



The USA's Ideological Globalism and Ghana's Religious Frontier Since the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

On 26th–29th March, 2023, Kamala Harris, the Vice President (VP) of the United States of America's leftist party visited Ghana. The visit couched as part of the US seeking to strengthen diplomatic ties with Ghana rather generated the opposite response from the Ghanaian religious constituency. In this article, the author argues that, the US's VP's visit was rather read by the country's overwhelming religious constituency as a decoy on the part of the US to advance its neo-colonial cultural revolution as part of the 21st century globalism. Taking the argument from the beginning of the 21st century, the author maintains that, the utopian idea of the US-dominated world that would foster the end of autocracy and birth economic prosperity has arguably failed. The failure of the vision of globalisation is, as the author argues, because America's pursuit of ideological politics in support of minority sexual rights runs contrary to the aspiration of family as a religious mandate in the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of Ghana's religious constituency. Consequently, the author analysing online news report about the backlash that emerged from the US's VP's visit concludes that, both Ghana's President and US VP were involved in making use of the word "we" in direct violation of the terms of the social contract that invest "we" in the people, not the presidents as individuals. Concurrently, compounded by a world reeling under the major disruptions that the coronavirus pandemic caused and the impact of the current impasse between Russia and Ukraine, the author maintains that, America's cultural and social revolution remains the nemesis of the aspirations of globalisation.

Keywords

ideological globalism; Ghana; minority sexual rights; religious frontier; United States

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INTRODUCTION

The United States of America's international policies towards Africa has had extensive attention since the end of the Cold War ([Adibe, 2017](#); [Lawson, 2007](#)). However, the most recent study on US and Africa relations has focused on former President Donald Trump and how his policies align with historic US politics to jeopardise Africa's political and economic interests ([Westcott, 2019](#)). But there is new type of America policies towards Africa, led by the current US president Joe Biden that gestures towards what comes across in Ghana's public discourse as US's cultural and ideological imperialism. For this reason, the author analysis the extent to which Biden's framing of US's diplomatic policy as promotion of minority sexual rights is reinvesting Ghana's religious frontiers with energy to stake a major role in public governance.

The new US's policy towards Africa was indexed by a 3-leg journey of the US's Vice President, Kamala Harris to Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania in 2023. As part of her visit to the continent, on the 26th–29th March, 2023, Kamala Harris, the Vice President (VP) of the United States of America visited Ghana. The purpose of the visit was widely reported across the print and the electronic media, as well as social media platforms as informed by US deepening its diplomatic ties with Ghana. Nevertheless, given contemporary global politics, such as issues of cultural wars and the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, several Ghanaians felt the US Vice President was in Ghana to court the support of the Ghanaian political elites. Rather very unusual, at least since the visit of Barack Obama, former US President, the Ghanaian religious constituency was highly suspicious of the presence of the US high profile politician in the country. As if to affirm the suspicion of the Ghanaian public, when the US VP co-addressed Ghanaians, an American Journalist who may have been assigned by his news agency to report the visit of the US political elite asked a question that was (un)expected. The question was about what she taught about women's right.

Obviously, appearing prepared with a strong political leftist agenda of promoting minority sexual rights and abortion in the US and an interest in expanding the frontiers of her party globally, she readily responded as follows ([GhanaWeb, 2023](#)):

"Let me be clear about where we stand. First of all, for the American Press who are here, you know that a great deal of work in my career has been to address human rights issues, equality issues across the board including those of the LGBT community. And I feel very strongly about the importance of supporting the freedom and supporting the fight for equality among all the people and that, all people be treated equally. I will also say that, this is an issue that we consider and I consider to be a human rights issue and that will not change."

Waiting with bated breath to hear what Ghana's President's response would be, several Ghanaians rather were disappointed when the president rather said ([Graphic Online, 2023](#)):

"First of all, we don't have any such legislation here in Ghana, a bill has been proposed to the Parliament of Ghana which has all kinds of ramifications which is now being considered by the Parliament. It hasn't been passed, so the statement that there is legislation in Ghana to that effect is not accurate. No legislation. The bill is going through the parliament, it's going through the parliament, the Attorney General has found it necessary to speak to the committee about it regarding the constitutionality or otherwise of several of its provisions and the Parliament is dealing with it but at the end of the process I will come in."

