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Missionaries and female empowerment in colonial Uganda: new evidence from Protestant marriage registers, 1880-1945

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Abstract: Protestant missionaries have recently been praised for their comparatively benign features concerning female education in Africa. Using a new dataset of 5,212 Protestant brides born between 1880 and 1945 from urban and rural Uganda, this paper offers a first pass at analyzing empirically the role of mission education on African women's socio-economic position within the household. The paper finds that although, mission education raised the sampled brides' literacy skills way above female national levels, they were largely excluded from participating in the colonial wage labour market. In this context, the missionary society presented an almost exclusive source of female wage labour in areas of religious service, schooling and medical care. While literacy per se did not affect women's marriage behaviour, women who worked for the missionaries married significantly later in life and married men closer to their own age, signaling a shift in the power balance between parents and daughters and between husband and wife. On average, daughters of fathers deeply entrenched in the missionary movement had the highest chances to access wage employment, emphasizing the importance of paternal mission networks for Protestant women's work outside the household during colonial times.

Keywords: Missions, Protestantism, Uganda, colonial economy, African women, education, wage labour, marriage patterns

JEL classification: J12, J16, N37, N97, Z12

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1. INTRODUCTION

The scholarly consensus holds that the colonial era led to a long-term deterioration of women's socio-economic position in sub-Saharan Africa[3]. Some of the oft-cited determinants include women's exclusion from the cultivation of cash-crops and agricultural training (Powesland 1952; Boserup 1970: 42); women's discrimination in the colonial market and cash-based economy and (urban) labour markets (Boserup 1970: 109; Little 1973: 32; Rodney 2012: 227; Lawrance et al. 2006: 27), as well as women's marginalization from political representation (Van Allen 1972; Rodney 2012).

Another strand of literature argues that Christian missionary societies, which provided the bulk of education in colonial British Africa, introduced and provided gender biased education that secluded women in the domestic realm (Boserup 1970; Rodney 2012; Akyeampong & Fofack 2014), and thus shaped another critical aspect in delineating African's women's socio-economic position. On the contrary, according to John Iliffe (2007: 245), missionary societies also had an emancipating aspect, furthering female African's formal education and occupational skills through the creation of mission employment opportunities. Moreover, recent empirical studies have presented evidence that the historical presence of Christian missionaries generated important long-term effects on African education (Gallego & Woodberry 2010; Frankema 2012; Cagé & Rueda 2013) and culture (Nunn 2010). However, although Catholic and Protestant missions had an overall positive long-run impact on African educational attainment, Nunn (2014) presented evidence that Protestant missions placed greater importance on female education relative to their Catholic contenders.[4] Also Fourie et al. (2014) show that native women, residing at Protestant mission stations in the Cape Colony, proportionally had higher literacy rates than men.

Using a newly collected longitudinal dataset of 5,212 African women, born between 1880 and 1945, drawn from Anglican marriage registers in rural and urban Uganda, this study investigates this claim one step further by empirically exploring whether Protestant missionary education had an emancipating effect on women's relative status and position within the household, beyond literacy achievements. In Uganda, marriage registers of the Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) are among the earliest written records documenting

[3] Hereafter the shorter term 'Africa' is used for 'sub-Saharan Africa'.
[4] Similarly, Becker & Woessmann (2008) have demonstrated that Protestant education decreased the gender gap in basic education in nineteenth-century Prussia.

the vital history of native spouses for the entire colonial era, comprising brides' and grooms' self-reported age at first marriage, occupations, location of residence and literacy status (inferred from signatures), as well as their fathers' occupations. Thus, this case-study follows the recent wave of scholarship (e.g. Moradi 2009; Cogneau & Rouanet 2011; Austin et al. 2012; Wantchekon et al. 2014; Cogneau & Moradi 2014) that has demonstrated that case-studies using historical African micro-data present a real alternative to broad-brushed macro-studies, avoiding 'compressing' the history of different time periods and paths (Austin 2008; Hopkins 2009). Yet, compounded by the paucity of data on African women during the colonial era, previous work using archival data has focused almost exclusively on African men as units of analysis. In that sense, Anglican marriage registers present a unique source for studying African women in the past.

To assess the influence and mechanisms of Protestant mission education in shaping the sampled Protestant women's socio-economic status three measures are constructed from the parish records: (i) literacy status, as a measure of human capital and proxy for female mission school attendance; (ii) occupational titles, assessing women's capacity to attain occupational skills and access wage employment; (iii) women's age at first marriage and spousal age difference, as an indicator of the power balance between parents and daughters and between husband and wife. In addition, the influence of the paternal occupational background on daughter' socio-economic status is explored for each of the above measures.

This paper provides a first empirical look at the influence and mechanisms of Protestant mission education in Africa on women's socio-economic position within the household. It shows that, although mission education raised the sampled women's literacy skills markedly above the national average, women were largely excluded from colonial labour markets, accept for mission labour. In this sense, the missionary society presented an exclusive and culturally legitimate mechanism for female converts to enter a new life-cycle in which they could further their formal education and acquire occupational skills through employment opportunities in areas of religious services, schooling and medical care. Female labour market participation significantly delayed women's uptake of marriage and decreased the spousal age difference, signaling enhanced autonomy in women's choice of marriage partner. Yet, literacy per se had no statistically significant effect on female brides' age at first marriage, or the spousal age difference. On average, daughters of fathers deeply entrenched in the mission

movement had the highest likelihood to access wage (mission) labour, highlighting the importance of paternal missionary networks for female offspring.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Women's status in pre-colonial Buganda and Toro

The Buganda kingdom, situated along the fertile northern shore of Lake Victoria (see Figure 2), was a centralised state with feudal structures comprising a *kabaka* (king, Luganda), territorial lordships (appointed chiefs) and a peasant class. Before colonial rule in 1894, Kibuga, today's location of Kampala, was the capital of the kingdom, where trading, political and administrative activities were centered. Its rain-fed fertile soils supported an extensive plantain cultivation which gave rise to a densely populated civilization (Ofcansky 1996). Greater Kibuga provided a home to about 70,000 tax-paying peasants, most of them owning their own plot of land for crop and livestock farming (Reid 2002: 38).[5] The Toro kingdom in the West of Uganda, stretching along the Rwenzori Mountains, and sharing many of the environmental characteristics of Buganda, was originally part of the Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom founded in 1830 but only became fully independent in 1891 (Ingham 1975). Fort Portal was the capital of the Toro kingdom where the Toro royal palace was located, and regional trade was centralized.

Admittedly, little is known about African women's pre-colonial position because of a paucity of sources for the early periods. Yet, colonial missionary accounts, as well as narrative and anthropological evidence can provide insights on the historical role of women in Buganda and Toro society. In both kingdoms men worked in the esteemed and skill-intensive barkcloth, tanning, pottery, canoe-building, and iron-working professions (Reid 2002: 97) from which women generally were excluded from. Men were also responsible for most of the regional and local commerce in ivory, slaves and handicraft products, as it was considered an ideological taboo for women to go out of the home to a market or to trade (Roscoe 1911).[6] While men tended towards external labour, women worked within the confines of the household,

[5] There are no population numbers for the pre-colonial era. One of the earliest population estimates were provided by the *Colonial Blue Book* of 1910, revealing that about a quarter of the total population of Uganda resided in Buganda (667,387), while less than 5% of the Protectorate's population belonged to the Toro kingdom (93,946).

[6] This contrasts with West Africa where women participated in local trade in colonial Nigeria (Ekechi 1995) and Ghana (Robertson 1984a).

responsible for the cultivation and preparation of food crops, provision of water and firewood, and the rearing of children (Hattersley 1908; Roscoe 1911; Wrigley 1957; Perlman 1966). The domestic weaving of baskets and mats is considered as the only 'industry' available for women in Buganda (Reid 2002: 89). Within the two societies women were subordinate to men (Perlman 1966) and cultural norms constrained women's mobility and appearance in public spaces (Roscoe 1911; Kyomuhendo & McIntosh 2006).

In Buganda and Toro, marriage was arranged by parents while their children were relatively young, typically after the onset of menarche (Roscoe 1911; Taylor 1958; Perlman 1966). Polygamy was widespread and was viewed as a conjugal mark of male prestige. Marriage was seen more in terms of the clan than of the nuclear family and therefore, the choice of girls' marriage partner was made largely by parents or other senior members (Hastings 1973; Banja 2013), ensuring chastity, future bride-wealth, and labour power. Buganda men and women were not allowed to marry a person of the same clan to which their parents belonged (Taylor 1958), thus excluding inter-clan and inter-family marriages. The customary marriage consisted of a potential groom's application, the consent of the parents, the handing over of bridewealth and the ceremonies surrounding the handing over of the bride to the groom, culminating in their official cohabitation and consummation of the marriage (Hastings 1973). Buganda's and Toro's patrilineal and patrilocal cultures implied – and still do[7] - ownership of children by the patrilineage with the bride upon marriage residing with or near the husband's family. Thus, decision-making power in these families largely lay in the hands of the male and the elderly. Indigenous education for girls, provided by their mothers, prepared them for adulthood in their homes, while boys were often sent to the court of the *kabaka* to receive training outside the home (Fallers 1964). Overall, this gives the impression that women's socio-economic position within the household and society, compared to men's was far from egalitarian in pre-colonial Buganda and Toro.

2.2 The arrival of Christian missionaries to Uganda

In the late 19th century the Anglican CMS (1877) and the Catholic White Fathers (1879) arrived in Buganda ahead of the colonial representatives. In Toro, Catholic and Protestant missionaries established stations a little later, around 1898. After Britain declared Uganda its Protectorate in 1894, Christian conversion and mission school enrollment thrived like nowhere else in British Africa (Oliver 1952: 184; Hastings 1994: 464-78; Ward 1999). The

[7] Those traditions vary considerably in their manifestation between rural and urban areas today.

