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Pursuing Social Justice through Public Health: Gender and Sexual Diversity Activism in Malawi

Dr. Ashley Currier [Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies] and
Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Cincinnati, PO Box
210614, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0164 USA, Telephone: +1-513-556-1774

Dr. Tara McKay [Assistant Professor of Medicine, Health, and Society]
The Center for Medicine, Health, and Society, Vanderbilt University, PMB #351665, 2301
Vanderbilt Pl., Nashville, TN 37235-1665 USA, Telephone: +1-615-322-0718

Abstract

African lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) organizations face various strategic dilemmas in contexts characterized by political hostility to gender and sexual dissidents. In Malawi, one such context, we examine how an LGBTIQ social movement organization (SMO) in Malawi, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), navigated one particular strategic dilemma—the dilemma of whether to adopt a less politicized public-health approach or a more nimble, grassroots-oriented, and social-justice approach to their advocacy work—and the consequences of the organization's strategic decisions. Scholars interpret these approaches as signifying differential political engagement among organizations, with the social-justice approach indicating political engagement and the public-health approach signaling political disengagement. This difference has led critics to argue that a public-health approach is poorly suited to generating social and legal reform because it de-politicizes LGBTIQ issues over time, while a social-justice approach exerts constant pressure on political and religious elites. Drawing on qualitative interview data with Malawian LGBTIQ activists and news media data reflecting public debate around homosexuality in the country, we illuminate how this SMO metamorphosed from an organization ostensibly focused only on public health and HIV/AIDS to one that advances social justice for gender and sexual dissidents. We argue for an understanding of the indigenous development of a hybrid strategy integrating the public-health and social-justice approaches.

Keywords

Social movements; public health; LGBT studies; African studies; Social justice

Introduction

For twenty years, since Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe infamously rebuked lesbian and gay activists, observers in Africa and elsewhere in the world have tracked the efflorescence of political homophobia in varied African nations (Engelke 1999; Hoad 2007; van Klinken 2015). "Political homophobia" refers to state leaders' public denigration of

same-sex sexualities, nonheterosexual people, gender variance, and gender and sexual diversity activism (Currier 2010; Boellstorff 2004, 469). News coverage of political homophobia in Africa highlights how the escalation of prejudice against homosexuals in a country like Uganda mirrors events in other African nations (Gettleman 2011, A4). To make the point that persecuting “gay” Africans is the new continental hobby, journalists’ descriptions frequently gloss over cultural, religious, national, and historical differences that show there is nuance among ethnic group attitudes toward gender and sexual diversity across the continent and fall back on grand claims that “[h]omophobia is the norm throughout Africa” without clearly identifying the sources of this homophobia (Bearak and Cowell 2010, A4).

In presenting Africa and Africans as a monolithic, homophobic group, Western media parrot “tired racist-inspired diatribes” that fail to critically examine the historical and economic contexts that have influenced and continue to shape Africans’ lives (McFadden 2008, 142). Furthermore, the exclusive focus on political homophobia in different African contexts obscures the gender and sexual diversity campaigns organized by African activists, who often work with few resources or infrequent support. These lopsided representations and convenient omissions imbue political homophobia with a dangerous urgency, which can result in misguided Northern interventions into gender and sexual politics in the global South (Epprecht 2013; Long 2009; Massad 2007; McKay and Angotti 2017). In addition, this interpretation constitutes the latest unfortunate misrepresentation of African sexual cultures and politics, which reproduces the “enduring association of blackness [and Africanness] with both homophobia and heteronormativity” (Nyong’o 2007, 42). When imprudent exaggeration obscures the realities of African LGBTIQ organizing, neither scholars nor sympathizers can generate an accurate image of the social movement landscape and strategic dilemmas faced by LGBTIQ activists, the outcomes of which may produce different articulations of citizenship and minority rights.

In this manuscript, we shed light on how an LGBTIQ social movement organization (SMO) in Malawi, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), navigated one particular strategic dilemma—the dilemma of whether to adopt a less politicized public-health approach or a more nimble, grassroots-oriented, social-justice approach to their advocacy work—in a context of both increasing political homophobia and international attention to LGBTIQ rights and health. Profiling the work of CEDEP in Malawi, we use a political-economy approach to show how this SMO metamorphosed from an organization focused only on public health and HIV/AIDS to one that advances social justice for gender and sexual dissidents due to a constellation of four sociopolitical factors, including: 1) state-sponsored homophobia, 2) resource availability, 3) international visibility of LGBTIQ rights in Malawi, and 4) the population density of LGBTIQ SMOs in Malawi.

CEDEP emerged in 2005 to respond to state officials’ denials of the presence of sexual minorities in Malawi. Although CEDEP’s original mission was grounded in a social-justice approach, the organization’s early work took advantage of more abundant opportunities and resources in the public-health sector and addressed inequalities in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in Malawi. Later in the decade, CEDEP

confronted a very different sociopolitical field. The prosecution of Tiwonge Chimbalanga, a transgender woman, and Steven Monjeza, a cisgender man, in 2010 for violating anti-sodomy laws unleashed a torrent of political homophobia in the country. Despite Chimbalanga's self-identification as a woman, police and prosecutors regarded her as a man and her relationship with Monjeza as a same-sex relationship (Biruk 2014). Chimbalanga and Monjeza's trial constituted a turning point for CEDEP. At this moment, the organization catapulted to public national and international prominence, as its leaders participated in the defense of the couple and drew international attention to rising anti-gay antagonism in Malawi. Since 2010, CEDEP has weathered political opposition and become a key leader in local civil society networks, balancing its historical strengths in HIV/AIDS advocacy, research, and services with its new profile as the leading organization pressing for LGBTIQ social justice and the decriminalization of same-sex sex.

In the next section, we explicate our political-economy approach to understand the structures and strategies adopted by African LGBTIQ SMOs. This approach aims to more thoroughly examine upstream factors—namely the political, economic, and organizational arrangements—that shape SMOs' strategies and decisions. We then explore the contours of LGBTIQ mobilization on the African continent and elaborate on the concept of *hybrid* organizing. Next, we explain the qualitative data and Malawian newspaper articles that inform this manuscript. Our analysis centers on profiling CEDEP's origins in HIV/AIDS public-health advocacy in Malawi and explicating the turning point for the SMO of Chimbalanga and Monjeza's prosecution; after the trial, CEDEP continued its HIV/AIDS public-health advocacy and pursued new social-justice advocacy. We also discuss CEDEP's recent advocacy work and conclude by considering the merits of a model of hybrid activism for understanding gender and sexual diversity politics in contexts in which few LGBTIQ SMOs exist.

