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Seeds of Prejudice: The Impact of British Colonization on Attitudes towards Sexual Minorities

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Abstract

This paper provides the first causal test of the widely debated hypothesis that British colonial institutions promoted sexual prejudice—defined as negative attitudes toward sexual minorities—in postcolonial societies. We document five main findings. First, after accounting for differences in contemporary economic development, OLS estimates from a cross-country sample of former European colonies reveal that former British colonies exhibit higher sexual prejudice than those of other European powers. Second, Geo-RDD estimates show that former British colonies have significantly greater sexual prejudice than former Portuguese colonies in Southern and Eastern Africa, where local norms did not systematically condemn same-sex relations. Third, Geo-RDD estimates indicate that former British and French colonies display similar levels of sexual prejudice in Western Africa, where a higher share of the population adheres to religious norms condemning same-sex acts. Fourth, additional evidence from areas in South America and Southeast Asia not characterized by homophobic social norms before colonization reinforces the external validity of our findings from Southeastern Africa. Finally, mechanisms analysis suggests that the persistence of sodomy laws fully accounts for the negative association between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice across countries. Overall, our results indicate that British colonial origin notably increased sexual prejudice in societies with social norms different from the penal codes imposed by colonizers.

JEL Codes: J15, J16, O10, O43, Z13.

Keywords: Sexual prejudice, British colonization, colonial institutions, sodomy laws.

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1 Introduction

Legal institutions shape how societies perceive and treat minority groups. A large body of evidence shows that discrimination imposes substantial economic costs on minorities (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Agan and Starr, 2017; Neumark et al., 2019), as well as on society as a whole (Hsieh et al., 2019). Economic theory attributes these costs to two mechanisms: individual distaste for out-groups (Becker, 1957) and beliefs about group characteristics that persist in the absence of new information (Phelps, 1972; Arrow, 1973). By signaling which groups are socially acceptable (Sunstein, 1996; Benabou and Tirole, 2011) and limiting opportunities for positive, non-threatening contact between groups (Allport, 1954), laws can entrench prejudice and intensify discrimination.

While economists have extensively studied the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination against gender and racial groups (e.g., Lang and Kahn-Lang Spitzer, 2020; Blau and Kahn, 2017; Bertrand and Duflo, 2017), far less attention has been paid to the origins of prejudice toward sexual minorities. We help fill this gap by providing the first causal test of the widely debated hypothesis that British colonial rule fostered sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies by imposing penal codes that criminalized consensual same-sex acts (Human Rights Watch, 2013; O'Mahoney and Han, 2018).[1]

Enduring sexual prejudice has far-reaching economic costs.[2] It harms sexual minorities by fostering discrimination, as empirical studies consistently show that they face discrimination in the labour market (Badgett et al., 2024), and gay men experience worse labour outcomes than their heterosexual peers (Drydakis, 2022). In line with the view that prejudice drives discrimination, sexual prejudice explain both the

[1] We use the terms *homosexual conduct* and *consensual same-sex acts* interchangeably.

[2] We adopt the definition of *sexual prejudice* used in social psychology: *"a negative attitude toward an individual based on her or his membership in a group defined by its members' sexual attractions, behaviours, or orientation"* (Herek and McLemore, 2013, p. 311).

extent of labour market discrimination against sexual minorities (Tilcsik, 2011) and the improvements in labour outcomes following same-sex marriage legalization (Sansone, 2019). Sexual prejudice also imposes broader societal costs: because sexual orientation is not directly observable, heterosexual individuals may engage in costly behaviours to avoid perceived stigma (Herek and McLemore, 2013, p. 313). High-prejudice environments, unsurprisingly, are associated with lower levels of subjective well-being (Inglehart et al., 2008).

The impact of British colonization on contemporary levels of sexual prejudice is *a priori* ambiguous. Unlike other European colonial powers, the British Empire systematically criminalized same-sex acts by imposing alien penal codes and common law magistrates in its colonies (Han and O'Mahoney, 2014; O'Mahoney and Han, 2018)—a legal legacy that, according to both the *legitimacy model* (Flores and Barclay, 2016) and the *expressive theory of law* [Sunstein, 1996; McAdams and Rasmusen, 2004; Bénabou and Tirole, 2011], would be expected to heighten sexual prejudice. However, strong evidence indicates that former British colonies tend to exhibit better economic outcomes (La Porta et al., 2008) and higher levels of education attainment (Cogneau and Moradi, 2014; Dupraz, 2019)- factors that, according to *modernization theory* (Inglehart et al., 2008), should reduce sexual prejudice. Given these competing forces, whether British colonization ultimately increased or reduced sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies remains an open empirical question.

Identifying the causal effects of British colonization on sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies is challenging. Simple cross-country comparisons risk omitted variable bias (OVB) if the British Empire systematically targeted territories with characteristics that correlate with sexual prejudice. First, ethnic locations exposed to British colonial rule may have held different attitudes towards sexual minorities prior to colonization. Second, territories colonized by the British Empire may vary in the precolonial prevalence of religions—such as Islam and Christianity—that condemn homosex-

uality. Third, such territories may also differ in their precolonial levels of economic development, a strong predictor of sexual prejudice.

To address these identification challenges, we combine evidence from multiple samples. First, we begin with a descriptive analysis using a global cross-country sample that includes country-year-level data from 872 nationally representative surveys conducted by the World Gallup Poll (WGP) in 87 former European colonies between 2011 and 2020. In this *WGP global sample*, we measure sexual prejudice as the share of respondents stating that their city or area is not a good place for gay or lesbian people. This sample offers the broadest coverage, providing variation in both colonial origins and sexual prejudice across postcolonial societies worldwide.

Second, we turn to our main causal evidence, drawn from two samples in Afrobarometer Wave 6 (AB-W6). These samples allow us to exploit discontinuities along historical colonial borders, using only respondents living in villages near former colonial boundaries. The *Western African sample* consists of 8,658 respondents from three former British colonies (Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone) and eight former French colonies (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo). The *Southern and Eastern African sample* includes 6,015 respondents from six former British colonies (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) and one former Portuguese colony (Mozambique). In both cases, we measure sexual prejudice with an indicator equal to one if the respondent (strongly) dislikes having homosexual neighbors.

Third, to enhance the external validity of our findings, we replicate this approach in two additional samples. The *South American sample*, drawn from LAPOP data, includes 1,571 respondents near the former colonial border between Guyana (a former British colony) and Suriname (a former Dutch colony), where sexual prejudice is measured by disapproval of homosexuals running for public office. The *Southeast Asian sample*, based on data from the World Values Survey (WVS), includes 2,736 respon-

dents near the colonial border between Myanmar (a former British colony) and Thailand (never colonized), where sexual prejudice is again measured using respondents' preferences regarding having homosexual neighbors. While the geographic data in these cases is less precise, both samples extend our identification strategy beyond the African context and allow us to examine whether similar patterns hold in other regional settings.

We employ three empirical exercises to address our research question. First, to establish broad cross-country patterns, we estimate the partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice in the WGP global sample, using an OLS regression with fixed effects and a set of controls to account for potential confounders. Second, for causal identification, we implement a Geographic Regression Discontinuity Design (Geo-RDD) using the Southern and Eastern African and Western African samples. Leveraging the geo-referenced location of AB clusters, we compare respondents in villages near former colonial borders who were exposed to British colonization with those exposed to Portuguese (in the Southern and Eastern Africa sample) or French (in the Western Africa sample) colonization. Third, to assess external validity, we extend the Geo-RDD approach to the South American and Southeast Asian samples, comparing respondents in historically British-colonized administrative units to those exposed to other European powers or never colonized.

Our descriptive analysis reveals a positive association between British colonization and contemporary sexual prejudice in societies where same-sex acts were not systematically condemned prior to colonization. OLS estimates in the WGP global sample indicate that British colonial origin is associated with a nearly 10 percentage point higher level of sexual prejudice—approximately 15% of the sample mean—relative to former colonies of other European powers. This result remains significant when restricting the control group to former French, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies. Notably, the effect is driven by countries with limited Islamic penetration before colonization, suggesting

that pre-existing cultural norms condemning homosexuality moderate the treatment effect.

Consistent with the descriptive results, our causal estimates show that British colonization increases contemporary sexual prejudice in contexts where precolonial norms did not systematically condemn homosexuality. In the Southern and Eastern African sample, exposure to British rule increases sexual prejudice by 45 percentage points, equivalent to 55.9% of the sample mean, relative to Portuguese rule. By contrast, in the Western Africa sample—where Islam had a stronger historical presence—we find a near-zero and statistically insignificant effect. We also find sizable effects outside Africa: in the South American and Southeast Asian samples, British colonial origin increases sexual prejudice by 34 and 23 percentage points, respectively—equivalent to 65% and 31% of the sample means. These results further support the interpretation that the long-run impact of British rule is moderated by precolonial norms, which in these two regions were arguably closer to those of Southern and Eastern Africa rather than Western Africa.

We conduct several robustness checks to validate our descriptive and causal findings. First, we reestimate the OLS model using an alternative global sample based on data from the World Values Survey (WVS). Despite difference in country coverage and in the measure of sexual prejudice, the results are consistent with those obtained using the WGP global sample. Second, in the Western African and Southern and Eastern African samples, we include ethnic-location fixed effects to ensure that our results are not driven by unobserved cultural differences across ethnic groups. Third, we re-estimate our Geo-RDD models using an exhaustive set of alternative specifications (including variations in RDD bandwith, polynomial order, and control variables), and find that the results remain almost identical across these methodological choices.

We examine and rule out three competing explanations unrelated to the legacy of colonial penal codes. First, changes in socioeconomic conditions caused by British

colonization are unlikely to explain our findings: controlling for individual income, education, religion, and exposure to missionary activity in the Southern and Eastern African sample leaves the estimates virtually unchanged. Second, a general increase in social prejudice under British rule is not a likely driver of the observed increase in sexual prejudice: British colonization is not associated with higher levels of prejudice against other minorities, and our Geo-RDD coefficients in the Southern and Eastern African sample remain stable when accounting for an index of prejudice toward non-sexual-minority groups. Third, we find no empirical support for the hypothesis that colonial-era beliefs were vertically transmitted across generations: a Geo-RDD analysis in Cameroon—a country with both British and French colonial legacies but shared national institutions—yields a null effect of British colonization on sexual prejudice.

We find quantitative evidence that the persistence of colonial-era sodomy laws is the primary channel linking British colonial origin to higher levels of sexual prejudice. In the WGP global sample, the presence of contemporary laws criminalizing same-sex acts fully explains the partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice today, highlighting the central role of long-run legal persistence.

We engage with multiple strands of literature. First, we contribute to the broad literature on the influence of colonial institutions on economic outcomes, which finds robust cross-country evidence linking British enforcement of common law to stronger contemporary economic performance (La Porta et al., 2008). While recent studies suggest that former British colonization improved educational attainment (Cogneau and Moradi, 2014; Dupraz, 2019), emerging research challenges this optimistic view. In Africa, for example, common law has been linked to higher HIV rates among women (Anderson, 2018), and indirect rule has been shown to increase corruption among local chiefs (Ali et al., 2020). We complement this literature by providing credible evidence documenting a novel and undesirable consequence of British rule: promoting sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies.

Second, we engage with the scholarly literature on the interdependence between culture and institutions (see Alesina and Giuliano, 2015, for a literature review). While the literature on the interdependence between culture and institutions has largely focused on how culture shapes institutions, an expanding body of work leverages historical geographical exposure to institutions to examine their influence in long-run cultural outcomes, such as interventionism (Alesina and Giuliano, 2015), trust in government (Becker et al., 2016), and honesty (Lowes et al., 2017). Within this expanding literature, recent studies examine how colonial institutions have shaped contemporary cultural attitudes in Africa—for example, the French medical mission fostering distrust in medicine (Lowes and Montero, 2021) and indirect rule weakening national identification (Ali et al., 2018). We contribute to this literature by providing the first causal evidence that British colonization increased contemporary sexual prejudice by imposing harsh penalties on homosexual conduct in previously tolerant societies, illustrating the harmful effects of enforcing foreign institutions expressing alien social norms.[3]

Third, we engage with recent literature on the causal determinants of variation in attitudes toward sexual minorities across time and space, which can be divided into two main strands. The first examines how historical events, such as skewed sex ratios in colonial settlements (Baranov et al., 2022; Brodeur and Haddad, 2021) and Christian missions (Ananyev and Poyker, 2021), shape spatial differences in these attitudes. The second documents how political developments, including debates over LGBT policies (Fernandez et al., 2021), the legalization of homosexual conduct (Corneo and Jeanne, 2009), and the recognition of same-sex relationships (Aksoy et al., 2020; Ofosu et al., 2019), foster greater acceptance over time. Our findings bridge these two strands by

[3]We engage with two recent unpublished studies that reach opposing conclusions. Boas and Browne (2024) find that British colonial origin is positively associated with sexual prejudice in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In contrast, Biesalski (2025) shows that colonialism increased sexual prejudice in Sub-Saharan Africa but finds no distinct effect of British rule. Using two global and four regional samples from three continents, we complement these studies by providing descriptive and causal evidence that British colonization promoted sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies. We also suggest that the persistence of sodomy laws helps explain this effect.

showing that prolonged exposure to a colonizer enforcing laws criminalizing homosexual conduct led to a lasting increase in sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies.[4]

Within this literature, we also engage with recent experimental studies on reducing prejudice against sexual minorities through the provision of factual information to sexual majorities, which have yielded mixed results. Webb (2024) finds that informing individuals about Supreme Court rulings affirming transgender rights reduces labor market discrimination in India, where homosexuality is legal. Similarly, Aksoy et al. (2023) show that receiving information that the WHO does not classify homosexuality as a mental illness increased acceptance of sexual minorities, but only among those who trusted the WHO. In contrast, Lyon (2023) shows that revealing information about legal changes regarding homosexual conduct in Western and other African countries has no effect on sexual prejudice in Uganda, where homosexuality remains criminalized. By demonstrating that the imposition of anti-sodomy laws by British colonizers and their persistence after colonization promotes sexual prejudice, we offer a potential explanation for these contrasting findings: decriminalization may be a necessary prerequisite for information campaigns to effectively reduce sexual prejudice.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 provides institutional background. Section 3 describes the data sources and the analyses samples. Section 4 outlines the identification strategy. Section 5 presents the main results and robustness checks. Section 6 explores heterogeneity, mechanisms, and falsification exercises. Section 7 concludes.

[4]Within this strand, we also contribute to a nascent sub-literature on the causes and consequences of sexual prejudice in developing countries, where evidence remains scarce (**?**). Our contribution is to provide clean and comprehensive evidence linking colonization to the abnormally high levels of sexual prejudice in Africa—a continent where LGBT individuals are difficult to identify and enjoy minimal legal protection.

2 Institutional background

2.1 Regulation of homosexual conduct in Europe

This subsection serves two purposes: first, to examine the regulation of sexuality in late 19th-century Britain compared to other European countries; second, to outline the laws governing consensual same-sex acts in the UK, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands at the onset of African colonization.

Regulation of sexuality in the United Kingdom: A comparative perspective.

While European societies generally held conservative views on sex in the late 19th century, Victorian morality in the UK stood out for its emphasis on sexual restraint and puritanism. Social purity campaigns led to restrictive policies, including raising the age of consent to 16—the highest in continental Europe and three years above France's (Hyam, 1991, p. 66). The UK also abolished state-regulated prostitution and intensified repression of street prostitution (Hyam, 1991, pp. 65–66, 68), diverging from the regulatory approaches of France and Portugal (Hyam, 1991, p. 150).

Similarly, while most European countries viewed homosexual conduct negatively, the UK imposed uniquely severe punishments. Whereas Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Belgium decriminalized private consensual same-sex acts in the 19th century (Hyam, 1991, p. 65), (Frank et al., 2010, p. 878), the UK expanded criminal sanctions to all forms of same-sex activity between men—not just sodomy (Hyam, 1991, p. 67). By the early 20th century, it was the only Western European country enforcing such draconian penalties (Adut, 2005, p. 214).

Regulation of homosexual conduct in the main European countries.

United Kingdom. The 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act criminalized consensual same-sex acts under Section 11, imposing harsh penalties for "gross indecency"

(Hernandez-Truyol, 2020, p. 3). Unlike most European countries, the UK maintained these prohibitions for much of the 20th century, only decriminalizing same-sex acts with the Sexual Offenses Act of 1967 (Kirby, 2013, p. 70).

Germany. Similarly to the UK, Germany also criminalized same-sex conduct from the onset of African colonization until the mid-20th century. Paragraph 175 of the 1871 German Penal Code punished consensual same-sex acts between men, remaining in effect until 1957 in East Germany and 1969 in West Germany (Human Rights Watch, 2013, p. 88).

France. Unlike the UK and Germany, France decriminalized consensual same-sex acts in 1791, immediately after the French Revolution (Han and O'Mahoney, 2014, p. 273), which have remained legal since then. During Napoleonic wars, the new French penal code, which had no sodomy law anymore, spread to continental Europe and later to its colonial possessions (Frank et al., 2010, p. 878).

Portugal. Inspired by the liberal Constitution of 1821, the Portuguese Penal Code of 1852 ignored same-sex acts by excluding the word "sodomy" from its text (Cascais, 2016, p. 96). However, six decades later, consensual same-sex acts were re-criminalized in 1912 by a Metropolitan Vagrancy Law that punished "vice against nature" with up to one year of imprisonment (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 8).

Spain. Like Portugal, Spain adopted a Penal Code influenced by liberal ideas, decriminalizing sodomy in 1822 [Martín Sánchez, 2011, p. 254; Mignot, 2022, p. 131]. The new 1848 Penal Code permanently removed sodomy as an offense, maintaining its decriminalized status until 1928. Homosexual conduct was subsequently criminalized only twice: from 1928 to 1931 and from 1954 to 1979, due to legal reforms under the dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco [Martín Sánchez, 2011, pp. 255–256; Mignot, 2022, p. 118].

Netherlands and Belgium. In both countries, same-sex sexual activity was

legalized following the French invasion and the introduction of the Napoleonic Code—Belgium in 1795 and the Netherlands in 1811 (Mignot, 2022, p. 131). Sodomy laws were not reinstated after independence (Mignot, 2022, p. 118), and same-sex activity was criminalized only briefly during the German occupation in World War II, after which it was immediately decriminalized (Schlagdenhauffen, 2018, p. 8).

2.2 Regulation of homosexual conduct in the colonies

This subsection has two objectives. First, it provides a comparative overview of colonial legal systems. Second, it examines the laws regulating consensual same-sex acts in the regions analyzed in our causal study: former British, French, and Portuguese African colonies, and Liberia; Guyana and Suriname; and Thailand and Myanmar.

Colonial legal systems: A comparative perspective.

Across European empires, colonial penal codes primarily applied to European settlers and a small fraction of the native population. In former British and Portuguese colonies, *indirect rule* prevailed, meaning customary law governed most legal matters for natives, including those related to homosexual conduct. In Portuguese territories, only Europeans and *assimilados*—natives who met literacy and employment criteria—were subject to colonial law (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 8).

A similar pattern emerged in other European colonies. In former French colonies, where *direct rule* dominated, only Europeans and a small group of assimilated natives (*citoyens*) were subject to colonial penal codes, while the rest (*sujets*) remained under customary law (Guarnieri and Rainer, 2021, p. 4).[5] Spanish colonies, which blended direct and indirect rule (*encomiendas*), incorporated Indigenous legal traditions, allowing their continued use unless they conflicted with core colonial laws (Bernal Gómez,

[5]French colonial authorities controlled native populations through the *indigénat*, a legal framework that imposed forced labor, compulsory taxes, and asset expropriation (Berizon and Briggs, 2016, p.p. 333-334; Mann, 2009, p.p. 343-344).

1998, p. 91; Mahecha, 2017, p.p. 33-34).[6] Likewise, in the Belgian Congo (*direct rule*) and Rwanda-Urundi (*indirect rule*), colonial civil laws applied exclusively to white settlers, while native populations remained under customary law, enforced through Indigenous courts overseen by colonial authorities (Braillon, 2014).[7,8]

Regulation of homosexual conduct by colonial origin.

British Africa. The criminalization of homosexual conduct in former British colonies followed four primary legal frameworks. The most common were the **Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860** and the **Queensland Criminal Code (QCC) of 1899**. The IPC, which prescribed up to ten years of imprisonment for consensual same-sex acts, was adopted by four of the 14 former British African colonies in our sample: Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 13). The QCC, which imposed a harsher 14-year prison sentence with hard labor, was adopted by seven former British colonies: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 20).[9]

Other legal bases were less common. Swaziland followed British Common Law as codified in the **Offenses Against the Person Act of 1861**, which penalized consensual same-sex acts with a prison sentence ranging from ten years to life (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 31). Ghana, in contrast, adopted the **Jamaican Penal Code of 1877**, which — unlike all other British-derived codes except Sudan's — differentiated between consensual and non-consensual same-sex acts, punishing the former as a misdemeanor with a two-year prison sentence (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 16).

[6] Spanish colonial law combined Castilian legal codes, *derecho indiano* (laws adapted to colonial governance, evangelization, and Indigenous protections), and preexisting Indigenous laws.

[7] Indigenous courts (*tribunaux indigènes*) were led by traditional chiefs under strict colonial supervision.

[8] However, the structure of legal systems varied across former Dutch colonies. While Indonesia incorporated customary laws and separate courts (Kambel, 2007, p. 72), Suriname did not (Tagliacozzo, 2009, p. 177).

[9] The QCC also served as the model for the Nigerian Penal Code of 1904, which replaced the IPC in several African countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 34).

Beyond British legal influences, some former British colonies retained pre-existing Dutch legal traditions. South Africa, originally a Dutch colony, criminalized homosexual conduct under **Roman-Dutch common law**, which allowed for capital punishment in extreme cases (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 29). This legal tradition remained in place under British rule and later influenced Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, where similar laws were adopted (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p.p. 29-30).

Portuguese Africa. Laws criminalizing homosexual conduct in Portuguese African colonies were introduced late in the colonial period but remained in force after independence. As discussed in 2.1, Portugal re-criminalized homosexual conduct in 1912 through the Metropolitan Vagrancy Law. However, this regulation was not extended to the colonies until four decades later, becoming fully applicable only in 1954 with a revision of the penal code, but did not apply to most of the native population (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 9-10). Despite late arrival and limited application, the legislation remained in effect in former Portuguese African colonies throughout the 20th century and was only repealed in recent years—Cape Verde (2004), São Tomé and Príncipe (2012), Mozambique (2015), and Angola (2019) (Mignot, 2022, p. 132)."

French Africa. The French applied their legal system uniformly across their colonies (Berizon and Briggs, 2016, p. 339). Given this approach, it is highly plausible that the 1791 French Penal Code, which decriminalized homosexual conduct in France, also rendered it legal in the French colonies. Consequently, scholars widely agree that consensual same-sex acts were not systematically criminalized in French African colonies, as they were legal in France at the onset of colonization (e.g., Frank et al., 2010, p. 13; Ireland, 2013, p. 57; Han and O'Mahoney, 2014, p. 273). Consistent with this historical precedent, only nine of the 19 former French African colonies criminalize consensual same-sex acts today — seven of them through legislation enacted after independence (ILGA, 2012).

Liberia. Although Liberia was never a formal colony of the United States, it was established as a private settlement by the American Colonization Society from 1821 to 1847, and its independence was not recognized by the United States until 1862. During this period, Liberian laws followed U.S. legal frameworks, and this influence remained in the early independence years. Historical records do not indicate the presence of sodomy laws or explicit prohibitions on same-sex conduct during this period, and consensual same-sex acts were not criminalized until 1978, when a new penal code introduced such provisions for the first time (Mignot, 2022, p.130).

Guyana and Suriname. The case of the three Guyanas suggests that British colonial institutions are an essential driver of the cross-country differences in beliefs about sexual minorities and institutions regulating homosexual conduct and same-sex unions. Located in a small region on the coast of South America, the three Guyanas had similar geography and population before colonization. However, they had different colonizers: France, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (UK). Despite their similarities before colonization, there is a clear divergence between the three countries after colonization. In the French and the Dutch Guyanas, consensual same-sex acts became legal in the XIX century (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018). In contrast, British Guyana is the last South American country where consensual same-sex acts remain illegal (ILGA, 2012). Unsurprisingly, British Guyana has the lowest acceptance of homosexuality in South America nowadays (Chaux et al., 2021).

Thailand and Myanmar. The case of Thailand and Myanmar provides a compelling example of the stark differences in the historical criminalization of homosexuality across countries in Southeast Asia. In the case of Myanmar, homosexual conduct was criminalized under the Myanmar Penal Code of 1886 during British colonial rule (which lasted from 1824 to 1948). This criminalization took place when Burma was incorporated as a province of British India, leading to the adoption of the Indian Penal Code, and still persists (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p. 13). In contrast, Thailand

was never colonized by a European power. While the prohibition of adult male-male relationships was introduced in the Thai penal code in 1908, this was merely a consequence of modernization efforts through the adoption of European-style legal codes. As in Japan, the copy of British regulations led to the inclusion of such prohibitions; however, it is considered a residual element, as its inclusion was not an intended objective per se, and it was never enforced (Sanders, 2013, p. 32). Such prohibition was repealed between 1956 and 1957, by explicitly decriminalizing adult, consensual, same-sex acts [UNDP, USAID, 2014, p. 21; Mignot, 2022, p. 132].

