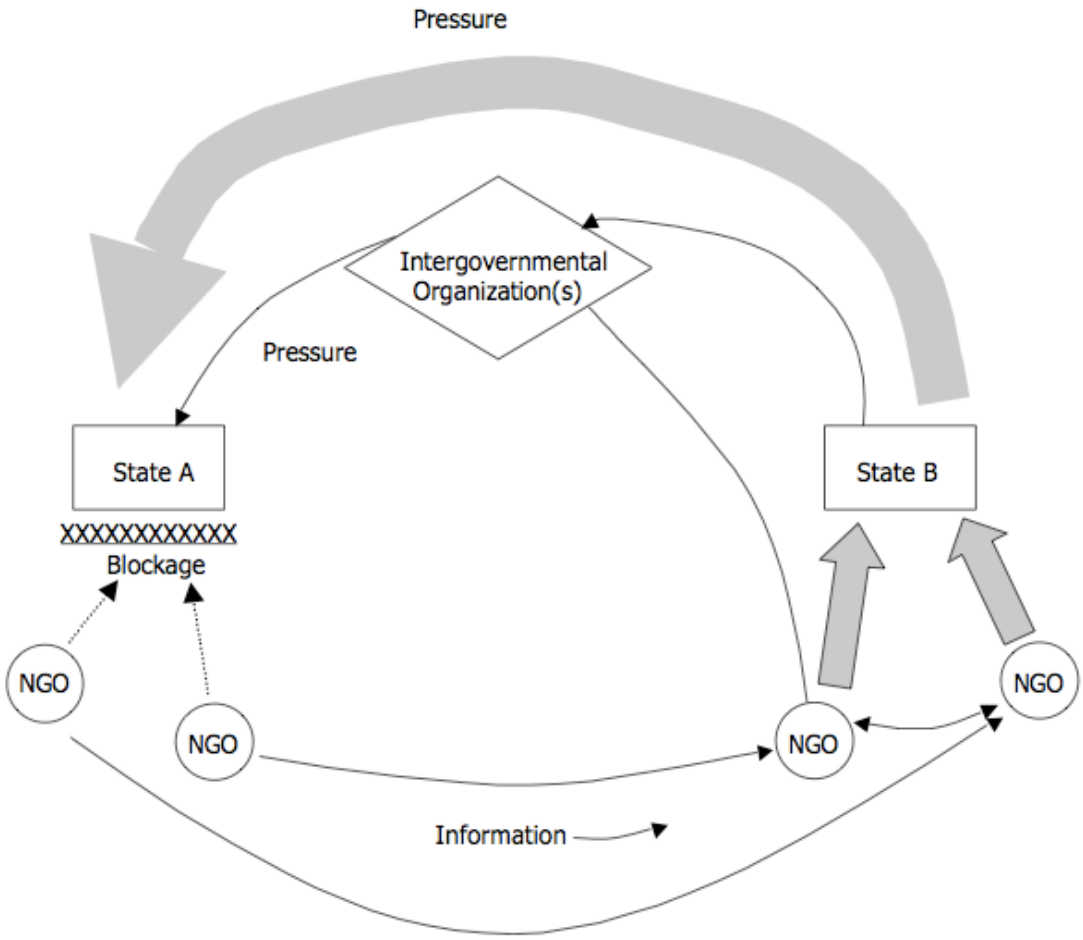

Figure 1: Boomerang Model

Source: Adapted from Keck and Sikkink (1998:13).

The 'boomerang effect' occurs when channels between the state and its domestic actors are blocked, usually due to a human rights violation. Responding to this blockage, domestic NGOs directly seek international allies to bring outside pressure to their state (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Within this model, local groups in a repressive state form alliances with international advocates who exert outside pressure on the norm-violating states. International contacts amplify the demands of domestic groups and echo these demands into the domestic arena through direct pressure (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As depicted in the final stage of the boomerang model, more powerful states put pressure on

the norm-violating state to comply with international norms. Through the conditionality strategy, more powerful actors in the global North link a violation of human rights practices "to the cut-off of military and economic aid, or to worsening bilateral diplomatic relations" (p. 97). This pattern of influence operates based on existing power imbalances between actors in the global North and global South. Although domestic NGOs are a crucial link in the initial stages of the boomerang pattern of influence, their role diminishes as 'more powerful' actors take hold of the movement. The boomerang model operates based on the understanding that "weak, internal southern actors" (Tarrow 2003: 11) and "struggling domestic groups" (Risse and Sikkink 1999: 18) rely on stronger transnational actors to pressure their government and achieve changes in policy.

Past studies chart the applicability of the boomerang model and conditions under which TANs are most effective (Hildrebrant 2012; Shawki 2011; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Although most literature on LGBT transnational activism focuses on the globalization of gay identities, Hildebrant (2012) applied the boomerang model to LGBT activism in China and found that domestic political conditions limit linkages between domestic NGOs and international actors. While aspects of the boomerang model accurately depict the transnational advocacy networks surrounding Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill, my analysis of movement activity in Uganda highlights the influence of networks driven by competing ideologies and the pivotal role of local activists in guiding transnational strategies.