The Political Economy of African LGBTIQ Organizing

CEDEP's hybridization draws on the two strategic orientations that tend to structure LGBTIQ organizing in African countries. First, some LGBTIQ SMOs adopt a social-justice approach that encompasses legal mobilization, service provision for victims of homophobic and transphobic injustices, and advocacy with political, religious, and traditional leaders and other important social or political institutions (Awondo 2010). Second, other LGBTIQ SMOs develop a specialized public-health approach to addressing gender and sexual diversity issues by providing social services and education around HIV/AIDS and STIs (Epprecht 2012). The "prevailing public health ideology" views "individualized risk as driving negative health outcomes and individual behavior change as key to improving health" (Thomann 2014, 123). In their infancy, SMOs that adopt public-health approaches often focus exclusively on the sexual health of MSM, making this strategic orientation "deeply controversial within the LGBTI movement" as it ignores the needs of other gender and sexually diverse constituents (Epprecht 2012, 240; see also Nguyen 2005; Seckinelgin 2009). Scholars writing about other sociopolitical contexts and social movements suggest that these approaches signify differential political engagement among SMOs. The social-justice approach indicates SMOs' political engagement, and the public-health approach to service provision signals SMOs' political disengagement, as SMOs step in to provide

essential social services no longer offered by the state (Bernal and Grewal 2014; Robins 2008). These critiques measure political engagement not by how SMOs interact with the state, but rather by how SMOs address constituents' grievances. According to these critiques, SMO efforts to eliminate inequalities constituents experience signifies activists' political engagement, whereas social services function as short-term, stop-gap measures to remedy constituents' needs; the latter constitutes a sign of political disengagement. Thus, critics argue that a public-health approach depoliticizes LGBTIQ issues over time, while a social-justice approach exerts constant pressure on political and religious elites (Thomann 2014).

Such concerns appear more broadly in the work of queer studies scholars troubled by the dangerous currents of de-politicization and demobilization inducing LGBTIQ activists into quiescence. Scholars question the placement of marriage equality at the apex of LGBTIQ movement goals in South Africa and the United States. In both countries, mainstream LGBTIQ activist organizations invested substantial resources in marriage-equality campaigns, while ignoring and disempowering queer persons of color and poor and working-class, gender and sexual dissidents whose primary concerns involve personal vulnerability and survival, not necessarily marriage (Duggan 2003; Oswin 2007; Ward 2008).

Concerns about queer demobilization and deradicalization are not confined to the content and order of LGBTIQ activists' goals. Scholars have raised them in relation to African LGBTIQ movements' bureaucratization, professionalization, and strategic priorities (Blessol 2013; Currier and Thomann 2016, 92-96). Queer studies scholars' interrogation of the bureaucratization, formalization, and professionalization of activism mirrors long-standing questions within social movement studies (Piven and Cloward 1977; Staggenborg 1988). Social movement bureaucratization and formalization refer to how collective action is sedimented as activist leaders channel political organizing into tactical routines, decision-making rituals, and organizational structures that limit future action taken by SMOs (Rucht and Neidhardt 2002). Professionalization includes creating positions for activist leaders and volunteers and grooming activists and constituents to perform paid or unpaid work in the service of movement goals. One effect of movement professionalization is that activist organizations "can become disconnected from, less visible to, and less accountable to their constituents" (Currier 2012, 187).

Many social movement scholars regard bureaucratization, formalization, and professionalization as tantamount to deradicalization because, in some SMOs, leaders centralize decision-making processes and over time members become disinterested in determining the SMO's course (Piven and Cloward 1977). Also depicted as "NGO-ization," the channeling of activism into nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), bureaucratizing activism aligns SMOs with development initiatives in different African nations, as foreign donors view NGOs as the "magic bullet" for ensuring the success of development projects (Okech 2013, 14). Not all feminist and queer activists and theorists embrace NGO-ization and professionalization. Following feminist critics of NGO-ization (Alvarez 1998; Hodži 2014; Nzegwu 2002), Gathoni Blessol (2013, 223) portrays NGO-ized, African LGBTIQ

SMOs as stripped of their radical potential, reduced to “hierarchically structured, donor mandated” structures focused on satisfying foreign expectations.

In our analysis of CEDEP’s transformation as a Malawian LGBTIQ SMO, we privilege a political-economy perspective on social movement organizing, which is often missing from discussions about LGBTIQ organizing throughout the global South, particularly in Africa. Modeling an interdisciplinary approach to tracking homophobias in different African countries, Ryan Richard Thoreson (2014b, 26-27) emphasizes the centrality of the nation-state in political-economy analyses of African sexual diversity politics. Although we agree that the nation-state looms large in such analyses, we seek to understand LGBTIQ SMOs’ developments in relation to intra-organizational, inter-movement, and external sociopolitical forces. Our political-economy approach to African LGBTIQ organizing entails examining 1) how LGBTIQ SMOs develop externally in relation to national sociopolitical environments and in response to transnational economic, political, and social trends and 2) how they manage internal demands, such as the “division of labor” in the SMO, and competition between SMOs in and across social movements (Zald and McCarthy 1987, 80).

How LGBTIQ SMOs emerge, develop, and operate varies significantly depending on the sociopolitical field in which movements operate. Not all African LGBTIQ movements are alike (Currier and Cruz 2014). In countries like Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda, multiple LGBTIQ SMOs serve local gender and sexual dissidents. However, in other African countries, like Malawi, only one or two LGBTIQ SMOs represent the interests of local gender and sexual minorities. In such circumstances, LGBTIQ SMO staff and volunteers can become torn between satisfying the demands of constituents centered on “‘bread-and-butter’ issues” and the requirements of foreign donors that emphasize the economic self-sufficiency of activist organizations and social-justice projects (Currier 2009, 25). In sociopolitical fields in which only one or two LGBTIQ SMOs operate, these organizations may develop into *hybrid* organizations, addressing a combination of public-health and social-justice issues raised by their diverse constituents of gender and sexual minorities. In the next section, we elaborate on this concept of *hybrid* organizing.