2.3 British colonial institutions and contemporary sexual prejudice

In this subsection, we examine key aspects of British colonization that may influence sexual prejudice in former British colonies compared to those with different colonial histories.

Criminalization of homosexual conduct. Unlike other European powers, the UK systematically enacted laws criminalizing consensual same-sex acts in its colonies, and these laws often persisted after independence (Han and O'Mahoney, 2014). As such, legal restrictions on same-sex relations are a defining feature of our treatment. The existence of these laws may heighten sexual prejudice through two main channels. First, under the *legitimacy model*, the continued enforcement of such laws in former British colonies could reinforce negative attitudes toward homosexuality to the extent that individuals feel morally or politically obligated to adhere to the law (Flores and Barclay, 2016). Second, the *expressive theory of law* posits that the criminalization of homosexual conduct can also reinforce sexual prejudice by signaling that same-sex relations are socially undesirable [Sunstein, 1996; McAdams and Rasmusen, 2004; Bénabou and Tirole, 2011].

Enforcement of sodomy laws. Existing archival evidence on the enforcement of

such laws is scarce, providing incomplete data for only a few countries and periods. In former British Africa, records show a modest number of judicial cases per year in Zimbabwe [= 9.4] (Murray and Roscoe, 2001, p. 206) and a low number of convictions per year in Kenya [= 0.33] (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 19). In line with the idea of *some* enforcement of sodomy laws in former British colonies, the number of convictions per year in former British colonies in Oceania—such as South New Wales [= 4.15], Victoria [= 11.9], and Papua New Guinea [= 7.9]—are similar to those reported for Zimbabwe. (Aldrich, 2003, p. 221 & p. 258). By contrast, extensive archival research has not documented any instances of crimes related to consensual same-sex acts in former Portuguese colonies, as exemplified by Mozambique, where only a few minor charges mention homosexual conduct, but only as an aggravating factor (Miguel, 2021, p. 122).

What can we learn from such scarce historical accounts? Naturally, as archival evidence covers only a small fraction of the universe of cases and a few countries, these figures should be interpreted with caution—they likely underestimate the actual enforcement of sodomy laws. However, two lessons seem reasonable. First, there appears to have been *some* enforcement of sodomy laws in former British colonies. Second, assuming that underreporting of cases is similar across countries, we can interpret the contrast between the presence of *some documented cases* in several former British colonies and *no documented cases* in Mozambique as a signal of stricter enforcement of sodomy laws by British colonial authorities relative to their Portuguese counterparts.

Economic development. Evidence consistently shows that British common law countries tend to have stronger economic institutions and better economic performance than those under civil law (La Porta et al., 2008). According to *modernization theory*, improved socioeconomic conditions foster self-expression and acceptance of diversity, reducing prejudice against different lifestyles, including homosexuality (In-

glehart et al., 2008).

Colonial education. The British education system relied on decentralized missionary schooling in local languages, contrasting with the centralized, French-imposed system that mandated French as the sole language of instruction (Cogneau and Moradi, 2014, p. 695). Similarly, Portuguese colonies used missionary education but with a simplified curriculum focused on basic labor market skills for native populations (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 12). Evidence indicates that British educational policies led to higher educational attainment in Africa (Cogneau and Moradi, 2014; Dupraz, 2019). Greater access to education in former British colonies may reduce sexual prejudice by improving socioeconomic conditions, discouraging literalist and extremist interpretations of religious texts, and fostering non-threatening interactions with individuals of diverse sexual orientations in the labor market.

3 Data

3.1 Global samples

We begin our analysis with two global cross-country samples that offer the broadest regional coverage, providing variation in both colonial origin and sexual prejudice across postcolonial societies. These are the *World Gallup Poll (WGP)* and the *World Values Survey (WVS)* global samples.

WGP global sample.

Our *WGP global sample* is a country-year unbalanced panel including sexual prejudice statistics from 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed by the World Gallup Poll (WGP) between 2011 and 2023. Appendix B provides detailed information on this sample: Table BI defines all variables used, while

Table BII presents basic descriptive statistics. Panel G of the latter, which provides descriptive statistics for year indicators from 2011 to 2021, shows that although the panel is unbalanced, the number of country-year observations is reasonably balanced over time.

The outcome variable, $Prejudice_{c,t}$, is the measure of sexual prejudice for country c at year t, defined as the share of WGP respondents who answer *No* to the question: "*Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?*". Panel A of Table BII presents descriptive statistics for $Prejudice_{c,t}$, showing a mean of 0.65, a standard deviation of 0.26, and values ranging from a minimum of 0.06 (Canada) to a maximum of 0.99 (Pakistan).

Our treatment variable, $British_{c,t}$, is a binary indicator equal to 1 if country c has British colonial origin, and 0 otherwise, based on data from Nunn and Puga (2012). Panel B of Table BII presents descriptive statistics for $British_{c,t}$ and other colonial origin indicators. It shows that our treatment variable is reasonably balanced in the WGP global sample: 40% of country-year observations correspond to former British colonies.

Our primary mechanism variable is an indicator for the contemporary criminalization of homosexual conduct, derived from the `DJ-4` variable in the F&M Global Barometers (FMGB) dataset (Dicklitch-Nelson et al., 2024). The FMGB identifies country-year observations in which sexual orientation was not criminalized between 2011 and 2020.[10] Using this data, we define our mechanism variable as $Criminalize_{c,t} = \mathbf{1}(\texttt{DJ4} = 0)$, which is equal to one if country c criminalizes homosexual conduct in year t and zero otherwise. Panel A of Table BII reports descriptive statistics for $Criminalize_{c,t}$, showing a mean of 0.38 and a standard deviation of 0.49.

We use two sets of control variables in the main OLS specifications estimated using

[10]The FMGB dataset combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to assess LGBT legal frameworks and has been peer-reviewed by a panel of legal and regional experts.

the WGP global sample. First, we control for the contemporaneous level of economic development, $Development_c$, defined as the income per capita in country c in the year 2000. Second, we add fixed effects for the 14 United Nations (UN) sub-regions with at least one former European colony in the WGP sample.[11] Panel F of Table BII provides descriptive statistics for these regional indicators, showing a high frequency of country-year observations in Western Africa (17%), Eastern Africa (14%), South America (15%), and Central America (10%).

The primary moderator in the WGP global sample is Low_Islam_c, an indicator for low precolonial prevalence of Islam. It equals one if the percentage of Islamic population in country c in 1900, $Perc\_Islam_c$, is below the median of the distribution across 235 countries in the World Religion Database (WRD).[12] Among the 87 former European colonies in our WGP global sample, 31 are classified as having low Muslim prevalence and 56 as high. The variable Low_Islam_c captures meaningful contrasts in precolonial social norms, as the distribution of $Share\_Islam_c$ is bimodal, creating a sharp distinction between countries with near-zero and near-complete precolonial Islamic prevalence before colonization.

The WGP global sample also includes twelve exogenous controls used in robustness checks to account for potential geographical and historical confounders. More specifically, for each country c, we define the vector of controls $\mathbf{x}_c = (\mathbf{x}_{1,c}, \mathbf{x}_{2,c})$. $\mathbf{x}_{1,c}$ consists of 10 geographical controls: latitude; longitude; land area; terrain ruggedness; percentage of fertile soil; percentage of the area with a desert climate; percentage of the area with a tropical climate; average distance to the coast; percentage of the area near the coast; and diamond extraction. $\mathbf{x}_{2,c}$ consists of 2 historical controls: the population in 1400; and the percentage of Islamic population in 1900. Panels D and E of

[11] The 14 UN sub-regions in the WGP sample are: Australia and New Zealand, Caribbean, Central America, Northern America, South America, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Middle Africa, Eastern Asia, South-eastern Asia, Southern Asia, Western Asia.

[12] Formally, $Low\_Islam_c = \mathbf{1}\left[Perc\_Islam_c < P_{50}\left(\{Perc\_Islam_i\}_{i=1}^{235}\right)\right]$, and by construction, $High\_Islam_c = 1 - Low\_Islam_c$.

Tables BI and BII provide variable definitions and descriptive statistics, respectively, for all the variables in $\mathbf{x}_c = (\mathbf{x}_{1,c}, \mathbf{x}_{2,c})$.

WVS global sample.

To assess the robustness of our results from the global sample, we construct a second cross-country sample using data from the merged World Values Surveys (WVS). This *WVS global sample* is a country-wave unbalanced panel including sexual prejudice statistics from 139 nationally representative surveys conducted in 50 former European colonies between 1990 and 2022. Table BX defines all variables used, while Table BXII reports basic descriptive statistics.

The outcome variable, $Prejudice_{c,w}$, is defined as the share of WVS respondents of country c and wave w who mention *Homosexuals* when asked: *"Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours*?" Panel A of Table BXII presents descriptive statistics for $Prejudice_{c,w}$, showing a mean of 0.46, a standard deviation of 0.25, and values ranging from a minimum of .047 (Uruguay) to a maximum of .996 (Egypt). Panel B of Table BXII also presents descriptive statistics for British and other colonial origin indicators, showing that nearly half of our country-wave observations correspond to former British colonies. The WVS global sample includes the same set of controls used in the WGP global sample.

3.2 African samples

Africa offers an ideal setting to examine how British colonization shaped attitudes toward sexual minorities in postcolonial societies. First, historical accounts indicate that same-sex relationships were not rare in precolonial African societies (Murray and Roscoe, 2001; Epprecht, 2008). However, postcolonial Africa exhibits markedly higher levels of sexual prejudice compared to other continents (Boryczka, 2020), suggesting a reversal of beliefs after colonization. Second, despite these high average levels of

sexual prejudice, there remains substantial variation across African countries (Dionne and Dulani, 2020). This variation makes the use of empirical strategies based on cross-country comparisons a promising approach. Third, the arbitrary colonial borders imposed during the Scramble for Africa often divided ethnic groups, creating plausibly exogenous variation in exposure to different colonial powers (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2020, 2013).

We rely on individual-level data from the Afrobarometer (AB) Wave 6 survey to construct two African samples.[13] This wave includes, among other survey statistics, attitudes towards sexual minorities from 33 nationally representative surveys conducted between 2014 and 2015. Figure BIII in Appendix B displays a map of the 33 countries in the AB survey, classified by colonial origin, and illustrates extensive country coverage in Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa. Table BIII in Appendix B defines all variables used.

Given the distinct colonial origins of the neighbors of former British colonies in the two AB country clusters—Southern & Eastern Africa (Portuguese) and Western Africa (French and Liberia, a U.S-backed settler colony)—as well as the potential differences in precolonial criminalization of homosexual conduct between them, we divide the AB data into two samples: the Southern and Eastern Africa sample and the Western Africa sample. Each sample includes only individuals living near former colonial borders between the British Empire and another colonial power.

The Southern and Eastern Africa sample includes individuals in former Portuguese (Mozambique) and British colonies (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania). The Western Africa sample comprises individuals in French (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Togo) and British colonies (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone), as well as Liberia, a U.S.-backed settler colony. Tables BIV and BV in Appendix B present basic descriptive statistics for each of the two

[13] Wave 6 corresponds to years 2014 to 2016, and is available at https://www.afrobarometer.org/.

samples, including colonial origin indicators coded following this classification.

The outcome variable, $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise.[14] Panel A of Tables BIV and BV presents descriptive statistics for $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, showing high mean values in both samples: 0.79 in the Southern and Eastern Africa sample and 0.89 in the Western Africa sample. Moreover, as shown in Figures BI and BII in Appendix B, sexual prejudice in Africa is widespread not only in absolute terms but also relative to other continents and to other forms of social prejudice.[15]

We merge both African samples with an extensive set of exogenous controls. For each respondent i, we define the vector of controls $\mathbf{x}_i = (\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i})$. First,$\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$ is a vector with eleven village-level geographical controls: latitude and longitude (in degrees); average temperature (in ^oC); elevation (in meters); slope (in ^{o}); distance to coast (in km); distance to diamond mines (in km); a dummy for coastal regions; an index for average agricultural suitability; and index for malaria stability; and a dummy for regions with a main river. The last four are constructed at the ethnic region-level (Murdock, 1959). Second, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ is a vector with six village-level historical controls: distance to Saharan trade routes (in km); distance to colonial railways (in km); distance to the closest national border (in km); a dummy for major precolonial conflict; a dummy for territories that formed part of a precolonial kingdom or empire; and a dummy for regions with a major city in 1400. Again, the last three are constructed at the ethnic region-level. Third, $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ is a vector with six individual-level controls: a sex dummy and indicators for five age categories, to account for the evidence showing that women and

[14]This variable is based on Question 89, Item C, which asks: *For each of the following types of people, please tell us whether you would like to have people from this group [**C. Homosexuals**] as neighbours, dislike it, or do not care.* Response options are: **1.** Strongly dislike, **2.** Somewhat dislike, **3.** Would not care, **4.** Somewhat like, **5.** Strongly like.

[15]Specifically, Figure BI shows that average levels in Africa are nearly twice those in the Americas and Europe, based on World Value Survey (WVS) data, while Figure BII, using Afrobarometer (AB) data, shows that about 80% of African respondents express some degree of sexual prejudice—a rate roughly 2.7 times higher than that of any other form of social prejudice.

younger individuals usually display lower sexual prejudice (Herek and McLemore, 2013).

3.3 Other regional samples

To assess the external validity of our findings, we examine two additional samples from neighboring countries outside Africa with different colonial origins (British vs. non-British) and available measures of sexual prejudice.

Southeast Asian sample.

Our Southeast Asian sample is an individual-level data set including survey responses from two Southeast Asian countries surveyed in the World Values Surveys Wave 7: Thailand (2018) and Myanmar (2020). Geographical location is available at the provincial and township level, respectively. Appendix B provides detailed information on this sample: Table BVI defines all variables used, while Table BVIII presents basic descriptive statistics.

We construct our measure of sexual prejudice using Question 22, which asks whether individuals would not like to have homosexuals as neighbors. Our outcome variable, $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, is a binary indicator equal to one if respondent i, residing in country c and subnational unit v, reports disliking homosexuals as neighbors, and zero otherwise.[16] Panel A of Table BVIII reports descriptive statistics for $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, showing a mean of 0.58 and a standard deviation of 0.49.

South American sample.

Our South American sample is an individual-level dataset comprising survey responses from Guyana and Suriname, both surveyed in the AmericasBarometer

[16]Question 22 asks: *On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbors?* A value of 1 is assigned if homosexuals are mentioned, and 0 otherwise.

(LAPOP lab) in 2012 and 2014[17]. Geographical location is available at the municipal level.[18] Appendix B provides detailed information on this sample: Table BVII defines all variables used, while Table BIX presents basic descriptive statistics.

We construct our measure of sexual prejudice using Question D5, which asks whether individuals approve or disapprove of permitting homosexuals to run for public office. Our outcome variable, $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, is a continuous index ranging from 0 (strong approval) to 1 (strong disapproval) for each respondent i, from municipality v in country c.[19] Panel A of Table BIX presents descriptive statistics for $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$, with a mean of 0.76 and a standard deviation of 0.35.

4 Methodology

Identifying the causal effects of British colonization on sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies is challenging because of endogeneity problems. More specifically, OVB may arise if the British Empire systematically selected territories with geographic, cultural, or economic characteristics correlated with contemporary levels of sexual prejudice. First, ethnic groups exposed to British colonial rule may have held distinct cultural traits correlated with current sexual prejudice, such as greater or lesser acceptance of consensual homosexual conduct. Second, former British colonies may also have differed in the precolonial prevalence of religions—such as Islam and Christianity—that condemn same-sex relations. Third, territories colonized by the British may also differ in their precolonial levels of economic development, a strong predictor of sexual prejudice.

[17] Available at the Center for Global Democracy: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop

[18] In the case of Suriname, geographic location is recorded at the resort level, an administrative division analogous to municipalities.

[19] Question D5 asks: *How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?* Answers were recorded on a 1 to 10 scale, which we rescale to an index from 0 to 1 for comparability with the other regional samples.

4.1 OLS across countries in the global samples

We start the analysis by estimating the partial correlation between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice in the WGP global sample using a simple OLS regression model with contemporary economic development and UN sub-region fixed effects (FEs) as controls. More precisely, we estimate the regression model

$$Prejudice_{c,t} = \alpha_t + \alpha_{s(c)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + \gamma Development_c + \epsilon_{c,t} \quad (1)$$

where c denotes country and t time unit (year). $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice for country c at time $t \in \{2011, ..., 2023\}$ in the WGP sample. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c has British colonial origin, 0 otherwise. Respectively, α_t and $\alpha_{s(c)}$ are year fixed effects (FEs) and UN subregion FEs. We cluster standard-errors (SEs) at the country level, the unit of variation of our treatment variable.

$Development_c$, measured by income per capita in the year 2000, represents the level of economic development in country c. We include this variable in Equation (1) to account for the impact of British colonization on sexual prejudice through its influence on economic development. Since economic development may itself be shaped by colonial history, measuring $Development_c$ before $Prejudice_{c,t}$ helps mitigate simultaneity bias.

We interpret β^{GB} in Equation (1) as a partial correlation, as its causal interpretation requires the strong assumption that all confounding factors linking British colonial origin and sexual prejudice are accounted for. Given the plausibility of omitted variable bias, simple cross-country comparisons are unlikely to identify a causal effect, highlighting the need for more sophisticated empirical strategies, such as natural experiments.

4.2 Geo-RDD in the regional samples

To identify the causal impact of British colonization on sexual prejudice, we employ a Geographic Regression Discontinuity Design (Geo-RDD) that leverages the quasi-experimental variation generated by historical colonial borders. This approach builds on seminal studies that use colonial boundaries to isolate the institutional legacy of European empires—both within countries (Dell, 2010) and across them (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013)—and has inspired a broad literature [See Valencia Caicedo, 2020, for a survey]. The Geo-RDD estimates the effect of British colonial rule on contemporary levels of sexual prejudice by comparing individuals located on either side of former colonial boundaries: those in locations exposed to British rule (treatment group) and those exposed to different or no colonial origin (control group).

We estimate the Geo-RDD in four regional samples: Western Africa, Southern and Eastern Africa, Southeast Asia (Thailand and Myanmar), and South America (Guyana and Suriname). These regions satisfy two key criteria: they include national borders separating British and non-British (or non-colonized) former territories, and they provide publicly available survey data on sexual prejudice with at least province- or township-level geographic identifiers.

Geo-RDD in the African samples

In the two African samples, we exploit fine-grained geolocation data from AB clusters to estimate the following regression model:

$$Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{e(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v} \quad (2)$$

where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. The terms $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ include exogenous geographic and historical controls, respectively, while $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ includes individual-level controls. $f(v)$ is a flexible RD polynomial in geographic location. As

noted earlier, some specifications also include $\alpha_{e(v)}$, fixed effects for ethnic locations, where $e(v)$ denotes the ethnic region containing village v. Subsection 3.2 define all variables in $\mathbf{x}_i = (\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i})$

In both equations (2) and (3), β^{GB} is a local average treatment effect (LATE) that measures the causal effect of British colonization on contemporary sexual prejudice for locations near the former British-non British colonial boundary. Two conditions must hold for β^{GB} to have a valid causal interpretation. First, a continuity assumption: all other determinants of sexual prejudice—other than exposure to British colonialism—must vary smoothly across the colonial boundary. Formally, letting $y^0 = Prejudice^0_{i,c,v}$ and $y^1 = Prejudice^1_{i,c,v}$ denote potential outcomes of individual i under control and treatment, respectively, the continuity assumption implies that $E[y^0 \mid Lat_v, Lon_v]$ and $E[y^1 \mid Lat_v, Lon_v]$ are continuous functions of Lat_v, Lon_v on both sides of the colonial boundary. Second, we assume the absence of selective sorting across the boundary: individuals with characteristics that predict sexual prejudice must not systematically migrate from one side to the other.

We make two core methodological choices in implementing the Geo-RDD. First, we follow Calonico et al. (2020) to select the optimal geographic bandwidth around each colonial border, and restrict estimation to respondents within this range. Second, we apply a local linear polynomial in distance to the boundary, weighted with a triangular kernel, as in Dell (2010) and Dell et al. (2018). To assess the robustness of our causal estimates, Appendix C presents robustness checks using an exhaustive set of alternative specifications, including different bandwidths, RD polynomials (with different functional forms defined both in terms of distance to the border as well as latitude and longitude), and kernel choices.

Implementing the Geo-RDD across the two African samples allows us to identify institutional contrasts driving β^{GB} while also capturing heterogeneity in β^{GB} due to regional variation in precolonial cultural norms, through comparisons that hold con-

stant unobserved confounders at local geographic scales.

First, the β^{GB} estimates for the Western African sample capture treatment effects arising from the *presence* of penal codes criminalizing homosexual conduct. First, as detailed in Table AI (Appendix A), all 3 former British colonies in this subsample (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) criminalized consensual same-sex acts, though their penal codes varied in their strictness and enforcement. Second, as noted in Section 2, France decriminalized consensual same-sex acts in 1791 and extended this policy to its colonies, and Liberia did not criminalized consensual same-sex acts until 1978, more than a hundred years after independence. Lastly, Western African French colonies retained these permissive laws until independence (Berizon and Briggs, 2016), ensuring a consistent and appropriate comparison group for neighboring British colonies.

Secondly, the β^{GB} estimates for the Southern and Eastern African sample reflect the prolonged exposure to colonial laws criminalizing homosexual conduct. First, as shown in Table AI (Appendix A), all six former British colonies in this treatment group (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) had criminalized consensual same-sex acts by the early 20th century. In contrast, Mozambique, the former Portuguese colony in the control group, only criminalized same-sex acts in 1954—just two decades before gaining independence—and these laws were not enforced (da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 10).

Geo-RDD in the other regional samples

While the Geo-RDDs in the African samples offer credible evidence of a causal effect of British colonization on contemporary sexual prejudice, their findings are, by design, local. This raises natural concerns about external validity. To assess whether similar effects hold outside Africa, we estimate additional Geo-RDDs using data from South America and Southeast Asia.

In the South American and Southeast Asian samples—where geolocation is only

available at the provincial or township level—we estimate a simplified version of Equation (2):

$$Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{r(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,i} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \epsilon_{i,c,v} \tag{3}$$

where i, c, and $f(v)$ have the same definition as in Equation (2). The terms $\mathbf{x}_{1,i}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ include exogenous individual-level controls and basic geographical controls, respectively. In this case, v denotes province or township, and $r(v)$ the corresponding region, for which we include fixed effects $\alpha_{r(v)}$ in our most stringent specification.

Because the South American and Southeast Asian samples each consist of a single country pair, they offer a clear view of the contrasting colonial institutions regulating same-sex conduct on either side of the border—mirroring those observed in the African samples. In South America, as in West Africa, the contrast centers on colonial-era criminalization: the British enforced sodomy laws in Guyana, while the Dutch did not in Suriname, and these legal differences persisted after independence. In Southeast Asia, as in Southern and Eastern Africa, the contrast lies in the duration and enforcement of such laws: Thailand briefly and passively criminalized same-sex acts before repealing the provision, while Myanmar's British-imposed laws were deliberate and remain in force.

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive analysis from the global samples

We begin our analysis by estimating the partial correlation between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice to understand the distribution of treatment effects before focusing on well-identified but local effects. This analysis uses the WGP Global sample described in Subsection 3.1 to estimate β^{GB} using Equation (1) outlined

in Section 4.

Table I presents the partial correlation estimates between $Prejudice_{c,t}$ and $British_c$ estimated using the global sample. Column (1) reports estimates without fixed effects (FEs) or controls. Column (2) introduces $Development_c$ as a control. Columns (3) to (5) sequentially add Year FEs, UN Subregion FEs, and UN Subregion-Year FEs to the specification in Column (2). Standard errors (SEs) are clustered at the country level, corresponding to the level of variation of the treatment variable.

[Table 1 about here.]

Table I shows that British colonial origin is associated with greater sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies when accounting for economic development. While the unconditional correlation in Column (1) is near zero and statistically insignificant, it becomes positive and significant once economic development (GDP per capita of 2000) is controlled for in Column (2). This positive and significant conditional correlation remains robust across Columns (3) to (5), even under more restrictive country comparisons. Moreover, the conditional effect is economically substantial, explaining at least 15% of the full-sample outcome mean.

The positive partial correlation between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice persists even when former British colonies are separately compared to those of other major European powers. Table CI in Appendix C extends the analysis from Table I by estimating separate coefficients for each non-British colonial origin while using former British colonies as the reference group. Consistent with the findings of Table I, the results of Table C document that former colonies of Portugal, Spain, and France exhibit lower levels of sexual prejudice than those of Britain. [20]

Additionally, the positive partial correlation between British colonial origin and

[20] Although the four former Belgian and Dutch colonies in our sample display higher sexual prejudice, this difference becomes statistically insignificant when restricting comparisons to countries within the same UN sub-region.

contemporary sexual prejudice holds when including more extensive controls or using an alternative sample and outcome measure. First, as shown in Table CII in Appendix C, the results remain quantitatively similar when the specification in Equation (1) is augmented with the exogenous controls described in Subsection 3.1. Second, as shown in Table CIII, the magnitude of the partial correlation—relative to the sample mean—increases when Equation (1) is estimated using the WVS global sample described in Subsection 3.3.

