Anglican Responses to Western Secularism in Ugandan Urban Dioceses of Kampala and Namirembe

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Abstract
This study explores how Anglican congregations in Ugandan urban centres, particularly in Kampala, respond to the influence of Western secularism, characterized by moral relativism, individualism, and the rejection of religious authority. Focusing on urban youth, the research examines the interplay of globalized secular values amplified through media, education, and urbanization with the Anglican Church of Uganda's (CoU) traditional frameworks. Employing a qualitative content analysis of sermons, church documents, social media, and media reports from 2020–2025, the study identifies three key themes: theological resistance rooted in biblical authority, cultural critiques framing secularism as a neo-colonial threat to Ugandan family values, and institutional strategies like youth programmes and ecumenical efforts. Findings reveal the CoU, particularly through the Namirembe and Kampala Diocese, counters secularism by emphasizing scriptural teachings, rejecting Western liberal influences, and promoting community initiatives to reduce reliance on secular donors. While these strategies reinforce conservative Christian identity, they risk alienating urban youth exposed to global media. The study highlights the need for culturally relevant approaches to engage diverse urban populations and address broader secular challenges like consumerism. Contributing to scholarship on African Christianity, this research offers insights for church leaders to develop adaptive discipleship programmes and informs policy dialogues balancing global influences with local values in Uganda's rapidly urbanizing context.

Keywords: Western Secularism, Anglican Church, Western Influences, Urban Dioceses

Introduction

Western secularism, characterized by moral relativism, individualism, and the rejection of religious authority, has increasingly permeated global societies, challenging traditional religious frameworks (Taylor, 2007, p. 22). Moral relativism prioritizes subjective ethical standards over absolute moral truths, while individualism emphasizes personal autonomy, often at the expense of communal values (Taylor, 2007, p. 38). The rejection of religious authority diminishes the influence of institutional religion, fostering a "buffered self" that navigates belief independently (Taylor, 2007, p. 27). In African contexts, these secular ideologies intersect with local cultures, creating unique dynamics that demand scholarly attention (Gifford, 1998, p. 45). This study examines how Anglican congregations in Ugandan urban centres, particularly among youth, respond to these secular influences through a quantitative lens.

Urban Uganda, especially metropolitan areas like Kampala, serves as a site of significant cultural shift, driven by youth, education, and media. Rapid urbanization has exposed young people to globalized media, which promotes secular values like individualism and consumerism (Kalu, 2008, p. 62). Education, particularly at tertiary levels, introduces critical perspectives that challenge traditional religious authority, fostering scepticism among urban youth (Adogame, 2013, p. 89). The proliferation of digital platforms further amplifies these influences, as social media and entertainment shape worldviews that often conflict with communal and religious norms (Kalu, 2008, p. 73). Kampala, as Uganda's economic and cultural hub, exemplifies these shifts, making it a critical context for studying the interplay of secularism and Christianity.

The Anglican Church, a cornerstone of Ugandan religious life, has historically shaped the nation's social and moral fabric. The Church of Uganda was established in 1877 by the first European missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Ward, 2009, p. 132). Known for its community-oriented initiatives, such as education and health programmes, the Anglican Church has navigated cultural changes while maintaining doctrinal integrity (Orobator, 2008, p. 94). However, the rise of Western secularism poses new challenges, particularly among urban youth who are increasingly exposed to globalized influences. The church's ability to adapt to these shifts while remaining relevant is a pressing concern.

Despite the Anglican Church's historical resilience, the growing influence of Western secularism in Ugandan urban centres threatens to erode traditional faith practices, particularly among youth. The extent to which secular values like individualism and moral relativism are evident, how congregants perceive their impact, and the effectiveness of church responses remain underexplored. Existing studies focus broadly on African Christianity or Pentecostalism, with limited attention to Anglicanism in urban Uganda (Gifford, 1998, p. 50; Jenkins, 2011, p. 112). This gap necessitates a quantitative study to examine how Anglican congregations address secularism in Kampala's dynamic urban context. How do Anglican congregations in Ugandan urban centres, particularly among youth, perceive and respond to the most evident secular values, and what strategies does the church employ to counter secularism's impact on their faith and church life, including the perceived effectiveness of these strategies?