British colonial administration and the missionaries from all denominations selectively accommodated each other within the British system of indirect rule in Uganda, with mission schools and hospitals providing the bulk of education and medical care for Africans at low cost during most of the colonial era.[8]

Figure 1 portrays the extraordinary indigenous reception and spread of Christianity among the total population of Uganda, Buganda, and Toro during the colonial era. According to Kaplan (1995: 9-23) and Frankema (2012), a crucial pre-requisite for the spread of the gospel was the *Africanization* of the mission, i.e. African converts taking the initiative in preaching the gospel, teaching pupils in mission schools as well as contributing to the financing of the mission. By 1925, a remarkable 41% of the population of Buganda, and 29% of Toro had already converted, which was substantially higher than the total Ugandan population at 17%. By 1959, 58% of the population of the Protectorate, 74% of the Buganda population and 54% of the Toro population had converted. Throughout the colonial era, about a third of Christian followers in Uganda were Protestants, the remaining two-thirds Catholic (see Figure A1).[9] The rapid spread of Christianity was also accompanied by a growing 'appetite' for Western education, as a result enrollment figures of Ugandan mission schools increased from 11,954 in 1900 to 267,837 in 1938 – constituting the highest numbers in the whole of British Africa by 1938 (Frankema 2012). Yet, Protestant schools serviced more than half of all primary school pupils in Uganda's 1920s (Frankema 2012). Mission schools sought girls as pupils as well as boys, with more than a third of all primary school pupils (Catholic and Protestant) being girls between 1910 and 1938.[10] The CMS was particularly attentive to female education as, although the CMS only claimed 31% of Ugandan Christians in 1922, 64% of total Christian females were in fact enrolled in schools run by the Protestants.[11]

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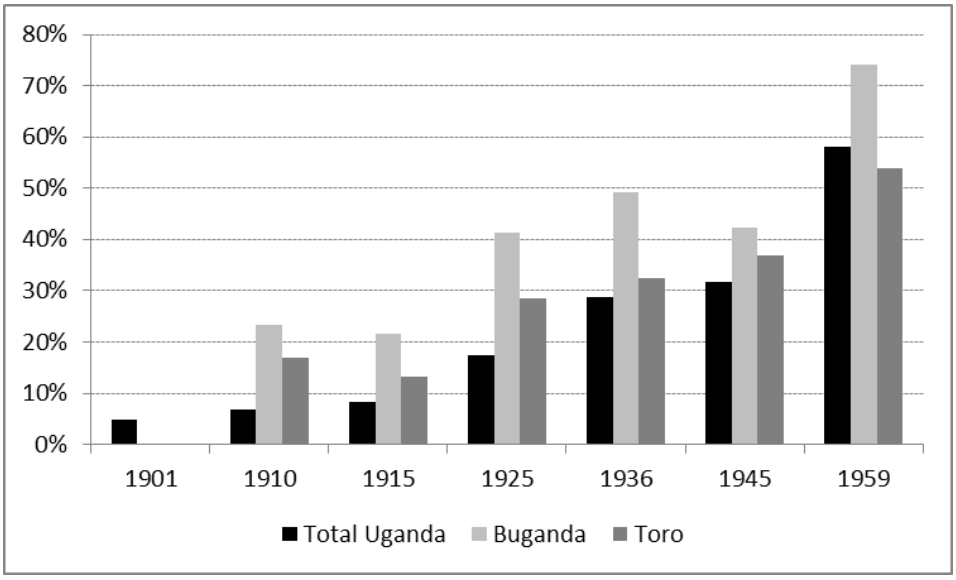
[8] Admittedly, the relationship between Christian missionaries and British colonialism was much more complex, than can be portrayed here. Generally, when imperial Britain and missionary interests aligned they worked together – when they conflicted, they competed (e.g. Stanley 1990; Porter 2004; Etherington 2005).
[9] Data were taken from various issues (1901-1945) of the *Blue Book of the Uganda Protectorate*.
[10] Girls' primary school enrollment was calculated on the basis of annual primary mission school attendance from Ugandan Blue Books derived from Frankema (2012).
[11] Data were taken from the *Blue Book of the Uganda Protectorate* (1922).

mission. By 1925, a remarkable 41% of the population of Buganda, and 29% of Toro had already converted, which was substantially higher than the total Ugandan population at 17%. By 1959, 58% of the population of the Protectorate, 74% of the Buganda population and 54% of the Toro population had converted.

Figure 1: Share (%) of Christian followers in Uganda, Buganda, and Toro, 1901-1959



Source: Blue Book of the Ugandan Protectorate, various issues 1901-1945; Uganda Protectorate Census 1959. The percentage of the Christian population of Toro for the year 1959 is based on figures for the Western province of Uganda.

Throughout the colonial era, about a third of Christian followers in Uganda were Protestants, the remaining two-thirds Catholic (see Figure A1).[12] The rapid spread of Christianity was also accompanied by a growing 'appetite' for Western education, as a result enrollment figures of Ugandan mission schools increased from 11,954 in 1900 to 267,837 in 1938 – constituting the highest numbers in the whole of British Africa by 1938 (Frankema 2012). Yet, Protestant schools serviced more than half of all primary school pupils in Uganda's 1920s (Frankema 2012). Missions sought girls as pupils as well as boys, and girls' education was widely accepted in Uganda (Larsson 1991, 180) with more than a third of all primary school pupils (Catholic and Protestant) being girls between 1910 and 1938.[13] The CMS was particularly attentive to female education as, although the CMS only claimed 31% of Ugandan Christians

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in 1922, 64% of total Christian females were in fact enrolled in schools run by the Protestants.[14]

Customary marriage and the bridewealth system continued throughout the colonial era and typically preceded or succeeded a Christian *ring-marriage* (Hastings 1973; Hansen 1984). Thus, African marriages were often validated within two institutions. There were a number of reasons for this behaviour. Firstly, Protestants who had married under customary law but remained without ring-marriage were suspended from Holy Communion and ex-communicated, which carried substantial social stigma within the Christian congregation (Parr 1947; Hansen 1984: 260), giving its members a strong incentive to have their customary marriage rapidly sanctified. Secondly, Protestant marriage carried significant social prestige and according to Mair (1969), 'in Buganda to marry without Christian ceremony was regarded as little better than not marrying at all'. Thirdly, though there was no ordinance in Uganda making fornication before Christian marriage a criminal offence, it was a highly anti-social practice condemned by Christian religion as a mortal sin (Parr 1947). Similarly, Toro tradition attached very strong values to female pre-marital virginity and there were strong sanctions against unmarried girls bearing children before marriage (Perlman 1966). Finally, parents unmarried by the rites of the Anglican Church were unable to baptize their infants, thus providing a strong incentive to legitimize their customary union in the Christian manner before the birth of their first child (Taylor 1958: 243).

3. CONVERSION TO GREATER FREEDOM?

The role of Christian missionaries on African women's socio-economic position in colonial Africa is ambiguous, largely relies on anecdotal evidence, and has been scarcely investigated using empirical evidence, reflecting the inadequacy of data available before the 1950s. We take as a departure point the observation that African girls in 1950 were 'outmanned' in primary education: the percentage of girls among pupils of primary schools in Africa was less than a quarter in Southern Nigeria, Uganda, and the Gold Coast, and constituted below a third in Kenya, Tanganyika and Sierra Leone (Hailey 1957). But even when girls attended mission schools, whether Catholic or Protestant, the content of mission school teaching was typically different for girls, stressing, basic literacy and domestic skills in class (e.g. cooking, cleaning,

[14] Data were taken from the *Blue Book of the Uganda Protectorate* (1922).

handicrafts, sewing), training girls for Christian marriage and motherhood, rarely qualifying them for employment in the modern sector (Boserup 1970; Gaitskell 1983, 1990; Labode 1993). The emphasis on female domesticity was a central component of the 'civilizing mission' which spread the British Victorian ideal of the proper role for women, stressing patriarchal ideology side-lining women as housewives (Van Allen 1972; Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Musisi 1999). Akyeampong & Fofack (2014) even argue that the missionaries' gender-biased educational system is among some of the 'most critical determinants of persistent gender inequality in the region'. However, it's also important to note that while mission schools made gender distinctions in teaching content, distinctions were already present in the local culture before their arrival, as highlighted earlier. Hence, the contention, that missionaries lowered African women's status also needs to be carefully interpreted in light of their pre-colonial resilience.

On the other hand, Fiona Leach's (2012) study of early 19th century letters written by African women from CMS mission stations in Sierra Leone cautioned not to rely too heavily on the argument that women unconditionally accepted the new Christian values of appropriate female behaviour but points to the neglect of women's agency in historical accounts. In addition, mission schools, clinics and hospitals started to employ women and, thus, allowed a small number of them to work outside the household and generate their own income. Because school-teaching and hospital nursing required literacy and vocational training, these positions were initially only open to Christian women. Kyomuhendo & McIntosh (2006: 58) provide anecdotal evidence from Uganda that the CMS particularly encouraged educated young women to enter wage mission labour as teachers, midwives and nurses, insisting that marriage should not terminate a woman's career. Apparently, Christian clubs for women appeared which strengthened women's position in both Ugandan society and within the household. For example, during the early colonial era within the CMS of Uganda, the Anglican Mother's Union, a shared spiritual and social club for Anglican British and African married women, became '…a formidable rival in arenas that may otherwise have preserved the male-centred hierarchy, including literacy and healing' (Prevost 2010: 32).

According to John Iliffe (2007: 245), missionary societies emancipated African women by furthering their formal education and building occupational skills through the creation of employment opportunities in areas of religious services, schooling and medical care which in turn raised women's marriage ages. Also, Etherington (2005: 263) argues that mission

stations offered 'unprecedented opportunities for African women to escape social control-.' However, both do not cite any empirical support for their claims. Larsson (1991) claims that in Uganda conversion led to more say in girls' choice of marriage partner for those who had the opportunity to attend mission school and attain professional training in teaching and nursing which eroded the 'gains' of (early) marriage, as it made women less economically dependent. Similarly, John Taylor's (1958) account of the growth of the Church in Buganda, observed that among educated and urban women marriage ages had increased during the colonial era. Further narrative evidence from a Quaker mission's boarding school in Western Kenya suggests that female education, despite its strong emphasis on domesticity (i.e. bear children, cook, wash, sew) increased girls' control over their choice of marriage partner, postponing marriage for schoolgirls relative to girls living outside the mission (Thomas 2000). Parallel to this, Perlman (1966) suggests that Ugandan fathers were beginning to lose control over their daughters because mission schools and churches provided opportunities for boys and girls to mingle, militating against arranged marriages. Similarly, Van Allen (1972) observes the weakening of kinship bonds and the emergence of free partner choice in Christian monogamous marriage due to the opening of schools in southern Nigeria. Along the same vein, Christine Oppong's (1970) survey of Christian married Ghanaian civil servants from Accra found that joint decision-making was higher among couples in which husbands and wives were of the same or adjacent age group and educational level than among those in which the husband was considerably older and more educated.