THE NETWORKS: CREATING AND OPPOSING UGANDA'S ANTI HOMOSEXUALITY BILL

In Uganda, homosexuality is considered an affront on culture and religion. Results of a recent study found that 95% of Ugandans view homosexuality as “repugnant and absolutely unacceptable to [their] culture” (Dicklitch et al. 2002: 462). While history reveals that homosexuality predates colonialism and was neither condoned nor completely suppressed during that time period, Ugandans view homosexuality as “un-African” and an import from the West (Tamale 2007). In response to "emerging internal and external threats to the traditional heterosexual family," (AHB 2009) the Anti-Homosexuality Bill was introduced in Uganda. The introduction of this draft Bill has spurred a global debate on the rights of LGBT individuals worldwide and the balance between national sovereignty and upholding international human rights standards.

Movement activity around LGBT rights in Uganda highlights the presence of two transnational movements driven by competing ideologies. In one transnational network, religious leaders in the U.S. and Uganda have formed partnerships based on the common belief that homosexuals pose a significant threat to Ugandan society. According to a Ugandan human rights activist,

> The way I see it, homophobia - not homosexuality - is the toxic import. Thanks to the absurd ideas peddled by American fundamentalists, we are constantly forced to respond to the myth - debunked long ago by scientists - that homosexuality leads to pedophilia. For years, the Christian right in America has exported its doctrine to Africa, and, along with it, homophobia. (Mugisha, 12.23.11)

While U.S. religious conservatives are not directly responsible for the creation of the Bill, I argue that their presence exacerbated the homophobia in Uganda and complicates the context from which the Bill was introduced. In a separate transnational movement with a competing rationale, Ugandan human rights activists and their foreign allies are dedicated to promoting the rights of LGBT individuals and defeating Uganda’s AHB. As part of

this campaign, Western political leaders have responded to the Bill with threats to withhold aid to Uganda and to restrict international trade benefits. President Obama referred to the proposed legislation as "odious" and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called it "a very serious potential violation of human rights" (Jopson 2009).

While the arguments of U.S. religious leaders resonate deeply with Ugandan supporters of the Bill, overt Western pressure and public condemnations by political leaders produces a backlash in Uganda. The strategic response to this backlash has been to "Ugandanize" the issue and to promote back-channel diplomacy. As a result, actors in the network rely on local activists to publicly lead the transnational movement and direct forms of international attention and support. The international community amplifies their efforts through pressuring the Ugandan government in the form of back-channel diplomacy. Although local activists minimize traditional North-South power imbalances to a certain extent, they still rely on the international community's implicit pressure and structural power to exhibit influence over the Ugandan government.

Transnational Religious Networks and the Creation of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill

In 1979, Reverend Jerry Falwell announced a "declaration of war" on homosexuality in America. Several conservative religious leaders quickly followed suit, and waged a domestic culture war under the guise of promoting family values. However, over the past few years, political leaders in the United States have discredited anti-gay activists and have instead instituted the rights of LGBT individuals. Through actions such as a Presidential Memorandum prioritizing global LGBT rights, Secretary Clinton's speech promoting gay rights as human rights, and the legalization of gay marriage, the U.S. has

institutionalized progressive, social norms. The combination of religious conservatives[1] losing ground in the U.S. with growing anti-gay sentiment in Uganda and other African countries provided an opportune moment for the export of the domestic culture war against LGBT individuals. Responding to a relatively closed opportunity structure in the U.S., religious conservatives created channels and alliances with partners from abroad who were more receptive to their influence. Kapya (2009) argues that American religious conservatives who lost credibility in a domestic context depend on their African counterparts to legitimize their position and gain leverage transnationally. An international human rights advocate confirmed that, "[The U.S.] is fighting our culture war in Uganda, we used to fight it here. Evangelicals lost here and so now they are fighting over there" (Informant #6, 2.6.13). A second respondent clearly articulated the transition from anti-gay activism in the U.S. to the spreading of homophobia in Uganda:

> [U.S. anti-gay activists] called it the declaration of war on the gay agenda. And they made up their minds in the US that they were going to through legislation, through amendments, do everything in their power to stop gays from getting married, from getting equality, et cetera. And over all these years it hasn't really worked. In fact it has gone in the opposite direction and [gay individuals] are starting to get some rights. And I think Scott Lively and his cohorts saw this and they thought that they could just go on down there and start conniving and speaking and getting themselves the accolade and the audience that they need in some sort of prototype state where it was ripe for scapegoating, where there was poverty and corruption, and he was successful there. And for me, this is where this uniqueness comes in from the Western perspective. (Informant #4, 1.30.13)

Charting the way that U.S. religious conservatives have enlisted the support of prominent African religious leaders in a campaign to restrict the rights of LGBT individuals, Kaypa (2009) describes the origins and consequences of these alliances. While there is a large amount of secrecy regarding the relationship

[1] In this paper, I use the term religious conservatives to refer to religious leaders promoting socially conservative policies and values, specifically related to homosexuality.

between U.S. mainline churches and Ugandan religious leaders, there is evidence showing that these partnerships include the transfer of funds, resources, and development assistance from religious communities in the global North to the global South (Kapya 2009). One of my respondents who has been living in Uganda for the past eight years and works in the human rights field explained the influence of American religious conservatives in Uganda,

> Religion is massively manipulated in Uganda. There is a huge Evangelical industry. People spend a lot of money for example on books and appearances by American evangelicals and then there are a lot of evangelical preachers and churches which are modeled on you know the particular prosperity and prayer message of the American right. So there is a huge influence (Informant #10, 2.8.13).