This study contributes to understanding how Western secularism shapes urban African Christianity, focusing on the Anglican Church in Kampala. By identifying prevalent secular values, assessing their impact on congregants, and evaluating church responses, the study provides insights for church leaders to develop culturally relevant strategies. It also enriches academic discourse on urban Christianity, offering a quantitative perspective on Anglicanism's engagement with modernity. Practically, the findings can inform discipleship programmes and mission strategies, ensuring the church's continued relevance in Uganda's rapidly changing urban landscape.

Literature Review

The intersection of Western secularism—defined as a worldview emphasizing moral relativism, individualism, and the diminishment of religious authority—with African religious landscapes has generated significant scholarly interest. In Uganda, where Christianity dominates with Anglicans comprising about 32% of the population, urban centres like Kampala represent hotspots for these encounters due to rapid urbanization, media exposure, and educational influences. This review critically examines existing literature on how Anglican congregations in Ugandan urban areas respond to secularism, drawing on works addressing global secularism, African Christianity, Anglican history, and specific socio-political dynamics. Key themes include resistance to Western liberal influences, particularly on sexuality and family; the role of education and politics in shaping responses; and the church's adaptation strategies. However, the literature reveals notable gaps, such as a scarcity of urban-specific, quantitative studies on youth engagement and an overemphasis on broader African or Pentecostal contexts rather than Anglicanism.

Charles Taylor's seminal work, *A Secular Age* (2007), provides a foundational framework for understanding Western secularism as a shift toward a "buffered self," where individuals navigate beliefs independently of religious institutions, fostering relativism and individualism. Taylor argues this process, rooted in Enlightenment thought, has globalized through colonialism and modernity, challenging traditional societies. Critically, Taylor's analysis is Western-centric, overlooking how secularism hybridizes in non-Western contexts like Africa, where it intersects with local cultures rather than supplanting them entirely. In Uganda, this

manifests in urban settings through media and education promoting consumerism and personal autonomy, as noted in broader African studies.

Extending Taylor's ideas, Philip Jenkins in *The Next Christendom* (2011) highlights the southward shift of Christianity's centre of gravity, portraying African churches as vibrant counterpoints to Western secular decline. Jenkins posits that Global South Christianity, including in Uganda, resists secularism by emphasizing communal values and scriptural authority. However, his optimistic view is critiqued for underplaying internal tensions, such as generational divides in urban areas where youth encounter secular influences via digital platforms. Paul Gifford's *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (1998) complements this by examining Christianity's socio-political engagement in Africa, arguing that churches such as the Anglican Church of Uganda (CoU) serve as moral bulwarks against secular erosion, particularly in politics. Gifford's focus on public roles is insightful but critiqued for its dated scope, predating the intensification of urban secular pressures in the 21st century, such as social media's role in promoting individualism.

Historical accounts underscore Anglicanism's colonial origins in Uganda, shaping its responses to secularism. Kevin Ward's *A History of Global Anglicanism* (2009) traces the CoU's establishment in the late 19th century under British rule, evolving into a major institution with millions of adherents. Ward emphasizes its community-oriented initiatives in education and health, which have helped maintain relevance amid cultural shifts. Critically, Ward's global lens dilutes Uganda-specific insights, though he notes the church's navigation of post-colonial identities and its resistance to secular relativism through doctrinal conservatism. Afe Adogame's *The African Christian Diaspora* (2013) extends this by exploring how African Anglicans abroad reinforce homeland churches against secularism, but it prioritizes diaspora dynamics over urban Ugandan realities.

In Uganda, Anglican identity is intertwined with national history, as detailed in Christopher Byaruhanga's work on Ugandan Anglicanism, which highlights verbal agreements dividing missionary territories and the church's growth in eastern regions. This historical resilience informs responses to secularism, yet literature like Ward's critiques the church for occasional complacency in addressing urban youth skepticism fostered by tertiary education.

More recent scholarship, such as Jörg Haustein's article on Anglicanism in Africa, frames it as a "story of religious and cultural encounters" evolving into contests over identity and mission. Haustein discusses challenges like secularization and youth unrest, but his analysis remains broad, lacking empirical depth on urban Uganda. Similarly, Ogbu Kalu's *African Pentecostalism* (2008), while focused on Pentecostals, offers parallels for Anglicans, noting how urban media amplifies secular values like consumerism. Kalu's work is critiqued for sidelining mainline denominations like Anglicanism, which respond differently—through institutional structures rather than charismatic revivalism.

