Seeds of prejudice: The impact of British colonization on attitudes towards sexual minorities.

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Abstract

This paper tests the 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 income per capita, 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 Southeastern Africa, where local norms did not systematically condemn same-sex. Third, Geo-RDD estimates also indicate that former British and French colonies display similar levels of sexual prejudice in Western Africa, where religious norms systematically condemn 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 results on Southeastern Africa. Finally, mechanisms analysis suggests that the lasting presence of sodomy laws entirely 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.

1 Introduction

Self-reported data suggest that sexual minorities constitute at least five percent of the population [Black et al., 2007, Coffman et al., 2017]. A growing body of evidence from developed countries indicates that they experience worse educational and health outcomes than heterosexual individuals [Sansone, 2019a, Buchmueller and Carpenter, 2010]. Moreover, research finds that labour market discrimination against sexual minorities is closely tied to prevailing levels of sexual prejudice [Tilcsik, 2011] and that legalizing same-sex marriage improves labour market outcomes for same-sex couples by reducing such prejudice [Sansone, 2019b]. Given these disparities, understanding the causes of *sexual prejudice* is essential for designing policies that support a significant segment of the population.¹

While the economics literature has extensively examined the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination against gender and racial groups [e.g., Lang and Kahn-Lang Spitzer, 2020], it has devoted less attention to the factors shaping prejudice to-ward sexual minorities.² To address this gap, we test the widely debated hypothesis that the British Empire fostered sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies by systematically enforcing penal codes that criminalized consensual same-sex acts [e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2013, O'Mahoney and Han, 2018].

Sexual prejudice is an economically relevant phenomenon with both broad and specific consequences. At a societal level, low-prejudice environments are linked to higher levels of subjective well-being [Inglehart et al., 2008]. At an individual level, sexual prejudice fosters discrimination and intolerance against sexual minorities while also harming those with an innate same-sex attraction by influencing their marital decisions. Furthermore, because sexual orientation is not immediately observable in social interactions, heterosexual individuals may also incur costs, as they might take costly actions to avoid sexual stigma [Herek and McLemore, 2013, p. 313], leading to a misallocation of talent [Hsieh et al., 2019].

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

¹We 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].

²We use the terms *homosexual conduct* and *consensual same-sex acts* interchangeably in this draft.

magistrates in its colonies [Han and O'Mahoney, 2014, O'Mahoney and Han, 2018], which, according to the *legitimacy model* [Flores and Barclay, 2016], should have heightened sexual prejudice. However, strong evidence indicates that former British colonies tend to have better economic outcomes [La Porta et al., 2008] and higher educational achievement [Cogneau and Moradi, 2014, Dupraz, 2019], factors that, according to *modernization theory* [Inglehart et al., 2008], should reduce sexual prejudice. Given these opposing forces, determining whether British colonization ultimately increased sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies remains an empirical question.

Identifying the effects of British colonization on sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies is challenging. More precisely, simple cross-country comparisons suffer from omitted variable bias (OVB) if the British Empire systematically targeted territories with characteristics that correlate with sexual prejudice. First, ethnic locations exposed to British colonization may differ regarding attitudes towards sexual minorities before colonization. Second, territories exposed to British colonization may vary regarding the pre-colonial share of the population following religions that condemn homosexuality, such as Islam and Christianity. Third, such territories may also differ regarding pre-colonial levels of economic development, which is usually a strong predictor of sexual prejudice.

We use multiple samples to address our research question. Our descriptive analysis relies on the *WGP global sample*, which includes country-year-level data from 872 nationally representative surveys conducted in 87 former European colonies by the World Gallup Poll (WGP) between 2011 and 2020. Here, we measure sexual prejudice as the share of respondents stating their city or area is not a good place for gay or lesbian people.

Our main causal evidence comes from two Afrobarometer Wave 6 (AB-W6) samples. The *West African sample* consists of 8,658 respondents from villages near colonial borders in 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 *South African sample* includes 6,015 respondents from similar villages in six former British colonies (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) and one former Portuguese colony (Mozambique). In both, we measure sexual prejudice with an indicator equal to one if the respondent (strongly) dislikes having homosexual neighbors. To enhance the external validity of our causal evidence, we incorporate two additional samples. The *South American sample*, drawn from LAPOP data, includes 1,571 respondents near the British-Dutch colonial border

in 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 *South Asian sample*, based on WVS data, includes 2,736 respondents near the colonial border between Myanmar (a former British colony) and Thailand (never colonized).

We employ two methodologies to address our research question. For broad external validity, we use the WGP global sample to estimate the partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice via an OLS regression with fixed effects and controls. For causal identification, we implement a Geographical Regression Discontinuity Design (Geo-RDD) using the South African and West African samples. Leveraging AB cluster geo-location, we compare respondents in villages near colonial borders exposed to British colonization with those exposed to Portuguese (French) colonization in the South African (West African) sample. To assess external validity, we extend the Geo-RDD approach to the South American and South Asian samples, comparing respondents from historically British-colonized administrative units to those exposed to other European powers or never colonized.

Our descriptive analysis finds a positive association between British colonization and contemporary sexual prejudice in societies that did not systematically criminalize same-sex acts before colonization. OLS estimates from the WGP sample indicate that British colonization increases sexual prejudice by 10 percentage points—about 15% of the sample mean—relative to former colonies of other European powers. This effect 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 norms criminalizing homosexuality moderate the treatment effect.

Consistent with the descriptive findings, our causal estimates show that British colonization increases contemporary sexual prejudice in contexts where pre-colonial norms did not systematically criminalize homosexuality. In the South African sample, exposure to British rule raises sexual prejudice by 45 percentage points (55.9% of the sample mean) relative to Portuguese colonization. By contrast, we find a near-zero, statistically insignificant effect in West Africa, where Islam had a stronger historical presence. Finally, British colonial origin increases sexual prejudice by 34% and 23% of the outcome means in the South American and South Asian samples, respectively, where pre-colonial norms were arguably similar to those in the South African sample. We conduct several robustness checks to validate our descriptive and causal findings. First, re-estimating the OLS model with World Values Survey (WVS) data in an alternative global sample yields similar results, despite differences in country coverage and the measure of sexual prejudice. Second, in the West African and South African samples, we include ethnic-location fixed effects to ensure that cultural differences across ethnic groups do not drive our results. Third, we re-estimate all four Geo-RDD models using an exhaustive combination of methodological choices (RDD sample, polynomial, controls, etc.), obtaining nearly identical results in most cases.

We rule out three alternative explanations unrelated to colonial penal codes. First, changes in socioeconomic conditions due to British colonization are unlikely to explain our findings, as controlling for individual income, education, religion, and missionary exposure in the South African sample leaves estimates virtually unchanged. Second, a general increase in social prejudice under British rule is not a likely driver, since Geo-RDD coefficients in the South African sample remain stable when accounting for an index of prejudice toward non-sexual-minority groups. Third, vertical transmission of colonial-era beliefs finds little support, as 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.

Our evidence supports the hypothesis that stricter enforcement of colonial sodomy laws and their post-independence persistence are the primary mechanisms driving our results. First, in the WGP sample, the presence of contemporary laws criminalizing same-sex acts fully accounts for the partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice, suggesting that legal persistence is key. Second, historical accounts confirm enforcement of sodomy laws in former British colonies but little to no enforcement in former Portuguese colonies.

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 the first causal test of the widely debated hypothesis that British colonization fostered a legacy of sexual

prejudice in postcolonial societies [Human Rights Watch, 2013, Han and O'Mahoney, 2014], revealing a novel and undesirable consequence of British rule.

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 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]. Our contribution to this growing body of literature is providing credible evidence that British colonization increased contemporary sexual prejudice by imposing harsh penalties on homosexual conduct in societies that had not previously condemned such acts, highlighting the unintended consequences of enforcing foreign institutions.

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

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. 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.

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 recriminalized 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; 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].³ 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, 1998, p. 91; Mahecha, 2017, p.p. 33-34).⁴ 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].⁵⁶

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

³French 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).

⁴Spanish colonial law combined Castilian legal codes, *derecho indiano* (laws adapted to colonial governance, evangelization, and Indigenous protections), and preexisting Indigenous laws.

⁵Indigenous courts (*tribunaux indigènes*) were led by traditional chiefs under strict colonial supervision.

⁶However, 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].

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].⁷

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].

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. 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 [da Costa Santos and Waites, 2019, p. 9]. Despite its late enforcement, the legislation persisted in former Portuguese African colonies throughout the 20th century, only being repealed in recent years —Cape Verde (2004), São Tomé and Príncipe (2012), Mozambique (2015), and Angola (2019).

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

⁷The 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].

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].

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 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]. Thus, legal restrictions on same-sex relations are a defining feature of our treatment. According to the *legitimacy model*, the continued enforcement of such laws in former British colonies reinforces negative attitudes toward homosexuality, increasing sexual prejudice [Flores and Barclay, 2016].

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 [Inglehart 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 World Gallup Poll Sample

Our World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample is a country-year unbalanced panel including sexual prejudice statistics from 872 nationally representative surveys in 87 former European colonies surveyed by the WGP between 2011 and 2023. Respectively, Tables B1 and B2 in the Appendix B precisely define all variables in the WGP sample and present basic descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum) for them. Panel G of Table B2 provides descriptive statistics for year indicators from 2011 to 2021, showing that the number of country-year observations in the WGP sample is reasonably balanced across time despite being an unbalanced panel.