Religious alliances in Uganda illustrate the harmful effects of the transfer of ideas and sentiment from U.S. religious conservatives to Ugandan religious leaders and members of parliament. Before the draft AHB, Ugandans "weren't shy about their American influences" (Sharlet 2010: 145) and frequently invited American anti-gay speakers to Uganda. Because Ugandans are highly amenable to the influence of American evangelicals, the rhetoric of U.S. religious leaders has the potential to be a powerful agent of change in Uganda.

The timing of the introduction of the Bill has been specifically linked to a 2009 conference in Uganda, entitled "Seminar on Exposing the Homosexual Agenda." This conference was led by well-known American evangelicals, including Scott Lively, the co-author of a book blaming homosexuals for the Holocaust, Caleb Lee Brundidge, and Don Schmierer. Throughout this seminar and at meetings with Ugandan members of parliament, Scott Lively promoted his book and argued that gays not only seek to take over the world, but also pose a significant threat to society by contributing to higher rates of divorce, child abuse, and HIV/AIDS (Kaoma 2009). Lively declared, "I can't say this

in America, but I can say it in Africa" and added that homosexuals are the "kind of person it takes to run a gas chamber" (Sharlet 2010: 145). Speaking about the 2009 conference, an international human rights advocate explained, "I remember thinking at the time...I wonder how many gay hate crimes could be tracked back even in the U.S. to this type of speech. And I saw a fusion between the USA and Uganda right at that time. And I started exploring Scott Lively and I realized they were losing this fight [in the U.S.]" (Informant #4, 1.30.13). Following the conference, Scott Lively proudly announced in a blog post that an individual in Kampala referred to his campaign as "a nuclear bomb against the 'gay' agenda in Uganda" (Lively, 2009). Five months after the conference, MP David Bahati introduced the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in the Ugandan parliament.

The content in the AHB reflects Scott Lively's arguments about the necessity of protecting Ugandan society from the 'homosexual agenda'. While Bahati denies any direct American influence on his bill, he explains that it is about a shared passion and a common desire for a government by God (Sharlet 2010). One of my respondents, a local human rights activist, explained that Bahati "is just naïve... and practically knows nothing about the subject of this bill" (Informant #5, 1.31.13). Furthermore, "[Bahati] believes that [the bill] is about protection of children, protection of the traditional family…so on that basis, he thinks of himself as a good Christian and a good culturist" (Informant #5, 1.31.13). When asked about Bahati's motivation to write this bill, my respondent explained,

> [Bahati] truly believes that what he is doing is the right thing. But he got the impetus because of Scott Lively and the evangelicals that came in from outside, largely from the U.S. There was a conference when Scott Lively came to Uganda. And they came and announced that they were meeting with MPs, they didn't say Bahati, just MPs. And then what we had next, 5 months later, was the

> Anti-Homosexuality Bill. I think that it was not Bahati's original idea…I think it was motivation from the American, evangelical groups and the pastors here (Informant #5, 1.31.13).

Similarly, another local LGBT activist confirmed that the bill is a reflection of "Bahati being a Christian and having been in touch with the churches…the churches used Bahati actually to push this Bill. They may not have been in position to draft and fight it themselves" (Informant #9,1.31.13).

During the 2009 conference, American evangelicals exacerbated homophobia in Uganda through convincing religious leaders that LGBT individuals seek to destroy Ugandan culture and society. The American religious leaders provided arguments that resonated deeply with Ugandan religious leaders and parliamentarians. Consequently, Ugandans provided their American allies with "examples of the policies too extreme to be implemented in the United States" (Sharlet 2010: 146). The relationship between American evangelicals and Ugandans is well known throughout the LGBT community in the U.S. As one of my respondents indicated, the influence of Scott Lively served as a catalyst for U.S. based LGBT organizations to take action:

> I have spoken on a lot of conference calls with LGBT groups…and we have all come to the conclusion that we are obligated here in the United States of America to find routes to combat this bill because we believe that it is our guy that went there and stirred the pot, and we really believe that if it wasn't for Scott Lively physically conniving, not just the language and the rhetoric…it is about the act of the deed, of the conniving to bring about the persecution and that has had a huge impact on me, and many others as well in wanting to defeat this bill. We can't understate the injustice, but it is this added thing of the Evangelicals we feel are responsible. (Informant #4, 1.30.13)

Because of the added evangelical influence, international LGBT organizations felt more of a responsibility to combat the bill. Dedicated to working in partnership with Ugandan LGBT activists, the international community realized that this bill was no longer solely a Ugandan issue but an injustice that could affect the rest of the world. However, without

the coordination and tenacity of the Ugandan LGBT activists, the transnational alliance dedicated to defeating the AHB would not have been able to occur on such a wide scale.