A dominant theme in the literature is the CoU's conservative resistance to Western secularism, often manifested in global Anglican rifts over sexuality and family. The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), formed in 2008, exemplifies this, with Ugandan leaders accusing Western churches of "sliding into grave liberal heresy and secularism." GAFCON claims to represent biblically orthodox Anglicanism, rejecting neo-colonial liberal impositions. Critically, this framing empowers African voices but risks oversimplifying secularism as solely Western, while ignoring local urban manifestations, such as individualism among Kampala's youth.

Stephen Noll's 2018 lecture in Kampala critiques secularism as an ideology abolishing traditional marriage and family, rooted in cultural Marxism and promoting "plastic sexuality." Delivered at Uganda Christian University, Noll urges Ugandans to defend monogamy and high fertility rates against Western pressures, citing the 1998 Lambeth Conference's rejection of views "incompatible with Scripture." This Anglican perspective is praised for its cultural relevance but critiqued for potentially conflating secularism with all Western influences, including positive aspects such as human rights.

In urban Uganda, responses intersect with politics and education. Dorothea Schulz's analysis of colonial secularity shows how Anglican-controlled schools marginalized Muslims, fostering Christian dominance in urban education. This legacy influences contemporary responses, where Anglicans use education to counter secular scepticism. However, Schulz's focus on Muslim-Christian relations underplays intra-Christian dynamics.

Political engagement is another response avenue. Barbara Bompani and Caroline Valois explore the CoU's role in public discourse, embedding it within national politics to resist

secular relativism. Emma Wild-Wood's study on church-state relations in Uganda highlights complexities, with Anglicans "eating and sharing" in governance to uphold moral authority. Critiques note that such involvement risks co-optation by state secular agendas, as seen in debates over religious regulation. Recent events, like the CoU's support for anti-LGBTQ laws, frame these as defenses against secularism, deepening rifts with Western Anglicans. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator's, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (2008) advocates culturally relevant theology, but its general approach lacks urban specificity.

While the literature robustly documents Anglican conservatism as a response to secularism, it is critiqued for several shortcomings. First, much of the focus is on Pentecostalism (e.g., Kalu) or broad African Christianity (Jenkins, Gifford), marginalising Anglicanism's unique episcopal structure. Second, urban Uganda receives scant attention; studies like Schulz's touch on urban education but not youth-specific responses. Third, qualitative dominance overlooks quantitative assessments of the prevalence of secular values or the effectiveness of strategies among urban congregants. Finally, the emphasis on sexuality rifts (GAFCON, Noll) risks reducing secularism to moral issues, neglecting economic individualism or media influences in Kampala. In conclusion, the literature highlights Anglican resilience in Ugandan urban centres, but also underscores the need for targeted, quantitative research to address these gaps, ensuring the church's adaptive strategies remain relevant amid ongoing secular pressures.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design with content analysis as its primary method to interpret how the Church of Uganda responds to Western secularism in Kampala's urban setting. Content analysis will systematically examine sermons, pastoral letters, church bulletins, social media posts, media articles, and academic works to identify themes, patterns, and discourses surrounding secular influences such as individualism, materialism, and moral shifts linked to globalization and urban lifestyles. By focusing on existing materials rather than direct interaction with individuals, the approach ensures a non-intrusive, in-depth exploration of Anglican strategies, including theological contradictions, community initiatives, and cultural critiques.

A purposive sampling strategy will be applied to select content from 2020–2025 that directly addresses secularism, prioritizing depth and relevance over breadth. Sources will include

primary materials from key Anglican institutions such as Namirembe and Kampala dioceses, as well as secondary sources like national newspapers and academic literature. To ensure diversity and richness, approximately 40 units of content will be analyzed, spanning textual, verbal, and visual formats. This targeted approach provides clear perceptions into how the Anglican Church navigates the challenges of secularism in Kampala's rapidly changing urban context.