Our outcome variable $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of country *c* at year *t*: the share of WGP respondents that 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?"*. Panel A of Table B2 presents descriptive statistics of $Prejudice_{c,t}$, showing a mean of 0.65, a standard deviation of 0.26, with observed values ranging from a minimum of 0.06 (Canada) to a maximum of 0.99 (Pakistan).

We measure the contemporary criminalization of consensual same-sex acts using the variable DJ-4 from the F&M Global Barometers (FMGB) [Dicklitch-Nelson et al., 2024], which identifies country-year observations with no criminalization of sexual orientation between 2011 and 2020. The FMGB dataset employs quantitative and qualitative methodologies to assess LGBT legal frameworks and has been peer-reviewed by a diverse pool of experts, ensuring its credibility. Based on this data, we define an indicator variable for the criminalization of same-sex acts, $Criminalize_{c,t} = \mathbf{1}(DJ4 = 0)$, which equals one if country *c* at year *t* is criminalizing and zero otherwise.

We merged our country-year WGP panel with indicators of colonial origin at the country level from Nunn and Puga [2012]. Our treatment variable $British_c$ is an indicator taking value 1 when country c with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. Panel B of Table B2 presents descriptive statistics of $British_{c,t}$ and other colonial origin indicators, show that 40% of the country-year observations have British colonial origin.

We merged two blocks of control variables used in our primary regression model in the WGP sample. First, we add one contemporary control: the level of economic development $Development_c$, as measured by the income per capita of country c in the

year 2000. Second, we added indicators for 14 United Nations (UN) sub-regions with at least one former European colony to the WGP sample.⁸ Panel F of Table B2 provides descriptive statistics for regional indicators based on UN sub-regions, showing a high frequency of country-year observations in Western Africa (17%), Eastern Africa (14%), South America (15%), and Central America (10%).

We also merged a set of exogenous controls $\mathbf{x}^{WGP} = (\mathbf{x}_{1,c}, \mathbf{x}_{2,c})$ used in our robustness checks. $\mathbf{x}_{1,c}$ 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.

3.2 Afrobarometer Sample

Our Afrobarometer (AB) sample is an individual-level data set including survey statistics from 28 nationally representative surveys surveyed by the AB between 2014 and 2015 during Wave 6 of the survey. Figure B2 in Appendix B shows a map with the 29 former European colonies in the AB sample by colonial origin, displaying good country coverage in Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa. Table B3 in the Appendix B precisely define all variables in the AB sample.

We build our measures of sexual prejudice in the AB sample using Question 89 Item C.⁹ Our outcome variable $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \mathbf{1}(Q89C \le 2)$ is an indicator equal to one if the respondent *i* from village *v* located in the country *c* says she would *Strongly dislike* or *Somewhat dislike* having homosexuals as neighbours and zero otherwise.

Sexual prejudice is an intense phenom in Africa relative to other continents and in comparison to different types of prejudice. Figure B1 depicts the prevalence of sexual prejudice across continents based on data from the World Value Surveys (WVS), and Figure B illustrates the proportion of the African population exhibiting various forms of prejudice within our sample. Two clear patterns emerge. First, approximately 80% of respondents in Africa exhibit some level of sexual prejudice, which is about 2.7

⁸The 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, Western Asia, South-eastern Asia, Southern Asia, Western Asia.

⁹Question 89 Item C 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. 1. Strongly dislike. 2. Somewhat dislike. 3. Would not care. 4. Somewhat like. 5. Strongly like.

times higher than any other type of prejudice. Second, the average level of sexual prejudice in Africa is significantly higher compared to other regions, being roughly double the average in the Americas and Europe.

We merged our individual-level AB sample with *British_c* and other indicators of colonial origin at the country level. The AB sample contains 14 former British colonies (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), 12 former French colonies (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia), and 3 former Portuguese colonies (Cabo Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe).

We merged the AB sample with an extensive set of exogenous exogenous controls. We divide the vector $\mathbf{x}^{AB} = (\mathbf{x}_c, \mathbf{x}_v, \mathbf{x}_i)$ with all controls associated with respondent *i* in three blocks: controls at the country level \mathbf{x}_c , village level \mathbf{x}_v , and individual level x_i . First, x_c is a vector with six country-level controls: it includes indicators for five African macroregions, and one indicator for whether the country had ever been a German colony to account for the confounding effects of criminalizing homosexual conduct in German colonies transferred to the UK after WWI. Second $\mathbf{x}_v = (\mathbf{x}_{1,v}, \mathbf{x}_{2,v})$ is a vector of village-level controls with geographical controls $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$ and historical controls $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$. $\mathbf{x}_{1,v}$ is a vector with eight geographical controls: latitude and longitude (in degrees); average temperature (in ${}^{o}C$); elevation (in m); slope (in o); distance to the national border (in km); distance to coast (in km); and distance to diamond mines (in km). $\mathbf{x}_{2,v}$ is a vector with three historical variables: distance to Saharan trade routes (in km), distance to colonial railways (in km) and distance to the closest national border (in km). Third, x_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 younger individuals usually display lower sexual prejudice [Herek and McLemore, 2013].

3.3 Other samples

WVS merged sample.

Our World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample is a country-wave unbalanced panel including sexual prejudice statistics from 139 nationally representative surveys in 50 former European colonies surveyed by the WVS between 1990 and 2022. Respectively,

Tables B4 and B5 in the Appendix B precisely define all variables in the WVS merged sample and present basic descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum) for them.

*Prejudice*_{*c*,*w*} share is WVS respondents of country *c* in wave *w* mentioning *Homosexuals* when asked: "*Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbours*?" Panel A of Table B5 presents descriptive statistics of *Prejudice*_{*c*,*w*}, showing a mean of 0.46, a standard deviation of 0.25, with observed values ranging from a minimum of .047 (Uruguay) to a maximum of .996 (Egypt). Panel B of Table B5 presents descriptive statistics of *British*_{*c*} and other colonial origin indicators, showing that nearly half of our country-wave observations have British colonial origin.

WVS Thailand-Myanmar sample.

Our World Value Survey (WVS) Thailand-Myanmar sample is an individual-level data set including survey statistics from 2 South-East Asian countries surveyed in 2018 and 2020: Thailand and Myanmar. Geographical location is available at the provincial and township level, respectively. We build 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 an indicator equal to one if the respondent would not like having homosexuals as neighbors, zero otherwise.

LAPOP sample.

Our LAPOP sample is an individual-level data set including survey statistics from 2 South American countries surveyed in 2012 and 2014: Guyana and Suriname. Geographical location is available at the municipal level.¹⁰ We build our measure of sexual prejudice using question Question D5, which asks whether individuals approve or disapprove permitting homosexuals to run for public office. Our outcome variable *Prejudice*_{*i,c,v*} is an index ranging from 0 to 1, where 0 represents strong approval and 1 represents strong disapproval.

4 Methodology

Identifying the causal effects of British colonization on sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies is challenging because of endogeneity problems. More specifically, OVB

¹⁰In the case of Suriname, geographic location is recorded at the resort level, an administrative division similar to municipalities.

is plausible because the British Empire may have chosen territories with geographical, cultural and economic characteristics correlated with contemporary sexual prejudice. First, ethnic groups exposed to British colonization may have different cultural traits correlated with current sexual prejudice, such as acceptance of consensual homosexual conduct before colonization. Second, countries colonized by the British may differ regarding the pre-colonial share of the population that followed religions that condemn homosexual conduct, such as Islam and Christianity. Third, territories colonized by the British may differ in terms of levels of economic development before colonization. Given the plausibility of OVBs, simple cross-country comparisons are unlikely to capture the causal effect of British colonization, making a case for more sophisticated empirical strategies relying on control variables, fixed effects, and natural experiments.

OLS in the WGP sample.

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

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

where *c* denote country and *t* time unit, which is the year. $Prejudice_{c,t}$ is the measure of sexual prejudice of 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. Respectively, α_t and $\alpha_{s(c)}$ are year fixed effects (FEs) and UN subregion FEs. $Development_c$ is the level of economic development of country *c*, as measured by the Income per capita of the year 2000. Although likely affected by the treatment variable $British_c$, the control variable $Development_c$ is measured 10-20 years before the outcome $Prejudice_{c,t}$ in the WGP sample, preventing concerns with simultaneity bias. We cluster the standard-errors (SEs) at the country level, the unit of variation of our treatment variable.

Geo-RDD methodology.

To increase the plausibility of our identification, we estimate a Geographic Regression Discontinuity Design (Geo-RDD). The Geo-RDD identifies the effect of British colonization by comparing the sexual prejudice of individuals in villages exposed to British colonization (treatment group) with those exposed to different or no colonial origin (control group). We estimate the Geo-RDD in 4 distinct regions: two in the AB sample (Western Africa, and Southeastern Africa), one in the WVS geo-RDD sample (Thailand and Myanmar) and one in the LAPOP sample (Guyana and Suriname). These 4 regions meet two key conditions. First, they feature one or more national borders separating countries with British colonial origin from those with a different (or no) colonial origin. Second, survey data on sexual prejudice including geographical location (at least, at the provincial level) are available.

To implement the Geo-RDD in the AB sample, we leverage the availability of individuals' exact locations to estimate a precise regression model

$$Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha_{e(v)} + \beta^{GB}British_c + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_i + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_v + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$$
(2)

where *i* denotes respondent, *c* country and *v* village. \mathbf{x}_v is a set of exogenous geographical and historical controls, and \mathbf{x}_i a set of exogenous individual controls. f(v) is the RD-polynomial. As we mentioned before, we include $\alpha_{e(v)}$ capturing ethnic location fixed effects in Equation (2) in some specifications. e(v) denotes the ethnic location where the village *v* locates.