Transnational Opposition to the Bill: Actors, Strategy, and Agency

The transnational advocacy network dedicated to defeating Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill is comprised of Ugandan activists, international human rights organizations, and members from governmental and inter-governmental agencies. Each actor in the network serves an important function and furthers the mission of the overall campaign. While Ugandans lead the public campaign, the international community plays a large role in providing support "behind the scenes." After the introduction of the Bill, local activists strategically mobilized in Uganda and built a strong local network opposing the Bill. While taking advantage of external linkages is a large part of their strategy, they also place a large emphasis on utilizing their local resources and harnessing the power of their common identity in Uganda. When their efforts need to be amplified by external actors, local activists enlist the support of their international allies.

In this campaign, the international community's support is diverse and multi-faceted. According to a local activist, the international community plays a role in "filling in the gaps where [local activists] couldn't reach" (Informant #5, 1.31.13). Although Ugandan activists "have some direct communication with the politicians through the diplomatic missions that work [in Uganda]," their "main liaison is human rights organizations" (Informant #1, 1.29.13). International human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and international LGBT organizations, coordinate with local activists to ensure that their interventions are relevant and necessary. An international human rights advocate explained, "we coordinate with

the activist to make sure that whatever we are doing is not going to be harmful" (Informant #12, 2.15.13). The specific forms of support from international human rights organizations vary from financial assistance to connecting activists with external actors who can amplify their demands. According to a representative from a prominent international human rights organization, "in every case, I think we have had something to do with connecting the journalist to the activist….so a huge amount of our work is actually staying invisible sometimes in a lot of ways" (Informant #2, 1.29.13). In addition to international human rights groups, the diplomatic community in Uganda plays a pivotal role in this network. A United States government official confirmed that the American embassy in Uganda "has been such a tremendous leader and we have been really lucky to have them" (Informant #8, 2.8.13). They too provide financial support to local activists, and play a role in opening channels between Ugandans and Western political leaders. In this section, I explore the dynamics of the partnership between actors in the international community and the local activists.

Uganda's well-coordinated civil society provided a strong platform from which local activists could develop a cohesive message that resonated with transnational actors. A United States government official confirmed that what is "unique in the Ugandan context is that there was already such a robust civil society and organization of LGBT people" (Informant #8, 2.8.13). Before the Bill was introduced, lesbian and gay organizations operated in Uganda as support groups, rather than overt activist campaigns (Tamale 2007). Initially, gay and lesbian activists avoided public visibility, which made it difficult for homosexuals to "demand their rights in Uganda with a unified voice" (Tamale 2007: 21). In March 2004, an LGBT umbrella organization, Sexual Minorities

Uganda (SMUG) was launched to strengthen the movement for the rights of LGBT people in Uganda. During this time, newspapers in Uganda began publicly outing gay individuals, revealing "nicknames, the workplaces, and the residences" (Informant #9, 1.31.13) and creating an environment of fear for LGBT individuals. A local LGBT activist stated,

> When my family and a few people started knowing I was gay, they started distancing themselves. I started feeling left out of place, and I realized that my next closest family were people like me, so I developed a strong attachment for the gay community because I made them my family, they were the ones I would run to and cry to, and ask for support. So I got this stronger bond to defend. (Informant #9, 1.31.13)

Building a unified LGBT community in Uganda developed organically overtime and in response to a growing marginalization of gay-identified individuals. As a local activist explained, "when [the Bill] came up, first and foremost we had already built a network" (Informant #9, 1.31.13). This "solidarity in the gay community in Uganda" gave activists the confidence to be "very radical" (Informant #3, 1.30.13).

After the introduction of the Bill, LGBT activists in Uganda harnessed the power of their local network and made the strategic decision to create a coalition aimed to defeat the AHB. Currently, the Coalition is comprised of 51 Ugandan civil society organizations that focus on a wide range of human rights issues. A local activist explained the partnerships within the Coalition:

> It was the first time in Uganda that we had a coalition of LGBTI and non-LGBTI actors and organizations coming together to propose an issue that has to do with LGBTI persons or groups. So it was the first time that you have separated groups that have joined, and not even half of them are LGBTI groups. So we had different actors from the child rights movement, HIV/AIDS movement, refugee law organizations, general human rights organizations, joining together to oppose the bill. So that kind of reach showed that this was not an LGBTI issue but a broader, human rights issues on which Ugandan NGOs are willing to engage. We always made it clear that the Ugandan NGOs can speak for themselves, and take the lead on this. (Informant #5, 1.31.13)

The coalition model is extremely powerful in Uganda, and directly contributed to activists' ability to form "contacts with supportive Governments and others outside of Uganda" (Informant #11, 2.6.13). According to a U.S. government official, "the level of sophistication of the groups [in Uganda] does not compare" (Informant #8, 2.8.13). The Coalition also plays a pivotal role in coordinating strategies, and serving as a direct point of contact for the international community:

> So we are coordinating, SMUG and the Coalition are taking lead on this. They send out alerts on how people can get involved, and they talk to embassies down here, how they can ask their governments to get involved on a diplomatic level, and coming out to put much pressure on parliament at once (Informant #3, 1.30.13).