The contrast between the unconditional and conditional estimates of β^{GB} in Columns (1) and (2) of Table I suggests that British and non-British colonies differed in their levels of economic development at the onset of colonization, with these differences persisting after independence and plausibly causing omitted variable bias in the OLS estimates. To mitigate this concern, we estimate Geo-RDDs in two African regional samples, exploiting borders imposed by European colonizers that separate locations with otherwise similar characteristics (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013). These frontier-based comparisons not only offer a more credible causal interpretation but also better isolate the direct influence of colonial colonization on social norms, as the economic effects of colonial rule fade near these borders (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013).

5.2 Causal evidence in the African samples

We now present our causal estimates, which exploit the arbitrariness in colonial borders between British and non-British former colonies to estimate the effect of British colonization on contemporary sexual prejudice. This analysis uses the two African samples—Southern and Eastern Africa, and Western Africa—described in Subsection 3.2. We estimate β^{GB} using the Geo-RDD specification outlined in Section 4, Equation (2), which takes advantage of quasi-experimental variation in exposure to British colonial rule by focusing only on individuals located near these historical boundaries.

Balance checks: motivating the continuity assumption.

A key requirement of the Geo-RDD is the continuity assumption: determinants of sexual prejudice—other than exposure to British colonialism—must vary smoothly across the colonial boundary. Violations occur if the colonial boundaries in our two samples were not arbitrary, causing villages (and individuals) in the treatment and control group to differ systematically in geographic, historical, or demographic characteristics that also affect contemporaneous levels of sexual prejudice.

Though the continuity assumption is not directly testable, we can assess its plausibility by testing the null hypothesis $H_0 : E[x_{i,k}|British_c = 1] - E[x_{i,k}|British_c = 0] = 0$ for each $x_{i,k} \in \mathbf{x}_i$, where $\mathbf{x}_i = (\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i})$ is the vector of controls defined in Subsection 3.2. To this end, we estimate, for each baseline variable $x_{i,k} \in \mathbf{x}_i$, a reduced Geo-RDD specification: $x_{i,k} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_{c(i)} + f(v(i)) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$.

Panels (a) and (b) in Figure CIII shows the results, which support the plausibility of the continuity assumption: in both the Southern and Eastern Africa and Western Africa samples, only 1 out of 21 mean difference test is statistically significant, and those differences are small in magnitude. Still, to address any concern that differences in characteristics between treatment and control groups might affect our results, we control for all those geographic, historical, and individual characteristics in subsequent analyses.

Geo-RDD results.

Table II shows the Geo-RDD estimates for the two African samples. Panel A presents estimates of β^{GB} for the Southern and Eastern Africa sample, while Panel B presents them for the Western Africa sample. All estimates are obtained using local polynomial Regression Discontinuity point estimators with robust bias-corrected confidence intervals following Calonico et al. (2014, 2018, 2019, 2020). We report standard er-

rors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis,[21] and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets.

[Table 2 about here.]

Results reveal that British colonization caused a pronounced increase in sexual prejudice in contemporary Southern and Eastern Africa. Panel A shows that the effect of British colonization on sexual prejudice is significant at 1% using both types of standard errors. In our preferred specification (Column (4) of Panel A), exposure to British colonization causes an increase in sexual prejudice of 45 percentage points—around 55.9% of the outcome mean in the sample. Relevant to the internal validity of the estimates, the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ remains stable when sequentially adding control variables and ethnic location fixed effects, suggesting that OVBs caused by differences in characteristics across villages and ethnic locations are unlikely to explain our results.

By contrast, Panel B shows no significant relationship between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice in Western Africa, with point estimates consistently near zero across all specifications. Notably, as illustrated in Figure I, this zero effect stems from uniformly high levels of sexual prejudice on both sides of the colonial borders. These contrasting results across the two regions raise the possibility that the impact of British colonization may depend on underlying regional characteristics, such as precolonial cultural norms, which we will explore in the following sections.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Assessing Robustness in Geo-RDD Estimates.

Appendix C presents a variety of robustness checks for our results. First, Figures CIV and CV show the stability of our results across multiple RD specifications. It includes

[21] Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values, to account for the low number of clusters.

alternative bandwidth specifications (50km, 75km, 100km, 200km), different kernel functions (uniform, triangular, epanechnikov), and different RD functions (a polynomial on distance to border and a polynomial on latitude and longitude). Estimates remain essentially unchanged across all alternatives.

Second, the precise location of respondents in the AB data enables us to examine differences in sexual prejudice among individuals residing within the same ethnic group territory but on opposite sides of the colonial border. Figure CVI illustrates these differences for ethnic groups split by the British and Portuguese colonial borders in the Southern and Eastern Africa sample. In 11 out of 12 split ethnic groups, those on the British side exhibit higher levels of sexual prejudice than their ethnic counterparts on the Portuguese side. This pattern parallels previous results in Column (5) of Table II, and supports the idea that the observed influence of British colonial on sexual prejudice is neither driven by precolonial differences in social norms nor by impacts on specific ethnic groups.

Third, Graphs **(a)** and **(b)** in Figure CVII present a non-parametric representation of the sexual prejudice data in the two African samples, using binned scatter plots with 20 km bins around colonial borders. The observed patterns further demonstrate that the results in this section align with the underlying raw data and are not influenced by methodological choices in the RD estimation or the regression model.

5.3 Causal evidence in the other regional samples

To complement our Geo-RDD estimates in the two African samples, we implement a similar analysis in two additional regions: the South American (Guyana and Suriname) and Southeast Asian (Myanmar and Thailand) samples, which are described in Section 3.3. In this setting, we estimate β^{GB} using the Geo-RDD specification outlined in Section 4, Equation (3). As discussed at the end of Section 4, these two samples mir-

ror the institutional contrasts introduced by British colonial rule in the African cases.

Balance checks: motivating the continuity assumption.

As in the case of the Geo-RDD in the African samples, we test the plausibility of the continuity assumption in the South American and Southeast Asian samples. Panels (c) and (d) in Figure CIII presents the results. In the Southeast Asian sample, only 1 out of 10 mean difference tests is statistically significant. In the South American sample, none of 4 the geographic covariates shows statistically significant differences, while 3 out of 6 demographic variables—female share, and the shares of respondents aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34—are marginally significant.[22] Some imbalance is to be expected in small subsamples, and t-tests are usually not significant despite differences of means of high magnitude. Importantly, any bias caused by these unbalances would likely attenuate any treatment effects. Nonetheless, we again control for all these geographic and individual characteristics in subsequent analyses to reduce any concerns that those differences could affect our results.

Geo-RDD results.

Table III displays the Geo-RDD estimates for the South American and Southeast Asian samples. Panel A presents estimates of β^{GB} for Guyana (former British colony) and Suriname (former Dutch colony), whereas Panel B presents them for Myanmar (former British colony) and Thailand (no colonial origin). As before, all estimates are obtained using robust bias-corrected confidence intervals following Calonico et al. (2014, 2018, 2019, 2020). We report standard errors clustered by settlement in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets.[23]

[22] Notice that the differences for the two age groups exhibit opposite signs, which reduces concerns that treatment effects could be driven by age composition.

[23] Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values, to account for the low number of clusters.

[Table 3 about here.]

Results indicate that British colonial rule led to a significant increase in sexual prejudice in both Guyana and Myanmar compared to their non-British neighbors. In our preferred specification, in Column (3), exposure to British colonization raises contemporary sexual prejudice by 33 and 26 percentage points, respectively. Estimates remain significant after controlling for region fixed effects, which suggests that the observed treatment effect is not driven by unobserved, region-level differences in baseline outcomes.

[Figure 2 about here.]

Assessing Robustness in Geo-RDD Estimates.

Analogous to the robustness checks performed in the Southern and Eastern Africa and Western Africa samples, Graphs **(c)** and **(d)** in Figure CVII present binned scatter plots of sexual prejudice in the South American and Southeast Asian samples, using the same non-parametric approach with 20 km bins near colonial borders. The observed patterns again confirm that results are consistent with the underlying raw data and do not depend on particular methodological choices in the RD estimation or the regression model.

6 Heterogeneity, Mechanisms and Falsification

6.1 Heterogeneity: the role of precolonial social norms

The contrast between the muted effect in the Western African sample (Panel B, Table II) and the substantial effects in the other three samples (Tables II and III) suggests

that British colonization influenced sexual prejudice unevenly. As illustrated in Figure I, the null effect in Western Africa coincides with uniformly high levels of sexual prejudice on both sides of the colonial borders. One plausible explanation is that British colonial rule had little scope to shape attitudes in regions where prevailing social norms had already condemned same-sex relations—such as in majority-Muslim or majority-Christian societies. This interpretation is consistent with the markedly higher levels of Islamic penetration historically observed in the Western African sample relative to the others.[24] The intuition is straightforward: colonial institutions are less likely to shift beliefs when they align with prevailing norms.

To preliminarily explore whether prevailing social norms—particularly religious beliefs—might explain the patterns observed in the different regional samples, Figure CI in Appendix C presents binned scatter plots of average sexual prejudice and the share of the Muslim population by country. Panels **(a)** and **(b)** use data from the WGP global sample, while panels **(c)** and **(d)** draw on the combined Afrobarometer subsamples. The x-axis shows Muslim population shares in 1900 in panels **(a)** and **(c)**, and in 2000 in panels **(b)** and **(d)**. In all four panels, sexual prejudice is more dispersed in countries with lower Muslim shares, whether historical or contemporary, while those with higher Muslim shares consistently exhibit high levels of prejudice. This pattern motivates the use of Low_Islam_c as a moderating variable of the the effect of $British_c$ on $Prejudice_{c,t}$.

Table IV tests the hypothesis that British colonization had a weaker effect in societies where same-sex relations were already condemned by prevailing norms, using the global sample. To test this hypothesis, we estimate Equation (1) separately for countries with high and low levels of Islamic penetration prior to colonization.[25]

[24] Islamic penetration was markedly lower in the Southern and Eastern African sample (1.97% in 1900 and 9.42% in 2000) than in the Western African sample (17.20% and 45.22%, respectively), where non-British former colonies consistently exhibited higher shares than British ones—19.58% vs. 11.66% in 1900, and 53.10% vs. 26.82% in 2000.

[25] Existing ethnographic atlases (e.g., Murdock and Narodov Mira) lack data on pre-colonial attitudes toward homosexual conduct, making the prevalence of religious groups that condemned same-sex acts

Specifically, Table IV mirrors the structure of Table I but reports $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ for subsamples defined by $High\_Islam_c = 1$ and $Low\_Islam_c = 1$.[26] As described in Subsection 3.1, Low_Islam_c equals one when the Muslim population share in 1900 falls below the global median, based on data from the World Religion Database.

Table IV provides strong support for the hypothesis that British colonization fostered sexual prejudice primarily in societies where existing norms did not already condemn same-sex relations. In Columns (2) through (5), the estimated effect in the low–Islamic penetration subsample ranges from 0.22 to 0.25 and is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. By contrast, in the high-penetration subsample, the estimate ranges from 0.02 to 0.07—four to ten times smaller than in the low-penetration group—and is not statistically significant. The fact that the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ depends on whether local norms condemned same-sex relations before colonization suggests that the effect reflects shifts in social attitudes driven by colonial institutions, rather than differences in socioeconomic outcomes before or after colonization. The next section examines which colonial institutions account for the estimated effect.

[Table 4 about here.]

6.2 Mechanisms: persistence of laws criminalizing homosexuality

Results in Table I suggest that conflicting mechanisms may underlie the estimated effect of British colonial origin, $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$, and warrant further investigation. On the one hand, the decline in the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ from Column (1) to Column (2) aligns with evidence that former British colonies tend to have stronger socioeconomic outcomes

the most practical proxy for pre-colonial social norms. We choose low Islamic penetration as a moderator because, although both Islam and Christianity traditionally condemn same-sex relations, only Islam was not introduced by European colonizers. This ensures that the moderator is not itself a consequence of the treatment.

[26] Following Feigenberg et al. (2023), we estimate β^{GB} separately for the high and low Islam penetration subsamples by interacting Low_Islam_c and $High\_Islam_c$ with all right-hand-side variables in Equation (1), rather than specifying only $British_c \cdot Low\_Islam_c$ and $British_c \cdot High\_Islam_c$ as interaction terms.

(La Porta et al., 2008), and with the hypothesis that economic development reduces prejudice (Inglehart et al., 2008; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). This pattern suggests that British rule may have reduced sexual prejudice indirectly by fostering economic growth.

On the other hand, the positive and significant coefficients in Columns (2) through (5) are consistent with research showing that British colonies were more likely to criminalize consensual same-sex acts (Human Rights Watch, 2013; O'Mahoney and Han, 2018; Han and O'Mahoney, 2014; Kenny and Patel, 2017). These findings point to a competing channel: British legal institutions may have increased sexual prejudice by institutionalizing repressive norms through sodomy laws and related codes.

To assess this possibility, we examine whether the continued enforcement of sodomy laws after independence helps account for the estimated effect. Specifically, we conduct a simple mediation analysis using the global sample, which includes data on sexual prejudice, colonial origin, and contemporary criminalization of same-sex conduct. If controlling for sodomy laws significantly reduces the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$, this would support the hypothesis that colonial legal institutions play a key mediating role.

Table V presents the results of the mediation analysis. All specifications control for $Development_c$ and include year fixed effects. Column (1) replicates the benchmark estimate from Column (3) of Table I, regressing $Prejudice_{c,t}$ on $British_c$. Column (2) reports estimates from a regression of $Criminalize_{c,t}$ on $British_c$. Column (3) uses $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the outcome and $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the treatment variable. Column (4) regresses $Prejudice_{c,t}$ on both $British_c$ and $Criminalize_{c,t}$, allowing us to assess whether the inclusion of the mediator attenuates the estimated effect of British colonial origin. Standard errors clustered at the country level are reported in parentheses.

Results in Table V show that contemporary criminalization of homosexual conduct nearly entirely mediates β^{GB}. This finding supports the claim that the persistence of

colonial-era penal codes enacted under British rule is the driver of our results. First, consistent with O'Mahoney and Han (2018) and Han and O'Mahoney (2014), Column (2) indicates that British colonial origin substantially increases the likelihood of criminalization of consensual same-sex acts in the present day. Second, Column (3) demonstrates that such criminalization is strongly associated with higher levels of sexual prejudice. Finally, Column (4) shows that β^{GB} becomes statistically insignificant and approaches zero when accounting for contemporary criminalization, confirming its role as mediating factor.

[Table 5 about here.]

6.3 Falsification: ruling out alternative explanations

While the results in the previous subsection support two key mechanisms—legal persistence and enforcement—they do not fully rule out competing interpretations. Three plausible alternatives remain, each unrelated to the presence or duration of sodomy laws during colonization or their persistence after independence. First, the observed effect may reflect differences in socioeconomic outcomes shaped by British colonization. Second, rather than indicating a rise in sexual prejudice specifically, the patterns could reflect a broader increase in social intolerance linked to British rule. Third, sexual prejudice acquired during the colonial period may have been transmitted across generations, independently of the persistence of sodomy laws on contemporary penal codes.

Alternative hypothesis 1: Colonial impacts on socioeconomic outcomes

The first competing hypothesis is that the rise in sexual prejudice could simply result from differences in socioeconomic outcomes caused by British colonial institutions. First, sexual prejudice might be higher in former British colonies if their institutions led

to *lower* economic development and educational achievement after colonization. Second, there may have been more intense missionary activity in former British colonies, causing more natives to convert from native religions to Christian affiliations that condemn homosexuality. Third, the prevalence of protestant missionaries and missionary schools may have transmitted stricter religious beliefs in former British colonies, and these may have persisted after colonization.

To investigate whether any of these hypotheses receive support from the data, we implement a simple mediation analysis to test whether changes in educational attainment, income, religious affiliation, and local exposure to missionary activity caused by British colonial institutions explain the observed effects on sexual prejudice. We perform this mediation analysis using the Southern and Eastern Africa sample for two reasons. First, it provides rich individual-level data on education, living conditions, and religious affiliation of respondents. Second, by combining the exact geographic location of respondents with historical mission data from (Nunn, 2010), we can calculate precise measures of exposure to Catholic and Protestant missions.

Table CIV in Appendix C shows the results of our simple mechanism analysis. Column (1) replicates the preferred specification of the Geo-RD across countries in Southern and Eastern Africa (Table II, Column (4) of Panel A), which serves as a benchmark. Columns (2) to (5) replicate the same specification, incorporating one set of endogenous controls at a time: education categories FEs, income category FEs, religious affiliation FEs, and local exposure to Christian missions, rescpectively.

The results in Table CIV show that none of these alternative mechanism hypotheses receives support from the data. More specifically, none of the four sets of endogenous controls included in the regression models substantially changes the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ compared to the specifications with only exogenous controls. This suggests that these factors are not quantitatively relevant mechanisms behind the effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice.

Alternative hypothesis 2: General increase in social intolerance

A second plausible competing interpretation for our results is that instead of measuring the impact of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice, a positive and significant $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ captures a general increase in social intolerance in former British colonies—one that increase prejudice against all types of diverse groups, not only sexual minorities. Again, we test this hypothesis using the AB sample in Southern and Eastern Africa, as it provides equivalent measures of prejudice against four other groups: immigrants, people of different religions, people with HIV, and people of different ethnic groups.

We take three steps to investigate whether such a reasonable competing interpretation receives support from the data. First, we perform a falsification exercise, estimating the effect of British colonial institutions on each the four measures of prejudice separately. Second, we take the first principal component of these four measures against different groups (excluding sexual prejudice) to construct a composite index of social prejudice, and repeat the same falsification exercise using this index. Finally, we estimate again $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ in our main Geo-RDD specification, now including this measure of general prejudice as an additional control variable.

Table CVI in Appendix B presents the results of these three exercises. Column (1) reproduces again the result in Table II, Column (4) of Panel A—our preferred specification of the Geo-RDD in the Southern and Eastern Africa sample—as a benchmark.[27] Columns (2) to (6) replicate this same specification, changing only the outcome variable. In Columns (2) to (5), we use the other four measures of prejudice against each other social group, one at a time. In Column (6) we use our general index of social prejudice. Finally, in Column (7), we re-estimate the specification in Column (1), this time including the index of social prejudice as an additional control. In this way, we

[27]The sample in Table CVI is slightly smaller than in Table II because we only use respondents that have non-missing values in all measures of prejudice, to keep consistent samples across our falsification exercise. Still, our results for sexual prejudice remain equivalent.

test whether the effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice holds after accounting for general social intolerance.

The results in Table CVI show that a generalized increase in various forms of prejudice caused by British colonial institutions is unlikely to explain their impact on sexual prejudice. First, Columns (2) to (6) show that, if anything, British colonial institutions *reduced* prejudice against other social groups. This result holds whether we examine the four measures separately or use the general index of social prejudice. Second, and not surprisingly, the magnitude of $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$ in Column (7) remains fairly similar to our preferred Geo-RDD estimate, in Column (1).

Figure CVIII in Appendix C shows the regression discontinuity plots corresponding to our estimates in Columns (2) to (6). The graphical evidence confirms that British colonial institutions are associated with either similar (for different religions or ethnicities) or more progressive (for immigrants or people with HIV) attitudes than Portuguese ones, but not with greater prejudice against any other diverse group. Taken together, these patterns strongly suggest that a general increase in social prejudice in former British colonies is not the mechanism explaining the positive and significant $\widehat{\beta}^{GB}$.

Alternative hypothesis 3: Vertical transmission of preferences

Given that changes in socioeconomic variables caused by British colonization are unlikely to explain its pronounced impact on contemporary sexual prejudice, we next evaluate the plausibility of competing hypotheses related to the persistence of institutional and cultural outcomes. Specifically, we assess whether the impact of British colonialism on contemporary sexual prejudice occurs through the persistence of subnational institutions rather than national institutions.

We do so by exploring the case of Cameroon, a country whose current territory was split between the British and French Empires. Although former French colonies did

not criminalize consensual same-sex acts during the colonial period (Frank et al., 2010, p. 878), Cameroon recriminalized such actions in 1972, eleven years after its independence and reunification ILGA (2020). Given the convergence of national institutions after reunification, the impact of British colonial institutions—if still present—must not operate through the persistence of national institutions (e.g., penal codes criminalizing consensual same-sex acts) but through the persistence of subnational ones (e.g., local churches and political parties adopting stronger anti-LGBT rhetoric).

Given this subnational variation in exposure to colonial institutions, we estimate a Geo-RDD using a sample of individuals in villages near the historical colonial border between French and British Cameroon.[28] The location of this border is depicted in Figure BX in Appendix B. More specifically, we estimate the regression model

$$Prejudice_{i,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_v + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,v} \tag{4}$$

where i, v, $f(v)$, $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$, and $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ have the same definition as in Equation (2).[29] $British_v$ is an indicator variable equal to one for those villages located on the British side of the boundary and zero for those on the French side. β^{GB} in Equation (4) measures the effect of British colonial institutions on contemporary sexual prejudice in villages near the former internal colonial boundary. A positive and significant β^{GB} would be consistent with the hypothesis of persistence through subnational institutions. In contrast, a small and insignificant β^{GB} would support the hypothesis of persistence through national institutions.

Table CV in Appendix C presents the results of this exercise. Results across all specifications show no significant differences in sexual prejudice across the two sides of the Cameroon internal colonial border. This indicates that differences in subnational

[28] Again, we use data from the Afrobarometer. Specifically, we use data for respondents in Cameroon, in rounds 6 to 9 (2015 to 2022), available at http://www.afrobarometer.org.

[29] Table BXIII and Figure CIX present descriptive statistics and balance checks, respectively, for this sample.

institutions cannot explain the observed differences in sexual prejudice across colonial borders found in the Geo-RDD estimates across countries.

7 Conclusion

We present the first causal test of the hypothesis that British colonization promoted sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies by enforcing sodomy laws. Our findings show that British rule significantly increased sexual prejudice, especially in regions where colonial legal codes conflicted with existing social norms, and that contemporary criminalization of same-sex conduct fully accounts for this effect. More broadly, the results underscore the lasting cultural impact of colonial legal systems and the central role of legal institutions in shaping societal attitudes toward marginalized groups.

Given these findings, governments seeking to promote tolerance should consider repealing colonial-era laws that criminalize homosexual conduct. Decriminalization would create more opportunities for non-threatening interactions between sexual majorities and openly LGBT individuals, helping to reduce prejudice. To minimize the risk of backlash, however, such reforms should proceed through regular legislative channels and respect the sovereignty of former colonies. We hope our results contribute to these important policy debates, demonstrating the lasting influence of colonial origin on the spatial distribution of sexual prejudice.

While we provide credible evidence that British colonial origins shaped contemporary sexual prejudice—and that the greater likelihood of criminalizing same-sex conduct in former British colonies helps explain this effect—our analysis does not address the role of postcolonial politics in sustaining these laws. One hypothesis is that sodomy laws endure more strongly in Anglophone countries because U.S. megachurches are particularly effective at converting voters and influencing public attitudes toward LGBT individuals (Kaoma, 2009, 2012; Grossman, 2015). Another pos-

sibility is that identity-based political platforms, which frame homosexuality as incompatible with African values, yield greater electoral returns in former British colonies, where ethnic identities remain particularly salient (Ali et al., 2018). Investigating these mechanisms offers a promising avenue for future research.