In the case of the WVS and LAPOP samples, for which geographical location is only available at the provincial or township level, we estimate a simplified regression model

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

where *i*, *c*, and **x**_{*i*} have the same definition than in Equation (2), and *v* denotes province or township. f(v) is the RD-polynomial. In this case, we include $\alpha_{r(v)}$ capturing region fixed effects in the most stringent specifications. r(v) denotes the region where the province or township *v* locates.

We make two methodological choices to implement the Geo-RDD across countries. First, we restrict our sample to the sub-sample of respondents living within the optimal bandwidth from the colonial boundary. This is separately determined for each specification following the procedure in Calonico et al. [2020]. Second, we use a local linear polynomial with a triangular kernel, following Dell [2010], Dell et al. [2018]. We do so using a polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary. Beside these choices, we test the robustness of our results both in the raw data and under alternative methodological specifications.

 β^{GB} is a local average treatment effect (LATE) that measures the effect of British col-

onization on contemporary sexual prejudice for those villages near the British-non British colonial boundary. Its causal interpretation in Equations (2) and (3) requires two assumptions. First, it depends on a continuity assumption which implies that all the relevant factors related to contemporary sexual prejudice other than the exposure to the British colonization have a smooth distribution over space at both sides of the Portuguese-British colonial boundary. In other words, letting $y^0 = Prejudice_{i,c,v}^0$ and $y^1 = Prejudice_{i,c,v}^1$ denote the potential outcomes of individual *i* under treatment and control, the continuity assumption implies that $E[y^0|Lat_v, Long_v]$ and $E[y^1|Lat_v, Long_v]$ are continuous functions of Lat_v , $Long_v$ on both sides of the colonial boundary. Second, it requires an additional assumption of no selective sorting around the treatment threshold, implying that individuals with characteristics that predict sexual prejudice are not more likely to migrate from the non British side of the border to the British side (and vice versa). In our setting, the two identification assumptions required by Equations (2) and (3) are less restrictive than the exogeneity assumptions defined by Equation (1) because they allow the correlates of sexual prejudice to vary smoothly over space.

By implementing the Geo-RDD specified in Equations (2) and (3) across four regional sub-samples, we can delineate the institutional contrasts underlying the treatment effect in each region. Moreover, differences in β^{GB} across subsamples may also reflect heterogeneous effects explained by spatial variation in the presence of pre-colonial cultural norms moderating this causal relationship.

The β^{GB} estimates for the Western African subsample capture treatment effects arising from heterogeneous penal codes criminalizing homosexual conduct. First, as detailed in Table A1 (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. Lastly, West African French colonies retained these laws until independence [Berizon and Briggs, 2016], ensuring a consistent and appropriate comparison group for neighboring British colonies.

The β^{GB} estimates for the Southeastern African subsample reflect the prolonged exposure to, and more vigorous enforcement of, colonial laws criminalizing homosexual conduct. First, as shown in Table A1 (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].

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive analysis in the WGP sample

We begin 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 data from the WGP sample described in Subsection 3.1 to estimate β^{GB} using Equation (1) outlined in Section 4.

Table 5.1 presents the partial correlation estimates between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice using WGP data. The outcome variable is *Prejudice_c* is the share of respondents answering *No* to *"Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?"*. Column (1) reports estimates without fixed effects (FEs) or controls. Column (2) introduces income per capita of 2000 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 variation in the treatment variable.

Table 5.1 indicates that British colonial origin increases sexual prejudice in postcolonial societies when accounting for economic development. First, the unconditional correlation in Column (1) is near zero and statistically insignificant. Second, after controlling for economic development (GDP per capita in 2000) in Column (2), the correlation becomes positive and significant. Third, this positive and significant conditional correlation persists across Columns (3) to (5), even under more restrictive country comparisons. Finally, the conditional effect is economically substantial, accounting for at least 15% of the full-sample outcome mean.

Former British colonies exhibit higher levels of contemporary sexual prejudice compared to each of the former colonies of the major European powers. Table C1 in Appendix C replicates Table 5.1, estimating separate coefficients for each non-British colonial origin, using former British colonies as the control group. Consistent with our hy-

Table 5.1: OLS across countries in the WGP sample:
Former British colonies have higher sexual prejudice than the former colonies of othe
European countries after controlling for contemporary income per capita

	(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}* = $\alpha + \beta^{GB}British_c + \gamma IPC_{2000_c} + \theta_{s(c),t} + \epsilon_{c,t}$, 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?". 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. $\theta_{s(c),t}$ 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.

pothesis, former colonies of Portugal, Spain, and France show lower sexual prejudice than British colonies.¹¹

The negative partial correlation between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice is confirmed when using a more extensive controls or a different sample using an alternative measure of sexual prejudice. First, as documented in Table C2 in Appendix C, results remain quantitatively similar when including the exogenous controls described in Subsection 3.1 to the specification in Equation (1). Second, as documented by C3, the magnitude of the partial correlation with respect to the sample mean increases when estimating the specification in Equation (1) using the WVS merged sample described in Subsection 3.3.

¹¹Although the four former Belgian and Dutch colonies in our sample display higher sexual prejudice, this difference becomes statistically insignificant when limiting comparisons to countries within the same UN sub-region.

The contrast between the null and statistically insignificant unconditional correlation in Column (1) of Table 5.1 and the extensive evidence documenting how the British Empire enforced penal codes criminalizing consensual same-sex acts that persisted after colonization suggests that such legislation likely has heterogeneous effects on contemporary sexual prejudice. For instance, one plausible hypothesis is that British penal codes only increased prejudice in locations where religious groups did not condemn consensual same-sex acts before colonization.

While ethnographic atlases (e.g., Murdock, Nadorov Mira) do not provide information about whether ethnic groups condemned consensual same-sex acts, we can measure the penetration of religious affiliations that condemned such acts at the country level in 1900 using data from the World Religious Database (WRD). Then, we use percentiles of the distribution of the share of the Islamic population in 1900 *Share_Islam_c* across countries to test our hypothesis about heterogeneous effects because, in contrast to Christianism, European colonizers did not import Islam to their colonies, and Islamic religious texts condemn consensual same-sex acts. Moreover, since *Share_Islam_c* has a bimodal distribution, we compare the partial correlation of British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice of several countries with near-zero Islam penetration and others with near-one Islam penetration.

Our main moderator is an indicator variable for low Islam penetration $Low_Islam_c = 1$ [*Share_Islam_c* > P_{50} ({*Share_Islam_i*} $_{i=1}^{235}$)] equal one when the share of Islamic population is below the median of the distribution across the 235 countries in the WRD. By construction, $High_Islam_c = 1 - Low_Islam_c$. In our WGP sample, 31 former European colonies have low Muslim penetration, and 56 former European colonies have high Muslim penetration. Then, following Feigenberg et al. [2023], we implement our heterogeneity analysis by estimating β^{GB} in Equation (1) for the sub-samples with $Low_Islam_c = 1$ and $Low_Islam_c = 0$.

Heterogeneity: description and results. Table 5.2 displays replicates the structure of Table 5.1 but present the OLS estimates of $\beta^{GB,H}$ and $\beta^{GB,L}$, respectively, $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ for the sub-samples with $Low_Islam_c = 1$ and $High_Islam_c = 1$. Results in Table 5.2 show that a direct partial correlation between British colonial origin and contemporary sexual prejudice is fully concentrated in the countries with *low* Islam penetration, strongly suggesting that the British colonization fostered sexual prejudice where pre-colonial beliefs did not systematically condemn homosexual conduct.

The results in Table 5.1 suggest that British colonial origin influences contemporary

 Table 5.2: Heterogeneity analysis in the WGP sample:

 The positive partial correlation between British colonial origin and sexual prejudice is considerably stronger in colonies with limited Islam penetration before colonization

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
British*Above p50 Muslim Pop.	-0.105	0.020	0.023	0.068	0.069
	[0.061]*	[0.051]	[0.051]	[0.043]	[0.048]
British*Below p50 Muslim Pop.	-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 (Above p50 Muslim Pop.)	532	532	532	532	532
Observations (Below p50 Muslim Pop.)	340	340	340	340	340
Num. of clusters	87	87	87	87	87
Num. of clusters (Above p50 Muslim Pop.)	56	56	56	56	56
Num. of clusters (Below p50 Muslim Pop.)	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