Hybrid LGBTIQ Organizing in Sub-Saharan Africa

A constellation of four economic, political, and structural factors contribute to the creation of hybrid LGBTIQ SMOs in African nations. These factors include 1) the presence of political homophobia, a form of political repression, 2) resource constraints and opportunities for LGBTIQ SMOs, 3) the international visibility of LGBTIQ rights in a country, and 4) the population density of LGBTIQ SMOs in a given country. Over time, some factors may become more influential in determining how quickly and to what degree SMOs become hybridized. For instance, emerging political homophobia can necessitate that LGBTIQ SMOs focusing on social-justice issues adopt a less visible, public-health approach or, conversely, embolden LGBTIQ SMOs focusing on health promotion to rapidly craft a social-justice response to neutralize this homophobia. In other contexts in which there are few LGBTIQ SMOs, multiple, divergent demands voiced by constituents may determine how and when a lone LGBTIQ SMO cultivates a hybrid orientation. We address each of these four factors in turn below.

First, political homophobia has made LGBTIQ organizing risky in some places. According to Marc Epprecht (2012, 229), “sexual rights activists in Africa commonly risk their jobs, family, reputations, and possibly even their lives to speak publicly and explicitly in favour of such rights.” In different places, LGBTIQ activists develop “visibility strategies” to protect their SMOs, constituents, and themselves (Currier 2012, 1-2). Burundian activists avoided using “homosexual” in one SMO’s name, enabling them to register the SMO with the government (Epprecht 2012, 239). LGBTIQ activists in Cameroon and Namibia portrayed their SMOs publicly as human rights organizations to advance LGBTIQ rights without attracting unwanted scrutiny (Awondo 2010; Currier 2012). Unlike some Northern social movements that seek media visibility (Werbner, Webb, and Spellman-Poots 2014, 20), many African gender and sexual diversity activists have been careful about cultivating public visibility for LGBTIQ SMOs.

Second, activism depends on the material and nonmaterial resources activists can dedicate to the budding movement. Since many African LGBTIQ activists struggle with poverty, they often rely on external support, in the form of funding, training, and advice about movement development. Without an injection of energy, expertise, and resources, many groups fail to get off the ground. Thus, resource distribution is an important consideration in political-economy analyses of African LGBTIQ organizing. In this way, the sequencing of activists’ strategic priorities, such as the relationship between public-health and social-justice issues, also affects LGBTIQ SMOs’ development. Embryonic organizing is fragile in that many emerging social movement groups disappear within months of first surfacing (Blee 2012). As a result, “[m]any local NGOs come and go” (Wallace, Bornstein, and Chapman 2006, 77).

Some LGBTIQ activists gravitate toward HIV/AIDS advocacy because Northern donors, foreign governments, and multilateral financial institutions have released significant amounts of funding to support HIV/AIDS advocacy, education, and treatment in sub-Saharan Africa. Organizing under the aegis of HIV/AIDS or public health has been a calculated strategy on the part of African LGBTIQ activists in recent years. In many African nations, the government and civil society agree that HIV/AIDS is a top public-health concern, and MSM have been increasingly prioritized within this frame in many countries (McKay 2016). Using HIV/AIDS advocacy as a cover for reaching gender and sexual dissidents cloaks LGBTIQ activism in the safety of a pressing public-health concern (Epprecht 2012). Nevertheless, the conflation of HIV/AIDS with gender and sexual minorities globally contributes to the perception that African LGBTIQ SMOs focus exclusively on achieving public-health objectives and serving MSM and queer sex workers who are vulnerable to contracting HIV (Awondo 2010; Thomann 2014). In fact, older LGBTIQ SMOs in Cameroon, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe were founded to counteract local political homophobia or to provide gender and sexually diverse people with opportunities to socialize safely, not to address constituents’ health needs. Over time, some SMOs absorbed HIV/AIDS advocacy and service provision into their organizational mandates in the 1990s and 2000s (Currier 2012; Epprecht 2012; Lorway 2014).

Third, the international visibility of LGBTIQ rights in a country affects opportunities for local LGBTIQ SMOs to link their concerns with transnational LGBTIQ SMOs based largely

in the global North. On the one hand, newfound international visibility can afford LGBTIQ SMOs access to material and nonmaterial resources available in transnational circuits of power. Access to such resources may not only strengthen the capacity of such NGOs but also catapult them to unprecedented national visibility. Where LGBTIQ SMOs may have existed in anonymity before accessing transnational circuits of power and visibility, after making these connections, SMO leaders, staff, and constituents may find themselves contending with unwanted scrutiny (Currier 2012). On the other hand, domestic audiences may interpret African LGBTIQ SMOs' alliances with transnational LGBTIQ SMOs and Northern donors as national, racial, and cultural betrayal. Political elites can portray African LGBTIQ SMOs' ties to Northern donors and transnational LGBTIQ SMOs as evidence that these SMOs are as "un-African" as the gender and sexual diversity they promote (Currier 2014). Given these tradeoffs, leaders of African LGBTIQ SMOs tend to approach the opportunities accompanying the international visibility of LGBTIQ rights cautiously.

Fourth, the number of SMOs populating a movement also affects what actions individual SMOs take. When multiple SMOs surface within a social movement, the movement undergoes diversification. Diversification entails SMOs specializing in particular tactics, achieving specific goals, or concentrating their mobilization in a specific geographic area, which Sandra R. Levitsky (2007, 272) describes as "niche activism." In some African countries, activists have established multiple organizations within the LGBTIQ movement, including some that specialize in HIV/AIDS work. Diversification can be healthy for social movements, enabling SMOs to work with a subset of constituents with multiple grievances. In Kenya, some LGBTIQ SMOs "focus on health," while others engage in legal and legislative advocacy (Dearham 2013, 188). Such specialization means that activists involved with other SMOs do not have to worry about catering to all constituents' needs and interests (Ssebagala 2011). Moreover, SMO specialization does not necessarily produce factionalism, although specialization can involve disagreement between SMOs about which SMO is responsible for certain campaigns (Awondo 2010). Some movements have an identity that is elastic enough to accommodate differences in organizations' identities, ideologies, goals, and tactics (Levitsky 2007).