4. DATA AND SOURCES

4.1 New micro-data from colonial Uganda

Since the mid-19th century, systematic vital registration of Christian Africans was carried out by missionary stations in many parts of Africa. Despite the prevalence of parish registers across Africa they have been seldom used for the reconstruction of Africa's demographic or socio-economic past (Siiskonen et al. 2005).[15] Because parish registers, documenting African baptism, marriage and death, were crucial for the (future) functioning of mission stations, they continued to remain on African soil, and thus cannot be obtained from European archives. However, African parish registers can sometimes suffer damage (caused by insects, theft, fire, or poor storage), have simply disappeared, or are troublesome to access. Furthermore, the

[15] Some notable exceptions include: Nhoni (1954); Thornton (1977); Katzenellenbogen et al. (1993); Notkola & Siiskonen (2000); Walters (2008); Doyle (2013); Meier zu Selhausen & Weisdorf (2014).

vital information from Christian parish registers differs substantially by religious denomination. For example, contrary to the CMS, the White Fathers did not record spouses' or fathers' occupations in their Ugandan marriage registers, nor had they to be signed by the spouses.

The data for this study were collected from hitherto unexplored hand-written Anglican marriage registers of the Diocese of Namirembe, located in Uganda's capital city Kampala[16], and the two rural parishes of Fort Portal (St. John's Cathedral) and Butiti, in the Toro kingdom in Western Uganda. The locations of the sampled parishes are mapped as crosses in Figure 2. Data from the two rural Toro parishes, aims at adding a rural comparative perspective, compared to more urban Kampala. Namirembe Diocese, founded by Bishop Alfred Tucker in 1890 under the *Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa*, was the earliest and largest Anglican missionary station and the main Anglican place of worship in Buganda. In 1904, the newly built brick cathedral represented the largest house of God in Africa with no less than 1,800 Africans gathering on Sundays (Hattersley 1908; Fisher 1900).[17] In the West, St. John's Cathedral in Fort Portal and Butiti's mission station were inaugurated in 1898 by Bishop Tucker.

The very first marriage register (1891-95) from Kampala, as well as the books from 1898-1907, had gone missing.[18] The first marriage book from was also absent. Hence, its documentation of marriages begins in 1911. Butiti, the second rural parish in the West, 35km to the east of Fort Portal, held archived marriage registers from 1927-1989. The early registers were pre-printed in London and then shipped to Uganda where they until today represent the earliest systematically written records, documenting Ugandan vital history on the micro-level. Moreover, their layout remained identical throughout the colonial and post-colonial phase, thus lending themselves to comparison across time and parishes.

[16] Over the course of the colonial era Kampala grew in size, from an urban population of 2,850 in 1912, to 24,000 in 1948 and 46,735 in 1959 (Omolo-Okalebo et al. 2010).
[17] This cathedral burned down due to lighting and was replaced by another brick-walled and tile-roofed structure, completed in 1919 (Moon 1994).
[18] Only recently, the first marriage register (1891-95) was located at the Africana section at Makerere University library (Kampala), indicating that the first marriage solemnized at Namirembe took place on 17 February 1891.

Figure 2: Protectorate of Uganda (around 1900) with Western kingdoms and locations of sample parishes (white crosses)

The marriage registers provide details such as the year, date and place of marriage, age at marriage, spouse's prior marriage status (bachelor/spinster or widower/widow), spouses' occupations and residence at marriage, as well as their fathers' occupation. Grooms' and brides' literacy status is inferred from the capacity of spouses to sign their marriage register. When the marriage partners were unable to sign, they instead placed their mark or a cross under the signature of the person who signed in their name. This is a universal technique for measuring historical literacy (Schofield 1968; Rachal 1987).[19] Yet, marriage ages may be misreported as a result of innumeracy, digit preference or rounding (ages ending in 0 or 5). A statistical technique, known as the Whipple's Index (WI), can shed light on the tendency of individuals (aged 23-72) to misreport their ages. A'Hearn et al. (2009) offer a lineal

[19] According to Rachal (1987) and Schofield (1968: 317) when the motives for literacy were largely religious, there were greater benefits for being able to read (the Bible and hymn-books) than knowing to write.

transformation of the WI demonstrating that the share of individuals who correctly reported their age was 95.3% for Kampala and 86.9% for the rural parishes.[20] This indicates relatively moderate overall age-heaping for females born 1880-1945, providing confidence that one can trust the women's self-reported ages.[21]

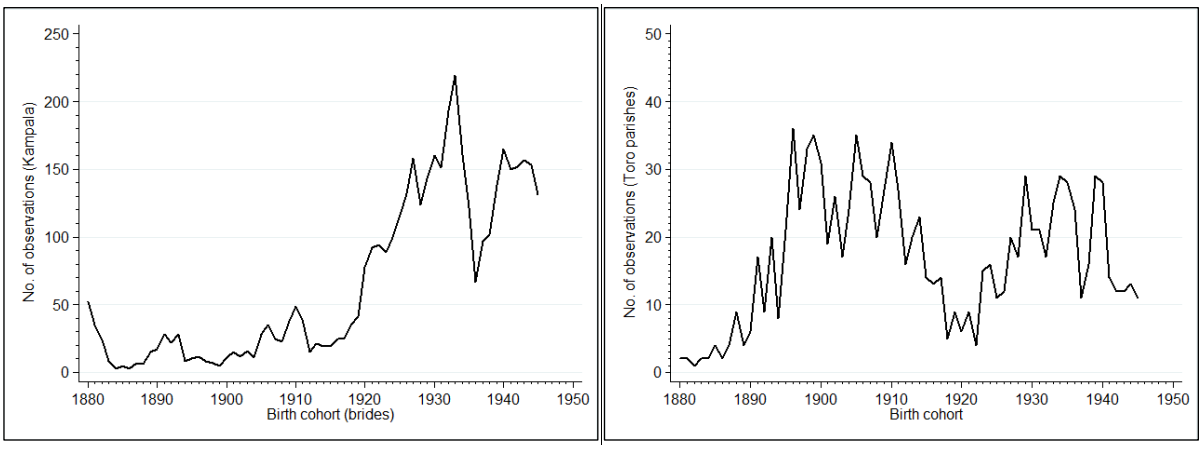
Because in this paper we are interested in the era in which missionary education was exclusively responsible for primary education the sample is restricted to women born between 1880 and 1945. The dataset with known female marriage ages for Kampala comprises 4,278 observations and 1,145 observations for rural Toro. The sample size used in this paper is further truncated according to the following criteria. First, women who were not spinsters (i.e. widows) were omitted to avoid multiple entries of the same individual and to ensure capturing brides' age at first marriage. Second, records of missing signature information were also excluded. Third, outlier ages above the age of 36 were excluded because these women are very likely to have been in traditional marriage for a long time and much later were getting their marriages solemnized in the church. Figure A2 presents the frequency distribution of brides' showing that more that 1.5% of Kampala and 7.2% of Toro brides married after the age of 36. Fourth, rather than being excluded, brides with no occupation recorded in the registers (178 for Kampala and 21 for the rural Toro) are presumed to be housewives (with numerous domestic duties). In sum, one remains with a sample of 4,166 brides from Kampala and 1,036 brides from rural Toro born between 1880 and 1945. In addition, we arrive at 4,091 husbands of the Kampala brides and, 1,032 husbands of the brides from Toro with full occupational and literacy information.

Figure 3 presents the frequency of sampled brides by birth year. For Kampala brides and grooms born between 1880 and 1910 there are less than 50 annual marriages. From 1925 onwards we count more than 100 observations per year for each sex. The mean yearly observation for the two rural Toro parishes is 16 for women and men. Hence, in order to have sufficient observations for later graphical analysis, five-year birth cohorts are applied.

[20] Their index ranges between 0 and 100 (100 = no age-heaping, 0 = only ages ending on multiples of 5 are reported).

[21] Note that this estimate is affected by how the WI is constructed, including only ages ranging 23-72, which as a result fails to capture 82.3% of female marriage ages from Kampala and 70.9% of those from rural parishes as mean marriage age was below 23 on average in both locations.

Figure 3: Sampled brides by year of birth, Kampala and Toro parishes



Kampala Toro parishes

4.2 Ugandan marriage registers: nature and bias

Marriage was close to universal in mid-colonial Uganda. The Uganda Protectorate census of 1921 published that in Uganda about 80.3% of males older than 18 years and 88.9% of females older than 15 years had married during their lifetime, either under customary or Christian rites. However, despite the unmatched large-scale conversion to Christianity in Uganda (Oliver 1952; Hastings 1994), and Buganda in particular (Wrigley 1959), historical Christian marriage registers are not without their potential biases because not everybody who converted to Christianity ended up marrying in the house of God. Those were many: according to the colonial census of 1931, 28.9% of all married women in Buganda (and 29.2% of greater Kampala) and 11.0% in Toro (and 17.0% in the districts of Kyaka and Mwangi near the sampled parishes) had their union sanctified under Christian Law (Catholic or Protestant). And this seems to have persisted over time, as John Taylor's 1956 survey of all 24 pastorates in Buganda found that no more than 25% of married Protestants had had a church marriage. However, in towns, owing to a greater prevalence of adopted Western social patterns, Taylor expected a higher percentage of church marriages. Furthermore, according to the annual colonial blue books of the Uganda Protectorate for the years 1901-1914, marriages at the CMS represented about a third of total Christian marriages taking place during the early colonial era in Uganda. In order to celebrate an Anglican marriage, both marriage partners had to be baptized in the Anglican Church and be at least of age 16. Thus, Protestant couples who had not entered a church marriage but relied on customary marriage remain unobserved.

John Taylor (1958) suggests two important reasons that may have prohibited a church-marriage. Firstly, not all Protestant followers complied with the monogamous and statutory obligations that came with Christian wedlock, such as the building of nuclear families. Yet, many Christians who never married in church may have lived sound Christian lives but, in the eyes of the Church, they were not properly married and were thus ex-communicated and cut-off from Holy Communion (Hansen 1984: 260; Hastings 1994: 46). Taylor's survey also uncovered that only half of those marriages that had been celebrated in the Anglican Church remained monogamous. The richer and powerful men in Africa, in particular chiefs, were still frequently polygamous despite living in Christian wedlock (Hastings 1973: 36; Wilson 1976). Their second wife under customary law typically lived away on another estate. Despite the widespread prevalence of polygamy, the Protestant missionaries only permitted one Christian marriage with one Protestant woman, banning the heathen practices of polygamy. Finally, besides the traditional bridewealth, the additional marriage expenses of paying for clothes, food for the wedding ceremony, as well as raising the church fee ate into the budget of the groom and his family and therefore may have had a deterrent effect for the poorer layers of society. Taking a look at the occupational background of fathers of the Protestant brides in Table 1 can provide some indication whether church marriage was mainly taken-up by the wealthier segments of society, although there is no adequate comparison group due to a lack of occupational data for Catholics or non-Christians for the colonial era.