Because activists have strategically organized within a coalition, they are able to articulate local strategies and direct the forms of international attention and support. A Ugandan activist explained that the international community always asks the Coalition, "'what do you think we can do, how can we help, and get involved?' before they come out" (Informant #3, 1.30.13). In addition, local activists have developed a communicative channel to foreign embassies and political leaders. A U.S. government official confirmed that,

> On a daily basis…[local activists] have such excellent communications with our embassy that it is really a good sign if I am not hearing from them directly as much because it means that they feel their channel is working to the US government. (Informant #8, 2.8.13)

An international human rights advocate posed the question, "how do we export this Coalition model to other countries? Because it is clearly needed" (Informant #6, 2.6.13). Because of the Coalition's important role as a mobilizing structure, local activists were able to form strong partnerships with international allies.

The coordination of the local activists and their ability to take advantage of international human rights norms enhanced the level of international support available to Ugandan activists. An international human rights advocate notes, "certainly, there has been a shift from a civil and political rights focus to a economic and social rights focus and that has been on-going for the last 10 years…LGBT rights, that aggregate, is a relatively new-ish area" (Informant #10, 2.8.13). Recently, the U.S. foreign policy agenda incorporated the promotion of institutionalized LGBT rights worldwide. In 2011, President Obama issued the first presidential memorandum to advance the human rights of LGBT individuals. In this memorandum, President Obama ordered the federal government to use all means necessary, including diplomacy and foreign aid, to promote gay rights worldwide. On the same day Obama issued this memorandum, Secretary Clinton delivered a speech claiming that "gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights" (Clinton, 2011). In addition to the public promotion of global LGBT rights, the U.S. government and international human rights organizations have presented numerous accolades honoring the work of Ugandan activists. In 2011, the Coalition was awarded the U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Defender Award for "effectively using the draft anti-homosexuality legislation to spark public dialogue on LGBT rights" (Lanier 2012). This marked the first time in history that the State Department has presented this award to a coalition of local NGOs and to human rights activists promoting the rights of LGBT individuals. Similarly, Ugandan LGBT activists have been the recipients of the Human Rights First Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, the Norwegian Rafto Prize, and the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. The prominence and funds that the local activists have garnered over the past

two years strengthens their network in Uganda. A local activist explained that "many of our colleagues got awards including the Coalition in early 2011. All of this is recognition which backs up our efforts back home in Uganda" (Informant #5, 1.31.13). In this sense, the international community empowers Ugandan LGBT activists and provides them with the resources to expand the local movement.

In all of my interviews with local LGBT activists, they confirmed that the most important strategies for defeating the Bill are "back-channel diplomacy" and "Ugandanizing" the issue (Informant #5, 1.31.13) to prevent a backlash. Private forms of diplomatic engagement are promoted because overt threats and pressure from Western states produce a backlash in Uganda and actually motivate Ugandan parliamentarians to pass the bill. While Keck and Sikkink (1998) argue that direct, explicit pressure can be a very powerful strategy, the case in Uganda shows how this pressure challenges Uganda's national sovereignty. A U.S. government official explained that, "that sort of donor conditionality argument you know has been very difficult" (Informant #8, 2.8.13). According to a local activist, in response to public condemnations from the West, Ugandans "get more rowdy by claiming [the West] is putting sanctions on them, or it is the Western world that is pushing for it" (Informant #9, 1.31.13). As a result, a representative from an inter-governmental agency explained that "the judgment was made early on -- in consultation with local human rights organizations, including members of the Coalition -- that private advocacy would be more effective than public outcry (Informant #11, 2.6.13). An international advocate confirmed, "back-channel diplomacy, that's what is going to defeat this. Along with a strong movement in Uganda which is saying gay rights are human rights, leave us alone" (Informant #6, 2.6.13). In

addition to promoting private forms of diplomacy, activists encourage local pressure. Activists repeatedly stated that they "want the pressure to come within, to be Ugandan pressure, not international pressure" (Informant #3, 1.30.13). A local human rights activist explained, "we advise more back-door advocacy and letting us, empowering us who come out openly gay in Uganda…to make it look local, not Western (Informant #3, 1.30.13). A U.S. government official confirmed that, "part of what has really helped in Uganda is that there are so many more Ugandan voices, and such a range of Ugandan voices speaking out against [the bill] that it is not just the United States' pet project (Informant #8, 2.6.13).