However, in some African sociopolitical fields, particularly those characterized by anti-gay repression, only one or two LGBTIQ SMOs have emerged, as is the case in Malawi. Such SMOs often become anchors for LGBTIQ communities, transforming into *hybrid* organizations responsive to diverse constituents' needs and grievances. Some LGBTIQ SMOs function as "safe spaces" for African gender and sexual dissidents and as *sites for/of socialization* (Currier 2012, 19-20; Lorway 2014, 4). For some constituents, LGBTIQ SMOs act as *sites for socialization*, presenting them with a rare opportunity to socialize with other gender and sexual minorities away from the prying eyes of family, friends, and community members who might disapprove of their lived gender and sexual diversity. In addition, SMOs serve as *sites of socialization*, as SMO leaders educate those new to organizations about local and Western gender and sexual identity terminology and acquaint constituents with the sometimes-mundane realities of organizing (Lorway 2014).

As constituents become empowered in these safe spaces, they increasingly make demands on local LGBTIQ SMOs. Activists leading these SMOs may become deluged with many

requests for social services and demands to air their grievances such that SMOs become incapacitated by internal strife. Prior research shows how The Rainbow Project (TRP), an LGBTIQ SMO in Namibia, became mired in internal disagreements about whether the organization should provide social services, such as a soup kitchen and health clinic, to constituents, or develop social-justice campaigns, including a campaign demanding the decriminalization of same-sex sex (Currier 2012). In TRP, different factions cast this decision as an “either-or dilemma” that threatened the SMO’s future (Currier 2012, 114). TRP’s transformation alienated LGBTIQ youth who mourned the loss of crucial social services and programs that doubled as sites of socialization; some youth felt betrayed by the SMO’s metamorphosis (Lorway 2014). Recognizing their meager resources, some activists in other contexts limit their campaigns or services, concentrating on constituents’ most pressing needs or grievances.

LGBTIQ activists may opt to specialize in delivering HIV/AIDS services to vulnerable constituents, sidelining social-justice campaigns. Public-health approaches do not require LGBTIQ activists to use identity terminology associated with Western interference, thereby allowing some LGBTIQ SMOs to escape anti-gay hostility (Epprecht 2012). Specializing in HIV/AIDS service provision renders LGBTIQ SMOs vulnerable to two criticisms. First, because the funds available for HIV/AIDS programs require SMOs to serve constituencies most adversely affected by the disease, some LGBTIQ SMOs tend to serve MSM and offer few services for lesbian, bisexual, and queer women and transgender people (Epprecht 2012; Ward 2008). Second, HIV/AIDS services are a form of social services. SMOs that offer social services face criticism that they have become depoliticized appendages of the state, focused only on ensuring their marginalized constituents’ short-term survival, instead of on achieving long-term, social-justice goals that will permanently eliminate constituents’ subjugation (Andrucki and Elder 2007; Mananzala and Spade 2008).

Rather than reproducing dichotomies that pit public-health and social-justice approaches against one another, we treat CEDEP as a *hybrid* SMO that has merged these two approaches over time (Heaney and Rojas 2014). CEDEP began pursuing social justice through public health, even if the SMO’s founders did not formulate the SMO’s principles so concretely. We analyze how CEDEP’s HIV/AIDS advocacy metamorphosed into parallel public health and social-justice advocacy, transforming the SMO into a hybrid organization, and the consequences of this transformation for LGBTIQ Malawians.

Data and Methods

This essay draws on qualitative data collected during several rounds of fieldwork that we conducted in Malawi in 2010, 2012, and 2014. McKay conducted fieldwork independently in 2010, and Currier conducted fieldwork independently in 2014. Both authors conducted fieldwork together in 2012. This project draws on diverse sources, including 138 interviews with Malawian activists and LGBT people and hundreds of articles from Malawian newspapers that mention homosexuality or homophobia. In 2010, McKay engaged in ethnographic observation of the public response to Chimbalanga and Monjeza’s trial in the Northern and Central regions of Malawi. She also conducted eight interviews with government officials at the Malawi National AIDS Commission, the Ministry of Health, and

United Nations offices in Lilongwe and with Malawian academics and news media reporters in English. In 2012, Currier interviewed 50 HIV/AIDS, human rights, LGBT, and women's rights activists in Blantyre and Lilongwe about how political homophobia affected their movements' campaigns; she conducted all interviews in English. In 2014, she interviewed 80 sexual minorities in Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mangochi, Mzuzu, and Nkhata Bay about their experiences with discrimination and violence. She also conducted some interviews in English, and Malawian research assistants conducted the remaining interviews in Chichewa, a local language, and translated them into English. To protect research participants' anonymity, we assigned them pseudonyms.

To supplement interview data, we gathered over 600 Malawian newspaper articles published since 2000 that mention homosexuality; these articles establish a timeline for the trajectory of political homophobia in Malawi (for a detailed description of the news media database, see McKay and Angotti 2017). Articles come from Malawi's two daily print newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*, including the *Sunday Times* edition, and a weekly print newspaper, *The Chronicle*. *The Chronicle* was first printed in 1993 as a small, weekly "opposition paper" and ran for over a decade. It is no longer in circulation. We also collected articles from the archives of an electronic Malawian newspaper, *The Nyasa Times*. We augment these data with articles that appeared in other Malawian and African news sources that we found through searches of the AllAfrica.com news database and the ProQuest historical newspapers database.

Gender and Sexual Diversity Politics in Malawi

To examine how CEDEP navigated strategic dilemmas in a context of political homophobia, we begin with a brief discussion of the historical and social context in which CEDEP emerged, focusing on early LGBTIQ activism during Malawi's transition to multiparty democracy and constitutional reform from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s. Throughout the past century, the visibility of LGBTIQ individuals and advocacy has been highly constrained in Malawi. Early in the twentieth century, British colonialism enshrined heteronormativity in Malawi as a cultural and political priority. Following Malawi's independence from Britain in 1964, Malawi's first president, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, advocated a return to traditional Malawian values and imposed substantial restrictions on citizens' self-expression and mobility. Malawi became a police state. Banda's party loyalists ensured allegiance throughout the country by administering beatings and arresting and disappearing suspected dissidents (Africa Watch 1990). Banda's government also instituted anti-sodomy laws inherited from British colonialists. Although Banda did not make explicit statements about homosexuality, his regime cast gender and sexual diversity as the result of foreign, especially Western, influence and deeply offensive to the "traditional" morals of Malawian society. While Banda was in power, most gender and sexual minorities cultivated anonymity to avoid state-sponsored harassment (Mwakasungula 2013).