The responses of the two leaders were totally not in tandem with the reality of the nature of social contract shaping the politics and the constitution of the modern state ([Anderson, 1991](#); [Gellner, 1983](#)). The author shall discuss this in the course of the paper. But suffice it to say that, the two leaders' use of "we" in their comments was totally unrepresentative of their respective constituencies. In Ghana, the overwhelming population, apart from a few cultural elites—academics and a few civil society groups, who frame themselves as allies of the US—do not support the idea of minority sexual rights. Similarly, the US is nearly polarised between conservative evangelical Christians and liberals over the issue ([Jouet, 2017](#)). Regardless of how one looks at the issue of sexuality and morality—as the author shall discuss—the two leaders were overreaching the limit of the power given to them by their people. They were misconstruing the terms of the social contract and abusing their power as federal heads.

The author gives two incidents that immediately demonstrated how the two federal heads abused the use of the "we" to adduce evidence of his point. First, the international media that already was bristling with an agenda to misrepresent Ghana's stance on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex+ (LGBTQ+) issue readily stated provided headlines such as, "Ghana's President softens country's stance on draconian anti-LGBTQ+ bill as Kamala Harris visits" ([Princewill, 2023](#)). Written by Nimi Princewill, a news Producer for CNN based in Abuja, Nigeria, the international media was deliberate in creating an assumption that it is not a white person reporting favourably about the US VP's visit. It was also to court support for the Democratic Government, which is also facing stiff opposition from the conservative religious constituency in the US. Put together, the author readily understood the swiftness with which Ghana's Speaker of Parliament cautioned the President of Ghana to be mindful of the limit of the President's power. On 28th March, 2023, in a breakfast meeting with a selected Clergy,

the country's Speaker of Parliament, Mr Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin responded to the President of Ghana as follows ([Gyesi, 2023](#)):

"This is legislation; this is not execution. Wait until we [Parliament] pass it and direct you [President] to execute it. So in the case of law, which is part of policy, we finalise it and then, the Executive now has the authority to implement it... to execute it; let's get this clear. Whilst this bill is before here, he [President] is not in charge; I'm in charge."

The author shall, against, discuss Bagbin's comment in his section on the state, but suffice it to say that the Speaker was very clear in demarcating the boundaries of the two of the three arms of government—specifically the executive and the legislature ([Barkan, 2009](#)). The separation of the powers of the Arms of Government is part of pre-empting and stemming the tide against the politically-inspired bastardisation of the ideals of the social contract ([Gyampo, 2015, 2016](#)). Even so, the question was both expected and unexpected; while the President's response was also put in the same perspective. The question was expected because several Ghanaians suspected that, the US was in the country to negotiate against a Bill in Ghana's Parliament that seeks retrain the expression of minority sexual rights, local and international advocacy in support of it. On the contrary, the question was unexpected because it was not part of what several Ghanaians considered necessary or even the stated goal of the US seeking to build and deepen diplomatic ties. Also, compared to his predecessors, J.A. Kufuor and J.E. Atta Mills ([Prempeh, 2021b](#)), the current President of Ghana has in the minds of several Ghanaians not been very consistent with his stance on the subject ([Prempeh, 2023](#)). More so, the religious constituency imagine that, the President rather is gradually gesturing more towards in support of the LGBTQ+ community. On the whole, the author will argue that, the backlash that the US's Vice President drew from the Ghanaian religious frontiers was because of the West seeking to extend the limit of the state to regulate pre-political institutions such as the family and issues of women's sexuality ([Prempeh, 2023](#)).