Because overt pressure from the West hinders the movement, actors in this network recognize the important role of local activists in directing forms of international attention and support. "Ugandanizing" the issue prevents arguments that the West is undermining Uganda's national sovereignty, and empowers local activists to take initiative and lead the transnational movement. An international human rights advocate explained the role of the Coalition in providing guidance on preferred forms of international support:

> I don't think that always in Uganda that push is going to be helpful, I think it can create backlash as well…I think the Coalition has been doing a great job of sending the e-mails keeping us updated, and that has set up a challenge for the international community to be like, "okay, that's the time to push, that's the time to stand back." And you know, not always the message gets to everybody at the same time, and also who are the point pressures, who are the people you should be targeting and who are those you shouldn't be targeting. So I think that has been a little bit of the challenge for the international community – what is actually helpful? Being vocal or not? And when? (Informant #12, 2.15.13)

Furthermore, an international human rights advocate articulated that because of "the nature of the local activists, they are smart…their courage, and their persistence and presence, they really make the internationals bow to their will more than what usually

happens" (Informant #10, 2.8.13). A prominent LGBT activist in Uganda emphasized that from the beginning, local activists "wanted [their] advocacies, or strategies to drive [international] strategies" (Informant #1, 1.29.13). A local activist described how "Western people, of course, spoke out because they were also concerned about [the Bill], but primarily it was our issue" (Informant #5, 1.31.13). Reiterating that the movement to defeat the Bill is a response to a Ugandan issue is important, as it furthers the claims of local activists and prevents a backlash.

When international tactics differ from Ugandan activists preferred form of support, local activists are vocal in expressing these concerns and guiding alternative actions. In November 2012, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs warned Ugandan speaker of parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, not to trample on LGBT rights. Kadaga replied: "If homosexuality is a value for the people of Canada they should not seek to force Uganda to embrace it. We are not a colony or a protectorate of Canada" (BBC 2012). An international human rights activist explained, "[Kadaga's] in Canada and the Canadian foreign minister calls her out on the LGBT issue- he publicly rebuked her. And that just then egged her on to bring [the Bill] back" (Informant #6, 2.6.13). After this public encounter, Kadaga returned to Uganda and promised her constituents to expedite the process and pass the Bill as a "Christmas gift" to the Ugandan people. This scenario highlights the dangers of explicit pressure and threats from the West, and further substantiates the strategies of back-channel diplomacy and local pressure. In response to the international community's breach of local activists' requests for more private diplomatic discussions, Ugandan activists issued an action alert directed towards their international supporters. They urged international allies to "always seek clarification

where there is a difference of opinion on tactics or where there is confusion or need for further information" (Action Alert 2012). In this action alert, Ugandan activists outlined specific guidelines for their international partners to follow and were explicit in highlighting what does not work. They explained, "We would like Ugandans to take charge of this campaign for now. Only if the Bill is mentioned/programmed in the Business of Parliament or passed into law shall we encourage a fully-fledged international outcry" (Action Alert 2012).

EXTENDING THE BOOMERANG MODEL: COMPETING TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

The competing networks operating to influence the Ugandan government illustrate a reworking of the TAN literature's understanding of the dynamics of transnational contention, particularly the "boomerang" effect. While the boomerang model depicts one network's diffusion of international norms, it does not account for the instigating role that can be played by alternate transnational networks that are driven by a competing rationale. Movement activity in Uganda illustrates how transnational advocacy networks can operate simultaneously with divergent goals. While one movement is committed to the promotion of international human rights norms, the competing movement is driven by an exclusionary religious identity that demonizes gays and lesbians and actively seeks their marginalization around the world. In the figure below, I depict the parallel and competing transnational advocacy networks operating to gain influence over the Ugandan government. On the right, I highlight the TAN connecting human rights activists in Uganda with actors in the international community promoting global LGBT rights. On the left, I illustrate the transnational religious network connecting religious conservatives

in the U.S. to leaders in Uganda working to suppress LGBT rights. Both movements include strong transnational alliances that legitimate and enhance the respective networks.