Note: This table displays the estimates of the OLS across countries using the World Gallup Poll (WGP) for subsamples with high and low Islam penetration. More precisely, we replicate the structure of Table 5.1 but present the OLS estimates of $\beta^{GB,H}$ and $\beta^{GB,L}$, respectively, $\hat{\beta}$ for the subsamples with $High_{IP_{c}} = 1$ and $Low_{_{IP_{c}}} = 1$. Low Islam penetration $Low_{_{IP_{c}}} = 1$ [*Share_Islam_c* > P_{50} ({*Share_Islam_i*}²³⁵)] is an indicator equal one when the share of Islamic population in 1900 *Share_Islam_c* is below the median of the distribution across the 235 countries in the WRD. By construction, $High_{_{IP_{c}}} = 1 - Low_{_{IP_{c}}}$. To test the hypothesis $H_0 : \beta^{GB,L} - \beta^{GB,H} = 0$, we estimate the augmented regression model $Prejudice_{c,t} = Low_{_{IP_{c}}} \cdot (\alpha^L + \beta^{L,GB}British_c + \gamma^LIPC_{2000_c} + \theta^L_{s(c),t}) + High_{_{IP_{c}}} \cdot (\alpha^L + \beta^{L,GB}British_c + \gamma^LIPC_{2000_c} + \theta^L_{s(c),t}) + High_{_{IP_{c}}} \cdot (\alpha^L + \beta^{L,GB}British_c + \gamma^LIPC_{2000_c} + \theta^L_{s(c),t}) + \epsilon_{c,t}$, and implement an one-sided hypothesis test of H_0 against H_1 : $beta^{GB,L} - beta^{GB,H} > 0$. We report standard errors clustered at the country level between parenthesis. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

sexual prejudice through complex mechanisms, warranting further identification improvements. First, the change in coefficients from Column (1) to Column (2) aligns with extensive evidence showing that former British colonies tend to have better socioeconomic outcomes (La Porta et al., 2008), supporting the hypothesis that economic development reduces prejudice (Inglehart et al., 2008, Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). This suggests that British colonial origin increased sexual prejudice by fostering economic development. Second, the positive and significant coefficients in Columns (2) to (5) align with studies showing that British colonies were more likely to criminalize consensual same-sex acts, implying that British colonial origin might have increased sexual prejudice by enforcing penal codes criminalizing such acts (Human Rights Watch, 2013, O'Mahoney and Han, 2018, Han and O'Mahoney, 2014).

5.2 Causal evidence in the AB samples

To more accurately measure the impact of colonial origin, we need to find a setting where colonial origin is exogenous. Seminal papers have utilized colonial borders to exploit exogenous variation in exposure to these institutions, both within countries [Dell, 2010] and across countries [Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013], inspiring several applications [See Valencia Caicedo, 2020, for a survey]. In particular, Africa is an ideal case for testing the influence of colonial origin, as colonial borders often split ethnic groups between different European colonizers Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013. Then, in this Subsection, we use a Geographical Regression Discontinuity Design (Geo-RDD) to estimate the impact of British colonial origin on sexual prejudice in two regional sub-samples in the African continent (Southeast Africa and Western Africa).

The continuity assumption is violated if the colonial boundaries in our Southern African and Western African samples are not arbitrary. In this case, it is plausible that the villages (individuals) in the treatment group have different geographical and historical (demographic) characteristics than those in the control group. Therefore, while the continuity assumption is not testable, we test the null hypothesis $H_0 : E[(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_v)|British_c = 1] - E[(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_v)|British_c = 0]$ to assess its plausibility.

In Figures C1 and C2, we assess the plausibility of the continuity assumption by showing a balance check exercise for the control variables in $(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_v)$ defined in Subsection 3.2. We estimate, for each baseline control $X_{i,c,v}$, our Geo-RDD specification: $X_{i,c,v} = \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$. We report standard errors clustered at the ethnic group level. Results support the plausibility of the continuity assumption. Both for the samples in Southeast and Western Africa, only 1 mean difference tests shows statistically significant differences between our control and treatment groups. Moreover, those differences are small in magnitude. Still, to address any concern that differences in characteristics between treatment and control groups may affect our results, we control for all those geographical, historical, and individual characteristics in the subsequent analysis.

In Table 5.3, we display the estimates from the Geo-RDD across countries described in Equation (2) using the Southeast and Western Africa samples described in Subsection 3.2. Panel A shows estimates of β^{GB} for Southeast Africa, whereas Panel B shows them for Western Africa. 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). Moreover, we report standard errors clustered by ethnic location between parenthesis and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors between square brackets.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Panel A: Geo-RDD in Southeast Africa						
British colony	0.459	0.458	0.451	0.453	0.435	
	$(0.027)^{***}$	(0.028)***	$(0.029)^{***}$	$(0.027)^{***}$	(0.023)***	
	[0.040]***	[0.040]***	[0.046]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	
Observations h/b	5,491/7,559	5,564/7,643	4,723/6,135	4,429/6,015	3,974/5,986	
Clusters (regions)	39	39	35	35	35	
Outcome average	0.79	0.79	0.81	0.81	0.82	
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	115.69/224.09	118.73/229.16	91.54/158.37	88.35/149.96	74.89/143.95	
	Panel E	3: Geo-RDD in W	estern Africa			
British colony	-0.004	-0.005	0.017	0.014	0.009	
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.023)	
	[0.020]	[0.019]	[0.023]	[0.022]	[0.021]	
Observations h/b	7,690/10,099	7,969/10,067	5,068/8,542	5,274/8,658	5,314/10,248	
Clusters (regions)	95	95	88	90	97	
Outcome average	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	119.6/176.33	125.51/175.23	78.35/140.57	81.40/143.79	83.06/183.94	
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	

Table 5.3: Geo-RDD across countries: Exposure to British colonial origin causes a substantial increase in sexual prejudice after colonization.

Results in Table 5.3 reveal that British colonial institutions caused a pronounced increase in sexual prejudice in contemporary Southeast Africa. The results in Panel A show that the effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice is significant at 1% according to both types of standard errors. In our favourite specification in Column (4) of Panel A, exposure to British colonial institutions causes an increase in sexual prejudice of 45 percentage points, around 55.9% of the outcome average in this sample. Relevant to the internal validity of the estimates, the magnitude of $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ remains stable when sequentially including control variables and ethnic location fixed effects, suggesting that OVBs caused by differences in characteristics across villages and ethnic locations are unlikely to explain the causal effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice.

In contrast to the pronounced effect in Southeast Africa, Panel B shows no signifi-

cant relationship between British colonial institutions and sexual prejudice in Western Africa. The estimated effect remains consistently near zero across all specifications in this region.

These results are consistent with the heterogeneity analysis in Table 5.2. The Southern and Eastern African subsample exhibits limited Islamic influence, contrasting sharply with the high levels of Islamic penetration observed in the Northern and Western African subsamples.¹² Furthermore, the regression discontinuity plots in Figure 1 show that the zero effect found in Western Africa is not the result of similar low levels of prejudice in both British and non-British former colonies, but rather to uniformly high levels of prejudice on both sides of the colonial borders. This pattern aligns with the hypothesis discussed in Subsection 5.1 that British colonial influence fosters sexual prejudice only in regions where precolonial norms did not already condemn consensual same-sex acts.



Figure 1: Geo-RDD across countries - Southeast and Western Africa

¹²First, in the Southeastern African countries in our sample (Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe), Islamic penetration was 1.97% in 1900 and 9.42% in 2000. By contrast, in the Western African countries in our sample (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo), Islamic penetration was 17.20% in 1900 and 45.22% in 2000. Notably, Non-British former colonies in the Western African sample exhibit higher shares of Islamic penetration both in 1900 and 2000 compared to their British counterparts: 19.58% and 53.10% versus 11.66% and 26.82%, respectively.

Assessing Robustness in Geo-RDD Estimates.

Figure C4 in Appendix C shows the stability of our results across various of RD specifications. The methodological choices tested include different RD subsamples (e.g., villages within 50km, 75km, 100km, 200km), kernel functions (uniform, triangular, epanechnikov), and RD functions (e.g., a polynomial on distance to border, and a polynomial on latitude and longitude), all estimated using Equation (2).

The precise location of respondents in the AB data allows 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 C5 illustrates these differences within ethnic groups in Southeast Africa, where ethnic group territories were divided by the British and Portuguese colonial borders. The results show that in eleven out of twelve cases, individuals on the British side exhibit higher levels of sexual prejudice than their ethnic counterparts. The stability of results across ethnic groups suggests that the result in Column (5), Panel A of Table 5.3, which includes a full set of ethnic fixed effects in the specification, is not driven by specific ethnic groups, but rather reflects a causal effect that is consistent across the territory. Furthermore, this supports the conclusion that the observed effect of British colonial influence is not driven by precolonial differences in social norms.

Figures C3 a) and b) present a non-parametric representation of the sexual prejudice data across the two regions, using binned scatter plots with 20 km bins near the colonial borders. The observed patterns 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 WVS and LAPOP samples

While our Geo-RDD estimates in Subsection 5.2 provide clean evidence for the effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice in areas where local customs did not criminalize homosexual conduct before colonization, we resort to alternative samples in South America (Guyana and Suriname) and Southeast Asia (Myanmar and Thailand) to increase the external validity of our results.

In Table 5.4, we display the estimates from the Geo-RDD across countries described in Equation (3) using the South American and Asian samples described in Subsection 3.1. Panel A shows estimates of β^{GB} for Guyana (former British colony) and

Suriname (former Dutch colony), whereas Panel B shows them for Myanmar (former British colony) and Thailand (no colonial origin). Again, we obtain our estimates using robust Regression Discontinuity methods by Calonico et al. (2014, 2018, 2019, 2020). We report standard errors clustered by settlement between parenthesis and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors between square brackets.

	(1)	(2)	(3)			
Panel A: Geo-RDD in the border between Thailand and Myanmar						
British colony	0.337	0.339	0.450			
	(0.216)	(0.222)	(0.093)***			
	[0.107]***	[0.111]***	[0.089]***			
Observations h/b	944/1,714	869/1,571	1,073/1,839			
Clusters (regions)	55	50	62			
Outcome average	0.55	0.52	0.56			
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	167.39/261.24	160.36/251.18	184.91/312.9			
Panel B: Geo-RDD in the border between Guyana and Suriname						
British colony	0.233	0.233	0.335			
-	(0.050)***	(0.051)***	(0.043)***			
	[0.061]***	[0.060]***	[0.060]***			
Observations h/b	1,178/2,736	1,178/2,736	1,178/2,914			
Clusters (settlements)	39	39	42			
Outcome average	0.76	0.76	0.76			
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	109.22/167.13	110.69/167.71	121.89/176.62			
Individual controls	No	Yes	Yes			
Region FE	No	No	Yes			

Table 5.4: Geo-RDD across countries: (...).