In the early 1990s, foreign donors and Malawian civil society organizations increasingly drew attention to Banda's repressive regime and began pressuring for reform. When donors cut off development aid to protest human rights abuses, Banda, who had appointed himself president for life, agreed to allow multiparty elections in 1994, which he lost to opponent

Bakili Muluzi. Following his succession, Muluzi called for the redrafting of the constitution in 1994, completed in just under a year, and worked to reestablish diplomatic ties with donor countries. At the time, Malawians viewed the country's transition from dictatorship to multiparty democracy as a hopeful "new dawn" for the country (Posner 1995). Civil society grew rapidly during Muluzi's presidency, despite the country's continued economic decline, ongoing abuses of power, and widespread corruption under Muluzi's regime. With renewed commitments of financial support from Northern donors, nascent civil society organizations tasked themselves with educating villagers on their rights in "the new Malawi." In this period of civil society expansion, however, civil society organizations and social movement actors depended heavily on the state for legitimacy and funding, constraining their ability to criticize political officials' abuses of power and creating conflict over what rights Malawians "needed" and in what order they needed them (Englund 2006). In 2003, after almost two five-year terms as president, Muluzi started to have second thoughts about leaving office. He proposed an amendment to the country's constitution that would allow him a third term. Malawians equated Muluzi's pursuit of a third term with Banda's claim to be president for life. Following mobilization by lawmakers, judges, and civil society leaders, Muluzi abandoned the amendment and promoted as his successor Bingu wa Mutharika, a Western-educated economist who had returned to the country during the fall of the Banda regime. In 2004, Mutharika won the presidency by popular vote, severed ties with Muluzi, and formed his own political party. Shortly thereafter, Mutharika established the Special Law Commission (SLC) and tasked the commission with reviewing and recommending improvements to the 1994 Malawian Constitution to avoid further abuses of power by the executive and legislative branches of government.¹

President Mutharika's decision to review the constitution briefly opened a new forum in which LGBTIQ Malawians and civil society organizations could raise concerns about discrimination and criminalization. In early 2005, amid activists' demands to legalize same-sex marriage in South Africa, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) asked the newly formed SLC to review the conflicts between the new constitution and the penal code. In particular, MHRRC wanted the SLC to uphold principles of nondiscrimination in the new constitution by decriminalizing same-sex sex and protecting the rights of gays and lesbians (Kabwila 2013). However, political elites, religious leaders, and civil society organizations quickly and publicly scorned MHRRC's recommendations as out of touch with Malawians' needs (Namangale 2005). This episode constituted the emergence of political homophobia in Malawi, prompting activists to exercise caution in promoting LGBTIQ rights in a country still recovering from political repression.

HIV/AIDS as a Mobilization Opportunity for LGBTIQ SMOs

While the social-justice approach adopted by MHRRC faced substantial political opposition, new opportunities for mobilization around sexual diversity emerged through attention to HIV/AIDS and STIs (Nyadani 2009). After years of inaction under Banda, HIV/AIDS was ravaging the country by the early 2000s. Population prevalence among adults aged 15-49

¹SLC membership included representatives from the judiciary, civil service, civil society, the Malawi Law Society, religious groups, academics, and eminent citizens.

was estimated at over eleven percent in 1994 and continued to rise to almost fourteen percent by 2003 (World Bank 2013). By 1998, 96 percent of rural Malawians knew someone who had died of AIDS, and fifty percent had known five or more; sixty percent of women and fifty percent of men in rural areas reported being “very worried” about contracting HIV (Smith and Watkins 2005).

Although Malawian HIV-prevention programs focused exclusively on heterosexual and maternal-to-child transmission, espousing a Western and heteronormative view of gender and sexuality (Esacove 2010), same-sex sex had been on the radar of Malawian HIV/AIDS officials since the late 1990s, following reports of HIV transmission in prisons. In 2003, the Malawi National AIDS Commission (NAC) added “persons engaged in same sex sexual relations” to its list of vulnerable populations in the National HIV/AIDS Policy (Government of Malawi 2003). For some observers, including sexual minorities constituted “a giant step towards addressing and acknowledging that things do happen in our midst” (*Chronicle* 2004). This support was short lived, however, as documents produced immediately following the 2003 AIDS policy reasserted the irrelevance of same-sex sexual transmission to Malawi’s AIDS epidemic. Contrary to the 2003 National AIDS Policy, which highlights the unequal burden of HIV among vulnerable populations, including sexual minorities, the 2005-9 National HIV/AIDS Action Framework drafted a year later describes transmission dynamics as follows:

Unprotected heterosexual contact with an infected partner accounts for 88% of new infections. Mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) accounts for about 10% of cases. Other modes of HIV infection are *insignificant* and together account for about 2%. These include use of infected blood, infected needles and health care waste handling, intravenous drug use and homosexual sex (emphasis added, Government of Malawi 2005, 4).

Under this framework, NAC implemented no HIV-prevention programs targeting sexual minorities between 2005 and 2009.²

However, the donor landscape was changing. Despite decades of distinguishing between transmission dynamics in Africa and the West and being careful not to push government officials so hard that they rejected HIV/AIDS prevention wholesale,³ in the mid-2000s, the Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and its cosponsoring organizations pushed for including MSM in national AIDS programs in all countries (McKay 2016). As part of a call to establish global prevention policy, in June 2005, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (2005) resolved that “issues such as men who have sex with men, drug use, sex work, gender vulnerability, and prison populations *must be incorporated into prevention plans in all regions*” (emphasis added). Linked developments among donors created a financial incentive for heavily aid-dependent countries like Malawi to identify MSM as a target population. As Jackson, a CEDEP researcher, explained in 2012,

²Interview, National AIDS Commission, April 28, 2010.

³Interview, National AIDS Commission, August 19, 2010.

[W]ithin Global Fund, they are pushing the human rights agenda in the forefront. So, the language is if you don't recognize sexual minorities, the rights of sexual minorities, within your HIV-prevention programming, then you may not get these funds. So, UNAIDS is of the same opinion. Some of the key Global Fund partners are also of the same opinion. And, again, if I'm not wrong, our Ministry of Health is also heavily funded by donors. They have got a pool of funds, like a basket. Even those funders, they also have got their own agendas towards [MSM]. They also are propagating the same philosophy.⁴

Newly available sources of funding for HIV/AIDS fueled the inclusion of MSM in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, even in Malawi, where laws criminalized same-sex sex.