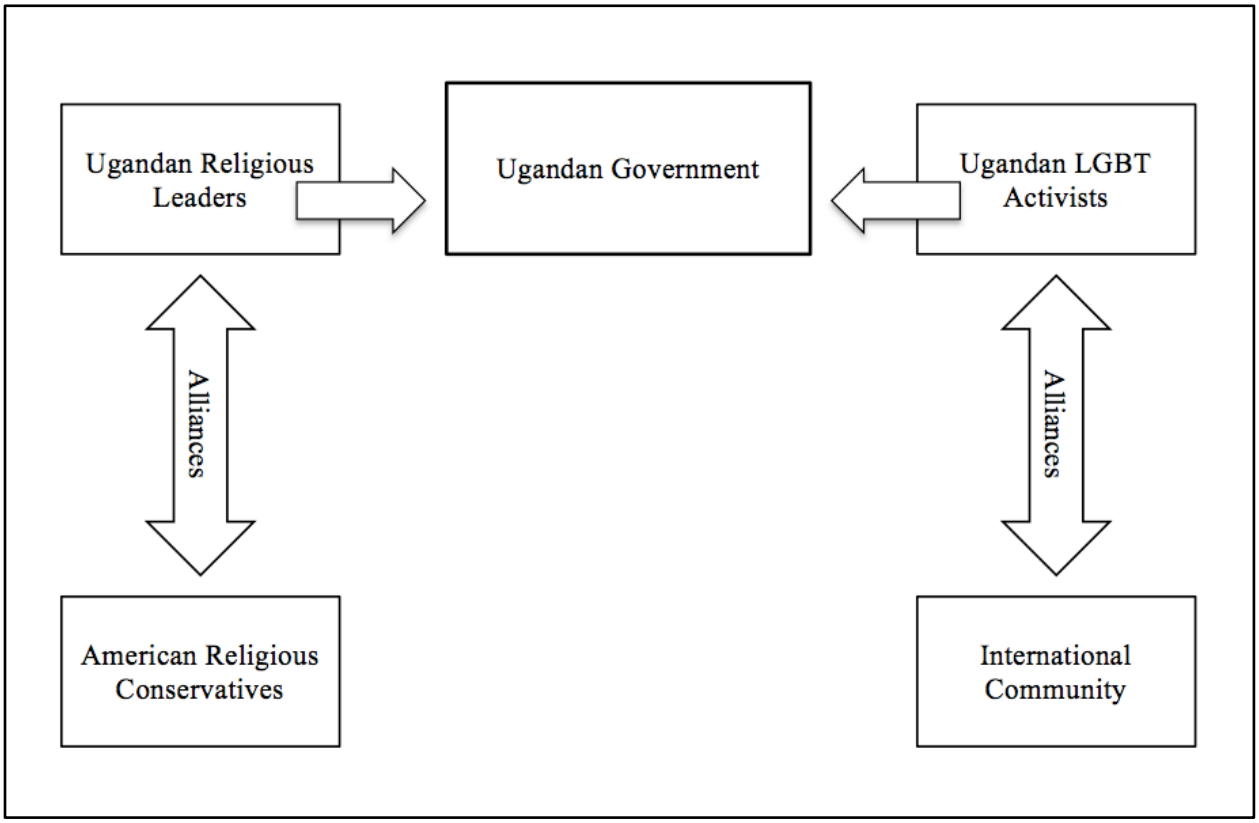

Figure 2: Competing Transnational Advocacy Networks

Although both movements appear to have equal power and influence in Figure 2, the international community's involvement in efforts to defeat the Bill creates vastly unequal transnational networks. While the transnational religious network influenced the creation of this egregious Bill, the Ugandan government's relationship with international allies will prevail as the decisive force in this campaign. Because of the local activists' coordination and success in publicly leading a resonant movement, they have the potential to defeat the AHB. However, if the blockage between the Ugandan government and local activists continues, the role of the international community will become

increasingly important in defeating the Bill. Figure 3 below depicts the influence of the global North's implicit pressure on the Ugandan government.