Table 1 presents the share of daughters by their fathers' occupational group. Five broad occupational groups were constructed comprising of: Chiefs/Sub-chiefs; Farmers; Craftsmen/Builders; Mission employees; and non-mission wage workers (see Table A1 for the most common occupations for each group). The proportionally high number of chiefly and clerical fathers for the Kampala and rural sample suggests that the opportunity to marry in the Anglican Church during the colonial era may be related to some degree of paternal socio-economic success. However, Anglican marriage at the head missionary stations of Buganda and Toro was by no means only confined to the upper classes of society, as 48% of Kampala brides and 69% or rural Toro brides had a father working as a farmer, herder, fisherman or traditional craftsman. In Kampala, a significantly larger number of fathers were working for the missionary society than in the rural sample which is probably due to a higher density of mission schools and hospitals, the earlier arrival of missionaries, as well as a more populous Protestant congregation within Kampala.

Table 1: Brides by fathers' occupational background (%), female birth cohort 1880-1945

	Chief	Farmer	Craftsman	Mission	Clerk	Others	**Total**
Kampala	16.21	36.90	10.83	10.80	23.94	1.32	**100.0**
Toro parishes	16.72	55.75	13.11	3.15	11.21	0.06	**100.0**

Notes: Number of father's occupations from Kampala: 3,647; Rural Toro: 1,017. No occupational information was present for 519 fathers from Kampala and 19 from rural Toro in the marriage registers, being deceased or without occupation at the time of their daughter's marriage. Table A1 provides a list of the top 15 occupations of brides' fathers.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSSION

The following discussion distinguishes among three measures of how missionaries may have affected women's socio-economic position within the household: (i) mission education, (ii) labour market participation and (iii) marriage patterns. In addition, each sub-chapter explores the effects of fathers' occupation on their daughters' socio-economic position.

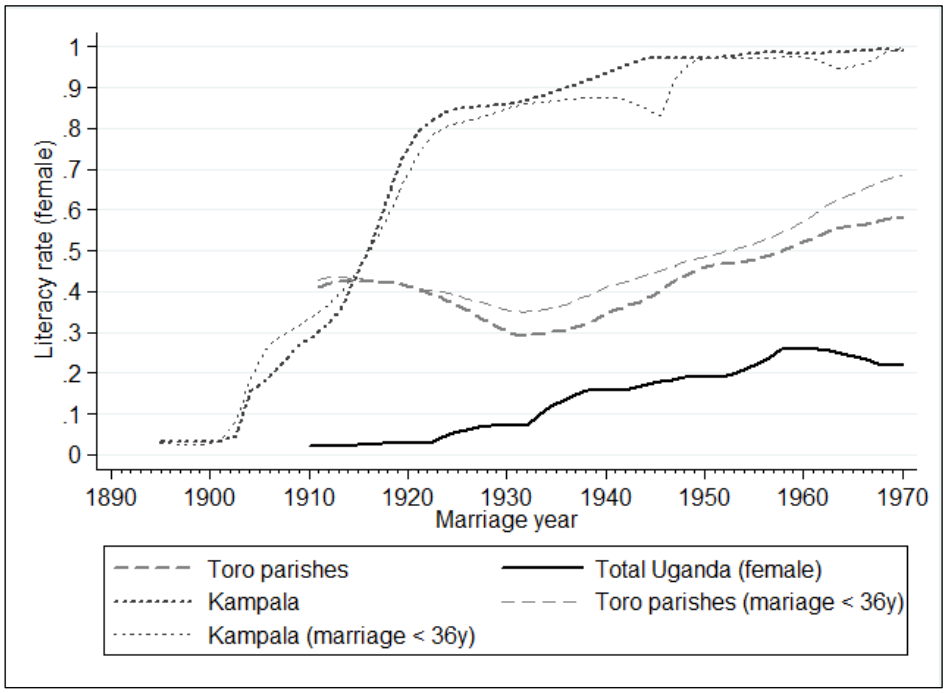
5.1 Female mission education

One way in which women can gain a more equal footing in both household and the labour market is through gains in human capital formation. Literacy status is a widely used measure to ascertain human capital formation. Also, literacy and the gaining of necessary occupational skills can be assumed to be important pre-conditions for accessing employment opportunities in the colonial economy. Until the late 1940s, education and thus the transfer of literacy skills, was almost entirely attributable to mission schools (Hailey 1957; Frankema 2012). In the Ugandan context, despite Christian teachings of women's domestic roles (Kyomuhendo & McIntosh 2006), mission school and church attendance enabled Christianized women to gain new freedoms of movement (beyond the homestead), to an extent not possible in the past which could be judged as an important first step for women's emancipation (Perlman 1966).

Figure 4 plots rural and urban Protestant women's annual literacy rates for total brides and those who married before the age of 36, and compares those with newly reconstructed decadal estimates for total Uganda, which were calculated on the basis of interpolating the growth rates of girls' mission school enrolment for the period 1910-40 based on Frankema (2012), taking the female literacy rate of 1950 from Hailey (1957: 1186) as starting point. For the

years 1960 and 1970, figures from Cooper (2002) were adopted, who calculated female literacy rates (aged 15 and above) from the basis of Statistical Yearbooks of the United Nations. Clearly, there are several limitations regarding this comparison. Because literacy rates are unavailable for the colonial period a comparison cannot be made on the basis of literacy rates in the specific regions but, admittedly, a rather crude comparison with total adult female Ugandans instead of comparing by religious faith or region. Given that during the colonial era the great majority of the Ugandan population Uganda was living in rural areas the reconstructed literacy rates obviously compare better to the estimates of rural Toro than to relatively urban Kampala.

Figure 4: Female literacy rates of total Uganda and sampled Protestants, 1895-1970



Notes: Number of observations for total 'Kampala' (N=7,513) and total 'Toro parishes' (N=1,787) by marriage year.

Figure 4 shows that by the end of the colonial era on average about a quarter of Ugandan adult women possessed the ability to read and write. Literacy rates of the sampled Protestant brides from Kampala[22] and the Western parishes were considerably higher than for the total female population throughout colonial times, highlighting the essential emphasis set by Protestant schools to instruct Bible-reading skills. Within only a quarter of a century, since the onset of colonial rule, 80% of urban female Protestants that had married in church also had

[22] See Meier zu Selhausen & Weisdorf (2014) for comparative long-term Protestant male literacy statistics for Kampala.

acquired literacy status. Moreover, female converts from Kampala achieved significantly higher literacy rates than those from the rural Toro parishes, suggesting that the Protestant brides from Kampala were more likely to have attended mission schools than their peers from the Toro sample, possibly due to a higher availability and density of mission schools in Buganda and relatively earlier arrival of the CMS.

Table 2 & 3: Female literacy rate (%) by father's background, Kampala

		Fathers' occupation				
		Chief	Farmer	Craftsman	Missionary	Clerk
Daughter literate (%)	1880-1909	80.53	33.33	42.54	64.00	59.52
	1910-1929	96.91	97.49	93.33	98.26	97.52
	1930-1945	97.35	98.03	97.87	99.22	98.7
	Total	**93.93**	**93.49**	**74.17**	**96.71**	**96.46**
	N	**593**	**1,367**	**333**	**395**	**876**

Table 3: Female literacy rate (%) by father's background, Toro parishes

		Father's occupation				
		Chief	Farmer	Craftsman	Missionary	Clerk
Daughter literate (%)	1880-1909	47.37	40.57	22.86	100.00	44.44
	1910-1929	50.94	39.26	39.47	61.54	50.00
	1930-1945	57.41	39.69	70.00	56.25	50.00
	Total	**51.36**	**40.03**	**35.15**	**62.50**	**49.11**
	N	**183**	**607**	**128**	**31**	**112**

Notes: No occupational information for 26 deceased fathers at time of daughter's marriage. The occupational group "Clerk" refers to non-mission wage labour.

On the family level, how did fathers' occupational background affect daughters' prospects of attaining literacy skills in mission schools? To explore this, Tables 2 and 3 present the average likelihood of brides being literate by fathers' occupational status for daughters early, mid-, and late colonial birth cohorts. In both sampled Kampala and Toro the first generation of Protestant females entering mission schools were from chiefly families. These findings resonate the claims of an older strand of literature, such as in the missionary account of Mullins (1908: 107), and Cartey & Kilson (1977: 77) that state that chiefs 'derived educational advantages for their offspring with the result that sons and other kin of chiefly families were disproportionally represented among the well-educated new elites in both British and French Africa.' We can add to this that during the early colonial era also daughters of fathers working for the CMS or otherwise engaged in wage labour had increased chances of being sent to mission schools compared to daughters from more traditional

backgrounds (i.e. farmer and craftsmen). Remarkably, in Kampala, from the mid-colonial era onwards family background ceased to determine daughters' educational input, as the large majority of Protestant brides from all 'walks of life' were admitted at mission schools, echoing the Protestant policy that every convert was supposed to be able to read the Bible. In contrast, the rural brides of fathers from traditional sectors (i.e. farmers and craftsmen) were significantly less likely to attain literacy throughout colonial times, while daughters of fathers working for the mission had the highest likelihood to acquire literacy status, followed by the offspring of chiefs and wage-earning clerks.

5.2 Accessing colonial labour markets

Reading and writing skills can be expected to be necessary accomplishments to access wage employment in the formal colonial economy. Hence, did the relative high share of female literacy, displayed in Figure 4, also translate into them taking an active role in colonial labour markets? In order to assess women's ability to access wage labour in the colonial economy, their occupations were coded according to wage and non-wage labour (see Table 4). To further explore the role of the missionary society acting as a potential entry-mechanism into wage employment as stated by Iliffe (2007), wage labour was further broken down into mission and non-mission labour. Table 4 lists the top 15 female occupations for urban and rural Protestant birth cohorts 1880-1945. We note that during the colonial era formal job opportunities, outside the domestic sphere, were relatively scarce for women, as nearly eight out of 10 females from Kampala and more than nine out of 10 rural females worked in traditional home-industries such as basket-, cloth- and mat-weavers, farmers, housewives, or self-employed needle-workers or tailors. However, while in rural Toro, about one out of four women were engaged in agricultural production, only 2% of sampled Kampala brides stated to work as farmers, indicating an ongoing shift towards urban home-industries and an increasing availability of wage jobs in the growing city. Moreover, according to Kyomuhendo & McIntosh (2006: 57), craft and food works produced by wives were usually taken by their husbands or other male relatives to local markets for selling – not by women themselves. Hence, it seems as if there has been relatively little change in terms of women's occupational mobility during the early and mid-colonial era, suggesting the presence of deeper pre-colonial roots of female labour segregation in Uganda that continued to play an important role for women's subsequent agency during the colonial era - something largely overlooked in Boserup (1970) and Rodney (2012), and already criticized by Huntington (1975).