Results of Content Analysis

The content analysis of primary and secondary sources revealed three overarching themes in the Anglican Church of Uganda's responses to Western secularism in Kampala's urban centres: (1) Theological Framing and Biblical Resistance, (2) Cultural and Moral Critiques of Western Influences, and (3) Institutional and Practical Strategies for Resistance. These themes emerged from an inductive coding process applied to approximately 40 units of content, including social media posts, news articles, academic papers, and archival reports. Data saturation was achieved after analyzing 30 units, with themes quantified by frequency: Theological Framing (45% of codes), Cultural Critiques (35%), and Institutional Strategies (20%). The analysis highlights how the Anglican Church, particularly through the Namirembe Diocese in Kampala, positions itself as a safeguard against perceived secular encroachments such as individualism, materialism, and liberal human rights discourses (e.g., on homosexuality and gender roles), often framed as Western imports that erode traditional Ugandan and Christian values.

Theme 1: Theological Framing and Biblical Resistance

A dominant theme is the use of biblical teachings to frame responses to secularism, emphasizing scripture as an unchanging authority against urban moral decay and Western individualism. Content frequently invokes Romans 12:1-2 ("Conforming to the Truth of God's Word and not the patterns of this world") as a rallying cry, portraying secularism as a 'godless' force leading to societal conscience erosion.

For instance, in a social media post from the Church of Uganda's official account, violence and blood-spilling in urban settings are linked to a fading national conscience, described as "a sign that the conscience of the nation is fading. A powerful reminder that a godless society risks losing its moral compass" (Church of Uganda, 2025a). This reflects a theological critique of

urban secular trends like materialism and individualism, urging a return to biblical values for dignity and love.

Secondary sources reinforce this, with academic analyses noting the Diocese of Kampala's prioritization of religious convictions over human rights perceived as secular. One paper highlights how Anglican leaders view issues like homosexuality as incompatible with scripture, stating that such rights have "no place in their cultural and religious values" (Okumu, 2021). In synod-related reports, theological reflections on peacemaking draw on Matthew 5:23-25 to advocate reconciliation, positioning the Church against Western-influenced conflicts such as corruption and tribalism, which are seen as secular deviations (Komakec, 2010).

News articles echo this theme, with Anglican bishops and clergy using homilies to warn against secular influences. For example, Bishop Wilberforce Kityo Luwalira of Namirembe Diocese urged congregants to "be bold & reject LGBTQ without any fear," grounding this in a commitment to "God's word" and a zero-tolerance stance on same-sex relationships (Namirembe Diocese, 2023a).

Theme 2: Cultural and Moral Critiques of Western Influences

Content frequently critiques Western secularism as a threat to Ugandan cultural identity, particularly in urban Kampala, where globalisation amplifies individualism and moral relativism. Homosexuality is a focal point, often portrayed as a Western "import" promoting deviance and eroding family values.

Primary sources from social media illustrate this: The Namirembe Diocese youth leaders denounced homosexuality to "protect family values and cultural norms that promote holy marriage of a man & a woman blessed by God" (Namirembe Diocese, 2023b). Archbishop Stephen Samuel Kaziimba Mugalu reaffirmed safeguarding marriage per biblical scriptures, despite donor threats endorsing homosexuality, emphasizing independence from Western pressures (Church of Uganda, 2023).

Secondary media reports amplify these critiques. An opinion piece by an Anglican bishop questions Western normalization of LGBTQ+, asking if it could lead to promoting bestiality, and contrasts African procreation-focused values with Western "recreation" (Mwesigwa, 2023).

Academic theses describe the Diocese of Kampala's uncertainty toward human rights, rejecting clauses on abortion and LGBTQ rights as Western secular impositions clashing with African Christian worldviews: "A strong value is placed on cultural and religious values rather than human rights" (Okumu, 2021).

The Anglican Church of Uganda's "Safe Screens, Safe Kids" campaign, launched April 4, 2024, at Kampala's Serena Hotel, addresses Western secularism's impact through digital media in urban centres. As internet usage surges, exposing youth to secular values like individualism and moral relativism, the campaign counters inappropriate content with biblical principles. Featuring speeches by church and social leaders, expert-led panel discussions, prayers, and youth performances, it fosters community engagement to safeguard traditional values. This initiative reflects Anglican strategies to combat secularism's erosion of cultural and Christian norms in Kampala, emphasising proactive, youth-focused responses to globalised media influences (Mark Michael, Ugandan Anglicans Aim to Protect Kids Online, 2024).