Results in Table 5.4 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 favorite specification in Column (2), exposure to British colonial institutions causes a rise in sexual prejudice of 34 and 23 percentage points, respectively. Results remain significant after controlling for region fixed effects, which indicates that the observed treatment effect is not driven by unobserved, region-level differences in baseline outcomes.

Robustness in the raw data. Analogously to the robustness checks for the Western and Southeastern Africa samples, Figures C3 c) and d) present binned scatter plots for the WVS and LAPOP samples, using the same non-parametric approach with 20 km bins near the colonial borders. The observed patterns again confirm that the results are consistent with the underlying raw data and do not depend on particular



(a) Geo-RDD at the Thailand-Myanmar Border
 (b) Geo-RDD at the Suriname-Guyana Border
 Figure 2: Geo-RDD across countries - Asia and South America

methodological choices.

6 Mechanisms and Falsification

6.1 Testing alternative interpretations

There are some reasonable hypotheses unrelated to the presence and more vigorous enforcement of colonial penal criminalizing consensual same-sex acts during colonization and the persistence of these penal codes after colonization that could explain our results. First, the observed effect could be related to differences in socioeconomic outcomes driven by British colonization. Second, rather than an increase in sexual prejudice specifically, the observed patterns could be part of a broader rise in social intolerance associated with British colonial influence. In this section, we test these hypotheses. Third, higher sexual prejudice acquired during the colonization might be vertically transmitted across generations independently of contemporary penal codes.

Hypothesis 1: Changes in socioeconomic outcomes caused by colonization.

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 income and worse educational achievement after colonization. Second, there may have been more intense missionary activity in former British colonies, causing more natives to convert from native religious 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 achievement, 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 AB sample in Southeast Africa for two reasons. First, it provides rich individual data regarding education, living conditions, and religious affiliation of respondents. Second, 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 C4 in Appendix C shows the results of our simple mechanism analysis. Column (1) replicates the preferred specification of the Geo-RD across countries in Southeast Africa (Table 5.3, Column (4) of Panel A), to be used as a benchmark of our previous results. Columns (2) to (5) replicate the same specification, incorporating one set of endogenous controls each (respectively, education categories FEs, income category FEs, religious affiliation FEs, and local exposure to Christian missions).

The results in Table C4 tell us that none of the alternative mechanism hypotheses discussed above 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 $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ compared to the specifications with only exogenous controls, suggesting that they are not quantitatively relevant mechanisms of the effect of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice.

Hypothesis 2: General increase in social intolerance.

A third plausible competing interpretation for our results is that instead of measuring the impact of British colonial institutions on sexual prejudice, a positive and significant $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ captures a general increase in social intolerance in former British colonies that increase prejudice against all types of diverse groups, not only sexual minorities. Again, we test this hypothesis using the AB sample in Southeast Africa, as it provides equivalent measures of prejudice against 4 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 the four measures of prejudice, separately. Second, we take the first principal component of these four measures against different groups (this is, excluding sexual prejudice), and repeat the same falsification exercise with this unique measure of general prejudice. Finally, we estimate again $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ in our main geo-RDD specification, including this new measure of general prejudice as an additional control variable.

Table C7 in Appendix B displays the results of the aforementioned falsification exercise. Column (1) reproduces the result in Table 5.3, Column (4) of Panel A, our preferred specification of the Geo-RDD across countries in Southeast Africa, to use as a benchmark of our main findings. Columns (2) to (6) replicate this same specification, changing only the outcome variable. In Columns (2) to (5), we use a measure of prejudice against one different social group at a time. In Column (6) we use our general measure of prejudice against other social groups (excluding sexual prejudice). By doing so, we test if British colonial institutions are also related to higher levels of prejudice against other collectives. Finally, in Column (7), we estimate again the specification in Column (1), including here our general measure of social prejudice as an additional control. In this way, we test if the relationship between British colonial institutions and sexual prejudice holds after controlling for the general level of social prejudice.

The results in Table C7 show that a generalized increase in several forms of prejudice caused by British colonial institutions is unlikely to explain their impact on sexual prejudice. First, the results in columns (2) to (6) show that, if any, British colonial institutions *reduced* prejudice against other social groups. This occurs both when we use the four measures of prejudice against different groups, one by one, and when we use our unique general measure of social prejudice. Second, not surprisingly, the magnitude of $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$ in Column (7) remains fairly similar our favorite Geo-RDD specification, in Column (1).

Figure C6 in Appendix C shows the regression discontinuity plots associated to our estimates in Columns (2) to (6). The graphical representation confirms that British colonial institutions are associated to either similar (different religions, different ethnicity) or more progressive (people with HIV, immigrants) attitudes than the Portuguese ones, but not to higher levels of prejudice against any other group. Given these patterns, it is highly improbable that a general increase in social prejudice in former British colonies is the mechanism explaining the positive and significant $\hat{\beta}^{GB}$.

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 should evaluate the plausibility of competing hypotheses related to the persistence of institutional and cultural outcomes. We continue by assessing the plausibility of the hypothesis that the impact of British colonialism on contemporary sexual prejudice occurs through the persistence of subnational institutions instead of national institutions.

We do so by exploring the case of Cameroon, a country with a current territory split between the British and French Empires. Although former French colonies did not criminalize consensual same-sex acts during the colonial period Han and O'Mahoney [2014], Cameroon recriminalized such actions in 1972, 11 years after its independence and reunification ILGA [2012]. Given the convergence of national institutions after the reunification of Cameroon, the impact of British colonial institutions, if existent, must not operate through the persistence of national institutions (e.g., penal codes criminalizing consensual same-sex acts) but through the persistence of different subnational institutions (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 colonial border between French and British Cameroon, which location is depicted in Figure B9 in Appendix B. More specifically, we estimate the regression model

$$Prejudice_{i,v} = \alpha + \beta^{GB}British_v + f(v) + \gamma_1 \mathbf{x}_i + \gamma_2 \mathbf{x}_v + \epsilon_{i,v}$$
(4)

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

Table C6 in Appendix C shows the results of the within-country Geo-RDD. 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 institutions cannot explain the observed differences in sexual prejudice across colonial borders found in the Geo-RDD across countries.

6.2 Persistence and enforcement of colonial penal codes

In Subsection 6.1, we falsified three hypothesis of causal mechanisms unrelated to the the penal codes enforced by British colonizers. Then, in this Subsection, we test the two most plausible remaining causal mechanisms for β^{GB} : the more vigorous enforcement of penal codes criminalizing consensual same-sex acts during colonization and the persistence of these penal codes after colonization.

Hypothesis 4: persistence of laws criminalizing homosexual conduct.

We begin by testing whether the persistence of legislation criminalizing consensual same-sex acts after colonization serves as a relevant quantitative mechanism for β^{GB} . To do so, we conduct a simple mediation analysis using the WGP sample, which includes measures of sexual prejudice, colonial origin, and contemporary criminalization of homosexual conduct for a wide set of countries. Such a mediation would produce evidence supporting such a mechanism if the magnitude of β^{GB} changes significantly when controlling for contemporary criminalization of homosexual conduct as an endogenous variable.

Table 6.1 displays the results of such a simple mediation exercise using the WGP data. All specifications include $Development_c$ as a control and Year FEs. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model using $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the outcome variable and $British_c$ as the treatment variable, as reported in Column (3) of Table 5.1. Column (2) shows estimates from a regression model using $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the outcome variable and $British_c$ as the treatment variable. Column (3) shows estimates from a regression model using $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the outcome variable and $British_c$ as the treatment variable. Column (3) shows estimates from a regression model using $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the treatment variable. Column (3) shows estimates from a regression model using $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the treatment variable and $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the treatment variable. Column (4) shows estimates from a regression model using $Prejudice_{c,t}$ as the treatment variable, $British_c$ as the treatment variable, and $Criminalize_{c,t}$ as the control variable. We report standard errors clustered at the country level between parenthesis.

Results in Table 6.1 shows that a higher likelihood of contemporary criminalization of homosexual conduct nearly entirely mediates β^{GB} . This finding supports the claim that the persistence of colonial-era penal codes enforced under British rule drives our results. First, consistent with O'Mahoney and Han [2018], Han and O'Mahoney [2014],

Column (2) indicates that British colonial origin substantially increases the likelihood of criminalizing consensual same-sex acts in the present day. Second, Column (3) demonstrates that this criminalization considerably heightens sexual prejudice. Finally, Column (4) shows that β^{GB} becomes statistically insignificant and approaches zero when accounting for contemporary criminalization, confirming its role as the mediating factor.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Sexual Prejudice	Criminalize	Sexual Prejudice	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

Table 6.1: OLS across countries in the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample:The persistence of laws criminalizing same-sex acts explains most of the pronouncedassociation between British colonization and sexual prejudice

Note: This table displays the results of a simple mediation estimated by 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. All specifications include Income per capita (of 2000) as a control and Year FEs. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model using *Prejudice_{c,t}* as the outcome variable and *British_c* as the treatment variable. *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. Column (2) shows estimates from a regression model using *Criminalize_{c,t}* as the outcome variable and *British_c* as the treatment variable. *Column* (3) shows estimates from a regression model using *Prejudice_{c,t}* as the outcome variable and *Criminalize_{c,t}* as the treatment variable. Column (4) shows estimates from a regression model using *Prejudice_{c,t}* as the outcome variable and *Criminalize_{c,t}* as the treatment variable. *British_c* as the treatment variable. Column (4) shows estimates from a regression model using *Prejudice_{c,t}* as the outcome variable and *Criminalize_{c,t}* as the treatment variable. Met error variable, *British_c* as the country level between parenthesis. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Hypothesis 5: enforcement of sodomy laws during colonization.