Table 4: Top 15 female occupations in Kampala and Toro, by birth cohort 1880-1945

Kampala			Toro parishes		
Occupation	**Freq.**	**Share (%)**	**Occupation**	**Freq.**	**Share (%)**
Weaver	1,102	26.53	Basketmaker	273	26.38
Tailor	1,078	25.95	Farmer	245	23.67
Matmaker	553	13.31	Matmaker	232	22.42
Teacher[a]	447	10.76	Tailor	91	8.79
Housewife	231	5.56	Seamstress	48	4.64
Nurse[a]	181	4.36	Teacher[a]	43	4.15
Basketmaker	145	3.49	Needleworker	29	2.80
Midwife[a]	90	2.17	Nurse[a]	28	2.71
Farmer	86	2.07	Housewife	21	2.03
Needleworker	44	1.06	Weaver	4	0.39
Secretary[b]	40	0.96	Clerk[b]	3	0.29
Clerk[b]	27	0.65	Domestic servant[b]	3	0.29
Typist[b]	25	0.60	Hospital assistant[a]	3	0.29
Stenographer[b]	11	0.26	Trader[b]	2	0.19
Dressmaker	8	0.19	Midwife[a]	1	0.10
Other	86	2.07	Others	9	0.87
Domestic labour	**3,256**	**78.38**	**Domestic labour**	**945**	**93.30**
Mission labour	**731**	**17.60**	**Mission labour**	**75**	**7.25**
Non-mission labour	**167**	**4.02**	**Non-mission labour**	**15**	**1.45**
Total	**4,154**	**100.00**	**Total**	**1,035**	**100.00**

Notes: [a] Mission labour; [b] Non-mission wage labour. 13 'University students' not considered as an occupation, and thus not counted; age at first marriage < 36.

Conversely, the minor but emerging appearance of women working outside the household in wage labour during the colonial era can also be interpreted as an important change from pre-colonial conditions. Notably, the shares of literate Protestant women, observed in the previous sub-section, seem to have rarely translated into female employment opportunities outside the traditional domestic and handicraft niches. In contrast, the acquisition of literacy was a necessary pre-requisite to participate in the colonial economy, as literally all rural and urban women employed for a wage knew how to read and write. The large gap between literacy rates and female labour market participation seems to suggest that on average parents' decision to send their daughters to mission schools was not strongly motivated by the incentives of economic returns from human capital investment but rather points to the importance of spiritual and cultural gains for women to enter the Protestant religion.

Table 4 also reveals that the Protestant missionary society represented an almost exclusive (and culturally legitimate) entry mechanism for the sampled Protestant brides into the wage

labour market in urban and rural parishes, as more than four out of five urban and rural females that participated in the colonial labour market, in fact worked for the Protestant missionary society during the period of observation, taking an important role in the institutional spread of Christianity. The three most common mission occupations observed were: teachers, nurses and midwives. This coincides with Elkan's (1956: 45) description of Ugandan men objecting to their wife working outside the home, as women were exempt from paying poll tax, wage earning opportunities ought to be reserved for men, accept for teaching, nursing and child care that were regarded not as typical male occupations.[23] The most common wage labour occupations held outside mission employment comprised of administrative jobs, such as: secretaries, clerks, typists and stenographers. Thus, despite some feminization in women's occupations, the mission society allowed and encouraged native girls to enter a new life-cycle in which they were able to further their formal education and acquire a set of new occupational skills through employment opportunities in areas of religious service, schooling, and medical care, challenging the ideological opposition concerning women's work outside the domestic context. According to Kyomuhendo & McIntosh (2006: 82), although mission and administrative labour did not pay large salaries, women profited from access to wage labour outside the household which gave women new occupational mobility and physical freedom, an independent income, and new freedom to delegate family duties to others or hire someone else to cultivate the family fields.

Next, Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the long-term trend of women's Protestant mission and other wage labour market participation by birth cohort for decades 1880-1949. Figures 7 and 8 provide a comparative perspective, presenting shares of males' mission and non-mission labour market participation. We note that whereas Protestant grooms rapidly entered the colonial wage economy with more than 20% of late 1880s male birth-cohorts earning a wage, it took women more than half a century to break the 20% ceiling at the end of the colonial era.[24] Non-mission employment, largely administrative jobs, only became available for women in the late colonial era which resonate earlier claims by Lawrance et al. (2006: 28)

[23] Already, Robertson (1984b: 37) emphasized that in African capital cities women 'do slightly better in the professional category alone, because of their roles as teachers and nurses'. Anecdotal evidence brought together by Little (1973: 31-33) holds that his has been the case in a number of other African countries.

[24] For international comparison with the homeland of the Anglican missionaries, Humphries & Sarasúa (2012) offer British female adult labour market participation rates from 1920s for Leeds (37%), Bradford (54), and Middlesbrough (20%). It indicates that labour market participation was significantly higher in Britain than for the sampled female Protestants from Uganda born around 1900. Note that those values are for total females (i.e. married and unmarried).

that female Africans entered increasingly colonial bureaucracies during the waning days of colonialism, in order to expand the civil service and to Africanize it. From Figures 5-8 we conclude threefold. Firstly, there were fewer opportunities to work in the labour market in rural areas than in urban areas for both sampled Protestant women and men. Secondly, compared to men, rural and urban women had limited opportunities for occupational mobility and wage employment during the colonial period. Thirdly, for rural and urban women, mission employment represented an almost exclusive source of wage labour outside the household during the colonial era, while men witnessed rapidly expanding employment opportunities, beyond missionary employment.

Figure 5: Share (%) total female wage and mission labour, Kampala

Figure 6: Share (%) total female wage and mission labour, Toro

Figure 7: Share (%) total male wage and mission labour, Kampala

Figure 8: Share (%) total male wage and mission labour, Toro

Notes: Female mission labour includes: Dispensers, Doctors, Evangelists, Hospital assistants, Matrons, Medical assistants, Midwives, Missionaries, Nurses, Priests, Teachers.
Male mission labour includes: Catechists, Clergy, Clerks in Holy Order, Dispenser, Doctors, Evangelists, Lay readers, Medical assistants, Nurses, Priests, Teachers.

To what extent did family background influence women's waged careers? Knowledge about the occupations of brides' fathers provides the opportunity to explore the relationship between fathers' background and daughters' propensity to earn a wage (see Table 5 and 6). For that purpose, the occupations of rural and urban fathers were categorized into five groups: Chiefs, Farmers, Craftsmen, Mission labourers, and Clerks (see Table A1). Next, the share of waged daughters born in the early, mid and late colonial period was calculated and assigned to their fathers' occupational group. Notably, in Kampala, daughters of chiefs and fathers working for the missionary society were on average more likely to enter (mission) wage jobs in the early colonial phase than daughters from other backgrounds. Missionary daughters held this advantage throughout the colonial era, making them the most likely group among Protestant brides to pursue a mission career, suggesting that missionary fathers were acting as sort of 'occupational brokers'. Despite the better initial social network, (mission) wage labour was not strictly confined to daughters of paternal aristocratic or missionary origin, but also included those of clerks, craftsmen, and farmers from the early-colonial era onwards. Similar trends are found for the rural sample, although with a smaller number of observations. Yet, in rural Toro girls from agricultural and craftship backgrounds were least likely to enter waged positions while daughters of chiefs and missionaries enjoyed greatest access.

Table 5: Female access to wage labour by father's occupational group, Kampala

		Fathers' occupation				
		Chief	Farmer	Craftsman	Missionary	Clerk
Daughter waged (%)		%	%	%	%	%
	1880-1909	7.96	4.30	5.22	8.00	4.76
	1910-1929	18.62	17.27	5.71	31.30	12.72
	1930-1945	24.34	25.99	15.96	50.78	22.45
	Total	**18.41**	**22.21**	**8.41**	**42.39**	**18.44**
	N	**593**	**1,367**	**333**	**395**	**876**

Table 6: Female access to wage labour by father's occupational group, Toro

		Fathers' occupation				
		Chief	Farmer	Craftsman	Missionary	Clerk
Daughter waged (%)		%	%	%	%	%
	1880-1909	2.63	1.28	4.28	0.00	11.00
	1910-1929	16.98	6.74	0.00	30.77	2.94
	1930-1945	22.22	7.63	10.00	40.00	10.00
	Total	**12.57**	**4.12**	**3.91**	**32.26**	**8.04**
	N	**183**	**607**	**128**	**31**	**112**

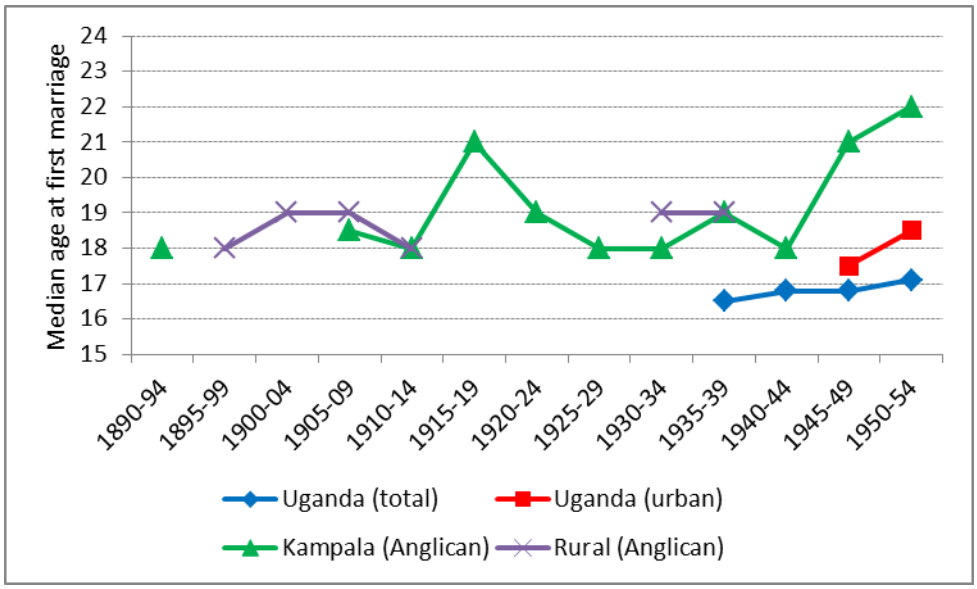
5.3 Marriage patterns and wage labour

Did the new wage opportunities for young women also translate into greater decision-making power regarding their choice of marriage partner and decisions within their new household? In the absence of historical indices of female empowerment, a new literature exploring the status and position of women in the past has proposed a turn towards female age at first marriage and the age difference between spouses as proxies of the bargaining position between sexes and generations (Kaufmann & Meekers 1998; Jensen & Thornton 2003; De Moor & Van Zanden 2006). The underlying idea is that marriage constitutes a turning-point in girls' lives and that the onset of marriage and individual partner choice largely depends on how much a girl is in a position to decide on this. Young girls who are married off to much older men are likely to be left with little say as to the terms of the union. This lack of free choice from the 'start' is likely to continue limiting women's bargaining power within the new household (Carmichael 2011; Carmichael et al. 2011; Van Zanden 2012; World Bank 2011). According to Kenneth Little (1973: 7), the fact that 'the position of African women is bound up inextricably with such fundamental institutions as marriage and kinship, renders it particularly sensitive to fresh developments', making it '…one of the best indices available for judging and predicting social change…'.