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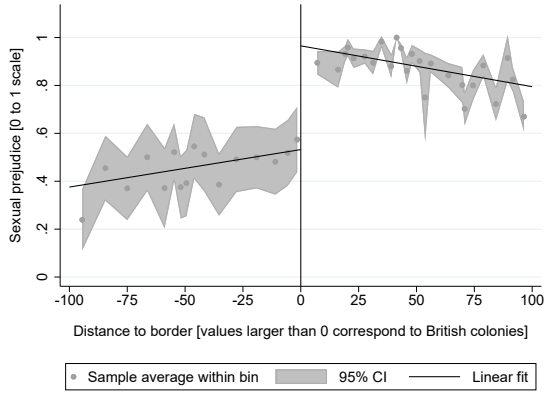
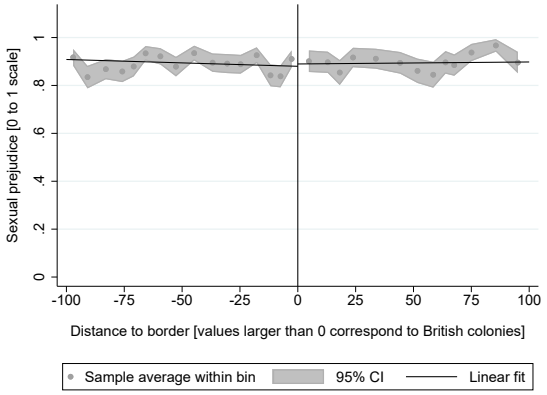
Figures

Figure I: Geo-RDD in the African samples



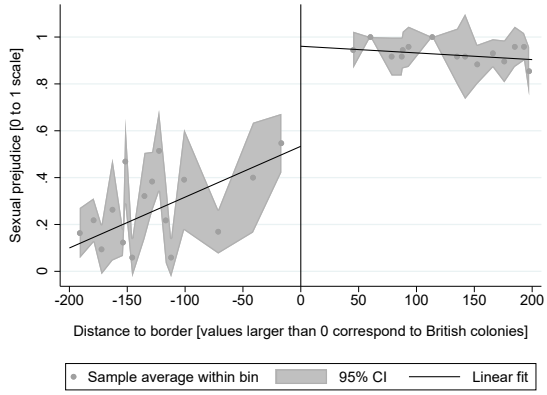
(a) Geo-RDD in the Southern and Eastern African sample



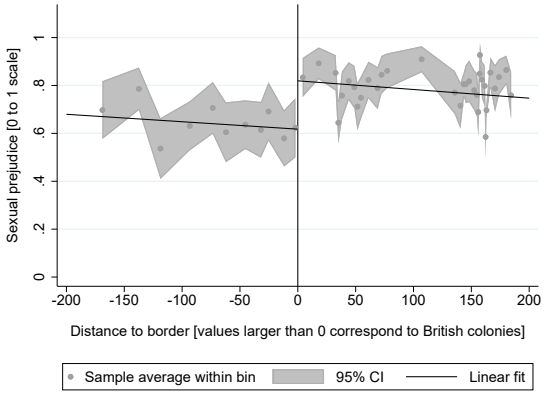
(b) Geo-RDD in the Western African sample

Notes: This figure displays the Regression Discontinuity plots associated to the Geo-RDD across countries in the Southern and Eastern African samples using the Afrobarometer (AB) data. Subfigure (a) includes respondents from Portuguese (Mozambique) and British (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania) former colonies. Subfigure (b) includes respondents from French (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Togo), British (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) and U.S. (Liberia) former colonies. All respondents were surveyed by the Afrobarometer (AB) between 2014 and 2015. The plots are obtained following data-driven procedures proposed by Calonico et al. (2015), replicating the specification in Table II, Column (1): $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We use observations within a 100 km bandwidth from the colonial border, apply a triangular kernel, and select the number of bins using the IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. We report 95% confidence intervals for each bin.

Figure II: Geo-RDD in the Southeast Asia and and South American samples



(a) Geo-RDD in the Southeast Asian sample



(b) Geo-RDD in the South American sample

Notes: This figure displays the Regression Discontinuity plots associated to the Geo-RDD across countries in the Southeast Asian and South American samples using the World Values Surveys (WVS) and LAPOP data, respectively. Subfigure (a) includes respondents from Thailand (never colonized) and Myanmar (former British colony), which were surveyed between 2018 and 2020. Subfigure (b) includes respondents from Guyana (former British colony) and Suriname (former Dutch colony), which were surveyed between 2012 and 2014. The plots are obtained following data-driven procedures proposed by Calonico et al. (2015), replicating the specification in Table III, Column (1): $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the province or township. In subfigure (a), $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is a binary indicator equal to one if respondent i, residing in country c and subnational unit v, reports disliking homosexuals as neighbors, and zero otherwise. In subfigure (b), $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is a continuous index ranging from 0 (strong approval) to 1 (strong disapproval) of permitting homosexuals to run for public office, for each respondent i, residing in country c and subnational unit v. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We use observations within a 100 km bandwidth from the colonial border, apply a triangular kernel, and select the number of bins using the IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. We report 95% confidence intervals for each bin.

Tables

Table I: OLS across countries in the global sample:
Former British colonies have higher sexual prejudice than the former colonies of other European countries after controlling for contemporary economic development

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British	-0.018	0.139	0.141	0.092	0.094
	[0.063]	[0.041]***	[0.041]***	[0.039]**	[0.043]**
Observations	872	872	872	872	872
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87	87
R-squared	0.001	0.480	0.514	0.783	0.803
Outcome average	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647
Income per capita of 2000	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion FEs	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion-Year FEs	No	No	No	No	Yes

Note: This table displays the estimates of the OLS across countries using the World Gallup Poll (WGP) data. Our sample includes respondents in 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed by the WGP between 2011 and 2023. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model without Fixed Effects (FEs) and controls. Column (2) adds the Income per capita (of 2000) as a control in the specification from Column (1). Respectively, Columns (3) to (5) sequentially include Year FEs, United Nations (UN) Subregion FEs, and UN Subregion-Year FEs in the specification from Column (2). In the complete specification in Column (5), we estimate the regression model $Prejudice_{c,t} = \alpha_{s(c),t} + \beta^{GB} British_c + \gamma Development_c + \epsilon_{c,t}$, where c and t denote the country and the year of the WGP survey, respectively. $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of country c at year t: the percentage of respondents that respondent mentions *No* when asked: *"Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?"*. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. $Development_c$ is level of contemporary economic development, as measured by the income per capita of country c measured in the year 2000. $\alpha_{s(c),t}$ capture the UN Subregion-Year FEs. We report standard errors clustered at the country level between parenthesis. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table II: Geo-RDD across countries: Exposure to British colonial origin causes a substantial increase in sexual prejudice after colonization in Southern and Eastern Africa, but not in Western Africa

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Geo-RDD in Southeast Africa					
British colony	0.459	0.446	0.446	0.450	0.439
	(0.027)***	(0.022)***	(0.025)***	(0.025)***	(0.022)***
	[0.040]***	[0.039]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***
Observations h/b	5491/7559	5618/7723	4423/6038	4391/5986	3993/5986
Clusters (ethnic groups)	39	40	35	35	35
Outcome average	0.79	0.79	0.82	0.82	0.82
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	115.69/224.09	120.73/232.89	85.29/146.58	85.25/145.04	75.55/145.12
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Panel B: Geo-RDD in Western Africa					
British colony	−0.004	−0.002	0.022	0.020	0.009
	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.029)
	[0.020]	[0.020]	[0.024]	[0.024]	[0.022]
Observations h/b	7690/10099	7230/10193	4439/8112	4437/8193	4195/10013
Clusters (ethnic groups)	95	97	86	87	95
Outcome average	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	119.6/176.33	111.44/180.19	68.64/130.21	69.03/132.45	66.69/175.68
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	0.917	0.964	0.666	0.711	0.815
RD function	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historical controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ethnic group FE	No	No	No	No	Yes

Note: This table displays the estimates of the Geo-RDD across countries in the African samples using the Afrobarometer (AB) data. Panel A includes respondents from Portuguese (Mozambique) and British (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania) former colonies. Panel B includes respondents from French (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Togo), British (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) and U.S. (Liberia) former colonies. All respondents were surveyed by the Afrobarometer (AB) between 2014 and 2015. The complete regression model we estimate is $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{e(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. Column (1) shows estimates from this regression model including only the RD polynomial $f(v) = f(Distance_v)$, a function on the distance to the former colonial boundary. Columns (2), (3) and (4) add sequentially Geographical, Historical and Individual characteristics as controls in the specification from Column (1). The terms $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ denote the geographic, historical controls, and individual-level controls, respectively. Finally, Column (5) adds fixed effects for ethnic locations ($\alpha_{e(v)}$). $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets. Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values (Rademacher weights with 9,999 replications), to account for the low number of clusters. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table III: Geo-RDD across countries: Exposure to British colonial origin causes a substantial increase in sexual prejudice after colonization both in Southeast Asia and South America.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: Geo-RDD in the border between Thailand and Myanmar				
British colony	0.337	0.339	0.328	0.486
	(0.216)	(0.222)	(0.136)**	(0.097)***
	[0.107]***	[0.111]***	[0.124]***	[0.094]***
Observations h/b	944/1,714	869/1,571	456/1,450	1,040/1,764
Clusters (townships)	55	50	45	58
Outcome average	0.55	0.52	0.62	0.55
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	167.39/261.24	160.36/251.18	127.25/226.42	173.51/288.08
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	0.183	0.204	0.331	0.111
Panel B: Geo-RDD in the border between Guyana and Suriname				
British colony	0.233	0.233	0.261	0.335
	(0.050)***	(0.051)***	(0.043)***	(0.043)***
	[0.061]***	[0.060]***	[0.061]***	[0.060]***
Observations h/b	1,178/2,736	1,178/2,736	1,178/1,683	1,178/2,914
Clusters (municipalities)	39	39	30	42
Outcome average	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	109.22/167.13	110.69/167.71	113.55/154.53	121.89/176.62
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	0.049	0.046	0.041	0.02
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographical controls	No	No	Yes	No
Region FE	No	No	No	Yes

Note: This table displays the estimates of the Geo-RDD across countries in the Southeast Asian and South American samples using the World Values Surveys (WVS) and LAPOP data, respectively. Panel A includes respondents from Thailand (never colonized) and Myanmar (former British colony), which were surveyed between 2018 and 2020. Panel B includes respondents from Guyana (former British colony) and Suriname (former Dutch colony), which were surveyed between 2012 and 2014. The complete regression model we estimate is $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{r(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,i} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the province or township. Column (1) shows estimates from this regression model including only the RD polynomial $f(v) = f(Distance_v)$, a function on the distance to the former colonial boundary. Columns (2) and (3) add sequentially Demographic and Geographical characteristics as controls in the specification from Column (1). The terms $\mathbf{x}_{1,i}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ denote the individual level demographic controls and the settlement level geographic controls, respectively. Finally, Column (4) adds regional fixed effects ($\alpha_{e(r)}$). In Panel A, $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is a binary indicator equal to one if respondent i, residing in country c and subnational unit v, reports disliking homosexuals as neighbors, and zero otherwise. In Panel B, $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is a continuous index ranging from 0 (strong approval) to 1 (strong disapproval) of permitting homosexuals to run for public office, for each respondent i, residing in country c and subnational unit v. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by settlement in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets. Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values (Rademacher weights with 9,999 replications), to account for the low number of clusters. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table IV: Heterogeneity analysis in the global sample:
The positive partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice is considerably stronger in countries with limited Islam penetration before colonization

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British*High Islam Penetration	-0.105	0.020	0.023	0.068	0.069
	[0.061]*	[0.051]	[0.051]	[0.043]	[0.048]
British*Low Islam Penetration	-0.040	0.221	0.222	0.261	0.247
	[0.135]	[0.052]***	[0.053]***	[0.031]***	[0.040]***
Observations	872	872	872	872	872
Observations (High Islam Penetration)	532	532	532	532	532
Observations (Low Islam Penetration)	340	340	340	340	340
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87	87
Num. of clusters (High Islam Penetration)	56	56	56	56	56
Num. of clusters (Low Islam Penetration)	31	31	31	31	31
R-squared	0.223	0.571	0.607	0.806	0.825
Outcome average	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647
Income per capita of 2000	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion FEs	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion-Year FEs	No	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: This table reports the OLS estimates from the global sample, stratified by subsamples with high and low Islam penetration. Specifically, we replicate the structure of Table I, but present the OLS estimates of $\beta^{GB,L}$ and $\beta^{GB,H}$—that is, $\widehat{\beta}$ for the subsamples where $Low\_IP_c = 1$ and $High\_IP_c = 1$, respectively. The low Islam penetration indicator is defined as $Low\_IP_c = \mathbf{1}\left[Share\_Islam_c < P_{50}\left(\{Share\_Islam_i\}_{i=1}^{235}\right)\right]$, where $Share\_Islam_c$ is the share of the Islamic population in 1900, and P_{50} denotes the median across the 235 countries in the World Religion Database (WRD). By construction, $High\_IP_c = 1 - Low\_IP_c$. We estimate $\beta^{GB,L}$ and $\beta^{GB,H}$ using the following augmented regression model: $Prejudice_{c,t} = Low\_IP_c \cdot (\alpha^L_{s(c),t} + \beta^{GB,L} British_c + \gamma^L Development_c) + High\_IP_c \cdot (\alpha^H_{s(c),t} + \beta^{GB,H} British_c + \gamma^H Development_c) + \epsilon_{c,t}$. Standard errors clustered at the country level are reported in parentheses. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table V: OLS across countries in the global sample:
The persistence of laws criminalizing same-sex acts explains most of the pronounced association between British colonization and sexual prejudice

	(1) Sexual Prejudice	(2) Criminalize	(3) Sexual Prejudice	(4) Sexual Prejudice
British	0.141	0.653		0.011
	[0.041]***	[0.068]***		[0.040]
Criminalize			0.206	0.199
			[0.033]***	[0.036]***
Observations	872	872	872	872
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87
R-squared	0.514	0.454	0.589	0.589
Outcome average	0.647	0.385	0.385	0.647
Income per capita of 2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: This table reports results from a simple mediation analysis estimated by OLS using the global sample, which includes 872 nationally representative surveys conducted in 87 former European colonies by the World Gallup Poll between 2011 and 2023. All specifications include controls for $Development_c$ and year fixed effects. $Development_c$ denotes the income per capita of country c in the year 2000. Column (1) reproduces the baseline estimate from Table I, using $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the outcome and $British_c$ as the treatment. $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the share of respondents in country c and year t who answer *No* to the question: "Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?" $British_c$ is an indicator equal to one if country c had British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. Column (2) uses $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the outcome, defined as an indicator equal to one if country c criminalizes consensual same-sex conduct in year t. Column (3) estimates the association between $Criminalize_{c,t}$ and $Prejudice_{c,t}$. Column (4) includes both $British_c$ and $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as covariates, with $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the outcome. Standard errors clustered at the country level are reported in parentheses. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Appendix

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A Background: Additional Information

Table AI: Regulation of consensual same-sex acts in British colonies: Former UK colonies systematically criminalized consensual homosexual conduct

Country	Legal base	Sanction	Date of adoption
Australia	British Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1788
	Queensland Criminal Code	Life imprisonment	1899
Bangladesh	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1862
Belize	Wright's Jamaican Penal Code	Up to 3 years imprisonment	1888
Bhutan	Not formally introduced by the British, but considered a direct influence (O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, p.31)	Less than a year	1959
Botswana	British Common Law	Up to 2 years of imprisonment	1885
	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 7 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1964
Canada	Stephen's Penal Code	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1892
Cyprus	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 5 years of imprisonment	1929
Eswatini	British Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1907
Gambia	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1934
Ghana	Wright's Jamaican Penal Code	Up to 3 years imprisonment	1892
Guyana	Wright's Jamaican Penal Code	Up to life imprisonment	1893
Hong Kong	British Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1865
India	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1862
Iraq	Baghdad Penal Code	Up to 15 years of penal servitude	1919
Israel	Palestine Criminal Code Ordinance	Up to 10 years of imprisonment	1936
Jamaica	Britsh Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1864
Kenya	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1897
	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Lesotho	British Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1871
Malawi	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years imprisonment or life imprisonment	1925
	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Malaysia	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years imprisonment or life imprisonment	1871
Mauritius	British Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1828)	Up to 5 years of imprisonment with servitude	1838
Myanmar	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1886
Namibia	Roman-Dutch Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1920
New Zealand	British Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1828)	Capital sentence	1840
	Stephen's Penal Code	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1893
Nigeria	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1914
Pakistan	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1862
Sierra Leone	British Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1861
Singapore	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1871
South Africa	After annexation (1806), retains previous Roman-Dutch Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1806
Sri Lanka	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1885
Sudan	Indian Penal Code	No punishment for consensual same-sex acts	1899
Swaziland	British Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1907
	Criminal Law and Procedure Act		1939
Tanzania	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1920
	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Trinidad and Tobago	Britsh Common Law (Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1861
Uganda	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1902
	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Unites States of America	Different bases (and years) across the 13 British colonies	Up to a capital sentence	1600's
Zambia	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Zimbabwe	Roman-Dutch Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1889

Notes: This table shows the legal bases (e.g., penal codes, legal origin) used to regulate consensual same-sex acts in the British colonies that appear in at least one of our samples. Respectively, Columns (2), (3), and (4) list the legal base, the prescribed sanction for consensual same-sex acts, and the date of adoption of the regulation in each country listed in Column (1). Elaborated by the authors using information from O'Mahoney and Han (2018), Han and O'Mahoney (2014), Mignot (2022), and Long (2003).

B Data and Methodology: Additional Tables and Figures

Table BI: Detailed description of the variables in the WGP sample

Variable	Description	Source
Panel A: Outcome variable		
Perceived sexual prejudice	Percentage of the (non-missing and non-unknown) respondents who answered YES to the question "Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?"	World Gallup Poll
Criminalize same-sex conduct today	Indicator variable equal to one if the respondent's country criminalizes same-sex conduct in the survey year, and zero otherwise.	Dicklitch-Nelson et al. (2024)
Panel B: Colonial origin variables		
Colonial origin: British	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has British colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: France	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has French colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Spain	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has Spanish colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Portugal	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has Portuguese colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Other European	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has Dutch or Belgian colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls		
Real GDP per capita	Real GDP per person for the year 2000.	Nunn and Puga (2012) from Maddison (2007)
Panel D: Geographical controls		
Latitude (°)	Latitude of the country centroid. Measured in degrees.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Longitude (°)	Longitude of the country centroid. Measured in degrees.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Land area (1000 Ha.)	Land area of the country. Measured in thousands of hectares.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Ruggedness Index (100 m.)	Terrain Ruggedness Index, originally devised by Riley et al. (1999).	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of fertile soil	Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has fertile soil.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of desert soil	Percentage of the land surface area of each country covered by sandy desert, dunes, rocky or lava flows.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of tropical climate	Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has any of the four Köppen-Geiger tropical climates.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Avg. distance to the coast (1000 km.)	Average distance to the coast. Measured in thousands of kilometers.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of area within 100 km. of the coast	Percentage of the land surface area of each country within 100 km of the nearest ice-free coast.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Diamond extraction (1000 carats)	Gem diamond extraction (1958-2000). Measured in thousands of carats.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Panel E: Historical controls		
Population in 1400	Total population of the country in 1400. Measured in 1000 inhabitants.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of Islamic population in 1900	Percentage of the population in 1900 following Islam.	World Religions Database
Low Islam Penetration	Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is below the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset.	World Religions Database
High Islam Penetration	Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is above the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset.	World Religions Database
Panel E: UN Subregions (Country level)		
Subregion indicators [14 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 14 United Nations subregions: Australia and N. Zealand; Caribbean; Central America; Northern America; South America; Eastern Africa; Northern Africa; Southern Africa; Western Africa; Middle Africa; Eastern Asia; South-eastern Asia; Southern Asia; Western Asia	United Nations (1999)
Panel G: Survey-year indicators		
Survey year indicators [13 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 13 survey years (from 2011 to 2023).	World Gallup Poll

Table BII: Descriptive statistics in the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice	0.65	0.26	0.06	0.99
Criminalize same-sex conduct today	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.40	0.49	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: France	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Spain	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Portugal	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Belgium & Dutch	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls				
Real GDP per capita	6255.10	7644.26	466.65	33970.17
Panel D: Geographical controls				
Latitude (°)	4.07	20.31	-41.81	61.49
Longitude (°)	4.25	67.96	-112.98	171.48
Land area (1000 Ha.)	103674.10	202007.97	67.00	916192.00
Ruggedeness Index (100 m.)	1.09	0.93	0.02	6.20
% of fertile soil	36.63	20.41	0.00	96.08
% of desert climate	3.26	10.48	0.00	74.86
% of tropical climate	57.25	41.30	0.00	100.00
Avg. distance to the coast (1000 km.)	0.34	0.34	0.00	1.43
% of the area w 100 km. of the coast	39.17	37.82	0.00	100.00
Diamond extraction (1000 carats)	11495.56	43603.17	0.00	264154.00
Panel E: Historical controls				
Population in 1400 (1000s)	2113.18	9466.36	0.00	77226.81
% of Islamic population in 1900	13.62	24.93	0.00	99.86
% of Islamic population in 2000	20.69	30.90	0.00	99.63
Low Islam Penetration	0.61	0.49	0.00	1.00
High Islam Penetration	0.39	0.49	0.00	1.00

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample, which includes respondents in 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed between 2011 and 2023. Table BII in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the WGP sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, contemporary controls, geographical controls, historical controls, UN sub-regions indicators, and year indicators.

Table BII: *(continues)* - Descriptive statistics in the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel F: Regional indicators				
Subregion: Australia and N. Zealand	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Caribbean	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Central America	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Northern America	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Subregion: South America	0.15	0.36	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Eastern Africa	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Northern Africa	0.01	0.10	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Southern Africa	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Western Africa	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Middle Africa	0.08	0.26	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Eastern Asia	0.01	0.11	0.00	1.00
Subregion: South-eastern Asia	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Southern Asia	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Western Asia	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00
Panel G: Year indicators				
Year: 2011	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00
Year: 2012	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Year: 2013	0.08	0.26	0.00	1.00
Year: 2014	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Year: 2015	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Year: 2016	0.08	0.26	0.00	1.00
Year: 2017	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Year: 2018	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Year: 2019	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Year: 2020	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Year: 2021	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample, which includes respondents in 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed between 2011 and 2023. Table BII in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the WGP sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, contemporary controls, geographical controls, historical controls, UN sub-regions indicators, and year indicators.

Table BIII: Detailed description of the variables in the Afrobarometer (AB) sample

Variable	Description	Source
Panel A: Outcomes and treatment		
Sexual prejudice [0 to 4]	Increasing discrete measure of sexual prejudice taking values from 0 to 4 if the respondent would *strongly like*, *somewhat like*, *not care*, *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having homosexuals as neighbours, respectively.	Afrobarometer
Sexual prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having homosexuals as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
Religious prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having people of different religion as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
Ethnic prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having people of different ethnicity as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
HIV prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having people with HIV as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
Immigration prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would *somewhat dislike* or *strongly dislike* having immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
British Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that formerly was a British Colony.	La Porta et al. (2008)
Panel B: Geographical controls (village level)		
Latitude	Latitude at the current location of the respondent.	Afrobarometer
Longitude	Longitude at the current location of the respondent.	Afrobarometer
Temperature	Mean temperature (in degrees Celsius) in the period from 2011 to 2020 from a grid at 0.5° resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	Climatic Research Unit (TS v. 4.07)
Elevation	Elevation (in meters) from a grid at 1km resolution, computed as the mean from the 5 by 5 cells centered in the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Slope	Slope (in degrees) computed from a grid at 1km resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Distance to coast	Minimum distance (in kilometers) from the current location of the respondent to the coastline.	GSHHG
Coastal region [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if respondent resides in a coastal ethnic location.	
Average agricultural suitability	Average land quality for cultivation by ethnic region, considering both climatic and soil suitability for farming.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Atlas of the Biosphere
Malaria stability index	Index considering the prevalence and type of mosquitoes indigenous to a region, their human biting rate, their daily survival rate, and their incubation period, averaged by ethnic region.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Anthony Kiszewski (2004)
Distance to diamond mines	Distance (in kilometers) from the current location of the respondent to the closest diamond deposit.	DIADATA - Peace Research Institute Oslo
Main river [Dummy]	Dummy variable taking value one if for ethnic regions with a river.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Natural Earth.
Panel C: Historical controls (village/ethnic level)		
Distance to Saharan trade routes	Minimum distance to the routes of the Saharan trade from the centroid of the land historically inhabited by the ethnic group in which the current location is located.	Nunn and Wantchekon (2011) Originally, Murdock (1959) and Century Company (1911)
Distance to colonial railways	Distance (in kilometers) from the current location to the closest colonial railway.	Nunn and Wantchekon (2011) Originally, Oliver (2000)
Distance to national border	Distance (in kilometers) from the current location of the respondent to the closest national border.	United Nations
Major precolonial conflict [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one for areas with major precolonial conflict.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Besley and Reinal-Querol (2014)
Precolonial kingdom or empire [Dummy]	Dummy variable that takes value one if an ethnic homeland was part of a large pre-colonial kingdoms.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Besley and Reinal-Querol (2014)
Major city in 1400 [Dummy]	Dummy variable that takes value of one if a city with a population larger than 20,000 in 1400 was in the historical homeland of an ethnic group.	Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) Originally, Chandler (1987)
Panel D: Individual controls		
Sex	Dummy taking value one if respondent is a female.	Afrobarometer
Age [5 age fixed effects]	Indicators for respondents in 5 age groups: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55+.	Afrobarometer

Table BIV: Descriptive statistics in the Southeast Africa - Afrobarometer (AB) sample

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice [=1 if dislikes/strongly dislikes]	0.79	0.41	0	1
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.82	0.39	0	1
Colonial origin: Portuguese	0.18	0.39	0	1
Panel C: Geographical controls				
Latitude (º)	-18.5	5.33	-27.9	-9.98
Longitude (º)	33.3	1.96	29.1	40.4
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	22.2	1.98	16.9	26.8
Elevation (meters)	789.9	412.9	5.06	1910.9
Slope (º)	1.83	2.10	0.029	17.2
Distance coastline (kms.)	319.5	193.9	0.76	803.1
Distance diamond mine (kms.)	233.8	124.7	5.13	552.3
Coastal indicator	0.15	0.36	0	1
Average agricultural suitability	0.60	0.12	0.26	0.77
Malaria stability index	0.84	0.13	0.11	1
Main river dummy	0.93	0.25	0	1
Panel D: Historical controls				
Distance Saharan trade routes (kms.)	3942.6	493.2	3124.0	4912.4
Distance colonial railways (kms.)	156.3	158.4	0.23	757.1
Distance to national border (kms.)	42.4	31.6	0.52	137.6
Major precolonial conflict (Dummy)	0.013	0.11	0	1
Precolonial kingdom or empire (Dummy)	0.99	0.088	0	1
Major city in 1400	0.017	0.13	0	1
Panel E: Individual controls				
Sex [1 = Female]	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age group: 18 to 24 years	0.25	0.43	0	1
Age group: 25 to 34 years	0.31	0.46	0	1
Age group: 35 to 44 years	0.20	0.40	0	1
Age group: 45 to 54 years	0.11	0.31	0	1
Age group: +55 years	0.14	0.34	0	1

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the Southeast Africa - Afrobarometer (AB) sample, which includes respondents in 7 former European colonies surveyed between 2014 and 2015. Table BIII in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the AB sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, geographical controls, historical controls, and individual controls.