Existing archival evidence investigating the enforcement of colonial laws criminalizing homosexual conduct is scarce, showing incomplete numbers for a few countries and periods. First, in former British Africa, there are records of 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 of Zimbabwe. [Aldrich, 2003, p. 221 & p. 258]. In contrast to the former British colonies, extensive archival research did not document instances of crimes related to consensual same-sex acts in the former Portuguese colony of Mozambique, with only a few charges for minor crimes that mention homosexual conduct as an aggravating factor [Miguel, 2021, p. 122].

What can we learn from such scarce historical accounts? Naturally, as archival evidence covers only a fraction of the universe of cases and a few countries, these numbers should be interpreted with a grain of salt because they likely underestimate the actual enforcement of sodomy laws. However, two lessons seem reasonable. First, it appears that there was *some* enforcement of sodomy laws in former British colonies, not more than a case per month. Second, assuming that the underestimation of cases is similar across countries, we can interpret the contrast between *some cases* in several former British colonies and *no cases* in Mozambique as a signal of stricter enforcement of sodomy laws by the British colonial authorities concerning the Portuguese ones.

7 Conclusion

We test the hypothesis that British colonial institutions promoted sexual prejudice by enforcing sodomy laws in postcolonial societies. Our findings suggest that British rule significantly increased sexual prejudice, particularly in regions where colonial legal codes clashed with pre-existing social norms. By imposing laws that criminalized same-sex relations, British institutions left a lasting legacy of intolerance. While the effects are most pronounced in societies without prior homophobic norms, evidence from multiple regions reinforces the external validity of this pattern. More broadly, these results highlight the enduring cultural impact of colonial legal systems and the role of legal institutions in shaping societal attitudes toward marginalized groups.

Which implications can we derive from our findings? First, given the limited probability of backslash in settings with low tolerance toward sexual minorities, an immediate policy recommendation for those governments interested in promoting tolerance toward sexual minorities is repealing the colonial laws criminalizing same-sex acts. Second, more broadly, our results showcase the social costs of criminalizing behaviours such as drug consumption and prostitution, suggesting that reforming penal codes to decriminalize such behaviours could decrease prejudice against those practising them.

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Appendix

A Background: Additional Information

Country	Legal base	Sanction	Date of adoption
Australia	British Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1788
	Oueensland 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			
Botswana	British Common Law		1885
Dotomana	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	Oueensland Criminal Code	Un to 5 years of imprisonment	1929
Eswatini	Queensiand ermana code	op to o years of imprisonment	1)2)
Cambia	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	
Gambia	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1934
Chana	Wright's Jamaican Penal Code	Un to 3 years imprisonment	1892
Hong Kong	British Common Law	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1865
riong Kong	(Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From to years to me imprisonment with servitate	1000
India	Indian Ponal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1862
Iraq	Indian Feliar Code	op to to years of imprisonment of me imprisonment	1002
Israol	Palastina Criminal Coda Ordinanca	Up to 10 years of imprisonment	1936
Iamaica	Britsh Common Law	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1950
Jamaica	(Offences Against the Person Act 1861)	From 10 years to me imprisonment with servitude	1004
Vanue	Indian Danal Code	Un to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1907
Kellya	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1097
Locotho	Criminal Law and Procedure Act	Op to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1930
Malauri	Indian Danal Cada	Up to 10 years imprisonment or life imprisonment	1936
Walawi	Queensland Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1923
Malassia	Queensiand Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment on life imprisonment	1930
Malaysia	Indian Penai Code	Op to 10 years imprisonment or life imprisonment	1871
Mauritius	Indian Danal Cada	Line to 10	100/
Nyanmar	Remain Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1880
Namibia	Roman-Dutch Common Law	Op to a capital sentence	1940
New Zealand	(Offer and A prime the Denser A at 1828)	Capital sentence	1840
	(Offences Against the Person Act 1828)		1002
NT: :	Stephen's Penal Code	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1893
Nigeria	Queensiand Criminal Code	Up to 14 years of imprisonment with hard labour	1914
Pakistan	Indian Penal Code		1862
Sierra Leone	British Common Law	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1861
	(Offences Against the Person Act 1861)		1071
Singapore	Indian Penal Code	Up to 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment	1871
South Africa	Roman-Dutch Common Law	Up to a capital sentence	1005
Sri Lanka	Indian Penal Code		1885
Sudan	Indian Penal Code	No punishment for consensual same-sex acts	1899
Swaziland	British Common Law	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1907
	(Offences Against the Person Act 1861)		
	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	From 10 years to life imprisonment with servitude	1861
	(Offences Against the Person Act 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			
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

Table A1: Regulation of consensual same-sex acts in British colonies: Former UK colonies systematically criminalized consensual homosexual conduct

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

Variable	Decominican	Course
Panel A: Outcome variable	Description	Source
Perceived sexual prejudice	Percentage of the (non-missing and non-unknown) respondents who an- swered 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
Panel B: Colonial origin variables Colonial origin: British	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has British colo-	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: France	nial origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has French colo-	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Spain	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has Spanish	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Portugal	colonial origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP respondent has Portuguese	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
Panel D: Geographical controls		Maddison [2007]
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,	Nunn and Puga [2012]
% of tropical climate	dunes, rocky or lava flows. Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has any of the four	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Avg. distance to the coast (1000	Average distance to the coast. Measured in thousands of kilometers.	Nunn and Puga [2012]
% of area within 100 km. of the	Percentage of the land surface area of each country within 100 km of the	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	Total nonvelation of the soundary in 1400 Measured in 1000 inhabitants	Nump and Bucco [2012]
% of Islamic population in 1900	Percentage of the population in 1900 following Islam	World Religions Database
I ow Islam Penetration	Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is he-	World Religions Database
Low Island Percentition	low the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset.	Hond Rengions Dutabase
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 le	vel)	
Subregion: Australia and N.	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Zealand	gion Australia and New Zealand, and 0 otherwise.	
Subregion: Caribbean	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Caribbean, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Central America	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Central America, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Northern America	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Northern America, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: South America	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion South America, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Eastern Africa	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Eastern Africa, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Northern Africa	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Northern Africa, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Southern Africa	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Southern Africa, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Western Africa	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Western Africa, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Middle Africa	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Middle Africa, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Eastern Asia	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Eastern Asia, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: South-eastern Asia	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion South-eastern Asia, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Southern Asia	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Southern Asia, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Western Asia	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- gion Western Asia, and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Panel G: Survey-year indicators		
Year: 2011	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2011.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2012 Year: 2012	Indicator variable = 1 if the WCP survey was conducted in 2012.	World Gallup Poll
1ea1. 2013 Year: 2014	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2013. Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2014	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2015	Indicator variable = 1 if the WCP survey was conducted in 2015.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2016	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2016.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2017	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2017.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2018	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2018.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2019	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2019.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2020	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2020.	World Gallup Poll
Year: 2021	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2021. Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2022	World Callup Poll
Year: 2023	Indicator variable = 1 if the WGP survey was conducted in 2023.	World Gallup Poll

Table B1: Detailed description of the variables in the WGP sample



Notes: This figure displays the percentage of people that shows prejudice against a certain group for countries in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 (ABW6) in our sample. 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 B1: 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.

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel A: Outcome variables				
Sexual prejudice	0.65	0.26	0.06	0.99
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
Low Islam Penetration	0.61	0.49	0.00	1.00
High Islam Penetration	0.39	0.49	0.00	1.00
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

Table B2: Descriptive statistics in the World Gallup Poll (WGP) sample

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 B2 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, Deels A to E display outcomes, colonial origin variables, contemporary controls, geographical controls, historical controls, UN sub-regions indicators, and year indicators.