We start by placing the marriage ages of the sampled Anglican brides into a comparative perspective. Female median marriage ages for rural and urban Uganda are derived from Garenne (2004) who computed women's marriage ages from DHS surveys for urban total and urban Uganda by five-year birth cohort. First, we compare the urban and rural Anglican nuptiality trends with those of urban and total Uganda by five-year birth cohorts in Figure 9. Unfortunately, DHS surveys do not allow reconstructing marriage patterns pre-1935 birth cohorts. We see, when taking the median age at first marriage, rural and urban Protestant brides marry around the same age. This may be the case because labour opportunities were not significantly different for urban than for rural Protestant women for most of the colonial era (see Figure 5 and 6). Urban Ugandan girls married about one year later than their rural counterparts. Rural Ugandan girls born 1935-1954 married at median age 17, while both sampled urban and rural female Protestants born 1935-1939 married at 19 years. This gap widened considerably, between three and four years, for girls marrying after independence. This partial evidence indicates that both urban and rural Anglican brides married about two years later than the average urban and rural Ugandan woman born in the 1930s. And Anglican

urban brides, born 1945-54, married between two and three years later than the average Ugandan 'city girl'.

Figure 9: Anglican urban and rural median age at first marriage in Ugandan perspective



Notes: Median age at first marriage for total and urban Uganda derived from Garenne (2004). Anglican 5-year birth cohorts excluded whenever N < 100. Coverage: Women aged 15-49.

Due to the limited number of observations going back in time in the macro comparison, a more suitable strategy to study the impact of mission labour on female marriage behaviour may lie in a *within*-analysis of marriage patterns. This would entail comparing age at first marriage and spousal age difference of women deeply entrenched in the mission movement versus women who were not and asking whether the transfer of occupational skills and subsequent mission employment prior to marriage delayed the uptake of women's marriage, as suggested by the views of Iliffe (2007) and Taylor (1958), and in turn also narrow the spousal age difference? However, admittedly, there is an element of reverse causality in this relationship. It is likely that women that earn a wage do indeed have more autonomy and can therefore influence their marriage to a greater extent. However, it may also be the case that later marriage simply gives women time to build up their human capital, which makes them more likely to have a waged career. Therefore, for the following interpretations this reciprocal relationship should be kept in mind.

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate age at first marriage and Figures 12 and 13 spousal age difference of urban and rural Protestant women engaged in mission medical and educational labour,

waged non-mission labour, as well as non-waged labour (informal) for birth cohorts 1880-1945 who married before their 36th birthday. The latter figures tell a consistent story: on average, whenever urban and rural girls worked for the mission society they married more than three years later than a non-wage earning woman. Non-mission wage-earning employment, arising approximately two decades later than mission employment, had a similar effect, delaying women's marriage by more than three years in Kampala and rural Toro relative to non-wage earning brides. As a result, the spousal age gap was also considerably smaller, by about three years, for the average mission and non-mission wage-earning bride in Kampala and Toro. This suggests that whenever young women had the ability to work for the mission (before marriage) as mission teachers, nurses, midwives, or otherwise participate in the labour market, they seemed to have gained more say in their choice of partner, as well as within the new household, in comparison to their female counterparts excluded from participation in the labour markets. This may be because wage-earning women were able to contribute to their household income, which might have weakened the economic basis for parental influence, which increased women's ability to decide on marital affairs, as well as affected the power-balance between them and their husbands. Conversely, the causal direction could also run through later marriage enhancing women's chances for human capital formation and working for a wage. If we continue this line of thought, based on the idea that demographers assume that age at first marriage is an important proximate determinant of fertility, one could hypothesize that employment opportunities largely offered by the missionary society also affected women's marital reproductive career. Furthermore, the age difference between wage-earning wives and their husbands was more than two years less than for the average non-mission working bride, and more than three years in rural Toro, indicating a better bargaining position within the union. Also, Figures 12 and 13 reveal an increasing spousal age difference for 1880-1920 Kampala and 1920-1940 Toro for non-wage-earning women, largely motivated by their husbands marrying considerably later in life, indicated by the relatively flat marriage age curves for informal labourers (Figures 10 and 11). Given that the majority of sampled husbands were wage labourers, this puts doubt on the hypothesis formulated by Kitching (1983) and Iliffe (2007: 247) that unprecedented access to wage employment and thus bridewealth resources resulted into a reduction of the age of marriage for men.

Figure 10: Age at first marriage, mission/non-mission labour, Kampala

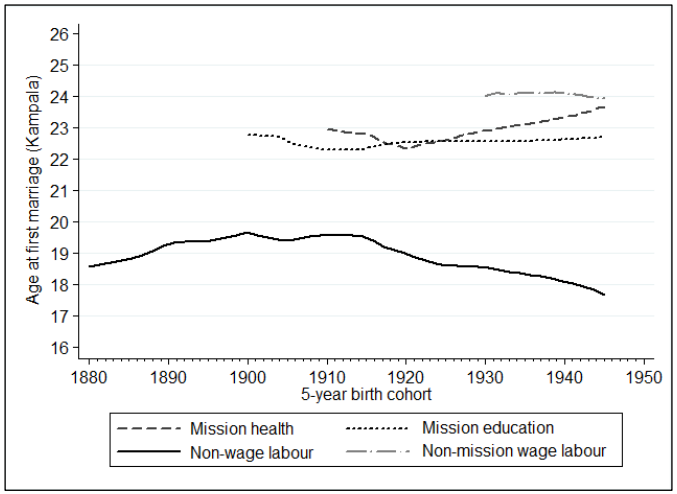


Figure 11: Age at first marriage, mission/non-mission labour, Toro

Figure 12: Spousal age gap, mission/non-mission labour, Kampala

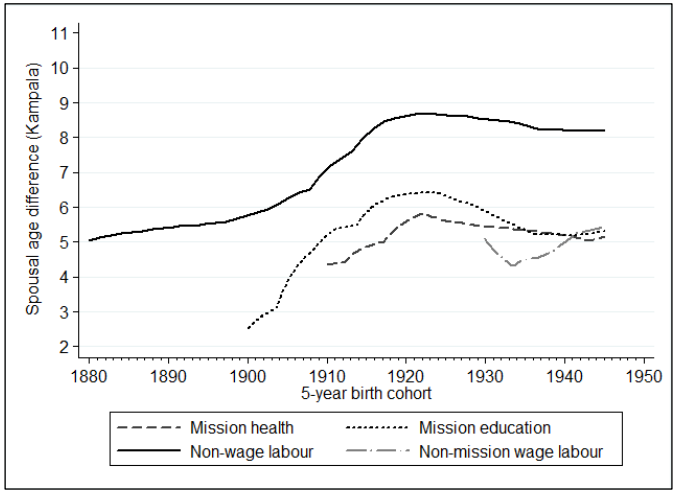
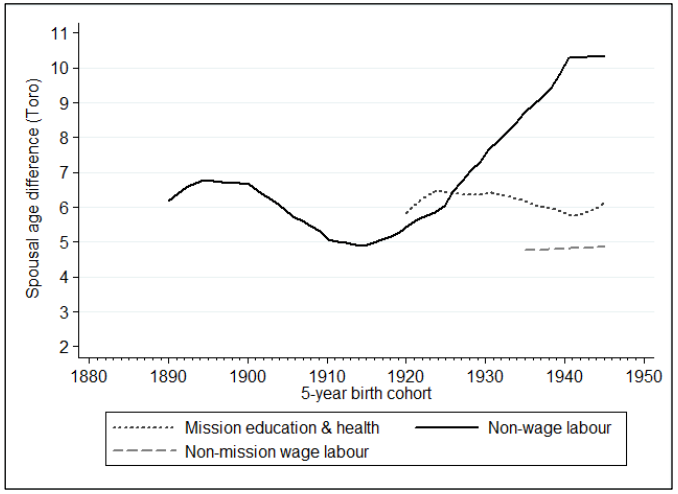


Figure 13: Spousal age gap, mission/non-mission labour, Toro



Notes: Figure graphs: local polynomial smoothed line. Coverage: age at first marriage < 36 years. Illustration if N > 10 per decade. 'Mission health': e.g. hospital nurse, midwife, dispenser, matron, medical assistant, doctor. 'Mission education': e.g.: school teacher, clergy. 'Non-mission waged labour': e.g.: clerk, typist, secretary, stenographer.

In this final section, some of the determinants of women's age at first marriage and spouses' age difference are jointly explored in a multivariate regression framework. The following analysis should be regarded as complementary and exploratory. The relatively small sample size for early Kampala birth cohorts (1880-1920) and the general much lower annual sample size of rural Toro means we have to treat the results of the first decades with caution. Furthermore, the limited number of variables in the marriage registers does not allow controlling for other unobserved factors. The OLS model is specified as:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 literacy + \beta_2 labour + \beta_3 father\_occ + \mu_{bc} + \varepsilon$$

where y represents the two outcome indicators: brides' age at first marriage or spousal age difference, and μ_{bc} are birth-cohort and parish fixed effects, while ε is the error term. The β_1 coefficient captures the effect of brides' literacy status, while β_2 takes the coefficient of the effect of two dummy variables: brides' mission employment and brides' non-mission wage employment, while β_3 denotes the coefficient of a number of dummy variables for fathers' occupational background used already in the previous sections. The reference category for the interpretation of the coefficients of paternal background is farming background. Whenever y denotes the spousal age difference it is also controlled for groom's wage employment and literacy status in the specification. The correlation matrix is presented in Table A2. The OLS regression results for Kampala and Toro, with robust standard errors, and birth cohort and parish fixed effects are reported in the Appendix Tables A3-5.