Table BV: Descriptive statistics in the Western Africa - Afrobarometer (AB) sample

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice [=1 if dislikes/strongly dislikes]	0.89	0.31	0	1
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.38	0.49	0	1
Colonial origin: French	0.54	0.50	0	1
Colonial origin: U.S	0.078	0.27	0	1
Panel C: Geographical controls				
Latitude (º)	8.70	2.55	4.84	14.9
Longitude (º)	-2.13	6.75	-13.9	10.1
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	27.5	1.14	23.4	30.5
Elevation (meters)	209.9	164.2	3.94	1212.7
Slope (º)	0.61	1.12	0	9.73
Distance coastline (kms.)	255.5	297.6	0.053	982.0
Distance diamond mine (kms.)	172.6	119.7	0.37	495.7
Coastal indicator	0.49	0.50	0	1
Average agricultural suitability	0.43	0.18	0.0040	0.73
Malaria stability index	0.99	0.049	0.11	1
Main river dummy	0.57	0.49	0	1
Panel D: Historical controls				
Distance Saharan trade routes (kms.)	658.7	255.5	11.9	1114.8
Distance colonial railways (kms.)	164.3	145.2	0.061	626.0
Distance national border (kms.)	34.4	33.8	0.076	128.1
Major precolonial conflict (Dummy)	0.23	0.42	0	1
Precolonial kingdom or empire (Dummy)	0.59	0.49	0	1
Major city in 1400	0.093	0.29	0	1
Panel E: Individual controls				
Sex [1 = Female]	0.50	0.50	0	1
Age group: 18 to 24 years	0.20	0.40	0	1
Age group: 25 to 34 years	0.32	0.47	0	1
Age group: 35 to 44 years	0.22	0.41	0	1
Age group: 45 to 54 years	0.14	0.35	0	1
Age group: +55 years	0.13	0.33	0	1

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the Southeast Africa - Afrobarometer (AB) sample, which includes respondents in 7 former European colonies surveyed between 2014 and 2015. Table BIII in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the AB sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, geographical controls, historical controls, and individual controls.

Table BVI: Detailed description of the variables in the Southeast Asian (WVS) regional sample

Variable	Description	Source
Panel A: Outcomes and treatment		
Sexual prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would dislike having homosexuals as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	WVS
British Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that formerly was a British Colony.	La Porta et al. (2008)
Panel B: Geographical controls (village level)		
Latitude	Latitude at the centroid of the current province, township or settlement of the respondent.	WVS
Longitude	Longitude at the centroid of the current province, township or settlement of the respondent.	WVS
Temperature	Mean temperature (in degrees Celsius) in the period from 2011 to 2020 from a grid at 0.5º resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	Climatic Research Unit (TS v. 4.07)
Elevation	Elevation (in meters) from a grid at 1km resolution, computed as the mean from the 5 by 5 cells centered in the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Slope	Slope (in degrees) computed from a grid at 1km resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Coastline Indicator	Dummy taking value one if respondent resides in a coastal location.	
Panel D: Individual controls		
Sex	Dummy taking value one if respondent is a female.	WVS
Age [5 age fixed effects]	Indicators for respondents in 5 age groups: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55+.	WVS
Panel E: Regional indicators		
Region indicators [9 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 9 major regions: 5 in Thailand (North, Central, South, Southeast, and Bangkok area) and 4 in Myanmar (North, East, Central, and Coastal South).	WVS

Table BVII: Detailed description of the variables in the South American (LAPOP) regional sample

Variable	Description	Source
Panel A: Outcomes and treatment		
Sexual prejudice [0 to 1 index]	Increasing continuous measure of sexual prejudice taking values based on how strongly the individual approves or disapproves of homosexuals being permitted to run for public office?.	LAPOP
British Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that formerly was a British Colony.	La Porta et al. (2008)
Panel B: Geographical controls (village level)		
Latitude	Latitude at the centroid of the current province, township or settlement of the respondent.	LAPOP
Longitude	Longitude at the centroid of the current province, township or settlement of the respondent.	LAPOP and WVS
Temperature	Mean temperature (in degrees Celsius) in the period from 2011 to 2020 from a grid at 0.5º resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	Climatic Research Unit (TS v. 4.07)
Elevation	Elevation (in meters) from a grid at 1km resolution, computed as the mean from the 5 by 5 cells centered in the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Slope	Slope (in degrees) computed from a grid at 1km resolution, matched to the current location of the respondent.	USGS (GTOPO30)
Coastline Indicator	Dummy taking value one if respondent resides in a coastal location.	
Panel D: Individual controls		
Sex	Dummy taking value one if respondent is a female.	LAPOP
Age [5 age fixed effects]	Indicators for respondents in 5 age groups: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55+.	LAPOP
Panel E: Regional indicators		
Region indicators [20 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 20 major regions: 10 provinces in Guyana (Barima-Waini, Pomeroon-Supenaam, Essequibo Islands-West Demerara, Demerara-Mahaica, Mahaica-Berbice, East Berbice-Corentyne, Cuyuni-Mazaruni, Potaro-Siparuni, Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo, Upper Demerara-Upper Berbice) and 10 in Suriname (Brokopondo, Commewijne, Coronie, Marowijne, Nickerie, Para, Paramaribo, Saramacca, Sipaliwini, Wanica).	WVS

Table BVIII: Descriptive statistics in the Southeast Asian - WVS sample

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice [=1 if dislikes]	0.58	0.49	0	1
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.48	0.50	0	1
Never colonized	0.52	0.50	0	1
Panel C: Individual controls				
Sex [1=Female]	0.52	0.50	0	1
Age group: 18 to 24 years	0.10	0.31	0	1
Age group: 25 to 34 years	0.17	0.37	0	1
Age group: 35 to 44 years	0.23	0.42	0	1
Age group: 45 to 54 years	0.24	0.43	0	1
Age group: 55+	0.26	0.44	0	1
Panel D: Geographical controls				
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	27.1	2.00	22.3	29.1
Elevation (meters)	231.3	305.9	1.97	972.7
Slope (°)	1.66	1.62	0.0015	4.98
Coastal indicator	0.41	0.49	0	1

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the Southeast Asian - WVS sample. It includes respondents in Myanmar (former British colony), surveyed in 2020, and Thailand (never colonized), surveyed in 2018. Table BVI provides a precise description of each variable in the Southeast Asian sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, individual controls, and geographical controls.

Table BIX: Descriptive statistics in the South American - LAPOP sample

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice [0 to 1 index]	0.76	0.35	0	1
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.74	0.44	0	1
Colonial origin: Dutch	0.26	0.44	0	1
Panel C: Individual controls				
Sex [1 = Female]	0.49	0.50	0	1
Age group: 18 to 24 years	0.21	0.41	0	1
Age group: 25 to 34 years	0.23	0.42	0	1
Age group: 35 to 44 years	0.23	0.42	0	1
Age group: 45 to 54 years	0.15	0.36	0	1
Age group: +55 years	0.18	0.39	0	1
Panel D: Geographical controls				
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	27.2	0.35	26.1	27.5
Elevation (meters)	25.5	62.6	0.77	320.7
Slope (º)	0.087	0.23	0	1.06
Coastal indicator	0.71	0.46	0	1

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the South American - LAPOP sample. It includes respondents in Guyana (former British colony), and Suriname (former Dutch colony), both surveyed in 2012 and 2014. Table BVII provides a precise description of each variable in the South American sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, individual controls, and geographical controls.

Table BX: Detailed description of the variables in the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample

Variable	Description	Source
Panel A: Outcome variable		
Perceived sexual prejudice	Percentage of the (non-missing and non-unknown) respondents who answered HOMOSEXUALS to the question *"Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours?"*	World Value Surveys merged sample
Panel B: Colonial origin variables		
Colonial origin: British	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has British colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: France	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has French colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Spain	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Spanish colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Portugal	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Portuguese colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Colonial origin: Other European	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Dutch or Belgian colonial origin.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls		
Real GDP per capita	Real GDP per person for the year 2000.	Nunn and Puga (2012) from Maddison (2007)
Panel D: Geographical controls		
Latitude (°)	Latitude of the country centroid. Measured in degrees.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Longitude (°)	Longitude of the country centroid. Measured in degrees.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Land area (1000 Ha.)	Land area of the country. Measured in thousands of hectares.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Ruggedness Index (100 m.)	Terrain Ruggedness Index, originally devised by Riley et al. (1999).	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of fertile soil	Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has fertile soil.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of desert soil	Percentage of the land surface area of each country covered by sandy desert, dunes, rocky or lava flows.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of tropical climate	Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has any of the four Köppen-Geiger tropical climates.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Avg. distance to the coast (1000 km.)	Average distance to the coast. Measured in thousands of kilometers.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
% of area within 100 km. of the coast	Percentage of the land surface area of each country within 100 km of the nearest ice-free coast.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Diamond extraction (1000 carats)	Gem diamond extraction (1958-2000). Measured in thousands of carats.	Nunn and Puga (2012)
Panel E: Historical controls		
% of Islamic population in 1900	Percentage of the population in 1900 following Islam.	World Religions Database
Low Islam Penetration	Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is below the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset.	World Religions Database
High Islam Penetration	Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is above the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset.	World Religions Database
Panel E: UN Subregions (Country level)		
Subregion indicators [14 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 13 United Nations subregions: Australia and N. Zealand; Caribbean; Central America; Northern America; South America; Eastern Africa; Northern Africa; Southern Africa; Western Africa; Eastern Asia; South-eastern Asia; Southern Asia; Western Asia	United Nations (1999)
Panel G: Wave indicators		
Survey Wafe indicators [6 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 6 survey waves (Waves 2 to 6).	World Value Surveys merged sample
Panel H: Year indicators		
Survey year indicators [27 fixed effects]	Indicator variables for 27 survey years (1990 to 1992, 1995 to 2002, 2004 to 2007, 2010 to 2014, and 2016 to 2022.	World Value Surveys merged sample

Table BXI: Descriptive statistics in the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice	0.46	0.25	0.05	1.00
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: France	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Spain	0.35	0.48	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Portugal	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
Colonial origin: Belgium & Dutch	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls				
Real GDP per capita	9353.23	8883.57	521.83	33970.17
Panel D: Geographical controls				
Latitude (°)	5.09	25.43	-41.81	61.49
Longitude (°)	2.59	81.19	-112.98	171.48
Land area (1000 Ha.)	176673.83	269242.08	3.00	916192.00
Ruggedeness Index (100 m.)	1.26	0.86	0.02	4.20
% of fertile soil	36.98	21.10	0.00	96.08
% of desert climate	3.21	6.19	0.00	26.13
% of tropical climate	41.11	41.52	0.00	100.00
Avg. distance to the coast (1000 km.)	0.30	0.30	0.00	1.43
% of the area w 100 km. of the coast	41.55	35.61	0.00	100.00
Diamond extraction (1000 carats)	12726.66	49766.31	0.00	264154.00
Panel E: Historical controls				
% of Islamic population in 1900	16.59	29.82	0.00	98.37
Low Islam Penetration	0.53	0.50	0.00	1.00
High Islam Penetration	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Panel F: Regional indicators				
Subregion: Australia and N. Zealand	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Caribbean	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Central America	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Northern America	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Subregion: South America	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Eastern Africa	0.06	0.25	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Northern Africa	0.06	0.25	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Southern Africa	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Western Africa	0.06	0.25	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Eastern Asia	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00
Subregion: South-eastern Asia	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Southern Asia	0.06	0.25	0.00	1.00
Subregion: Western Asia	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00

Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample, which includes 152 nationally representative surveys in 50 former European colonies from 6 WVS waves implemented between 1990 and 2022. Table BX in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the WGP sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, contemporary controls, geographical controls, historical controls, UN sub-regions indicators, WVS wave indicators, and year indicators.

Table BXII: *(continues)* - Descriptive statistics in the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel G: Wave indicators				
WVS Wave: 2	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
WVS Wave: 3	0.14	0.34	0.00	1.00
WVS Wave: 4	0.16	0.37	0.00	1.00
WVS Wave: 5	0.19	0.39	0.00	1.00
WVS Wave: 6	0.22	0.42	0.00	1.00
WVS Wave: 7	0.25	0.44	0.00	1.00
Panel H: Year indicators				
Year: 1990	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Year: 1991	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Year: 1992	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Year: 1995	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
Year: 1996	0.06	0.25	0.00	1.00
Year: 1997	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Year: 1998	0.01	0.12	0.00	1.00
Year: 1999	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00
Year: 2000	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2001	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00
Year: 2002	0.01	0.12	0.00	1.00
Year: 2004	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Year: 2005	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Year: 2006	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00
Year: 2007	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00
Year: 2010	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Year: 2011	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2012	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00
Year: 2013	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2014	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2016	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00
Year: 2017	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00
Year: 2018	0.12	0.33	0.00	1.00
Year: 2019	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2020	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
Year: 2021	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00
Year: 2022	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00

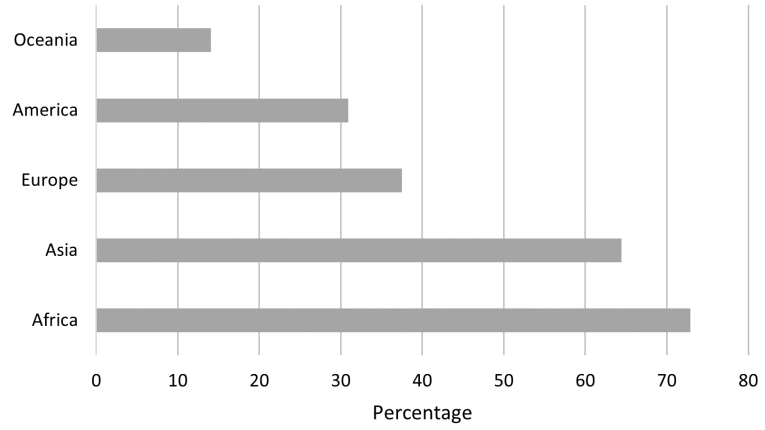
Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample, which includes 152 nationally representative surveys in 50 former European colonies from 6 WVS waves implemented between 1990 and 2022. Table BX in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the WGP sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, contemporary controls, geographical controls, historical controls, UN sub-regions indicators, WVS wave indicators, and year indicators.

Table BXIII: Descriptive statistics in the Cameroon - Afrobarometer (AB) sample

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice [=1 if dislikes/strongly dislikes]	0.90	0.30	0	1
Panel B: Colonial origin variables				
Colonial origin: British	0.39	0.49	0	1
Colonial origin: French	0.61	0.49	0	1
Panel C: Geographical controls				
Latitude (º)	4.93	0.83	3.64	6.59
Longitude (º)	9.94	0.44	9.02	11.6
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	23.7	2.80	19.9	27.2
Elevation (meters)	726.8	662.5	0.63	2325.5
Slope (º)	1.57	1.63	0	8.14
Distance coastline (kms.)	96.6	90.2	0.013	308.8
Distance diamond mine (kms.)	451.8	38.3	359.8	527.2
Coastal indicator	0.47	0.50	0	1
Average agricultural suitability	0.38	0.069	0.28	0.56
Malaria stability index.	0.79	0.22	0.31	0.99
Main river dummy	0.33	0.47	0	1
Panel D: Historical controls				
Distance Saharan trade routes (kms.)	816.8	92.9	638.9	933.0
Distance colonial railways (kms.)	615.4	51.1	502.8	716.3
Distance national border (kms.)	57.8	42.9	0.097	144.8
Panel E: Individual controls				
Sex [1 = Female]	0.50	0.50	0	1
Age group: 18 to 24 years	0.28	0.45	0	1
Age group: 25 to 34 years	0.36	0.48	0	1
Age group: 35 to 44 years	0.18	0.39	0	1
Age group: 45 to 54 years	0.097	0.30	0	1
Age group: +55 years	0.084	0.28	0	1

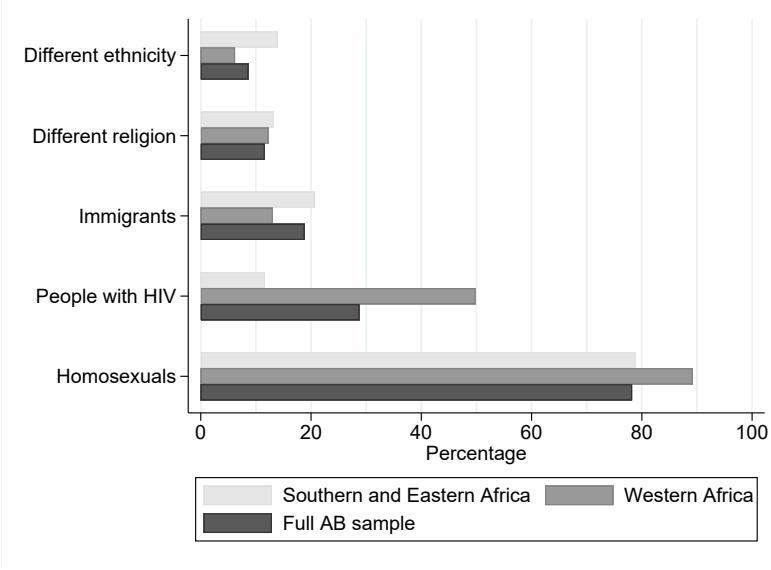
Notes: This Table displays descriptive statistics from the Cameroon - Afrobarometer (AB) sample, which includes respondents in xx waves surveyed between . Table BIII in Appendix B provides a precise description of each variable in the AB sample. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) show the sample mean, the standard deviation, the sample minimum, and the sample maximum of the across establishments distribution of each variable displayed in Column (1). Respectively, Panels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, geographical controls, historical controls, and individual controls.

Figure BI: Share of population that shows sexual prejudice across continents: contemporary Africa, compared to other continents, exhibits high levels of sexual prejudice



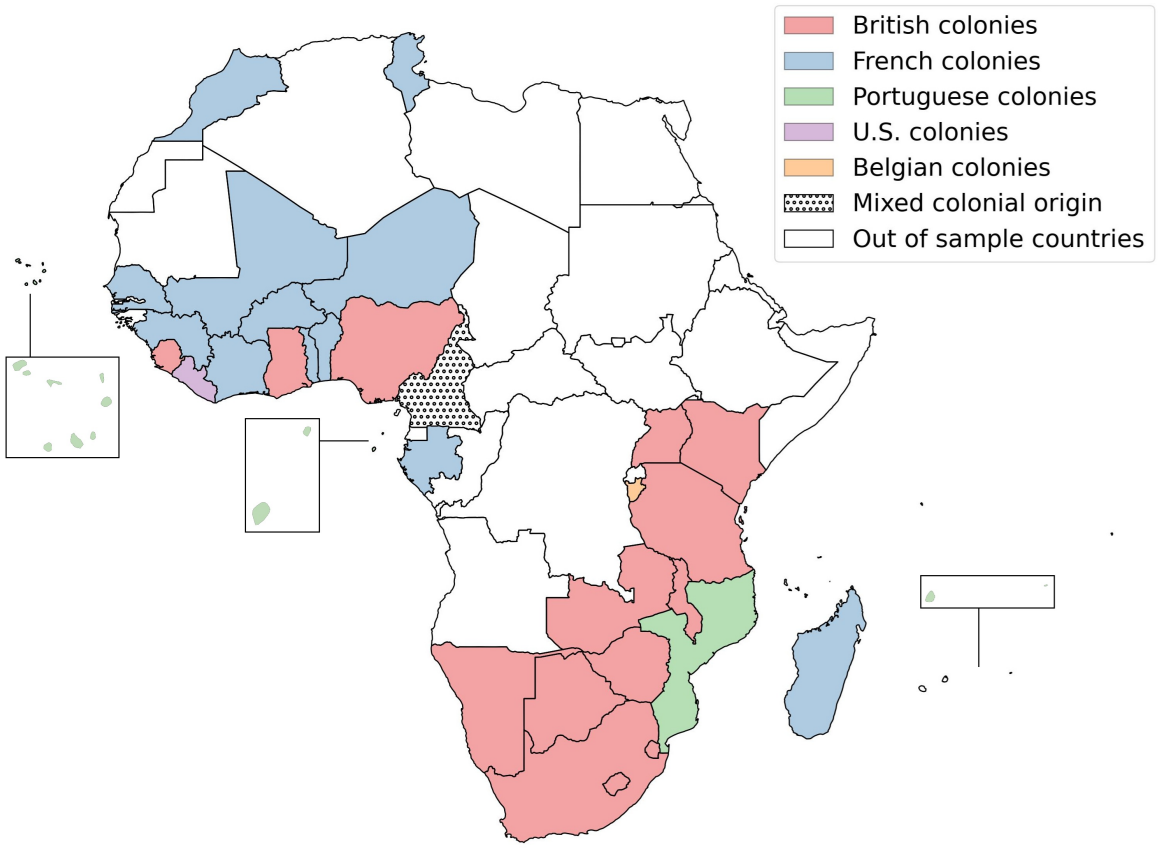
Notes: This figure displays the percentage of people that shows sexual prejudice across continents. Information is obtained from Questions 36 to 44 in the 6th wave of the *World Value Survey*: the interviewer shows a list of 9 groups of people and asks the respondent to choose which of those she would not like to have as a neighbor. One of the groups listed is *"Homosexuals"* (item 40). We consider that an individual shows sexual prejudice if she chooses homosexuals among the groups she would not like to have as a neighbor.

Figure BII: Share of African population with different forms of prejudice in our sample: sexual prejudice, compared to other types, is a salient phenomenon in contemporary Africa



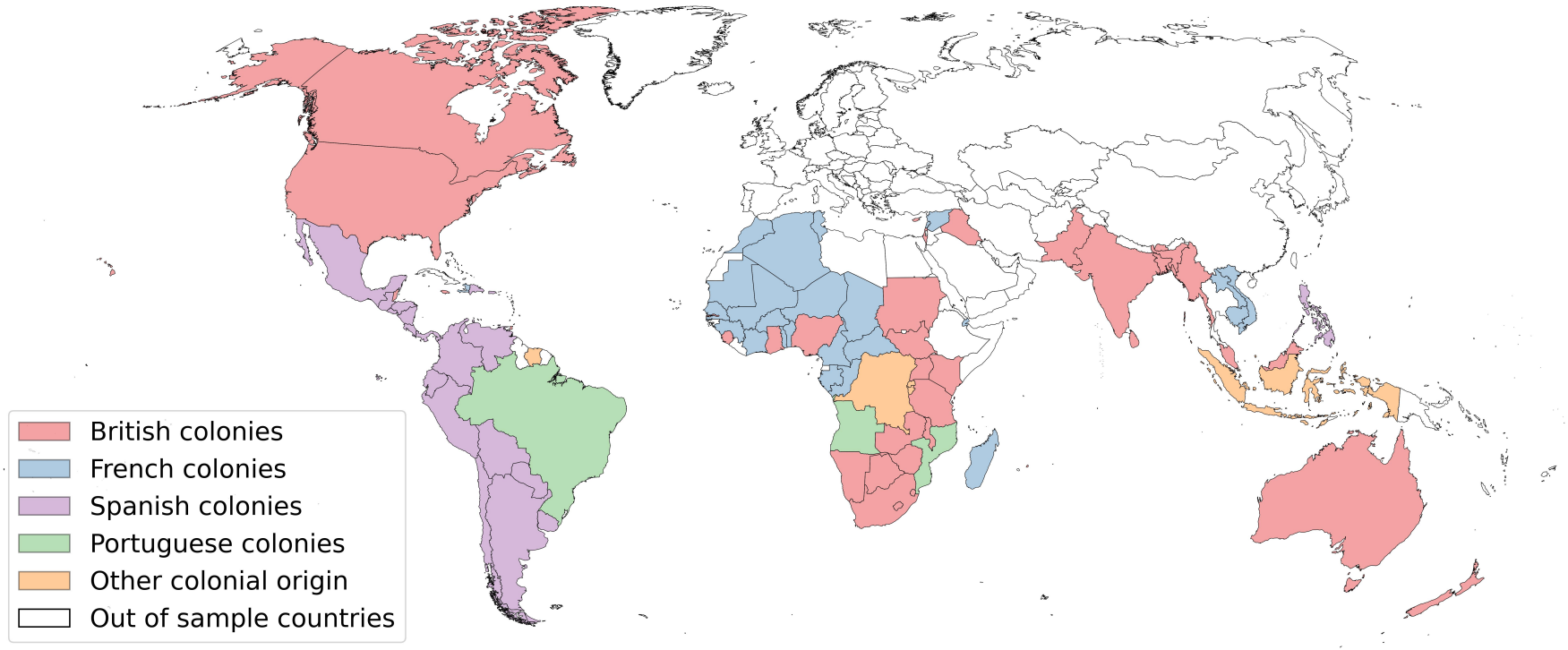
Notes: This figure displays the percentage of people that shows prejudice against a certain group for respondents in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 (ABW6). We provide the percentage for our 2 regional samples (Southern and Estaern Africa, Western Africa) and the full AB data. Information is obtained from the following question: *For each of the following types of people, please tell us whether you would like to have people from this group [(...)] as neighbours, dislike it, or do not care.* Possible answers are *Strongly dislike*; *Somewhat dislike*; *Would not care*; *Somewhat like*; *Strongly like*. The question is asked for 5 different groups: *Homosexuals*; *People of a different religion*; *People of a different ethnicity*; *People with HIV*; *Immigrants or foreign workers*. We consider that an individual has prejudice towards a group if she answers *Strongly dislike* or *Somewhat dislike*.