The Church of Uganda's opposition to the Marriage Bill 2024, as detailed in Elizabeth Kamurungi's December 6, 2024, Daily Monitor article, underscores Anglican resistance to Western secularism in Ugandan urban hubs like Kampala. The Church raised red flags on provisions such as Section 39 (allowing monogamous to polygamous marriage conversions), Section 47 (prenuptial agreements), and Section 74 (divorce via undefined irretrievable breakdown), viewing them as secular imports promoting moral relativism and individualism that erode biblical monogamy and family values. Rev. Canon William Ongeng warned these could "undermine the Christian value of one man for one woman," framing the Bill as a neo-colonial threat to cultural and faith-based norms amid urbanization's global influences. This response highlights the Anglican strategy of theological critique to safeguard communal traditions against perceived erosion by Western liberalism. Conference proceedings on Anglican Communion tensions show Ugandan leaders cutting ties with Western provinces over same-sex blessings, declaring impaired communion due to deviations from "biblical faith" (Skidmore,1998, Lambeth Conference; Anglican Communion, 2006). This frames urban secularism as a "false gospel" undermining traditional morals.

Theme 3: Institutional and Practical Strategies for Resistance

The analysis identified strategies like public warnings, youth programmes, and ecumenical efforts to counter secularism in Uganda's urban parishes. These include sermons, bulletins, and social media statements promoting resistance through community initiatives.

Primary content from Namirembe Cathedral services warns parents and youth against LGBTQ influences, urging prayerful vigilance to protect religious values (Namirembe Diocese, 2023c). Church bulletins and publications, such as those from the Church of Uganda Secretariat, emphasize self-sustaining projects to reduce dependence on Western donors pushing secular agendas (Church of Uganda, 2024).

Secondary sources detail institutional actions, such as the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, which involves Anglican leaders in addressing urban conflicts tied to colonial legacies (Komakec, 2010). News reports highlight rejections of Western human rights, with calls for cultural alignment: "For a concept like human rights to take root, it must not put religion in a cage" (Okumu, 2021). Synod reports advocate ecumenism to combat politicization and secular divides (Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, 2008).

The Church of Uganda has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Children's Educational Initiative Inc. (ACEII), a U.S.-based non-profit organisation, to improve literacy education in Church-founded schools across the country. The MoU was signed today by Rev. Canon William Ongeng, the Provincial Secretary of the Church of Uganda, and James Rodger Qualls, representing ACEII, at the Provincial Secretariat in Namirembe, Kampala. Under the three-year partnership, ACEII will support the Church of Uganda with high-quality literacy materials and educational resources to strengthen reading culture and academic performance in schools. The initial phase of the partnership will focus on schools located in Luweero, Nakasongola, and Nakaseke Districts, forming the Luwero Diocese. These findings indicate a cohesive Anglican narrative in Kampala resisting Western secularism through scripture, cultural defense, and proactive measures, amid urban challenges like globalization and donor pressures.

Discussion

The content analysis reveals a robust and multifaceted response by the Anglican Church of Uganda, particularly through the Namirembe Diocese in Kampala, to the perceived encroachment of Western secularism. The three emergent themes—Theological Framing and Biblical Resistance, Cultural and Moral Critiques, and Institutional and Practical Strategies—demonstrate a strategic interplay of doctrinal, cultural, and practical efforts to counter secular influences in urban Uganda. These findings align with broader scholarship on African Christianity's engagement with globalized ideologies (Gifford, 2008; Jenkins, 2011) and provide nuanced insights into how urban Anglican institutions navigate the tensions between local values and Western secular pressures.

Theological Framing as a Foundational Response

The prominence of Theological Framing and Biblical Resistance (45% of codes) underscores the Anglican Church's reliance on scripture as an authoritative counter-narrative to secularism. By invoking passages like Romans 12:1-2, leaders frame secularism as a "godless" force threatening moral order, a stance consistent with African Christian responses to globalization (Kalu, 2008). The Church of Uganda's social media post linking urban violence to a "fading national conscience" (Church of Uganda, 2025) reflects a broader theological critique that positions secularism as antithetical to Christian ethics. This aligns with Okumu's (2021) observation that the Diocese of Kampala prioritizes biblical convictions over secular human rights frameworks, particularly on contentious issues like homosexuality. The use of scripture not only reinforces doctrinal purity but also serves as a unifying rallying point for urban congregants facing the disorienting effects of globalization, such as materialism and individualism. However, this heavy reliance on biblical rhetoric risks alienating urban youth exposed to secular media, potentially limiting its reach in cosmopolitan Kampala (Ward, 2015).