The regression results show that women's literacy from mission education is not statistically significantly related to women's age at first marriage in Kampala and Toro (Table 3 and 4). Furthermore, mission schooling has no significant effect on the age difference between groom and bride in both parish samples. Those findings are consistent in a range of specifications, including testing for different colonial time period interaction terms. This is somewhat surprising as it is commonly stated in the literature that mission education led African women to marry later in life. Two possible explanation for the present result could be that the effect of Protestant mission schools' propagating women's domesticity and motherhood may have encouraged women to marry early in combination with schools and churches providing new mating opportunities for boys and girls, introducing them to a broader marriage market. Yet, our literacy dummy does not inform us about length of schooling or girls' skills obtained at school. Hence, a better indicator for the level of brides' human capital may lie in their

occupational skills gained through schooling and subsequent vocational training, in both mission and other waged employment.

Keeping in mind an element of reverse causality in the relationship of wage labour and marriage age, i.e. wage labour leads to later marriage but later marriage can also increase the chances of working for a wage, we find that mission wage employment yields the expected positive effect in both Kampala and Toro, confirming the prior graphical analysis that both urban and rural sampled women employed by the mission society married more than three years later in life, reflecting a greater bargaining power regarding their marital affairs. Hence, literacy per se, in the absence of employment opportunities outside the household, was not sufficient to delay women's marriage, nor in reducing the spousal age gap. An interaction variable between distinct colonial birth cohorts and mission labour was added to the regression to explore the historical dynamics a little further. In both Kampala and Toro parishes, mission labour started to significantly affect female marriage ages from the mid-colonial birth cohorts (1910-45) onwards. The dummy for non-mission related wage labour is significant for the late-colonial birth cohorts (1930-45) in Kampala which is in line with the previous finding that for women non-mission employment niches only opened up in the late colonial era. The coefficients for women's non-mission employment in Toro are to be interpreted with caution, as they are based on only 12 observations for the entire period. Moreover, Table A5 presents evidence that in Kampala female mission (1930-45) and non-mission labour, and groom's wage labour and literacy status reduced the age gap between grooms and brides, carrying potential gains of women's household bargaining power. In Toro, groom's literacy status and bride's non-mission wage labour narrowed the spousal age gap.

Lastly, we control for women's parental background with brides' fathers' occupied as farmers acting as reference group. We find that girls from Kampala who had a father deeply entrenched in the missionary movement married about one year later than girls' from a farming family background. Other paternal background yielded no statistically significant results. This suggests that mission fathers may have given their daughters greater agency regarding marriage choice but it could also be related to women's greater likelihood of working for the mission as suggested in Table 5. On the contrary, father's mission background had no significant effect. However, daughters who had a father working for a wage outside the mission or coming from chiefly families married almost one year later than girls from agricultural backgrounds.

6. CONCLUSION

Recent studies of women's educational development in Africa have given ample credit to the benign features of Protestant missionary education. Yet, little is known about the influence of Protestant missionary education on African women beyond its long-term effect on education. Using a new dataset of Ugandan Protestant brides drawn from rural and urban Anglican marriage registers of the colonial era, this case study has traced the development of female Protestants' literacy, labour market participation, and age at marriage and offered a first pass at analyzing empirically the role of missionary education in shaping women's socio-economic position within the colonial economy and the household. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that African parish records can offer an exciting avenue for research to study Africa's socio-economic and demographic past on the micro-level.

The paper finds that while mission education raised the sampled rural and urban Protestant women's literacy rates far above the female national levels, women were largely isolated from participating in the emerging wage economy. Thus, beyond the spiritual gains, the acquisition of literacy at mission schools seems to have been a necessary but not sufficient achievement for successful participation in the colonial wage economy. Within the colonial economy the Protestant missionary society presented an almost exclusive entry mechanism for Protestant women to acquire new occupational skills through wage labour opportunities in areas of religious service, schooling and medical care until the late colonial era when administrative employment niches opened up. On average, daughters of fathers deeply entrenched in the missionary movement had the highest likelihood to access waged (mission) labour, highlighting the importance of the paternal missionary network for female employment.

Literacy per se did not affect women's marriage behaviour, unless coupled with their participation in wage labour which allowed women to contribute to the income of their households. However, girls who obtained vocational training and subsequent wage labour with the missionary society or another employer married significantly later in life and married men closer to their own age, signaling a shift in the power balance between generations and between husband and wife. Thus, access to the labour market played a key role in the emancipation process for the sampled Protestant brides which seemed to mark a break from their pre-colonial status. However, the element of reverse-causality between labour market participation and age at first marriage also cautions us to completely rely on such a clear-cut

conclusion. The present data cannot shed light on whether similar developments also occurred among Ugandan female Catholics which is left to future research.

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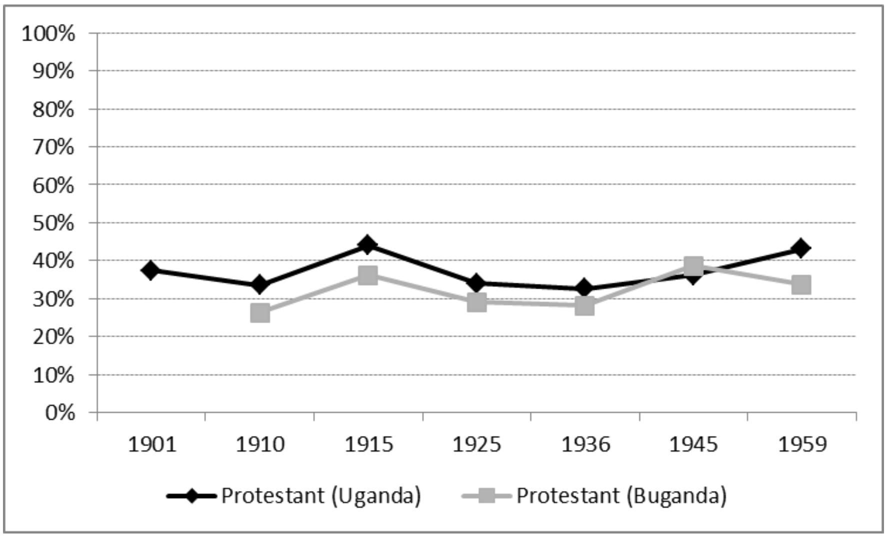
APPENDIX

Figure A1: Share of Protestants among Christian followers in Uganda and Buganda, 1901-1959



Source: Uganda Protectorate Blue Books 1901-1945, Uganda Protectorate Census 1959. Entebbe: Government Printer.

Figure A2: Marriage register page from St. Paul's Cathedral, Namirembe Diocese, Kampala, 15 July, 1895

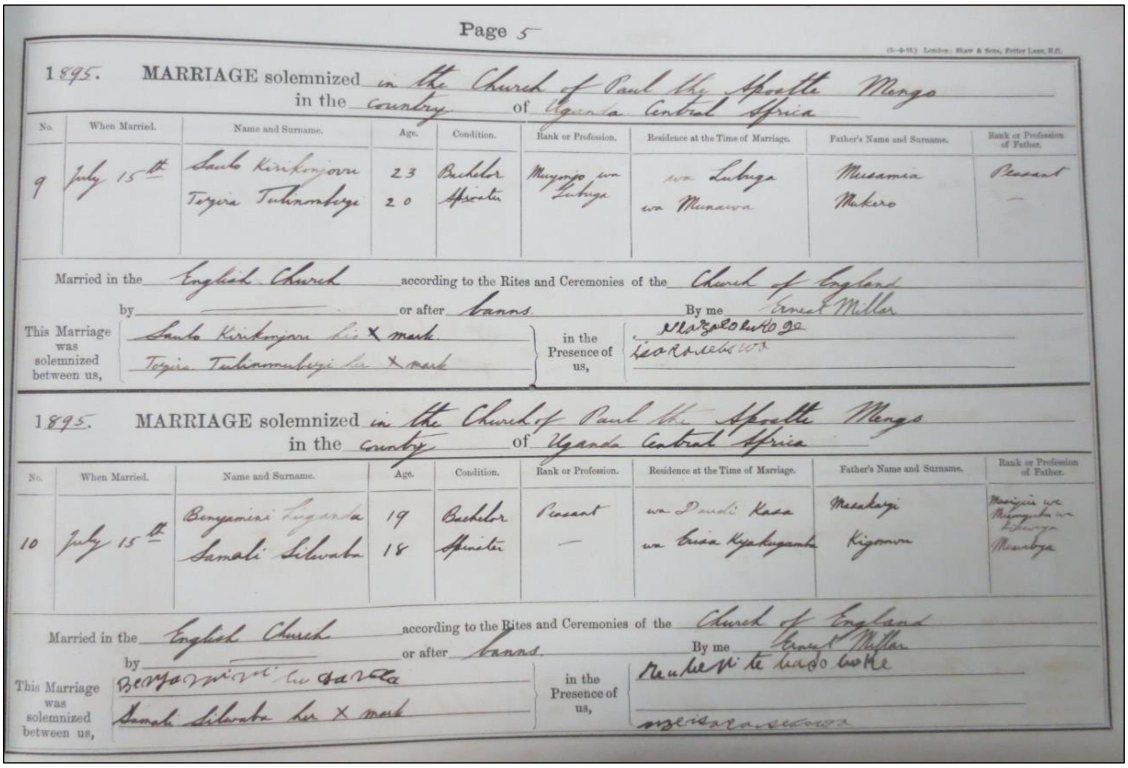
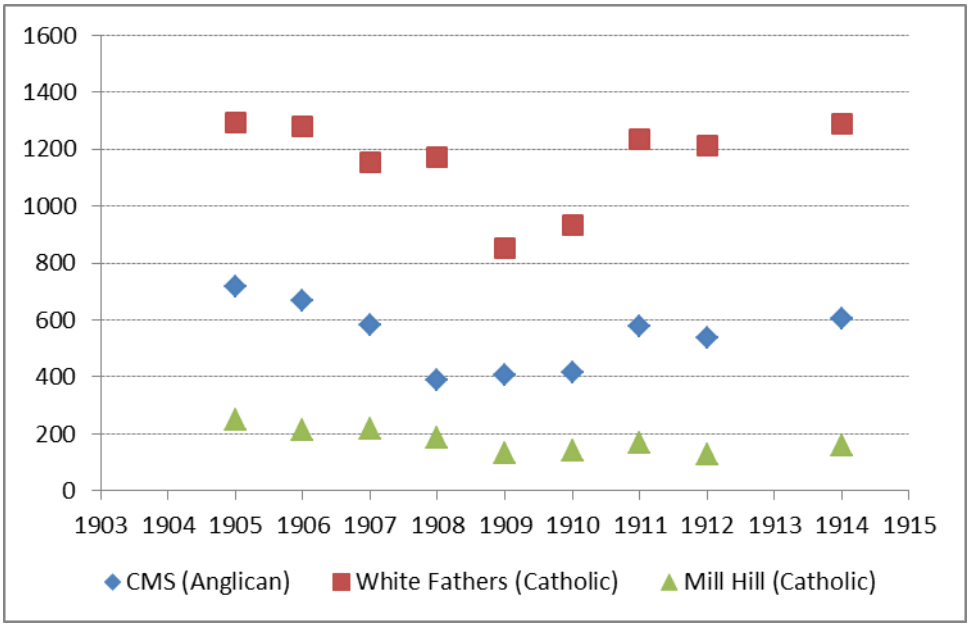
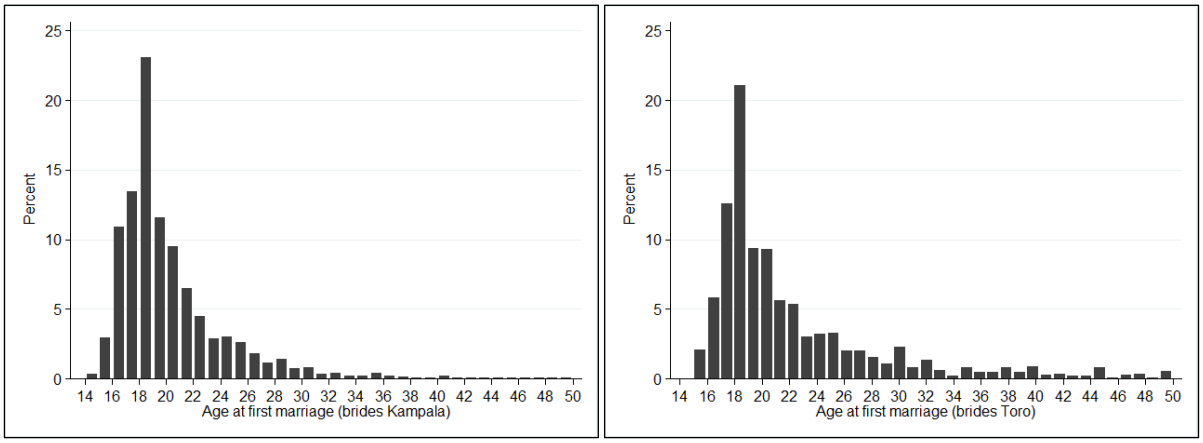