Figure BIII: Countries in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 according that include information regarding attitudes towards sexual minorities, according to their colonial origin



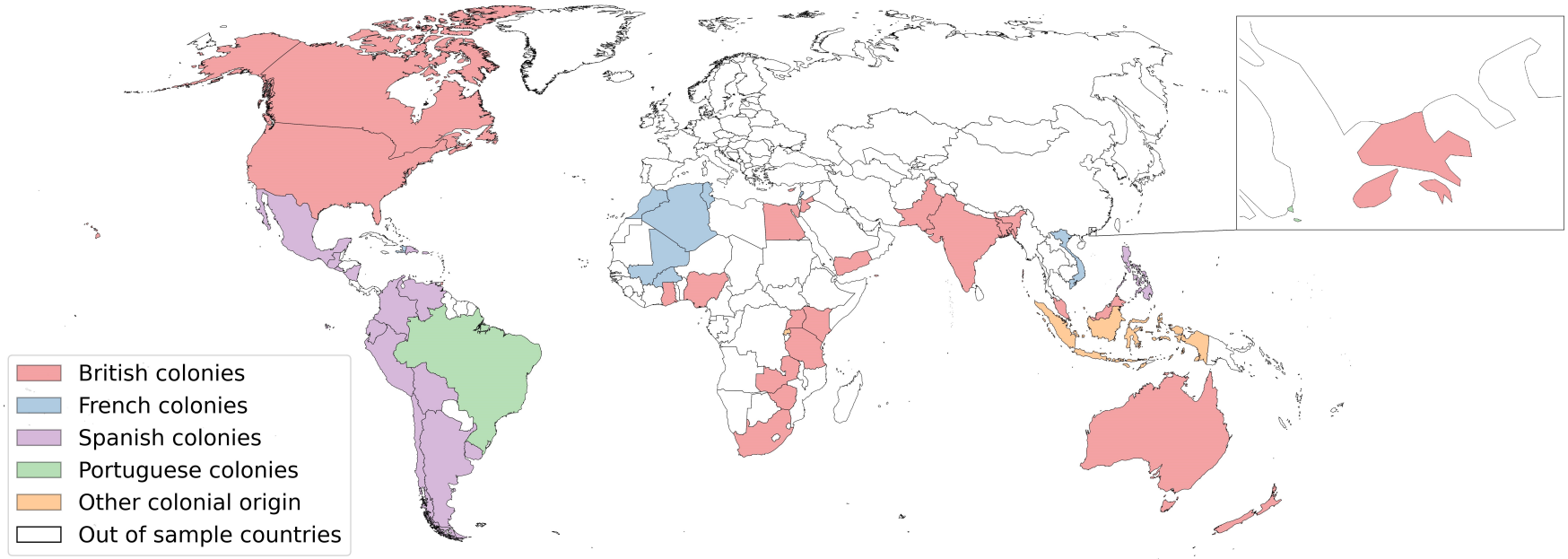
Notes: This figure shows a map with all countries in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 (ABW6), in different colors according to their colonial origin. We only display the colonizer of the countries that asked Q89C (i.e., how much they would dislike having homosexuals as neighbours) in the ABW6. We show former colonies of the UK in red (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe), France in blue (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia), Portugal in green (Cabo Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe), Belgium in orange (Burundi), U.S. in purple (Liberia, a U.S.-backed settler colony), and Cameroon and Mauritius, that were both colonized by the UK and France, with black dots pattern. The picture highlights that, in the Southern & Eastern African countries in our sample, the variation in exposure to different colonial institutions lies at the boundary between six former British colonies (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) and one former Portuguese colony (Mozambique), and in the Western African countries, at the boundary between seven former French colonies (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Togo) and U.S. colonies (Liberia, a U.S.-backed settler colony) and three former British colonies (Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone).

Figure BIV: World Gallup Poll (WGP) global sample used in the OLS across countries estimates



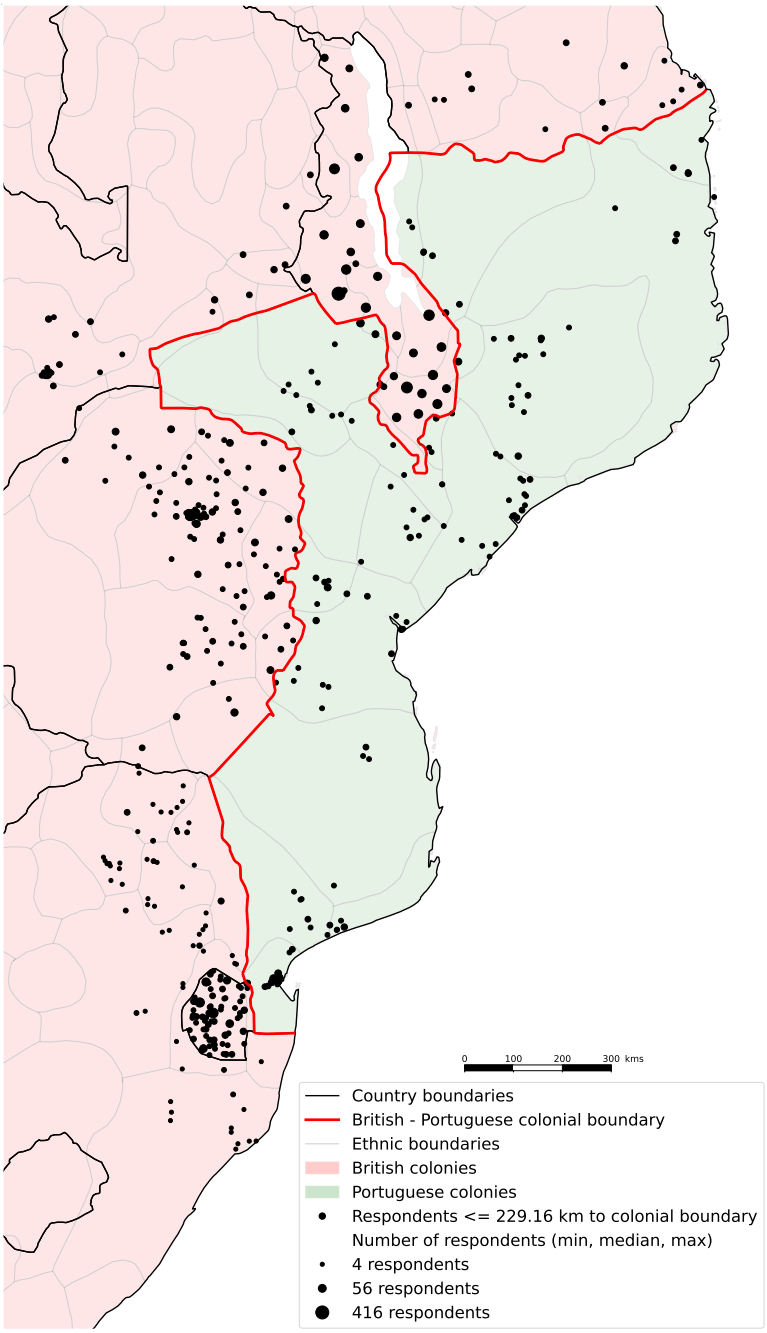
Notes: This map displays our sample from the World Gallup Poll (WGP) used to estimate the cross-country results in Table I, and extensions. Our sample includes countries with 6 different colonial origins. First, 37 British colonies: Australia, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Canada, Cyprus, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Second, 26 French colonies: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Syria, Togo, Tunisia and Vietnam. Third, 19 Spanish colonies: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela. Fourth, 3 Portuguese colonies: Angola, Brazil and Mozambique. Fifth, 3 Belgian colonies: Burundi, Rwanda and DR Congo. Finally, 2 Dutch colonies: Indonesia and Suriname.

Figure BV: World Values Surveys (WVS) global sample used in the OLS across countries estimates



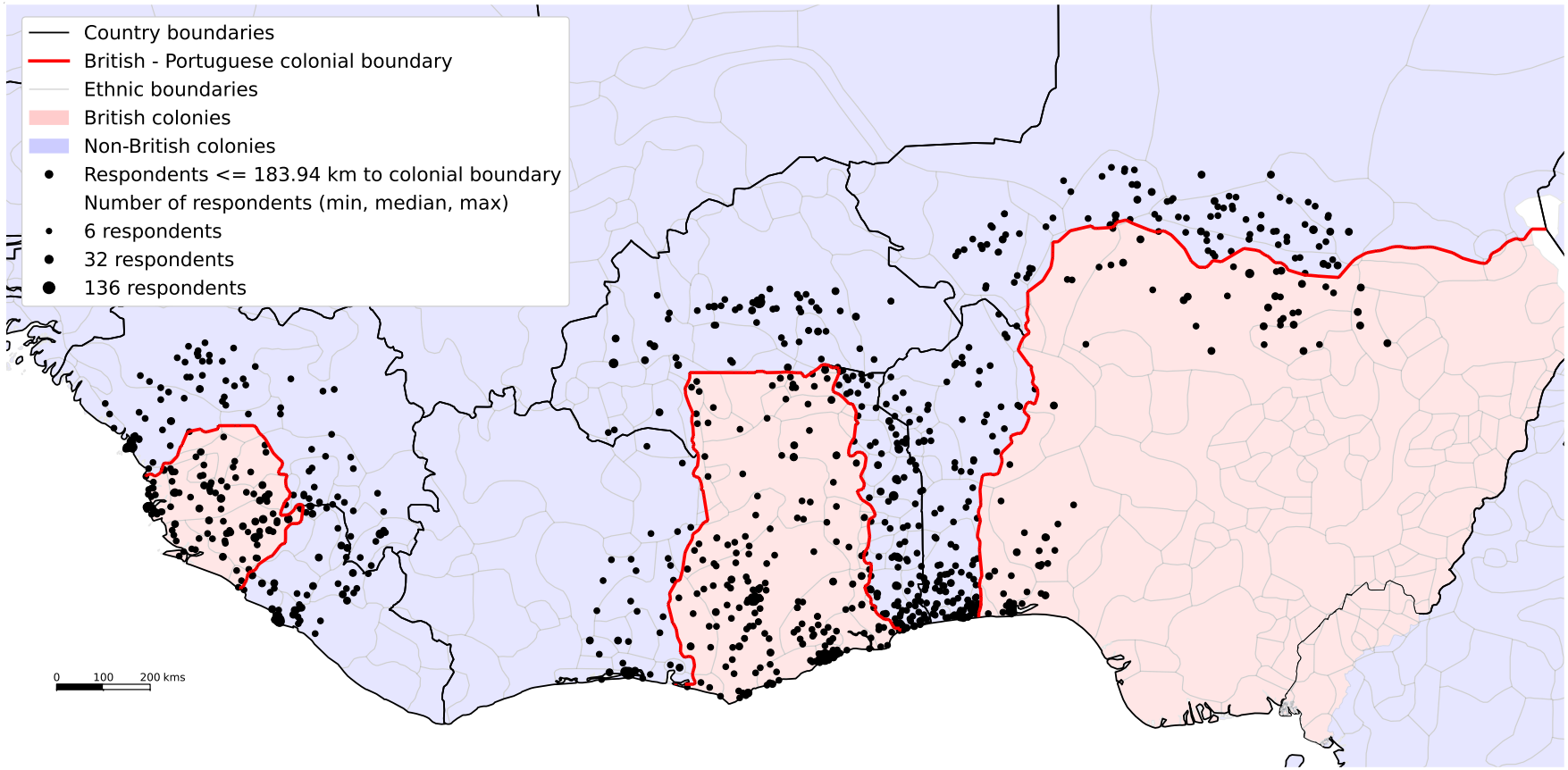
Notes: This map displays our sample from the World Values Surveys (WVS) used to estimate the cross country results in Table CIII. Our sample includes countries with 6 different colonial origins. First, 23 British colonies: Cyprus, Tanzania, Singapore, Ghana, India, Nigeria, United States, Egypt, Bangladesh, Canada, Yemen, Zambia, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Trinidad and Tobago and Australia. Second, 8 French colonies: Mali, Tunisia, Algeria, Haiti, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Vietnam. Third, 15 Spanish colonies: Argentina, Philippines, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Peru, Puerto Rico, Bolivia and Ecuador. Fourth, 2 Portuguese colonies: Macau and Brazil. Finally, one Dutch colony (Indonesia) and one Belgian colony (Rwanda).

Figure BVI: Afrobarometer sample used in the Geo-RDD across countries in Southeast Africa



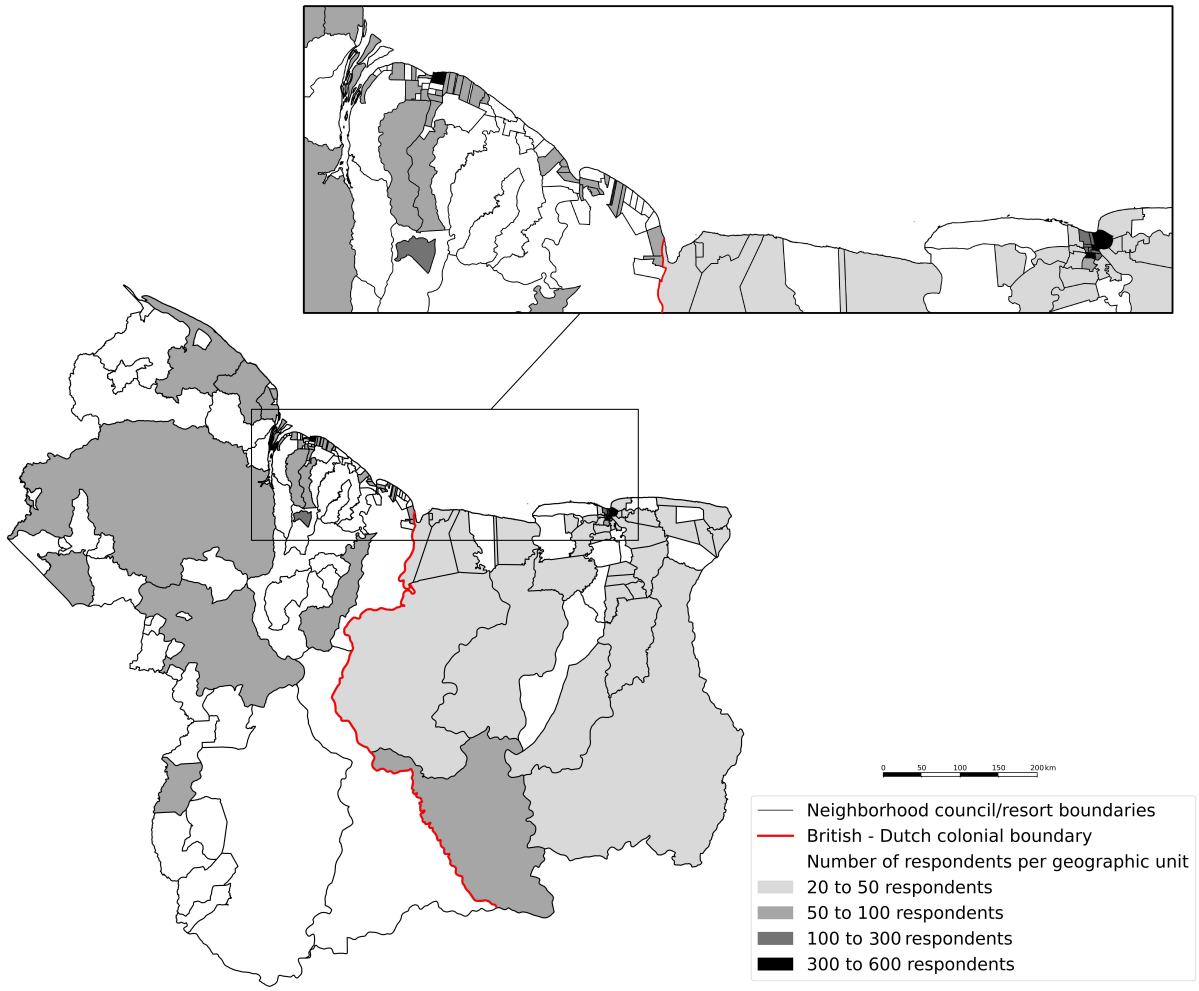
Notes: This map displays our sample from Afrobarometer (AB) Wave 6 in Southern & Eastern African countries used to estimate the Geo-RDD specification in Panel A of Table II. Our sample includes respondents exposed to either British colonial institutions (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) or Portuguese colonial institutions (Mozambique). We generate the map in two steps. First, the Portuguese-British colonial boundary (in red) is overlaid onto the polygons of the Murdock (1959) map of ethnic boundaries (in light grey) and onto the rest of national boundaries (in black). Then, we plot dots representing the locations of respondents - i.e., specifically, those within 229.16 km of the former Portuguese-British colonial boundary, the largest optimal bandwidth used in Panel A of Table II. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

Figure BVII: Afrobarometer sample used in the Geo-RDD across countries in Western Africa



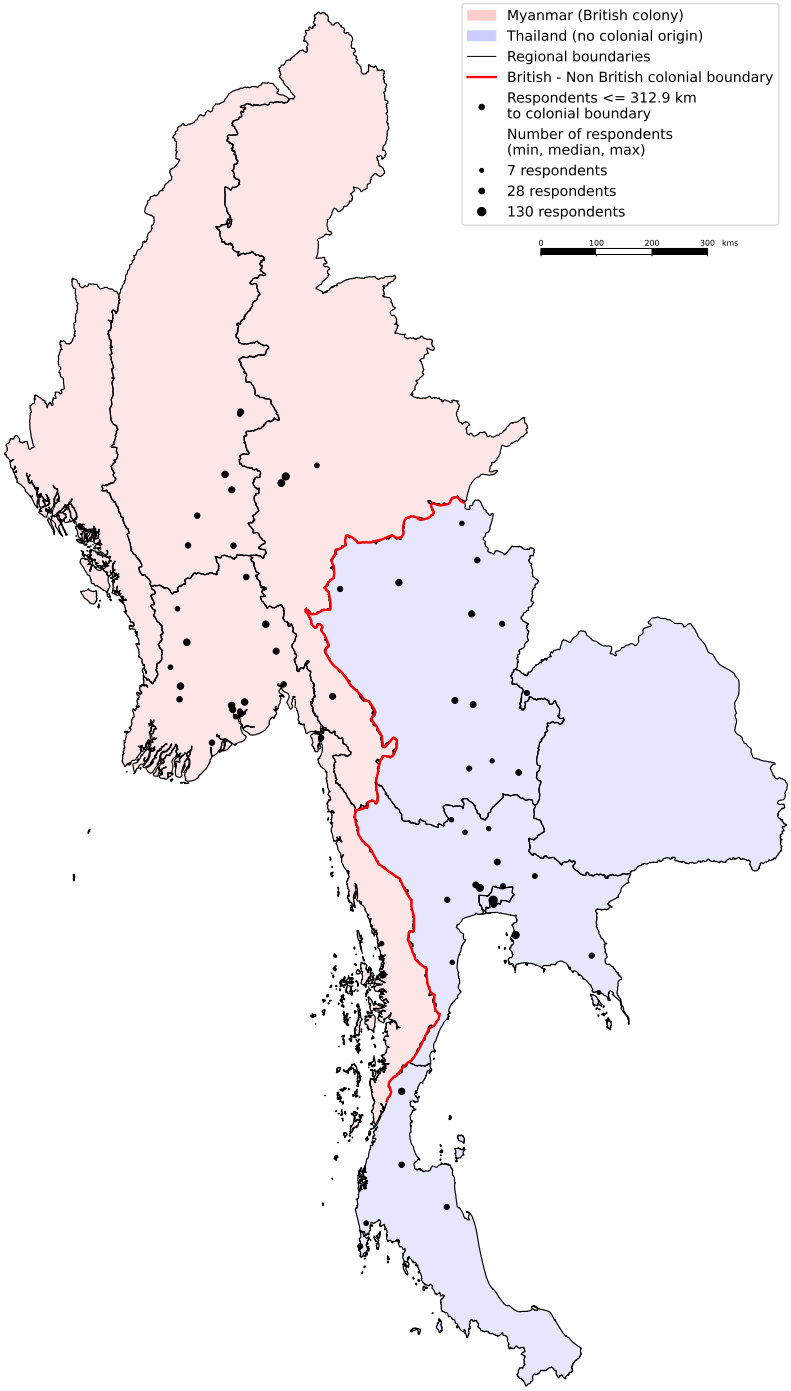
Notes: This map displays our sample from Afrobarometer (AB) Wave 6 in Western African countries used to estimate the Geo-RDD specification in Panel B of Table II. Our sample includes respondents exposed to either British (Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone), French (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Togo), or U.S. (Liberia, a U.S.-backed settler colony) colonial institutions. We generate the map in two steps. First, the British-Non British colonial boundary (only for countries including sexual prejudice data in the AB survey, in red) is overlaid onto the polygons of the Murdock (1959) map of ethnic boundaries (in light grey) and onto the rest of national boundaries (in black). Then, we plot dots representing the locations of respondents - i.e., specifically, those within 183.94 km of the former Portuguese-British colonial boundary, the largest optimal bandwidth used in Panel A of Table II. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

Figure BVIII: LAPOP sample used in the Geo-RDD across countries in Guyana and Suriname



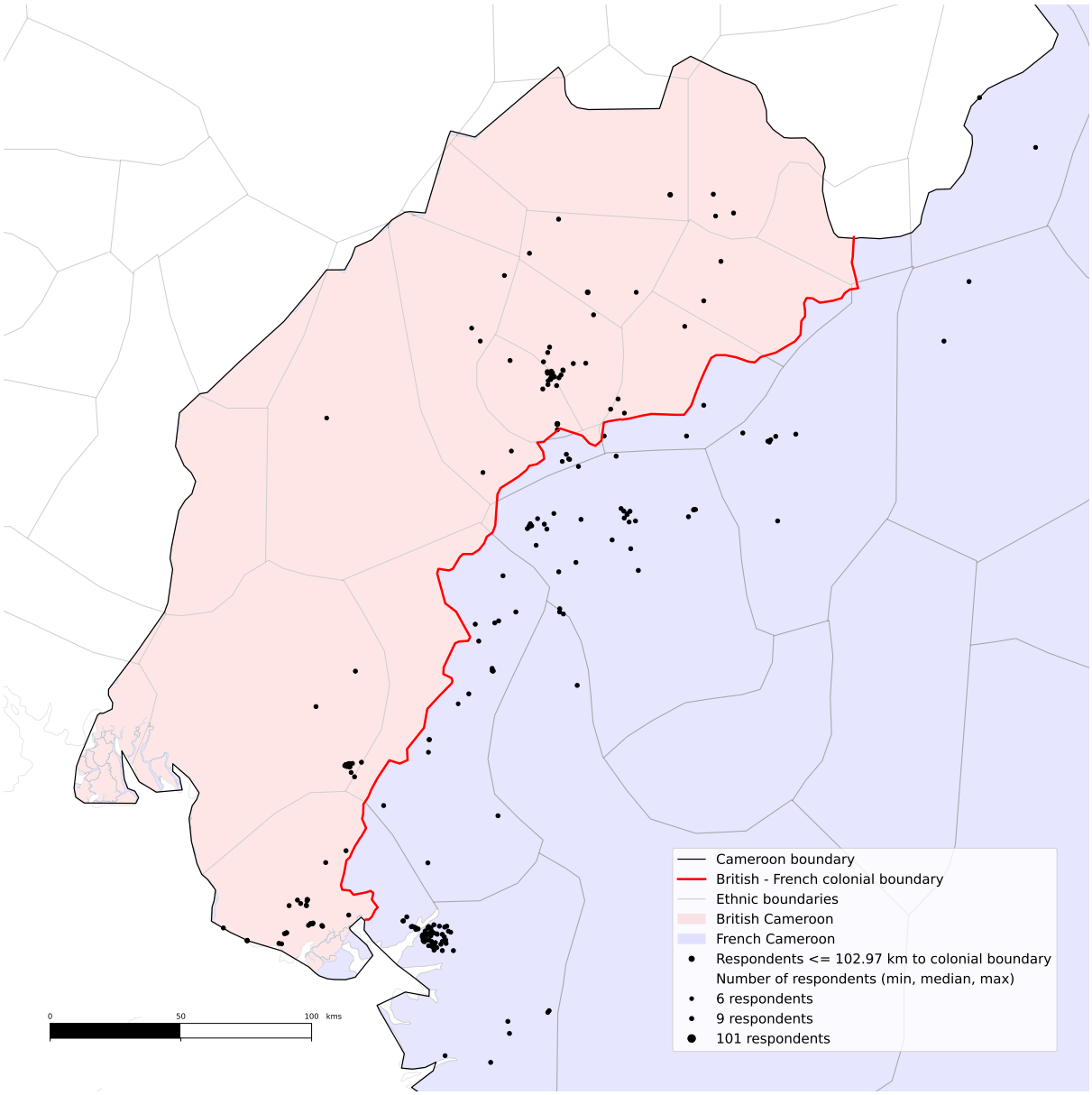
Notes: This map displays our LAPOP sample for the Guyana (former British colony) and Suriname (former Dutch colony), used to estimate the Geo-RDD specification in Panel B of Table III. We generate the map in two steps. First, the British-Dutch colonial boundary (in red) is overlaid onto the polygons of the second level administrative-units (64 neighborhood councils and 62 resorts, respectively). Then, the units are shaded according to the number of respondents residing in each area. A zoomed-in view of the northern part of the plotted region is included in the upper right corner to enhance visualization of the area.