Within this shifting environment in Malawi, a group of gay and bisexual men and allies interpreted MHRRC's advocacy for decriminalizing same-sex sex and introducing MSM into national HIV/AIDS programs as promising developments. They formed a new organization called the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) in late 2005 in Blantyre, Malawi's commercial capital in the heavily populated Southern region. Benjamin, a cofounding member and CEDEP officer, asserted that the inspiration for CEDEP stemmed from a collective interest to create a "movement that is going to give a voice to ... other [sexual minorities] who are not able to speak out."⁵

CEDEP responded to the "sidelining" of sexual minority issues not just by the government but also by mainstream HIV/AIDS organizations in Malawi. In this way, HIV/AIDS served as a mobilization conduit for MSM in Malawi. In a 2007 interview, Gift Trapence, then-director of operations at CEDEP, indicted HIV/AIDS organizations that "have very nice policies" of including MSM "on paper but it's only for them to get funds" (Mpaka 2007a, 5). As Richard, a cofounding CEDEP member, explained:

There were some insinuations from the [AIDS] program implementers saying that they cannot implement programs targeting MSM because [sexual minorities] do not exist, so they took that as an excuse of not doing anything ... so we thought, "How can they say that people do not exist when we know [they exist]?" Some of them are our friends. Some of them are amongst us. So let's come up with something to mobilize the community.⁶

As cofounding members established a strategic plan, they decided that to make any headway, they first had to register the organization to obtain legal status and gain access to government and donor funds.

Like other LGBTIQ SMOs in Africa (Currier and Cruz 2014), cofounders believed that they should register CEDEP as a human rights organization and not as an LGBTIQ SMO given the hostile sociopolitical context and homophobia in Malawi. Although the organization was a "human rights" organization on paper, staff devoted the minimal resources they had to

⁴Jackson, interview, June 29, 2012.

⁵Benjamin, interview, June 27, 2012.

⁶Richard, interview, June 28, 2012.

HIV/AIDS education and advocacy. To avoid additional scrutiny, the group also adopted a nondescript name, as Moses, a cofounding member of CEDEP, explained.⁷ Richard stated that activists were worried about political persecution in the aftermath of MHRRC's much-maligned sexual-rights advocacy attempt in 2005 and selected "Centre for the Development of People" (CEDEP) as a name so that "we would not be labeled or identified as ... gay."⁸ Activists hoped that an innocuous name would protect CEDEP from harassment. LGBTIQ activists in other African countries have used similar naming strategies with success (Currier and Cruz 2014; Epprecht 2012).

Once they established CEDEP as a human rights organization, organizers decided that they had a responsibility not only to sexual minorities but also to other vulnerable communities, such as sex workers and prisoners. Like other Malawian organizations (Watkins and Swidler 2013), CEDEP focused on funding proposals, education, and outreach and relied heavily on networks of volunteers to conduct work outside the office. Founding members' prior experience working in HIV/AIDS organizations also promoted CEDEP's alignment with public-health practices and technologies. As Thomas, a founding CEDEP member, explained:

Most of the politicians have been arguing to say homosexuality does not exist in Malawi.... So, we thought the best way to bring this to them is by conducting research. So, just in 2006, the first activity that we did was to do ... a KAP study: knowledge, attitude, and practices of men who have sex with men in Malawi ... because there was no any other data around in Malawi, not anywhere.... That was the first evidence that [sexual minorities] exist.⁹

In collaboration with Malawian researchers at the University of Malawi and a Zambian researcher at the University of Zambia, CEDEP researchers working on the KAP study identified just less than 100 MSM within a month in Lilongwe and in the Southern region (Ntata, Muula, and Siziya 2008). Trapence explained that MSM "are all over and they cut across society and demographics. From a villager to those in high office and religious leaders, [MSM] are there" (Mponda 2009, 4). Such research opportunities reflected CEDEP's commitment to a public-health strategic orientation, as CEDEP staff and leaders invested heavily in accruing expertise in all areas of HIV/AIDS advocacy, including research.

By establishing the "real" presence of male-male sexualities in Malawi, this initial, small-scale study executed by CEDEP reinvigorated debate about the criminalization of same-sex sex and created a context in which personal, albeit anonymous, testimonials of LGBTIQ Malawians became possible (Mpaka 2007b, 2007c; Nkhata and Mambulasa 2007). CEDEP organizers conducted research on how HIV/AIDS impacted MSM. Dr. Eric Umar, a psychologist involved in CEDEP's research, stated that these studies were trying to help MSM "practice safe sex so that HIV does not spill over from the gay community to the general public" (Mponda 2009, 3). Leaders obtained funding from foreign donors to rent a

⁷Moses, interview, July 2, 2012.

⁸Richard, interview, June 28, 2012.

⁹Thomas, interview, June 27, 2012.

house in Blantyre to use as CEDEP's office. Organizers hired an "office administrator" and an "accountant" and purchased a TV and "videos from friends on MSM" that they screened during "seminars and roundtable discussions to just see what other people in other places are doing," according to Blessings, a cofounding member of CEDEP.¹⁰

CEDEP officers also presented findings from their ongoing research on MSM and HIV prevalence locally at NAC, activities that cemented the organization's reputation as an HIV/AIDS organization dedicated to a public-health focus. Crystal Biruk (2011) captures how some HIV/AIDS experts dismissed the findings that CEDEP officers presented from their ongoing research with MSM at a 2008 NAC meeting in Mzuzu, a city in the Northern region. CEDEP presenters documented that 21 percent of MSM in Malawi were HIV-positive and described anal sex as a way some MSM contract HIV (Fay et al. 2011). According to Biruk (2011, 229), "people described anal sex as 'unnatural' and expressed disgust" and rejected a CEDEP presenter's claim that in different African and Arab societies, women opted to have anal sex with male sexual partners to "'preserve their virginity,'" an argument audience members repudiated.

With time, CEDEP officers helped engender receptive attitudes among a few NAC officials. Blessings explained that eventually, "we were being invited [by NAC] every year to present at national conferences." NAC officials found CEDEP's work with MSM to be so compelling that

if you read [NAC] work plans ... since 2006, you'll notice that in all the major national plans on HIV and AIDS they mention working with MSM and all that. They were actually literally copying and pasting some of the statements that were in [CEDEP] reports into their policy documents.