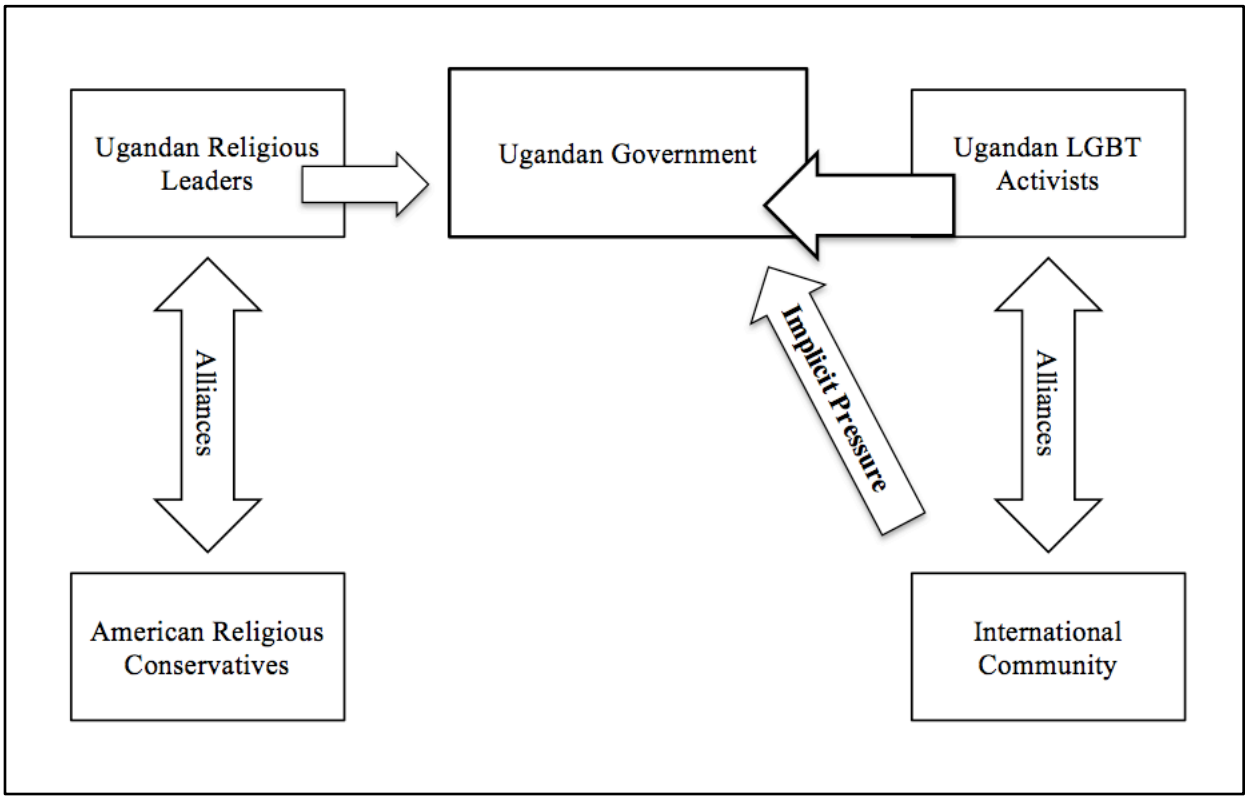

Figure 3: Implicit Pressure

The Bill states that "any international legal instrument whose provisions are contradictory to the spirit and provisions enshrined in this Act, are null and void to the extent of their inconsistency" (AHB 2009). However, if the AHB is enacted into law, the Ugandan government will be ostracized from the global community. As an international advocate stated, "as a country you have a choice: you can either completely isolate yourself or you can go in the middle and be a global operator, or you can become completely Westernized" (Informant #4, 1.30.13). The Ugandan government will have to make this choice the next time the Bill is debated in Parliament. As my respondents indicated, ultimately "[Uganda] will be more concerned with international relations" (Informant #5, 1.31.13) than passing a draconian bill that jeopardizes their position in the global

community. Thus, their final compliance with international norms will be "because of the broader political or financial implications" (Informant #10, 2.8.13).

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, I illustrate the parallel and competing transnational movements and alliances working to both suppress and promote LGBT rights in Uganda. After religious conservatives lost credibility in the U.S., they sought international allies who were more receptive to their influence and claims. Although this exportation of the U.S. culture war did not directly result in the draft Anti-Homosexuality Bill, it complicated the context from which the Bill emerged and exacerbated existing homophobia in Uganda. The creation of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill created a blockage between the Ugandan government and LGBT activists, thereby initiating the boomerang pattern of influence. Due to the coordination of local LGBT activists, they were able to form valuable partnerships with actors in the international community. These partnerships empower local activists, and serve as the base of a strong transnational advocacy network dedicated to pressuring the Ugandan government to remove the AHB from parliamentary debate. Within this movement, because overt pressure from the West produces a backlash, the international community was forced to diminish their public outcry and instead work through domestic actors. As a result, the major strategies to defeat the Bill became back-channel diplomacy and empowering local activists to take the initiative and lead the movement. Unlike Keck and Sikkink's model, which undermines the potential of domestic actors to guide transnational movements, this case study highlights the power of local activists to direct the transnational initiative. While this increased agency is partially

related to the fact that all actors in this TAN recognize the political dangers of the West publicly imposing their views on Ugandan government, it is also a direct reflection of the Ugandan activists strategic coordination.

Appendix. Methodology

In 2011, I had the opportunity to intern for the Coalition in Uganda. In a country where 95% of the population is openly homophobic and supports legislation to curtail the rights of LGBT individuals, affiliation with LGBT activism completely defies all cultural norms. But for those who have no choice but to fight for their sexual identity, they are constantly battling with the possible outcomes of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. During my time at the Coalition, the local activists showed me the true meaning of devotion and the importance of fighting for those who are forced to remain silent. Through working on a small project funded by the U.S. embassy, I saw how the different actors in the movement coordinate efforts, strategies, and mobilize resources. I witnessed the dynamics between local activists, international human rights organizations, and diplomatic missions in Uganda. In all of my encounters, I was inspired at the ability of local activists to assert their opinions and direct forms of international support.

The data collected in this research is a combination of direct observation while in Uganda and in-depth interviews. I conducted 14 Skype interviews with three different groups of actors in this campaign: local activists, international human rights advocates, and Western political leaders in governmental and inter-governmental agencies. I relied on the contacts I formed while in Uganda and employed snowball sampling to gather additional respondents. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, all respondents have been anonymized.

My brief involvement with LGBT activism in Uganda and my connection to the local activists contributed to my struggle to provide an un-biased account of the transnational politics surrounding Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill. I wanted to shed

light on the incredible tenacity of the Ugandan activists and their ability to create and lead a transnational campaign. However, I realized that a depiction of the transnational advocacy network dedicated to defeating Uganda's AHB would not be complete without recognizing the global North's undeniable power in global politics. In this paper, I hope to provide a balanced perspective highlighting the dynamics of transnational movement activity surrounding Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill and the presence of competing networks working to both promote and limit LGBT rights in Uganda.

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