Figure BIX: WVS sample used in the Geo-RDD across countries in Myanmar and Thailand



Notes: This map displays our WVS sample for Myanmar (former British colony) and Thailand (no colonial origin), used to estimate the Geo-RDD specification in Panel A of Table III. We generate the map in two steps. First, the British-Non-British colonial boundary (in red) is overlaid onto the polygons of the respective country regions. Then, we plot dots representing the settlements (available at township level) of respondents -i.e., specifically, those within 312.9 km of the former British-Non British colonial boundary, the largest optimal bandwith used in Panel A of Table III. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

Figure BX: Afrobarometer sample used in the Within-country Geo-RDD in Cameroon



Notes: This map displays our sample from Afrobarometer (AB) waves 6 to 9 in the Western region of Cameroon that was split into a British and a French colony before its independence, used to estimate the within-country Geo-RDD specification in Table CV. We generate the map in two steps. First, the former colonial boundary that lies within the current territory of Cameroon (in red) is overlaid onto the polygons of the Murdock (1959) map of ethnic boundaries (in light grey). Then, we plot dots representing the location of respondents - i.e., specifically, those within 102.97 km of the former British-French colonial boundary, the largest optimal bandwidth used in Table CV. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

C Results: Additional Tables and Figures

Table CI: OLS across countries in the WGP sample with split cross country comparisons: Former colonies of either France, Spain, or Portugal have lower sexual prejudice than the former British colonies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
French	0.197	0.018	0.016	-0.070	-0.072
	[0.059]***	[0.042]	[0.042]	[0.035]**	[0.039]*
Spanish	-0.176	-0.262	-0.262	-0.221	-0.227
	[0.060]***	[0.036]***	[0.036]***	[0.071]***	[0.079]***
Portuguese	-0.204	-0.327	-0.330	-0.329	-0.331
	[0.134]	[0.089]***	[0.085]***	[0.057]***	[0.066]***
Belgium & Dutch	0.281	0.099	0.086	0.074	0.072
	[0.052]***	[0.036]***	[0.040]**	[0.082]	[0.089]
Observations	872	872	872	872	872
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87	87
R-squared	0.331	0.668	0.697	0.817	0.837
Outcome average	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647
Income per capita of 2000	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion FEs	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion-Year FEs	No	No	No	No	Yes

Note: This table displays the estimates of the OLS across countries using the World Gallup Poll (WGP) data, using the former British colonies as the reference control group, and displays one separate coefficient for each non-British colonial origin (French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Netherlands & Belgium). Our sample includes respondents in 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed by the WGP between 2011 and 2023. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model without Fixed Effects (FEs) and controls. Column (2) adds the Income per capita (of 2000) as a control in the specification from Column (1). Respectively, Columns (3) to (5) sequentially include Year FEs, United Nations (UN) Subregion FEs, and UN Subregion-Year FEs in the specification from Column (2). In the complete specification in Column (5), we estimate the regression model $Prejudice_{c,t} = \alpha + \beta^{FR} French_c + \beta^{SP} Spanish_c + \beta^{PT} Portuguese_c + \beta^{B\&N} Belgium\_Dutch_c + \gamma IPC\_2000_c + \theta_{s(c),t} + \epsilon_{c,t}$, where c and t denote the country and the year of the WGP survey, respectively. $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of country c at year t: the percentage of respondents that respondent mentions *No* when asked: "*Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?*". Respectively, $French_c$, $Spanish_c$, $Portuguese_c$, and $Belgium\_Dutch_c$ are indicators taking value 1 when country c has French, Spanish, Portuguese, Belgium & Dutch colonial origin and zero otherwise. $Development_c$ is the Income per capita of country c measured in the year 2000. $\theta_{s(c),t}$ capture the UN Subregion-Year FEs. We report standard errors clustered at the country level between parenthesis. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

Table CII: OLS across countries in the WGP sample: Former British colonies have higher sexual prejudice than former colonies of other European powers, even after extensive controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British	0.141	0.122	0.112	0.110	0.072
	[0.041]***	[0.049]**	[0.045]**	[0.042]**	[0.040]*
Observations	872	872	872	872	872
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87	87
R-squared	0.514	0.569	0.641	0.672	0.835
Outcome average	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647	0.647
Income per capita of 2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latitude and Longitude	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historic controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion FEs	No	No	No	No	Yes

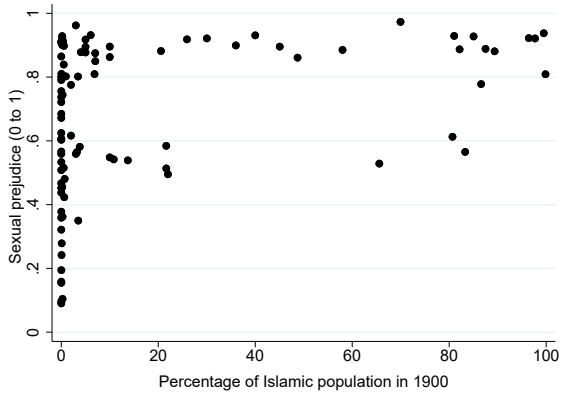
Note: This table displays the estimates of the OLS across countries using the World Gallup Poll (WGP) data. Our sample includes respondents in 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed by the WGP between 2011 and 2023. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model without Income per capita (of 2000) as a control. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) sequentially include Latitude and Longitude, Geographic controls, Historic controls, and United Nations (UN) Subregion FEs to the specification from Column (1). In the complete specification in Column (5), we estimate the regression model $Prejudice_{c,t} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + \gamma Development_c + +\gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,c} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,c} + \theta_{s(c),t} + \epsilon_{c,t}$, where c and t denote the country and the year of the WGP survey, respectively. $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of country c at year t: the percentage of respondents that respondent mentions *No* when asked: "*Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?*". $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. $Development_c$ is the Income per capita of country c measured in the year 2000. Respectively, $\mathbf{x}_{1,c}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{2,c}$ are vectors of geographical and historical controls at the country level defined in Subsection 3.1. $\theta_{s(c),t}$ captures the UN Subregion-Year FEs. We report standard errors clustered at the country level between parenthesis. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table CIII: Results from the OLS across countries in the WVS merged WGP samples are similar: Former British colonies have higher sexual prejudice than the former colonies of other European countries after colonization

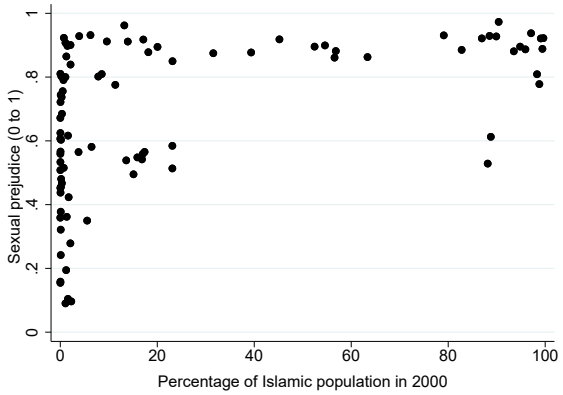
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British	0.112	0.113	0.124	0.211	0.148
	[0.075]	[0.065]*	[0.060]**	[0.049]***	[0.055]***
Observations	139	139	139	139	139
Num. of clusters	50	50	50	50	50
R-squared	0.081	0.311	0.757	0.614	0.814
Outcome average	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.464
Wave FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UN Subregion FEs	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Income per capita of 2000	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: This table displays the estimates from the OLS across countries in the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample using the measure of sexual prejudice described in Subsection 3.3. Our sample includes respondents in 139 nationally representative surveys in 50 former European colonies from 6 WVS waves implemented between 1990 and 2022. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model with WVS wave fixed effects (FEs) as controls. Respectively, Columns (2) and (3) sequentially include Year FEs and UN Subregion FEs as controls in the specification from Column (1). Column (4) adds the Income per capita (of 2000) as a control in the specification from Column (2). Column (5) specification includes WVS wave FEs, Year FEs, UN Subregion FEs, and Income per capita (of 2000) as controls. In our favourite specification in Column (5), we estimate the regression model $Prejudice_{c,w} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + \gamma IPC\_2000_c + \theta_{t(c,w)} + \theta_{s(c)} + \epsilon_{c,w}$, where c denotes a country, w a WVS wave, and t the year of implementation of the country-wave survey. $Prejudice_{c,w}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of country c in wave w. It takes the value one if the respondent mentions *Homosexuals* when asked: "*Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours*?". $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when individual i lives in a country c with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. IPC_2000_c is the Income per capita of country c measured in the year 2000. Respectively, θ_w, $\theta_{t(c,w)}$, and $\theta_{s(c)}$ capture the WVS wave FEs, Year FEs, and UN Subregion FEs, respectively. We report standard errors clustered by country level between parenthesis. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

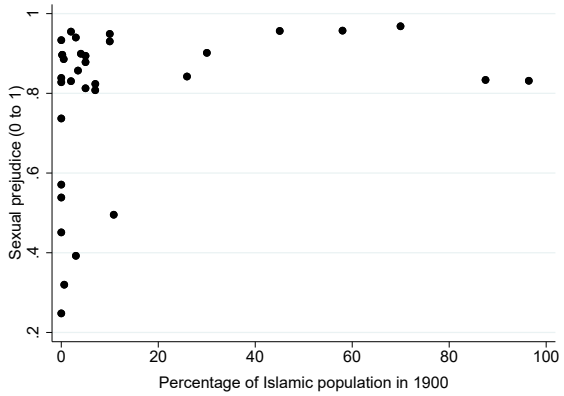
Figure CI: Countries where prevailing social norms—both historical and contemporary—condemn same-sex relations tend to exhibit higher levels of sexual prejudice today.



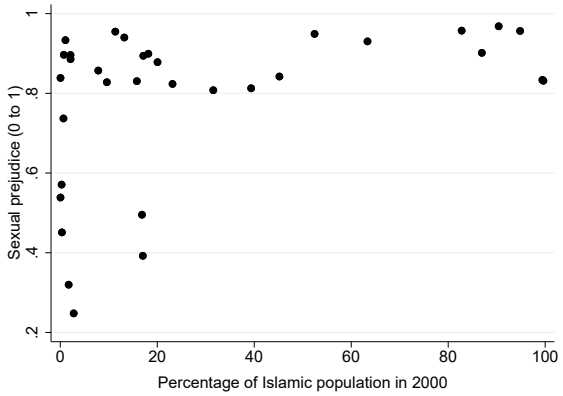
(a) WGP global sample, Percentage of Islamic population in 1900 in the x-axis



(b) WGP global sample, Percentage of Islamic population in 2000 in the x-axis



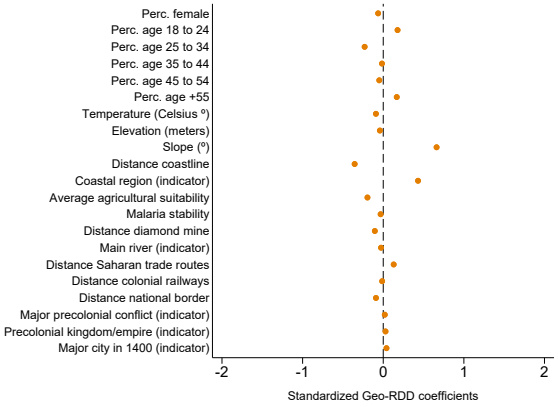
(c) Afrobarometer sample, Percentage of Islamic population in 1900 in the x-axis



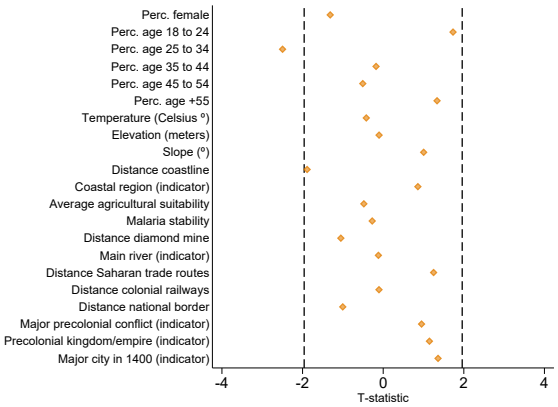
(d) Afrobarometer sample, Percentage of Islamic population in 2000 in the x-axis

Notes: The four subfigures display binned scatter plots of average sexual prejudice and the share of the Muslim population by country. Panels **(a)** and **(b)** use data from the WGP global sample, while panels **(c)** and **(d)** use the Afrobarometer sample. In all cases, the y-axis reports $\overline{\text{Prejudice}}_c$, the average of $\text{Prejudice}_{c,t}$ across all survey waves available for country c. In the WGP sample, this is the share of (non-missing) respondents answering *No* to the question: "Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?" In the Afrobarometer sample, it corresponds to the share of respondents who (strongly) dislike having homosexual neighbors. As for the x-axis, panels **(a)** and **(c)** use $\text{Perc\_Islam}_{c,1900}$ (Muslim population share in 1900), while panels **(b)** and **(d)** use $\text{Perc\_Islam}_{c,2020}$ (Muslim population share in 2020). In all four panels, sexual prejudice is more dispersed among countries with low levels of Islamic penetration, motivating the use of Low_Islam_c as a moderating variable.

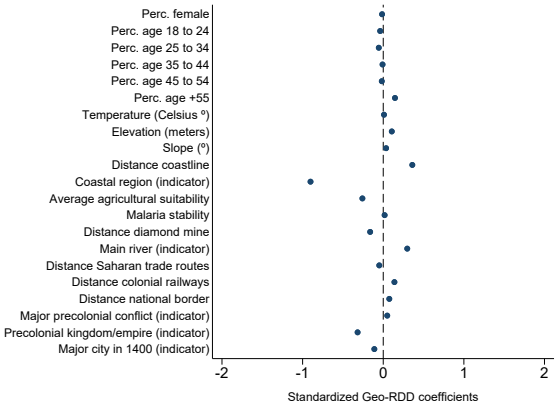
Figure CII: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the samples used to estimate the cross-country Geo-RDD's in Southern and Eastern Africa and Western Africa have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics.



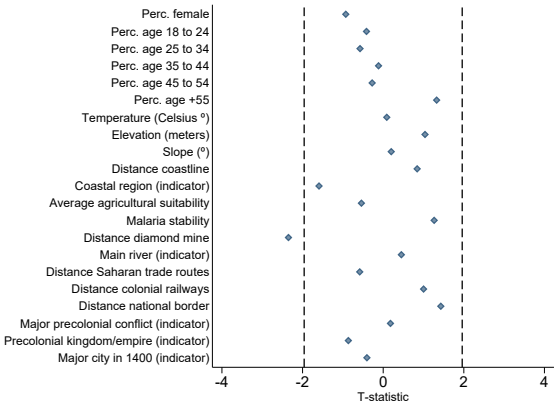
(a) β^{GB} in the Southern & Eastern Africa sample



(b) T-statistics in the Southern & Eastern Africa sample



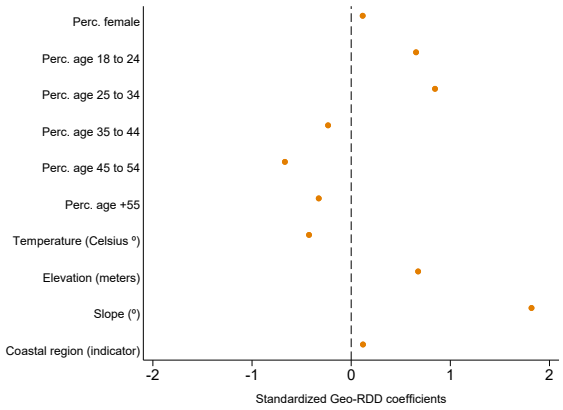
(c) β^{GB} in the Western Africa sample



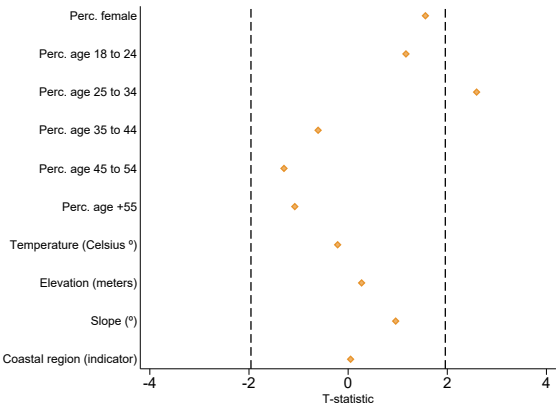
(d) T-statistics in the Western Africa sample

Notes: This figure shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls for the main samples used in Table II, Column (4). First, we standardize the values of each baseline control $x_{i,k} \in \mathbf{x}_i = \left(\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i}\right)$ by computing $x_{i,k}^{std} = \frac{x_{i,k}-\mu_x}{\sigma_x}$, where $\mu_x = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_{i,k}$ and $\sigma_x = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-1}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(x_{i,k}-\mu_x)^2}$ are the sample mean and standard deviation, respectively. Then, we estimate our Geo-RDD specification (equivalent to Equation 2), with a triangular kernel, using each standardized baseline control $x_{i,k}^{std}$ as the outcome variable, and no additional controls: $x_{i,k}^{std} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where $x_{i,k}^{std}$ is each of the controls listed. $f(v)$ is the linear RD-polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary. T-statistics are obtained from standard errors clustered at the ethnic group level. Panels **(a)** and **(c)** show the estimates of β^{GB} for each regression. Panels **(b)** and **(d)** display the associated t-statistics.

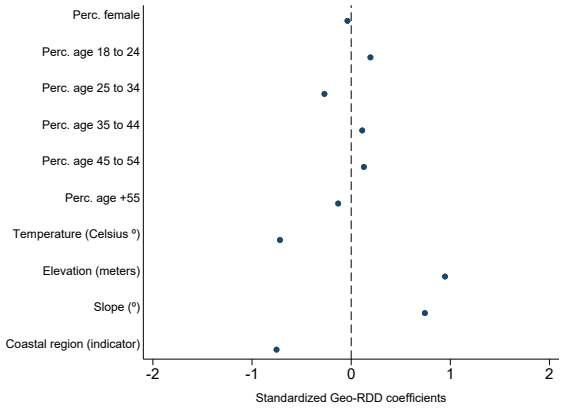
Figure CIII: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the samples used to estimate the cross-country Geo-RDD's in Southeast Asia and South America have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics.



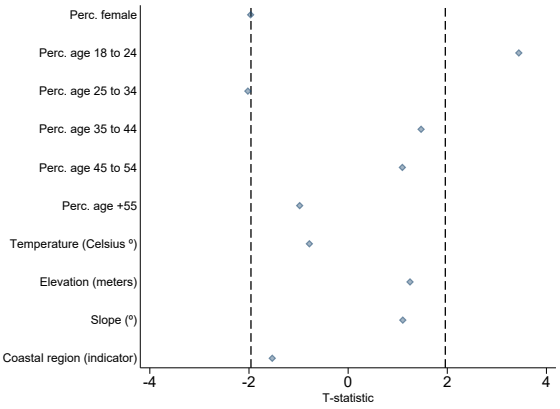
(a) β^{GB} in the Southeast Asian sample



(b) T-statistics in the Southeast Asian sample



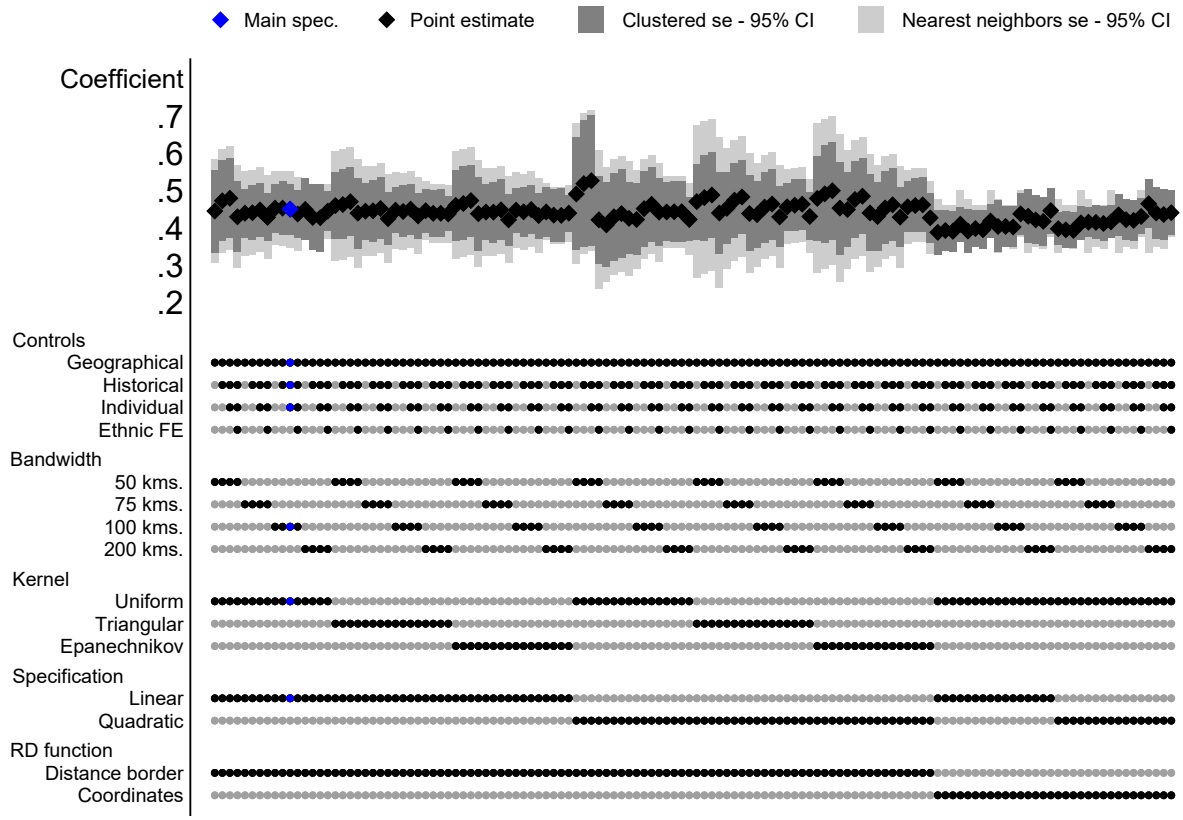
(c) β^{GB} in the South American sample



(d) T-statistics in the South American sample

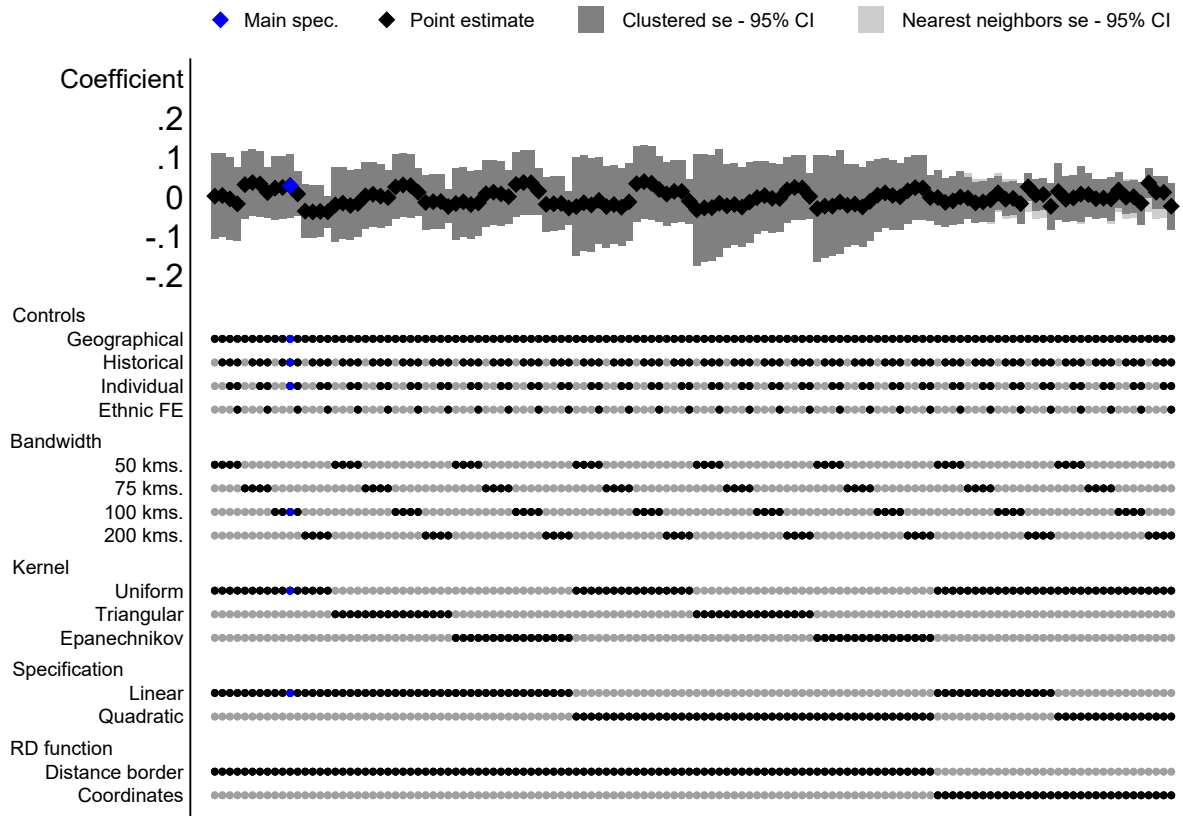
Notes: This figure shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls for the main samples used in Table III, Column (3). First, we standardize the values of each baseline control $x_{i,k} \in \mathbf{x}_i = \left(\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i}\right)$ by computing $x_{i,k}^{std} = \frac{x_{i,k}-\mu_x}{\sigma_x}$, where $\mu_x = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_{i,k}$ and $\sigma_x = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-1}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(x_{i,k}-\mu_x)^2}$ are the sample mean and standard deviation, respectively. Then, we estimate our Geo-RDD specification (equivalent to Equation 3), with a triangular kernel, using each standardized baseline control $x_{i,k}^{std}$ as the outcome variable, and no additional controls: $x_{i,k}^{std} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where $x_{i,k}^{std}$ is each of the controls listed. $f(v)$ is the linear RD-polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary. T-statistics are obtained from standard errors clustered at the township/municipal level. Panels **(a)** and **(c)** show the estimates of β^{GB} for each regression. Panels **(b)** and **(d)** display the associated t-statistics.