Page 5
1895. MARRIAGE solemnized in the Church of Paul the Apostle Mengo
in the country of Uganda Central Africa
No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the Time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father.
9 | July 15th | 23 | 20 | Bachelor | Spinster | Peasant
Married in the English Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England
by or after banns By me Ernest Millar
This Marriage was solemnized between us, in the Presence of us,
1895. MARRIAGE solemnized in the Church of Paul the Apostle Mengo
in the country of Uganda Central Africa
No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the Time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father.
10 | July 15th | 19 | 18 | Bachelor | Spinster | Peasant
Married in the English Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England
by or after banns By me Ernest Millar
This Marriage was solemnized between us, in the Presence of us,

Figure A3: Number of marriages per year and by denomination, 1905-1914



Source: Uganda Protectorate Blue Books 1905-1915. Entebbe: Government Printer.

Figure A4: Women's age at first marriage frequency distribution, birth cohorts 1880-1945



Kampala Toro parishes

Table A1: Fathers' occupational groups with respective top 15 occupations

Chief	Farmers	Craftsmen & Builders	Mission wage labour	Other wage labour
Chief	Cottongrower	Barkclothmaker	Teacher	Trader
Sub-chief	Cowherd	Basketmaker	Clergy	Clerk
	Farmer	Blacksmith	Medical assistant	Driver
	Fisher	Brickmaker	Doctor	Mechanic
	Fisherman	Builder	Dispenser	Businessman
	Hunter	Carpenter	Clerk in Holy Order	Headman
	Planter	Maker	Priest	Shopowner
	Shepherd	Mason	Lay reader	Cook
		Matmaker	Church teacher	Engineer
		Potter	Bishop	Soldier
		Tailor	Church Warden	Policeman
		Weaver	Nurse	Printer
		Matmaker	Archdeacon	Accountant
			Catechist	Labourer
			Church Minister	Butcher

Table A2: Correlation matrix

		Lit_B	ML_B	OWL_B	Lit_G	WL_G	Mi_WB	Cr_FB	Mi_FB
Kampala	Mission labour bride	0.113	1.000						
	Other wage labour bride	0.035	-0.096	1.000					
	Literate groom	0.464	0.055	0.025	1.000				
	Wage labour groom	0.214	0.122	0.069	0.201	1.000			
	Chief father bride	0.012	-0.031	-0.015	0.024	0.012	1.000		
	Craftsman father bride	-0.212	-0.095	-0.043	-0.080	-0.080	-0.157	1.000	
	Mission father bride	0.051	0.155	0.069	0.017	0.031	-0.158	-0.125	1.000
	Clerk father bride	0.075	-0.045	-0.002	0.038	0.010	-0.254	-0.066	-0.201
Toro	Mission labour bride	0.215	1.000						
	Other wage labour bride	0.053	-0.026	1.000					
	Literate groom	0.345	0.068	0.006	1.000				
	Wage labour groom	0.065	0.154	0.089	0.138	1.000			
	Chief father bride	0.075	0.112	-0.018	0.120	0.039	1.000		
	Craftsman father bride	-0.062	-0.051	-0.039	-0.007	-0.055	-0.178	1.000	
	Mission father bride	0.081	0.150	0.159	-0.018	0.063	-0.078	-0.068	1.000
	Clerk father bride	0.048	0.026	0.027	-0.009	0.133	-0.160	-0.085	-0.063

Table A3: Regression results (Kampala) - OLS (dependent variable: bride's age at first marriage)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Literacy	-0.048		-0.230	-0.233	-0.075	-0.129
	(0.347)		(0.332)	(0.335)	(0.346)	(0.341)
Literacy		0.498				
1880-1909		(0.305)				
Literacy		-1.069				
1910-1929		(0.773)				
Literacy		-0.149				
1930-1945		(0.846)				
Mission labour			3.723***			3.585***
			(0.158)			(0.170)
Mission labour				0.453		
1880-1909				(0.836)		
Mission labour				2.887***		
1910-29				(0.880)		
Mission labour				3.887***		
1930-45				(0.194)		
Non-mission wage					0.487	
labour, 1880-1909					(0.617)	
Non-mission wage					-0.665	
labour, 1910-29					(0.933)	
Non-mission wage					4.548***	
labour, 1930-45					(0.338)	
Mission labour father						0.998***
						(0.201)
Chief father						-0.119
						(0.152)
Craftsman father						0.209
						(0.194)
Non-mission wage						-0.155
labour father						(0.152)
Birth year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	26.349***	20.667***	26.433***	26.411***	21.049***	25.790***
	(0.340)	(0.635)	(0.372)	(0.355)	(0.513)	(0.194)
R^2	**0.084**	**0.085**	**0.233**	**0.135**	**0.135**	**0.241**
N	**4,166**	**4,166**	**4,166**	**4,166**	**4,166**	**3,582**

Note: *Significant at 10% **Significant at 5% ***Significant at 1%. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Coverage: brides' age at first marriage < 36 years.

Table A4: Regression results (Toro parishes) - OLS (dependent variable: bride's age at first marriage)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Literacy	0.202		-0.285	-0.299	0.166	-0.300
	(0.264)		(0.260)	(0.258)	(0.264)	(0.261)
Literacy 1880-1909		-0.412				
		(0.375)				
Literacy 1910-1929		1.049*				
		(0.622)				
Literacy 1930-1945		0.678				
		(0.532)				
Mission labour			4.571***			4.150***
			(0.517)			(0.515)
Mission labour 1880-1909				1.984		
				(1.164)		
Mission labour 1910-29				2.870**		
				(1.326)		
Mission labour 1930-45				4.689***		
				(0.702)		
Non-mission wage labour, 1880-1909					-1.193**	
					(0.265)	
Non-mission wage labour, 1910-29					8.343***	
					(3.252)	
Non-mission wage labour, 1930-45					2.920	
					(2.623)	
Mission labour father						0.912
						(0.759)
Chief father						0.772**
						(0.374)
Craftsman father						-0.772
						(0.310)
Non-mission wage labour father						0.932**
						(0.467)
Birth year & Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	28.673***	32.026***	29.057***	29.077***	28.756***	31.954***
	(0.404)	(0.569)	(0.394)	(0.395)	(0.404)	(0.574)
R^2	**0.147**	**0.150**	**0.208**	**0.216**	**0.156**	**0.220**
N	**1,036**	**1,036**	**1,036**	**1,036**	**1,036**	**1,011**

Note: *Significant at 10% **Significant at 5% ***Significant at 1%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Coverage: brides' age at first marriage < 36 years.

Table A5: Regression results (Kampala & Toro) - OLS (dependent variable: spousal age difference)

	Kampala			Toro parishes		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Literacy bride	-0.132	-0.069	-0.005	-0.258	-0.040	-0.183
	(0.497)	(0.504)	(0.502)	(0.424)	(0.445)	(0.428)
Mission labour		-0.546			-1.802	
1880-1909		(1.101)			(1.391)	
Mission labour		-1.814			1.536	
1910-1929		(1.172)			(1.636)	
Mission labour		-2.221***			-1.820	
1930-1945		(0.241)			(1.331)	
Non-mission wage			-1.819***			-4.431***
labour			(0.369)			(1.517)
Literacy groom	-1.998***	-2.220***	-2.135***	-2.584***	-2.582***	-2.574***
	(0.663)	(0.690)	(0.689)	(0.587)	(0.591)	(0.591)
Wage labour groom		-0.882***	-1.062***		-0.396	-0.427
		(0.264)	(1.099)		(0.438)	(0.431)
Birth year & Parish FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.131***	3.150***	6.122***	12.839***	5.650***	5.876***
	(0.744)	(0.770)	(0.876)	(0.539)	(0.992)	(0.970)
R^2	**0.056**	**0.090**	**0.066**	**0.144**	**0.148**	**0.149**
N	**4,101**	**4,026**	**4,026**	**1,007**	**1,003**	**1,003**

Note: *Significant at 10% **Significant at 5% ***Significant at 1%. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Coverage: brides' age at first marriage < 36 years.