Table B3: Detailed description of the variables in the Afrobarometer (AB) sample

Variable	Description	Course
Panel A: Outcomes and treatment	Description	Source
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	Afrobarometer
Sexual prejudice [Dummy]	strongly dislike having homosexuals as neighbours, respectively. 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 <i>somewhat dislike</i> or <i>strongly dislike</i> having people of different religion as neighbours, 0 otherwise	Afrobarometer
Ethnic prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would <i>somewhat dislike</i> or <i>strongly dislike</i> having people of different ethnicity as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
HIV prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would <i>somewhat dislike</i> or <i>strongly dislike</i> having people with HIV as neighbours, 0 otherwise.	Afrobarometer
Immigration prejudice [Dummy]	Dummy taking value one if the respondent would <i>somewhat dislike</i> or <i>strongly dislike</i> having immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours, 0 oth- erwise	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]
French Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that formerly was a French Colony.	La Porta et al. [2008]
Portuguese Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that formerly was a Portuguese Colony.	La Porta et al. [2008]
Panel B: Country level controls		
Region [West Africa]	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in West Africa.	Afrobarometer
Region [East Africa]	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in East Africa.	Afrobarometer
Region [South Africa]	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in South Africa.	Afrobarometer
Region [North Africa]	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in North Africa.	Afrobarometer
Region [Central Africa]	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in Central Africa	Afrobarometer
Former German Colony	Dummy taking value one if respondent currently lives in a country that	La Porta et al [2008]
Former German Colorly	formerly was a German Colony	
Panel C: Geographical controls (vii	llage 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	Climatic Research Unit
Temperature	a grid at 0.5° resolution matched to the current location of the respondent	(TS y 4 07)
Elevation	Elevation (in meters) from a grid at 1km resolution, computed as the mean from the 5 by 5 colls contared in the current location of the resonand $n_{\rm current}$	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 respon- dent to the coactline	GSHHG
Distance to diamond mines	Distance (in kilometers) from the current location of the respondent to the closest diamond denosit	DIADATA - Peace Research Institute Oslo
Panel D: Historical controls (village	zelethnic level)	
Distance to Saharan trade routes	Minimum distance to the routes of the Saharan trade from the centroid of	Nunn and Wantchekon [2011]
	the land historically inhabited by the ethnic group in which the current lo- cation is located.	Originally, Murdock [1959] and Century Company [1911]
Distance to colonial railways	Distance (in kilometers) from the current location to the closest colonial rail- way	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
Panel E: Individual controls		
Sex	Dummy taking value one if respondent is a female.	Afrobarometer
Age [18 to 24]	Dummy taking value on if respondent is 18 to 24 years old	Afrobarometer
Age [25 to 34]	Dummy taking value on if respondent is 25 to 34 years old	Afrobarometer
A go [35 to 14]	Dummy taking value on if regrandent is 25 to 44 years old.	Afroharomotor
A go [45 to 54]	Dummy taking value on if respondent is 45 to 54 years old.	Afroharometer
A ra [+55]	Dummy taking value on if respondent is 55 years old or older	Afroharometer
1601-001	Durning taking value of it respondent is 55 years old, of older.	Anobarometer

Table B4: 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 an- swered HOMOSEXUALS to the question "Could you please mention any that you rould not like to have as neiobhours?"	World Value Surveys merged sample
Panel B: Colonial origin variables	Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has British color-	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Erance	nal origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has French colo-	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Spain	nial origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Spanish	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Portugal	colonial origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Portuguese	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Colonial origin: Other European	colonial origin. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WVS respondent has Dutch or	Nunn and Puga [2012]
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls	Belgian colonial origin.	0
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 (°) Land area (1000 Ha.)	Longitude of the country centroid. Measured in degrees. Land area of the country. Measured in thousands of hectares.	Nunn and Puga [2012] Nunn and Puga [2012]
Ruggedness Index (100 m.) % of fertile soil	Terrain Ruggedness Index, originally devised by Riley et al. [1999]. Percentage of the land surface area of each country that has fertile soil.	Nunn and Puga [2012] 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) Panel E: Historical controls	Gem diamond extraction (1958-2000). Measured in thousands of carats.	Nunn and Puga [2012]
% of Islamic population in 1900 Low Islam Penetration	Percentage of the population in 1900 following Islam. Indicator variable = 1 if the percentage of Islamic population in 1900 is be-	World Religions Database World Religions Database
High Islam Penetration	low the median of the distribution of 235 countries in the WRD dataset. 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 le Subregion: Australia and N.	wel) Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Zealand Subregion: Caribbean	gion Australia and New Zealand, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Central America	gion Caribbean, and U otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Northern America	gion Central America, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: South America	gion Northern America, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Eastern Africa	gion South America, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Northern Africa	gion Eastern Africa, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Southern Africa	gion Northern Africa, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Western Africa	gion Southern Africa, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Eastern Asia	gion Western Africa, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: South-eastern Asia	gion Eastern Asia, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Southern Asia	gion South-eastern Asia, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre-	United Nations [1999]
Subregion: Western Asia	gion Southern Asia, and 0 otherwise. Indicator variable = 1 if the country of the WGP survey is in the UN Subre- sion Worker Asia and 0 otherwise.	United Nations [1999]
Panel G: Wave indicators	gion western Asia, and 0 ornerwise.	Would Value Currents meneed
WVS Wave: 2	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted during wave 2.	sample
WVS Wave: 4	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted during wave 5.	sample World Value Surveys merged
WVS Wave: 5	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted during wave 5.	sample World Value Surveys merged
WVS Wave: 6	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted during wave 6	sample World Value Surveys merged
WVS Wave: 7	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted during wave 7	sample World Value Surveys merged
Panel H: Year indicators		sample
Year: 1990	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1990.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1991	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1991.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1992	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1992.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1995	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1995.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1996	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1996.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1997	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1997.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1998	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1998.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 1999	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 1999.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2000	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2000.	World Value Surveys merged sample
year: 2001	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2001.	world Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2002	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2002.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2004	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2004.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2005	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2005.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2006	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2006.	World Value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2007	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2007.	World Value Surveys merged sample
rear: 2010	indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2010.	world Value Surveys merged sample
redr: 2011	Indicator variable = 1 if the MVC survey was conducted in 2011.	sample
reat: 2012	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVC survey was conducted in 2012.	world value Surveys merged sample
Year: 2013	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2013.	sample
reat: 2014	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVC survey was conducted in 2014.	world value Surveys merged sample
Vear: 2010	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS Fireby was conducted in 2010.	sample
Vear: 2017	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2017.	sample
Year: 2010	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2010.	sample
Vear: 2017	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2019.	sample
Year: 2021	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2020.	sample World Value Surveys merged
Year: 2022	Indicator variable = 1 if the WVS survey was conducted in 2021	sample World Value Surveys mercord
		sample

Table B5: Descriptive statistics in the World Value Survey (WVS) merged sample

Devel A. Outrame, 11	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Panel A: Outcome variables Sexual prejudice	0.46	0.25	0.05	1.00
Panel B: Colonial origin variables	0.40	0.23	0.05	1.00
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
Panel C: Contemporaneous controls	0.04	0.17	0.00	1.00
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 (*) Land area (1000 Ha.)	2.39 176673.83	81.19 269242.08	-112.98	171.48 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 41 55	0.30	0.00	1.43
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
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: Southern Africa	0.08	0.25	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
Panel C: Wave indicators	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
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
Panel H: Year indicators	0.23	0.44	0.00	1.00
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: 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 Year: 2004	0.01	0.12	0.00	1.00
Year: 2005	0.03	0.00	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 Voar: 2012	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2012	0.11	0.51	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 Voar: 2020	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
Year: 2020	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
Year: 2022	0.01	0.08	0.00	1.00

 Itean. 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 B5 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 G 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 subregions indicators, WVS wave indicators, and year indicators.

Figure B2: Countries included in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 according to their colonial origin



Notes: This figure shows a map with all countries in the Afrobarometer Wave 6 (ABW6) in our sample, in different colours 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 grey (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe), France with horizontal lines pattern (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia), and Portugal in black (Cabo Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe). We exclude countries with two distinct colonizers (Cameroon and Mauritius) from our cross-country sample to avoid mixing cross-country and within-country variation in exposure to colonial institutions. 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).



nia, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Syria, Togo, Tunisia and Vietnam. Third, 19 Spanish colonies: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Notes: This map displays our sample from the World Gallup Poll (WGP) used to estimate the cross-country results in Table 5.1, and extensions. Our Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United States of Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Maurita-Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela. 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, America, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Second, 26 French colonies: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, 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 B3: World Gallup Poll (WGP) global sample used in the OLS across countries estimates





cludes 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, Bo-Notes: This map displays our sample from the World Values Surveys (WVS) used to estimate the cross country results in Table C3. Our sample inlivia and Ecuador. Fourth, 2 Portuguese colonies: Macau and Brazil. Finally, one Dutch colony (Indonesia) and one Belgian colony (Rwanda). Figure B5: 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 5.3. 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 5.3. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

Figure B6: 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 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, Then, we plot dots representing the locations of respondents - i.e., specifically, those within 183.94 km of the former Portuguese-British colonial boundary, B of Table 5.3. Our sample includes respondents exposed to either British colonial institutions (...) or Portuguese colonial institutions (Mozambique). 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). the largest optimal bandwidth used in Panel A of Table 5.3. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.



Figure B7: 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 5.4. 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 B8: 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 5.4. 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 5.4. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.



Figure B9: 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 C6. 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 C6. The size of the dots is proportional to the number of respondents in each location.

C Results: Additional Tables and Figures

	(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

Table C1: 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

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, Frenchc, Spanishc, Portuguesec, and Belgium_Dutchc 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.

	(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

Table C2: 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

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.

	(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

Table C3: 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

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?". Britishc 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 C1: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the sample used to estimate the Geo-RDD across countries in Southeast Africa have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics. This figure shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls for the main sample used in Table 5.3, Panel A, Column (4). First, we standardize the values of our baseline controls. Second, we estimate our Geo-RDD specification (equivalent to Equation 2), using each baseline control $X_{i,c,v}$ as the outcome variable, and no additional controls: $X_{i,c,v} = \beta^{GB}British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where $X_{i,c,v}$ is each of the controls listed. We use the specification with the linear RD-polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary ($f_v = f(Distance_v)$), and a triangular kernel. Standard errors are clustered at the ethnic group level. The figure shows the estimates of β^{GB} for each regression, and the associated 95% confidence interval.