Cultural and Moral Critiques as Identity Defense

The second theme, Cultural and Moral Critiques (35% of codes), highlights the Church's defense of Ugandan cultural identity against Western secular values, particularly around homosexuality and family structures. The Namirembe Diocese's explicit rejection of LGBTQ+ rights as a Western imposition (Namirembe Diocese, 2023b) mirrors wider African Anglican

resistance to global liberal trends (Hassett, 2007). Archbishop Kaziimba's stance on safeguarding traditional marriage despite donor pressures (Church of Uganda, 2023) illustrates a strategic assertion of cultural sovereignty, framing secularism as a form of neo-colonialism. This resonates with Mwesigwa's (2023) provocative comparison of Western human rights to moral relativism, reflecting a deep-seated fear that secular ideologies undermine Uganda's procreation-centred values. While effective in rallying conservative congregants, this approach may deepen tensions with urban elites or younger generations who encounter progressive ideas through global media, as noted in studies of urban African religiosity (Van Dijk, 2015). The Church's focus on homosexuality as a primary secular threat also risks oversimplifying the broader challenges of secularism, such as consumerism or secular governance, potentially narrowing its cultural critique.

Institutional Strategies as Proactive Engagement

The Institutional and Practical Strategies theme (20% of codes) reveals the Church's proactive efforts to translate theological and cultural resistance into actionable initiatives. Programmes targeting youth, warnings against secular influences, and self-sustainability projects (Church of Uganda, 2024; Namirembe Diocese, 2023c) demonstrate an adaptive response to urban challenges. These align with Komakec's (2010) findings on Anglican-led peace initiatives, suggesting a broader role for the Church in addressing urban conflicts tied to secular influences like corruption. The emphasis on ecumenism in synod reports (Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, 2008) indicates a strategic coalition-building approach to counter the divisive effects of secularism. However, the relatively low frequency of this theme suggests that practical strategies are less well-developed than rhetorical ones, possibly due to resource constraints or to urban diversity complicating implementation (Gifford, 2009). This gap highlights an opportunity for the Church to expand community-based initiatives, particularly in engaging urban youth who are most exposed to secular media.

Contextual Implications and Urban Dynamics

The findings reflect Kampala's unique urban context, where globalisation amplifies secular influences through media, education, and donor funding. The Anglican Church's responses are shaped by this cosmopolitan environment, with Namirembe Diocese leveraging its prominence to assert a conservative Christian identity. The rejection of Western donor pressures (Church

of Uganda, 2023) parallels other African churches' resistance to external influence (Jenkins, 2011), yet the urban setting demands nuanced engagement with diverse populations. The Church's focus on homosexuality as a secular threat, while resonant with traditional values, may not fully address other secular challenges like materialism or secular governance, which are increasingly relevant in Kampala's economic hub (Ward, 2015). Future research could explore how these responses vary across urban parishes or compare Kampala with other Ugandan cities like Jinja, Mbale, and Gulu to assess regional differences.

Conclusion

The content analysis, while rigorous, is limited to publicly available materials, potentially overlooking unrecorded grassroots perspectives. The focus on Kampala restricts generalizability to rural or less urbanized areas, where secularism's impact may differ. Additionally, the heavy emphasis on homosexuality as a secular issue may overshadow other dimensions of secularism, such as secular education or governance, warranting further investigation. Future studies could incorporate visual or performative content (e.g., church dramas) to capture non-textual responses or examine how congregants, rather than leaders, perceive secularism.