Figure CIV: Geo-RDD across countries in Southern and Eastern Africa: results are robust across multiple RD specifications.



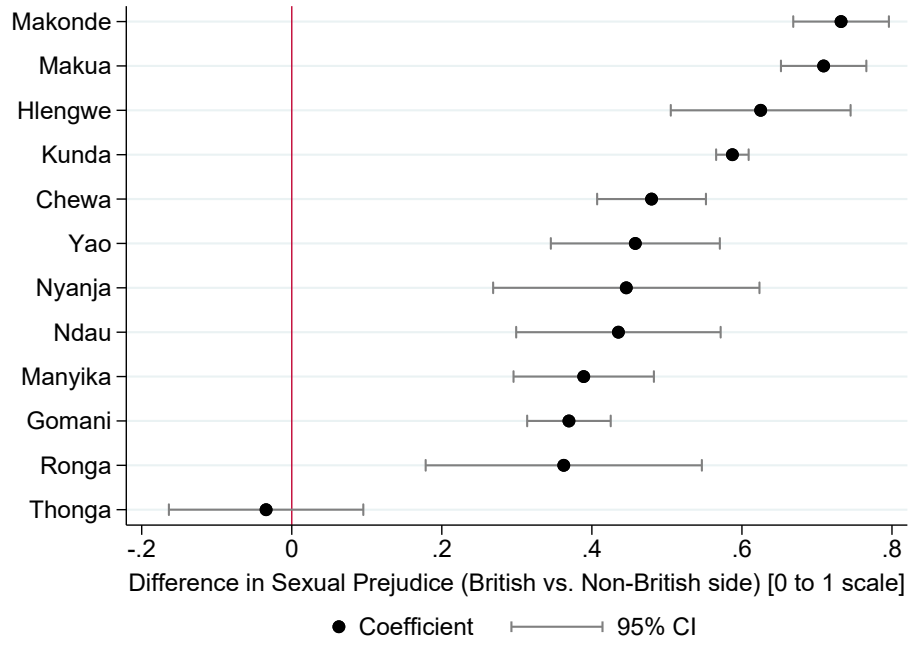
Notes: We provide point estimates and confidence intervals for β^{GB} in the Geo-RDD across countries in the Southern and Eastern African sample. The complete regression model we estimate in the most complete specification is $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{e(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. Across specifications, we use alternative bandwith specifications (50km, 75km, 100km, 200km), different kernel functions (uniform, triangular, epanechnikov), and different RD polynomials, denoted by $f(v)$ (a polynomial on distance to border and a polynomial on latitude and longitude), all of them combined with different combinations in Geographical ($\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$), Historical ($\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$), and Individual ($\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$) control variables, as well as fixed effects for ethnic locations ($\alpha_{e(v)}$). $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets.

Figure CV: Geo-RDD across countries in Western Africa: results are robust across multiple RD specifications.



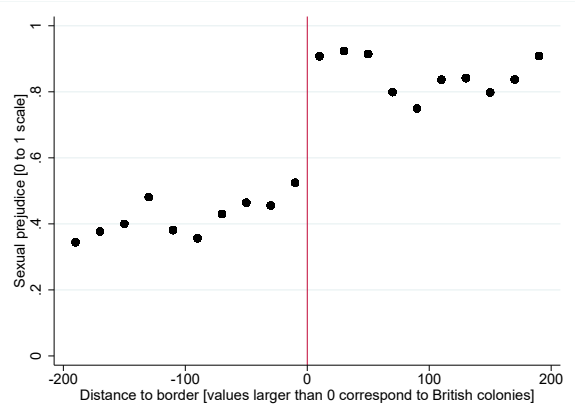
Notes: We provide point estimates and confidence intervals for β^{GB} in the Geo-RDD across countries in the Western African sample. The complete regression model we estimate in the most complete specification is $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{e(v)} + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. Across specifications, we use alternative bandwith specifications (50km, 75km, 100km, 200km), different kernel functions (uniform, triangular, epanechnikov), and different RD polynomials, denoted by $f(v)$ (a polynomial on distance to border and a polynomial on latitude and longitude), all of them combined with different combinations in Geographical ($\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$), Historical ($\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$), and Individual ($\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$) control variables, as well as fixed effects for ethnic locations ($\alpha_{e(v)}$). $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets.

Figure CVI: Geo-RDD across countries in Southern and Eastern Africa: differences in sexual prejudice persist even when we compare individuals residing within the territory of ethnic groups split across the British - Portuguese colonial borders.

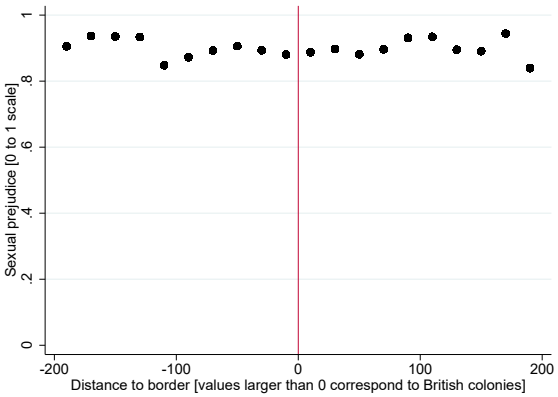


Notes: The reported coefficients are obtained estimating the following regression model separately for each ethnic group: $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB}_{e(v)} British_c + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where i denotes a respondent, v the current village, and c the country of residence, and $e(v)$ denotes the ethnic location where village v is located. $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report 95% confidence intervals using spatially correlated standard errors with a linear decay in a 100km bandwith.

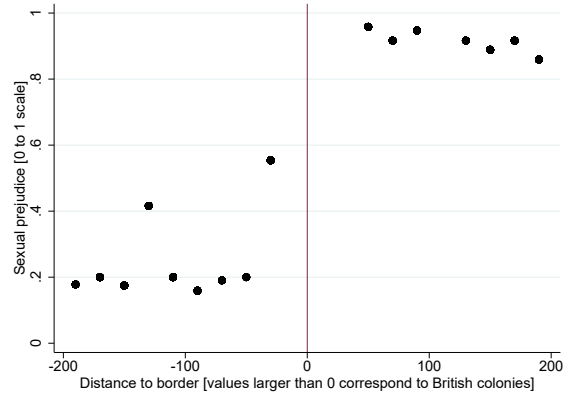
Figure CVII: Geo-RDD across countries in our four regional samples: The results obtained in our main Geo-RDD specifications are consistent with the patterns observed in the raw data.



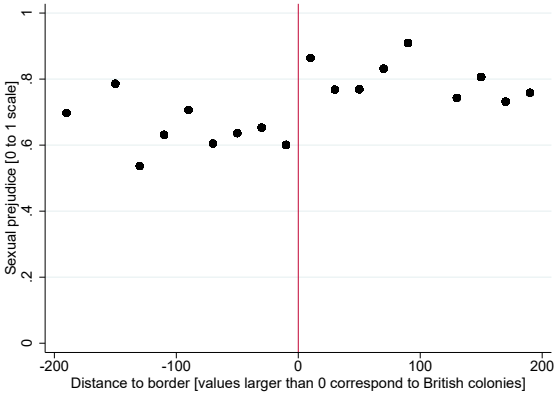
(a) Binned scatter plot in Southern and Eastern Africa



(b) Binned scatter plot in Western Africa



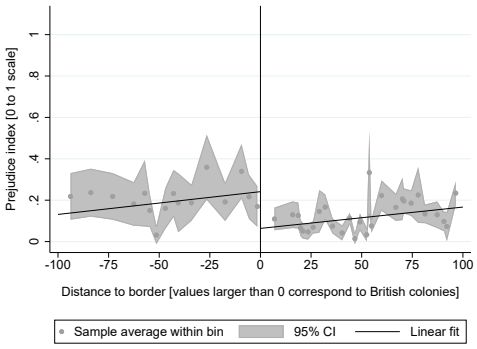
(c) Binned scatter plot at the Thailand-Myanmar Border



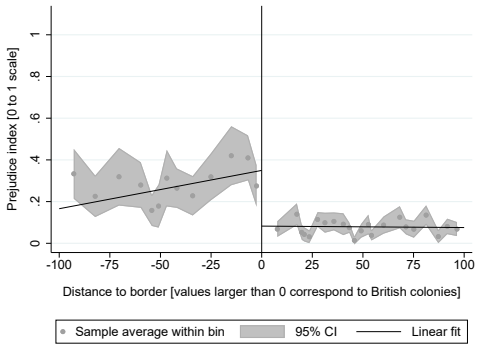
(d) Binned scatter plot at the Suriname-Guyana Border

Notes: The 4 subfigures present binned scatter plots of raw sexual prejudice data, averaged in 20 km bins around colonial borders, in the 4 regional samples used in the Regression Discontinuity Analysis in Subsections 5.2 and 5.3.

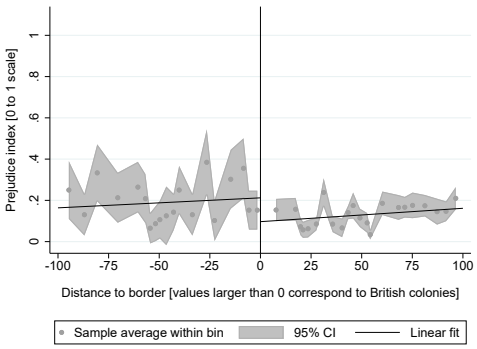
Figure CVIII: Falsification: Geo-RDD's across countries in the Southern and Eastern African sample using measures of prejudice against different social groups show that British colonies do not exhibit higher levels of prejudice against any of these groups.



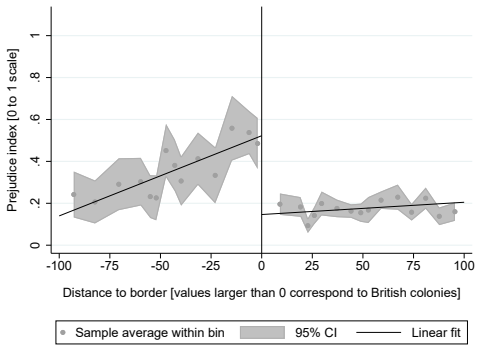
(a) Outcome: prejudice against people of different religions



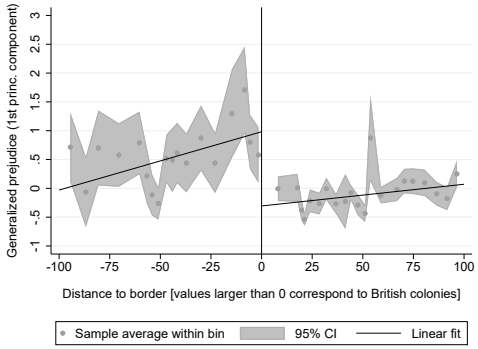
(b) Outcome: prejudice against people with HIV



(c) Outcome: prejudice against people of different ethnicity



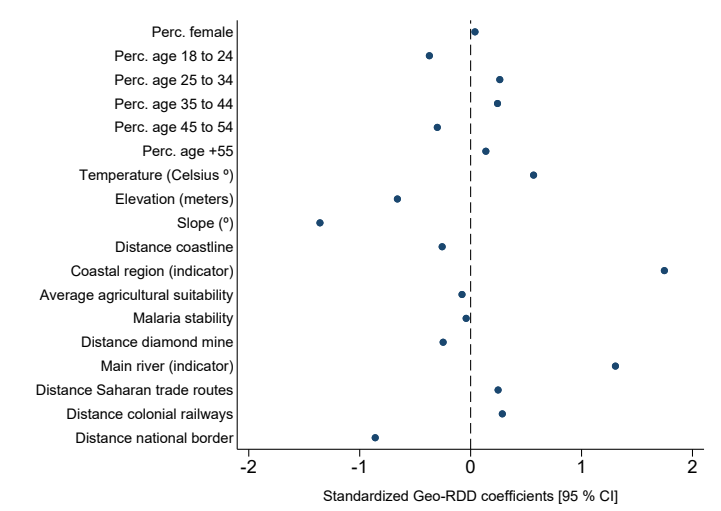
(d) Outcome: prejudice against immigrants and foreign workers



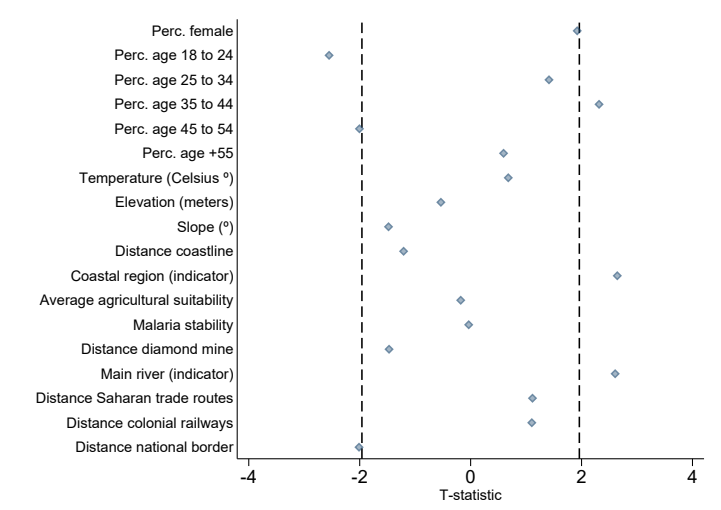
(e) Outcome: General prejudice [1st principal component of prejudice against the four social groups, excluding sexual prejudice]

Notes: In the five cases, regression discontinuity plots are estimated mirroring the basic Geo-RDD specification, with no additional controls: $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. We use a triangular kernel, and bins are selected automatically through mimicking variance quantile-spaced methods using polynomial regression. In subfigures a) to d), $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having an individual of the correspondent group as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. In subfigure e), $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is the first principal component of the measures of prejudice against the four social groups.

Figure CIX: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the sample used to estimate the Within-country Geo-RDD in Cameroon have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics.



(a) β^{GB} in the Cameroon sample



(b) T-statistics in the Cameroon sample

Notes: This figure shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls for the main sample used in Table CV, Column (4). First, we standardize the values of each baseline control $x_{i,k} \in \mathbf{x}_i = \left(\mathbf{x}_{1,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v(i)}, \mathbf{x}_{3,i}\right)$ by computing $x_{i,k}^{std} = \frac{x_{i,k}-\mu_x}{\sigma_x}$, where $\mu_x = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_{i,k}$ and $\sigma_x = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-1}\sum_{i=1}^{N}(x_{i,k}-\mu_x)^2}$ are the sample mean and standard deviation, respectively. Then, we estimate our Geo-RDD specification (equivalent to Equation 4), with a triangular kernel, using each standardized baseline control $x_{i,k}^{std}$ as the outcome variable, and no additional controls: $x_{i,k}^{std} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_v + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,v}$, where $x_{i,k}^{std}$ is each of the controls listed. In contrast with the historical controls included in the Geo-RDD in Southern and Eastern Africa and Western Africa, we do not include the indicators for precolonial kingdom/empire, major precolonial conflict, and major city in 1400, as there is none of those recorded as 1 for any of the villages in this sample. $f(v)$ is the linear RD-polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary. T-statistics are obtained from standard errors clustered at the ethnic group level. Panel **(a)** shows the estimates of β^{GB} for each regression. Panel **(b)** displays the associated t-statistics.

Table CIV: Alternative mechanisms: Our estimates show that neither variation in education, income, individual religious affiliation, nor differential exposure to missionary activity are likely to explain our results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British colony	0.450	0.449	0.457	0.457	0.450
	(0.025)***	(0.025)***	(0.024)***	(0.024)***	(0.024)***
	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	[0.048]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***
Observations h/b	4,391/5,986	4,388/5,967	4,359/5,940	4,355/5,940	4,391/5,986
Clusters (regions)	35	35	35	35	35
Outcome average	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	85.25/145.04	86.64/146.73	85.66/144.44	85.92/146.21	85.65/144.6
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
RD function	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historical controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional controls	–	Education FE	Income FE	Religion FE	Distance to missions

Note: This table displays a mediation analysis to assess the plausibility of the hypothesis that changes in endogenous socioeconomic variables and local exposure to Missionary activity explain our results. This is done replicating our preferred specification in our Geo-RDD estimates across countries in the Southern and Eastern African sample, and testing whether the coefficient measuring the impact of British colonial institutions is stable when we control for these additional variables. Column (1) replicates the estimate in Column (4), Table II, in which we estimate $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$. i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. The terms $f(v)$, $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ denote the RD polynomial in distance to colonial boundary, geographic controls, historical controls, and individual-level controls, respectively. Columns (2) to (5) include one set of endogenous controls each (respectively, education categories FEs, income category FEs, religious affiliation FEs, and local exposure to Christian missions). $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets. Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values (Rademacher weights with 9,999 replications), to account for the low number of clusters). ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table CV: Geo-RDD within-country: Exposure to British colonial institutions does not increase sexual prejudice relative to other colonial origins when individuals are subject to the same national institutions after colonization.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British colony	−0.008	−0.012	0.021	0.016	0.038
	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.026)
	[0.046]	[0.043]	[0.055]	[0.055]	[0.053]
Observations h/b	1,747/1,830	1,755/1,861	1,537/1,769	1,537/1,769	1,450/1,808
Clusters (ethnic groups)	20	20	17	17	18
Outcome average	0.90	0.90	0.89	0.89	0.89
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	53.35/74.41	56.82/96.96	33.58/62.1	33.59/62.14	30.07/70.61
p (wild cluster bootstrap)	0.807	0.821	0.777	0.828	0.506
RD function	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historical controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ethnic group FE	No	No	No	No	Yes

Note: This table reports the estimates for the within-country Geo-RDD using the regression model specified in Equation (4) and the Cameroon sample described in Section 6. The complete regression model we estimate is $Prejudice_{i,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_v + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_i + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_v + \epsilon_{i,v}$ where i denotes the respondent, and v the current village of residence. Column (1) shows estimates from this regression model including only the RD polynomial $f(v) = f(Distance_v)$, a function on the distance to the former colonial boundary. Columns (2), (3) and (4) add sequentially Geographical, Historical and Individual characteristics as controls in the specification from Column (1). The terms $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ denote the geographic, historical controls, and individual-level controls, respectively. In contrast with the historical controls included in the Geo-RDD in Southern and Eastern Africa and Western Africa, we do not include the indicators for precolonial kingdom/empire, major precolonial conflict, and major city in 1400, as there is none of those recorded as 1 for any of the villages in this sample. Finally, Column (5) adds fixed effects for ethnic locations ($\alpha_{e(v)}$). $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_v$ is an indicator taking value 1 when individual i lives in a village v with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets. Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values (Rademacher weights with 9,999 replications), to account for the low number of clusters). ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table CVI: Falsification: Geo-RDD across countries in the Southern and Eastern African sample using measures of prejudice against different social groups. British colonies do not exhibit higher levels of prejudice against any of these groups, making a generalized increase in social intolerance unlikely to explain the increase in sexual prejudice observed in our main results.

	(1) Sexual prejudice	(2) Religion	(3) HIV	(4) Ethnicity	(5) Immigrants	(6) General prejudice	(7) Sexual prejudice
British colony	0.469	−0.228	−0.324	−0.169	−0.455	−1.565	0.553
	(0.031)***	(0.052)***	(0.040)***	(0.044)***	(0.066)***	(0.245)***	(0.030)***
	[0.049]***	[0.044]***	[0.046]***	[0.043]***	[0.050]***	[0.202]***	[0.046]***
Observations h/b	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854	4,204/5,854
Clusters (ethnic groups)	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Outcome average	0.82	0.13	0.12	0.14	0.21	0.01	0.82
Outcome range	[0.00/ 1.00]	[0.00/ 1.00]	[0.00/ 1.00]	[0.00/ 1.00]	[0.00/ 1.00]	[-0.85/ 4.95]	[0.00/ 1.00]
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	80/138.37	80/138.37	80/138.37	80/138.37	80/138.37	80/138.37	80/138.37
p(wild cluster bootstrap)	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01

Note: This table displays a falsification analysis assessing the plausibility of the hypothesis that a generalized increase of all forms of prejudice explains our main results. We do so using the Southern and Eastern African sample and testing whether the impact of British colonial institutions on *sexual prejudice* has: (i) a different sign than the one in measures of prejudice against different social groups; (ii) a different sign than the one in *social prejudice*; (iii) a stable magnitude when including *social prejudice* as a control variable. Column (1) replicates the results from the Geo-RDD across countries in Table II, Panel (A), Column (4), that includes our complete set of controls: $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_{1,v} + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_{2,v} + \gamma_3 \mathbf{x}_{3,i} + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$. i denotes the respondent, c the country, and v the village. The terms $f(v)$, $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$, $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ and $\mathbf{x}_{3,i}$ denote the RD polynomial in distance to colonial boundary, geographic controls, historical controls, and individual-level controls, respectively. $Prejudice_{i,c,v}$ is defined as an indicator equal to one if respondent i, from village v in country c, reports *Somewhat dislike* or *Strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbor, and zero otherwise. $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c is of British colonial origin, and zero otherwise. The sample is slightly smaller than in Table II because we only use respondents that have non-missing values in all measures of prejudice, but results remain equivalent. In Columns (2) to (5) we test point (i): we replace the outcome variable for equivalent measures of prejudice against 4 different social groups: people of different religion, with HIV, of different ethnicity, or immigrants and foreign workers. In Column (5), we test point (ii): we replace the outcome variable by a generalized measure of prejudice; this is, the first principal component of the individual measures of prejudice against each of the previous four social groups. Finally, in Columnn (6) we reestimate the specification in Column (1), but add as additional control the generalized measure of prejudice. We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location in parenthesis, and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbors standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors in square brackets. Additionally, we also report wild cluster bootstrap p-values (Rademacher weights with 9,999 replications), to account for the low number of clusters). ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.