Figure C2: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the sample used to estimate the Geo-RDD across countries in Western Africa have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics. This figure shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls for the main sample used in Table 5.3, Panel B, Column (4). First, we standardize the values of our baseline controls. Second, we estimate our Geo-RDD specification (equivalent to Equation 2), using each baseline control Xi, c, v as the outcome variable, and no additional controls: $X_{i,c,v} = \beta^{GB} British_c + f(v) + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where $X_{i,c,v}$ is each of the controls listed. We use the specification with the linear RD-polynomial on the distance to the colonial boundary $(f_v = f(Distance_v))$, and a triangular kernel. Standard errors are clustered at the ethnic group level. The figure shows the estimates of β^{GB} for each regression, and the associated 95% confidence interval.



Figure C3: Binned scatter plot of raw sexual prejudice data, in 20 km bins, for the 4 subregions used in the Regression Discontinuity Analysis in Subsection 5.2.



Figure C4: Geo-RDD across countries - Robustness



Figure C5: Difference in sexual prejudice within ethnic groups split across the British -Portuguese colonial borders in Southeast Africa. The reported coefficient is obtained estimating the following regression model separately for each ethnic group: $Prejudice_{i,c,v} = \alpha + \beta^{e(v),GB}British_c + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where *i* denotes a respondent, *v* and *c* denote the current village and country of residence, respectively, and e(v) denotes the ethnic location where the village *v* locates. We report 95% confidence intervals using spatially correlated standard errors with a linear decay in a 100km bandwith.

Table C4: 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	0.453 (0.027)***	0.451 (0.028)***	0.459 (0.028)***	0.459 (0.027)***	0.452 (0.029)***
	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	[0.047]***	[0.046]***
Observations h/b	4,429/6,015	4,447/5,986	4,654/5,984	4,434/5,962	4,649/6,031
Clusters (ethnic groups)	35	35	35	35	35
Outcome average	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
Bandwith h/b (kms.)	88.35/149.96	88.98/149.47	91.44/151.86	89.52/151.47	90.73/152.63
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 missions

Note: This table displays a mechanism 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 using the geographic regression discontinuity estimates for Southeast Africa, by 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 5.3. 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). We report standard errors clustered by ethnic location between parenthesis and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors between square brackets.

	Obs	Sample Mean	Diff of Means	RDD Coef	SEs of RDD Coef
Panel A: Individual characteristics					
Sex [Female=1]	485	0.49	0.0044	0.010	(0.091)
					[0.007]
Age [18 to 24]	485	0.22	0.022	-0.082	(0.078)
					[0.077]
Age [25 to 34]	485	0.37	0.0076	0.13	(0.088)
					[0.060]**
Age [35 to 44]	485	0.21	0.0014	-0.021	(0.067)
					[0.076]
Age [45 to 54]	485	0.11	-0.029	-0.042	(0.062)
					[0.060]
Age [55+]	485	0.082	-0.0021	0.019	(0.053)
					[0.037]
Panel B: Geographic characteristics					
Temperature (degrees Celsius)	62	23.7	-2.20	-1.08	(1.069)
					[1.469]
Elevation (meters)	62	792.0	524.2	158.8	(348.240)
					[374.641]
Slope (°)	62	1.81	1.72	0.93	(1.005)
L ···					[1.106]
Distance coast (kms.)	62	108.7	69.6	-29.8	(38.035)
					[44.413]
Distance diamond mines (kms.)	62	457.7	54.0	-13.3	(14.803)
					[19.978]
Panel C: Historical characteristics					
Distance Saharan trade routes (kms.)	62	805.4	-128.2	-4.24	(37.443)
	-				[44.981]
Distance colonial railways (kms.)	62	605.5	-80.9	14.3	(18.189)
			· ·		[24 693]

Table C5: Balance-check: treatment and control villages in the sample used to estimate the Within-country Geo-RDD have similar demographic, geographic, and historical characteristics

Note: This table shows balance check statistics of our baseline controls at the village level for the sample used to estimate the Within-country Geo-RDD. Respectively, the second and third columns display the sample size *N* and the sample mean \bar{x} of each baseline control *x* described in the first column. The fourth column reports the (unconditional) difference of means between our control and treatment groups $\bar{x}(British_c = 1) - \bar{x}(British_c = 0)$ of the baseline control *x*. The fifth column shows the (conditional) difference of means $\hat{\beta}_x^{GB}$ estimated by the Geo-RDD model described by Equation (4) in Section 6 using the baseline control *x* as an outcome variable. We use the specification with the RD-polynomial on the distance to the national boundary $f_v = f(Distance_v)$. The sixth column reports the standard errors (SEs) of $\hat{\beta}_x^{GB}$: SEs clustered at the village level between parenthesis and spatial HAC SEs [Conley, 1999] up to 50 km between square brackets. In Panel A, we report balance-check statistics for the individual-level controls in \mathbf{x}_i estimated using an individual-level regression model. Respectively, Panels B and C report balance check statistics for the village-level geographical and historical controls in $\mathbf{x}_v = (\mathbf{x}_v^G, \mathbf{x}_v^H)$ estimated using a village-level regression model. ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10.




(d) Outcome: prejudice against immigrants and foreign workers



(e) Outcome: General prejudice (1st principal component of prejudice against different social groups, excluding sexual prejudice)

Figure C6: Falsification: Geo-RDD across countries in Southeast Africa using measures of prejudice against different social groups. In none of these cases, British colonies exhibit higher levels of prejudice against any of these groups that Non-British ones.

Table C6: 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	0.003	0.008	0.002	0.035
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.032)
	[0.046]	[0.043]	[0.043]	[0.042]	[0.053]
Observations h/b	1,747/1,830	1,755/1,861	1,755/1,861	1,762/1,861	1,450/1,808
Clusters (ethnic groups)	20	20	20	20	18
Outcome average	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.89
Bandwidth h/b (kms.)	53.35/74.41	57.38/95.07	58.86/100.78	59.19/102.97	30.05/70.56
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 replicating the regression model specified in Equation (4) using the measure of sexual prejudice defined in Subsection 3.2 and the Cameroon sample described in Section 6. Column (1) shows estimates from a regression model including only the RD-polynomial, without controls. Respectively, Columns (2) to (5) include sequentially village-level geographical controls, village-level historical controls, individual-level controls, and ethnic group FE. In our favorite specification in Column (54, we estimate the regression model *Prejudice*_{*i*,*v*} = $\alpha + \beta^{GB}British_v + f_v + \epsilon_{i,c,v}$, where *i* denotes a respondent and *v* denotes the current village of residence of respondent *i*, respectively. *Prejudice*_{*i*,*v*} is the extensive margin measure of sexual prejudice of respondent *i*: it takes the value one if the individual would *dislike* or *strongly dislike* having a homosexual as a neighbour and 0 if the individual would like, strongly like or doesn't care. *British*_v is an indicator taking value 1 when individual *i* lives in a village *v* with British colonial origin and zero otherwise. \mathbf{x}_v and \mathbf{x}_i are vectors with village-level, and individual-level controls defined in Table B3. The RD-polynomial is a function on the distance to the former colonial boundary [$f_v = f(Distance_v)$]. We report standard errors clustered at the ethnic group level between parenthesis and heteroskedasticity-robust nearest neighbor standard errors using the 100 nearest neighbors between square brackets.

		former Britis	h colonies is un	likely to explain	our results.		
	(1) Sexual prejudice	(2) Religion	(3) HIV	(4) Ethnicity	(5) Immigrants	(6) General prejudice	(7) Sexual prejudice
British colony	0.472 (0.032)*** [0.048]***	-0.241 (0.051)*** [0.044]***	-0.329 (0.039)*** [0.046]***	$\begin{array}{c} -0.173 \\ (0.041)^{***} \\ [0.042]^{***} \end{array}$	-0.457 (0.058)*** [0.049]***	-1.603 (0.218)*** [0.199]***	0.556 (0.033)*** [0.046]***
Observations h/b Clusters (ethnic groups) Outcome average Outcome range Bandwith h/b (kms.)	4342/5921 35 0.82 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.13 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.12 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.14 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.21 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.00 [-0.85/4.95] 85.7/145.74	4342/5921 35 0.82 [0.00/1.00] 85.7/145.74
Note: This table displays a fail institutions on <i>sexual prejudice</i> across countries with our comp sexual prejudice as a control. M the specifications in columns (1 standard errors clustered by co	ification exercise accessing nas: (i) a different sign tha lete set of controls using so loreover, Columns (3) and) to (3) but estimate the W untry and ethnic location i	g the plausibility of the hy n the one in <i>social prejudic</i> ocial prejudice as a depen (4) mirror the specificatior ithin-country Geo-RDD w n Columns (3) to (4), and	prothesis that a generaliz c, (ii) a stable magnitude dent variable, and Colum is in Columnof (1) and (2) tith $f_v = f(Distance_v)$. We standard errors clustered	ced increase of all forms (when including <i>social pro</i> in (2) includes social proj but estimate the Geo-RD de report standard errors at the village in Column	of prejudice explains or <i>judice</i> as a control varia udice as a control varia D across countries with between parenthesis cl s (5) to (6).	Ir results by testing whether able. Column (1) replicates 1 ble in the specification from $f_v = f(Distance_v)$. Finally, 0 ustered at the country level i ustered	the impact of British colonial the specification from the OLS the OLS across countries with Columns (5) and (6) reproduce n Columns (1) to (3), two-way

Table C7: Falsification: Estimates using measures of prejudice against different social groups show that a general increase in prejudice informer British colonies is unlikely to explain our results.

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