It is important to remember that CEDEP initiated HIV/AIDS advocacy in the mid- and late-2000s at a time when sexual diversity received only occasional, negative scrutiny from political officials. The episodic nature of early bouts of political homophobia enabled CEDEP to work with LGBTIQ people unnoticed. However, the arrests and prosecution of Tiwonge Chimbalanga and Steven Monjeza for sodomy in December 2009 turned same-sex sexualities into a "very explosive and divisive issue" throughout 2010, resulting in NAC's distancing from CEDEP for a time.¹¹

The Necessity of Working on Social-Justice Issues

Intensified political homophobia generated international visibility for LGBTIQ organizing in Malawi, thrusting CEDEP into the domestic and international spotlight. This new visibility contributed to CEDEP's transformation as a hybrid organization under the watchful eyes of Northern donors and Malawian and international media. "Trouble started" for CEDEP, according to Blessings, "when Tiwonge and his friend [Steven Monjeza] made a public engagement," focusing national attention on same-sex relationships (Chanika, Lwanda, and Muula 2013).¹² Benjamin reported that some politicians believed "we [at CEDEP] were

¹⁰Blessings, interview, July 4, 2012.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

trying to test the government on how they are going to react on such issues” of legalizing same-sex relationships and encouraged Chimbalanga and Monjeza to stage their engagement party.¹³ CEDEP became involved in the couple’s defense by asking a lawyer “to just represent the guys so that at least they don’t seem to be abandoned. So we deployed one of our lawyers” to coach them on the necessity of not “opening your mouth because ... we noticed that Tiwonge was very loudmouth[ed].”¹⁴ CEDEP officers were concerned that the couple might further incriminate themselves, thereby generating additional unwanted scrutiny for the SMO.

CEDEP’s acquired international visibility as officers attended HIV/AIDS conferences and meetings of LGBTIQ activists overseas. As CEDEP’s international profile grew, representatives from international human rights and LGBTIQ SMOs began “calling to just curiously ask, ‘What are you doing about this case, and what is your role in the case?’” Others wanted to know “how were the couple being treated in prison.” Such inquiries emboldened CEDEP officers who interpreted these questions as recognition that the SMO was well poised to advance LGBTIQ rights in Malawi. According to Blessings, “that’s when we thought, ‘Okay, some people are interested in us playing a role in this.’ So we just jumped in. It wasn’t something formal.... [P]eople knew we’re directly involved in advocating for rights of [sexual] minority people. So they expected an automatic involvement with the case.” However, some CEDEP staff and members wondered if it was appropriate for the SMO to become involved with the defense because Chimbalanga and Monjeza “were not ... CEDEP members. They were just another couple.”¹⁵ Eventually, CEDEP officers recognized that as the only SMO representing gender and sexual minorities in Malawi, CEDEP had an obligation to support the couple during the trial. In fact, other Malawian feminist and human rights SMOs experienced scrutiny from international donors who queried why these SMOs had not come to the aid of Chimbalanga and Monjeza (Currier 2014). If CEDEP officers had ultimately declined to assist the incarcerated couple, the organization could have encountered similar queries from donor agencies that may have limited future funding opportunities.

International recognition heightened the SMO’s visibility within Malawian activist networks, as “actors in Malawi and around the globe were focused on CEDEP’s work, publicly defining it in a way that few members were in a position to dispute” (Thoreson 2014a, 141). International LGBTIQ SMOs like the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) consulted CEDEP about the couple’s detention, and IGLHRC staff inquired what solidarity actions would support the couple (Thoreson 2014a).¹⁶ This consultation strategically positioned CEDEP as the national arbiter on LGBTIQ rights in Malawi. The trial contributed to CEDEP’s increasing inclusion in international meetings at which activists discussed LGBTIQ rights.

Despite CEDEP’s local campaigning and enlistment of international support, the court convicted and sentenced Chimbalanga and Monjeza to fourteen years in prison (Somanje

¹³Benjamin, interview, June 27, 2012.

¹⁴Blessings, interview, July 4, 2012.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶In 2015, IGLHRC changed its name to OutRight Action International.

2010). After the couple's conviction, pressure from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was visiting Malawi at the time, forced President Mutharika to pardon the couple, although his disapproval of homosexuality was clear in his comment that "[t]hese boys committed a crime against our culture, our religion, and our laws" (Bearak 2010, A6). After the trial, some CEDEP members and officers wanted to "shrug off the notoriety they endured during the trial and return to their work" around HIV/AIDS, a pathway that did not materialize (Thoreson 2014a, 147).

Participating in Chimbalanga and Monjeza's defense constituted a turning point - a moment when "new directions" in SMOs emerge (Blee 2012, 70) - for CEDEP. CEDEP's immersion in the couple's legal defense initiated a new pathway for strategic action, leading the SMO in the direction of expanded social-justice advocacy. In one sense, CEDEP was beginning to inhabit more fully the human rights role that founders had created for the SMO in its infancy. However, CEDEP's growing recognition within Malawi as a respected civil society organization earned the SMO the wrath of Mutharika's administration and the ruling political party, the Democratic People's Party (DPP). CEDEP's Blantyre office was ransacked several times, and some members speculated that DPP loyalists masterminded the attacks. Interpreting the office raids as intended to intimidate LGBTIQ activists, Charles, a CEDEP officer, explained that attackers' "intention was not to steal. They were not really thugs coming in to steal ... No, they just came to leave a message.... 'You guys need to stop the work that you're doing.'"¹⁷ Such attacks and threats from state leaders failed to deter CEDEP officers, although Gift Trapence, CEDEP's executive director, was forced into hiding as a result of government threats.

CEDEP became more active in a coalition of civil society organizations and started partnering with the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR). In 2011, CEDEP and CHRR joined other civil society organizations in demanding that Mutharika address political corruption, the nation's economic decline, fuel and foreign currency shortages, and poor healthcare infrastructure. When Mutharika failed to respond to these grievances, civil society organizations, including CEDEP, mobilized thousands of people to participate in ill-fated street protests on July 20, 2011, dubbed the "July 20 protests." Police used violence to disperse and punish protestors; police repression resulted in the deaths of nineteen protestors and bystanders and injuries of 58 others (Banda 2011). Mutharika responded to the protests by threatening to "smoke ... out" activist leaders in 2011 (Currier 2014, 147) and, in 2012 promising "critics that they will feel the heat" (*Nation* 2012).