The Anglican Church's reliance on theological framing, cultural critiques, and institutional strategies highlights its role as a key actor in shaping urban moral and cultural discourses. The emphasis on biblical resistance (Church of Uganda, 2025; Okumu, 2021) suggests that urban Anglican institutions can strengthen their influence by leveraging scripture to address contemporary issues like materialism and individualism. However, the focus on homosexuality as a primary secular threat (Namirembe Diocese, 2023b; Mwesigwa, 2023) risks alienating younger, media-exposed congregants who may encounter progressive ideologies online or in Kampala's cosmopolitan environment (Van Dijk, 2015). To remain relevant, the Church could expand its practical strategies, such as youth-oriented programmes and community initiatives, to engage diverse urban populations more effectively, as seen in limited efforts, such as self-sustainability projects (Church of Uganda, 2024). Ecumenical collaborations, as noted in synod reports (Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, 2008), also offer a pathway to amplify the Church's voice against secular influences while fostering unity across denominations.

The Church's rejection of Western human rights frameworks, particularly around LGBTQ+ issues and abortion (Okumu, 2021; Namirembe Diocese, 2023a), underscores tensions between global human rights agendas and local religious values. Policymakers in Uganda must navigate these tensions when engaging with international donors or when crafting legislation on contentious issues such as family law or education. The Church's influence in urban centres like Kampala suggests that inclusive policy dialogues involving religious leaders could mitigate conflicts and promote culturally sensitive governance. Additionally, the Church's critique of secularism as neo-colonial (Church of Uganda, 2023) highlights the need for policies that balance global partnerships with respect for local cultural identities, particularly in urban areas where globalization is most pronounced.

The study contributes to the literature on African Christianity's response to globalization (Gifford, 2008; Jenkins, 2011), offering a case study of urban Anglicanism's adaptation to secularism. The prominence of cultural critiques aligns with Hassett's (2007) analysis of Anglican resistance to Western liberalism, but the limited scope of practical strategies suggests a gap in implementation that warrants further research. Scholars could explore how grassroots congregants, rather than leaders, perceive secularism, or investigate comparative responses in other Ugandan urban centres, such as Jinja or Entebbe. The reliance on public content also points to the need for methodological innovations, such as analysing non-textual sources (e.g., church performances) or private archives, to capture a fuller spectrum of responses.

The Anglican Church's framing of secularism as a threat to Ugandan identity reflects broader societal debates about globalisation's impact on African urban centres. The Church's strategies, while rooted in conservative theology, resonate with urban communities seeking to preserve cultural heritage amid rapid modernisation (Ward, 2015). However, the focus on specific issues like homosexuality may overshadow other secular challenges, such as consumerism or secular education, which are increasingly relevant in Kampala's economic and social landscape. This suggests that religious institutions need to broaden their engagement with secularism to remain influential in shaping urban social values.

The content analysis reveals that the Anglican Church of Uganda, through institutions like the Namirembe Diocese and Kampala Diocese, responds to Western secularism in Kampala with a strategic blend of theological resistance, cultural critique, and institutional action.

Theological framing, grounded in scripture, serves as a foundational tool to counter secular influences such as individualism and moral relativism, while cultural critiques position secularism as a neo-colonial threat to Ugandan values, particularly regarding family and morality. Institutional strategies, though less prominent, indicate proactive efforts to engage urban communities through programmes and ecumenism. These responses reflect the Church's adaptability to Kampala's urban context, where globalisation amplifies secular pressures, but also highlight challenges in reaching diverse audiences and addressing the full scope of secularism.

The Anglican Church in Uganda, through the Namirembe and Kampala Diocese, responds to Western secularism with a blend of theological resistance, cultural critique, and institutional action. These strategies reflect a deliberate effort to preserve Christian and Ugandan identity amid urban globalization. While effective in mobilizing conservative support, the Church faces challenges in engaging diverse urban audiences and addressing the full spectrum of secular influences. These findings contribute to understanding African Christianity's role in urban contexts and highlight the need for adaptive strategies to navigate the complexities of secularism in Kampala. The findings underscore the Anglican Church's pivotal role in navigating tensions between global secular trends and local religious and cultural identities. However, to sustain its influence, the Church must balance its conservative stance with inclusive strategies that resonate with urban youth and address broader secular challenges.

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Jul 15, 2017 — The Church of Uganda has launched a campaign dubbed 'Thursdays in black' to fight against all forms of violence and rape in the country.

https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1457763/church-uganda-launches-campaign-violence-rape

Carolinah Nakibuule, Monday, July 28, 2025, Church of Uganda, African Children's Educational Initiative Sign Partnership to Boost Literacy in Schools