Threats of political repression notwithstanding, CEDEP and CHRR leaders remained vocal critics of Mutharika's leadership. Late in 2011, Mutharika blamed Malawi's political woes on the "work of the devil," logic that leaders of CEDEP and CHRR reversed in a press release that read:

If the problems the country is facing are being caused by Satan, then we believe Satan is using the President because the problems centre on poor economic and political governance led by [Mutharika] as President. As organisations who believe

¹⁷Charles, interview, July 3, 2012.

in the above power of the Almighty God, we strongly ask President Mutharika to reject the Satan he is condemning (Kasunda and Singini 2012, 2).

CEDEP and CHRR leaders continue to critique the government's human rights abuses and demand improved governance in Malawi.

Despite facing state repression and scrutiny, CEDEP officers integrated their public-health advocacy with the new social-justice strategic orientation. CEDEP staff and volunteers churned out research on how HIV/AIDS affected vulnerable populations, including sexual minorities, sex workers, and prisoners, in addition to engaging in public education about HIV and STI transmission in rural settings throughout the country. CEDEP leaders maintain an active presence in debates about national HIV/AIDS priorities. The SMO joined other organizations to call for the creation of a national policy that would guarantee antiretroviral treatments much earlier to people living with HIV/AIDS (Chauwa 2015). Their work on improving the inclusion of gender and sexual minorities into national HIV/AIDS policy and programs paid off in 2015, as the Global Fund pledged support for the country's grant proposal. Trapence commented that this new funding stream would "target key populations such as female sex workers and men who have sex with men, which is a great progress for Malawi's HIV response" (Kasalika 2015).

As CEDEP continues to earmark resources for public-health work, the organization presses on with its newer social-justice mandate, evidenced in its public visibility as a leader on LGBTIQ and human rights issues. Over the last few years, CEDEP and CHRR have cosponsored events commemorating the International Day and Homophobia and Transphobia in Malawi (Kasunda 2012). In 2014, CEDEP led other organizations in demanding the decriminalization of same-sex sex (Namangale 2014). Trapence asked Malawian lawmakers to "show 'commitment to universal human rights' by emulating" developments in Uganda, where the constitutional court annulled the Anti-Homosexuality Act on a technicality (Muheya 2014). Earlier in 2015, CEDEP and other local and international advocacy organizations rejected the Marriage Bill, as the "bill defines all marriages, unions, cohabitation, or customary marriages as between a man and a woman, ignoring the reality of same-sex relationships, and codifying State rejection of all same-sex relationships" (Chimjeka 2015).

Trapence also delivered a report on the condition of human rights in Malawi as part of the UN's Universal Periodic Review, a process intended to monitor whether certain governments carry out UN member states' recommendations for improving human rights (Khunga 2015b). Although Trapence and his colleague, Timothy Mtambo, the executive director of CHRR, acknowledged that Malawi had "made progress in the areas of child rights and women[']s rights, they alleged that the government had provided misleading "information about the environment regarding lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) in the country" (Mkandawire 2015). Specifically, Trapence and Mtambo condemned the government's claim that lawmakers have been unable to address "bad laws," such as anti-sodomy legislation, on the grounds that "they have no money" (Khunga 2015a). The participation of CEDEP and CHRR in international human rights monitoring processes continues to irk some government leaders, including Solicitor General Janet Banda who

claimed that these organizations' submissions were meant to "sustain their own donor funding," a misrepresentation of SMOs as motivated by money-grubbing interests (Phiri 2015).

Both organizations have increasingly taken public stances on high-profile issues within and outside of Malawi. CEDEP and CHRR leaders criticized candidates who failed to show up for the first presidential debate in 2014, calling their absence "an insult to the electorate" (Mthawanji 2014). Responding to the toll flooding had taken on Malawians earlier in 2015, CEDEP and CHRR leaders implored global civil society to send aid to Malawi (Chiumia 2015). These organizations also mobilized in April 2015 to denounce xenophobic attacks on Malawians living and working in South Africa and to demand that the South African government address xenophobia and socioeconomic inequalities there; when delivering these demands to the South African high commissioner, Gift Trapence fittingly wore a "Stop Xenophobia" T-shirt (*Nation* 2015). Both organizations' leaders voiced support for UN intervention in Gaza (Malikwa 2014). These developments suggest that CEDEP will continue engaging in expanded social-justice advocacy.

Conclusion

In CEDEP's early years, the organization's leadership took advantage of an environment in which "HIV resources [were] abundant" and carved space for gender and sexual diversity within HIV/AIDS programs (Trapence et al. 2012, 403-4). However, there have been few resources to support LGBTIQ rights advocacy, leaving CEDEP officers to push forward and respond creatively to the changing sociopolitical environment. In response to growing political homophobia, cues from foreign donors, and a lack of other LGBTIQ SMOs in the country, CEDEP transitioned to social-justice advocacy during Chimbalanga and Monjeza's trial, while still using HIV/AIDS as an opportunity to mobilize around LGBTIQ rights. CEDEP officers realized that failing to assist the couple could have serious repercussions for the SMO's access to resources in the future. For example, in 1987, the International Lesbian and Gay Association expelled the Gay Association of South Africa as a member organization for refusing to support Simon Nkoli, a black gay antiapartheid activist who was on trial for treason, and to oppose apartheid rule (Rydström 2015). Supporting Tiwonge Chimbalanga and Steven Monjeza vaulted CEDEP to international visibility as the leading LGBTIQ SMO in Malawi and confirmed the organization's commitment to human rights. Within a sociopolitical field in which CEDEP was the primary SMO defending gender and sexual diversity, staff and members made explicit and strategic decisions to transform the organization into a hybrid public-health and social-justice organization.

Our analysis points to the need for additional theorizing about the strategic orientations of LGBTIQ activist organizations and the political economy of queer organizing in Africa, particularly during a time of heightened political homophobia. With limited resources, CEDEP continues to provide social services to constituents, balancing these obligations with expanding work on pressing social-justice concerns. CEDEP has thereby managed to avoid the black hole of depoliticization from which few SMOs return. Considering the placement of LGBTIQ SMOs in African sociopolitical fields would illuminate the strategic trajectories of queer activism. When only one or two LGBTIQ SMOs populate a national field, existing

SMOs may not develop into hybrid organizations that tackle public-health and social-justice concerns. The presence and severity of political homophobia coupled with international pressure to advocate publicly for LGBTIQ rights may influence whether single-issue SMOs metamorphose into hybrid organizations. Local repression may stifle social-justice advocacy and encourage activists to stick with a public-health approach. Conversely, international pressure may embolden activists to venture into social-justice territory, despite threats of personal injury and arrest from government authorities.

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