Already, Ghana had gained bad international image through the reportage of Western Media as breathing hot and cold against minority Ghanaians who want their sexual rights to be decriminalised ([Human Rights Watch, 2021a, 2021b](#)). Since the religious constituency and much of Ghana's enchanted public sphere, which has since the turn of the millennium gestured more towards evangelical Pentecostalism and reformist Islam ([Larkin & Meyer, 2006](#)), would not yield to the demands of the minority sexual group, the country has been profiled as showcasing Christianity nationalism ([Haynes, 2022](#)). Certainly, the notion of Christian nationalism—often used to signal Christian seeking to saturate the moral sphere with Christian morality or puritanic

ethics—is quite problematic. The label is problematic not only for Christian majority, but also Muslims—together constituting Ghana's largest religious constituency.

The fault lines of labelling Christians and Muslims of yielding to nationalistic tendencies to capture the state runs contrary to the theological and sociological construction of religious community. As the author shall discuss, for both Christians and Muslims, their ultimate community is the religious one, the Ecclesia of Christ and the Islam *ummah*. Christians and Muslims would defer to the dictate of the religious communities on nearly all matters, but particularly those that border on ethics and morality. Arguably, these religious groups prioritise their religious ethics over any other aspect of submission to the state because, the moral issues are about moral matters such as family life and sexuality are pre-political—or to re-state, not but of the social contract of the political establishment. Also, the state is not directly concerned with ethics, which tend to foster unity within plurality as it is directly involved in legal matters that tend to deal with managing plurality. To sum, the author's point, religious communities are informed by affection or run by a moral and affectionate economy, informed by covenant, while the state runs on a social contract.

As a result of the complicated nature of a religious community, the visit of the US's VP was interpreted differently away from the state, but uniformly within the religious community. The reason for this is not farfetched. First, religious frontiers of Africa are very awake to the Western metastasising cultural wars ([Van Klinken, 2013](#)), which is at the heartland of the current US government. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic had induced a re-engineering of exploitative Western capitalist economy—reminding Africans to be mindful of the kinds of international ties they established ([Nhemachena et al., 2021](#)).

The author shall discuss all above in detail as the analysis continues. But suffice it at present to state that, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine alongside the West—the US and the Northern Alliance Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have redefined geopolitical alliances. China, which is a major global economy has not explicitly expressed disaffection with Russia's war against Ukraine. Also, China's relatively investing in Africa and deliberately staying clear of Africa's internal politics put China in a positive light before several Africans ([Hess & Aidoo, 2015](#)). Third, Russia's gesturing towards stemming the tide against Western sexual liberalisation has favourably disposed the Russian government more towards the religious, especially Christian community, in Africa—not least Ghana.

The above complicated restructuring of geopolitics, as the author has hinted has a direct impact on Africa's national and transnational politics. Already, segments of the continent, particularly the Sahel region of West Africa is reeling under the discontent youthful constituency who are making their respective countries in Burkina Faso, Mali,

and Niger nearly ungovernable ([Danjibo, 2020](#); [Sulemana, 2015](#)). As the coronavirus pandemic negatively impacted global economy, disadvantaging Africans in particular, African leaders find themselves in the sort of history repeating itself (historical parallelism)—either going the East, including China or the West, including the US. Meanwhile, the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Nana Akufo-Addo rather appears to have taken a position to comes across to many in Ghanaian pro-Socialists as favouring the US over Russia. For example, speaking at a session during the US–Africa Leader’s Summit in Washington on 2022, visit to the US on 14th December, 2022, President Akufo-Addo accused Russian mercenaries of imperilling the country’s peace with Burkina Faso ([Nyabor, 2022](#)).

Apart from the above issue re-setting international relations, Africa’s religious frontiers have been profiled by some academics as hostile to members of minority sexual groups ([Chitando & Van Klinken, 2016](#)). Already, Uganda has passed a law that offers what some analysts consider as harsh immeasurable punishment for persons of minority sexual group ([Landman, 2023](#); [Oxford Analytica, 2024](#); [Vasireddy et al., 2024](#)). Ghana’s religious constituency is also pushing a Bill to further outlaw the possibility religious minority group gaining grounds in the country ([Prempeh, 2021b](#)). Against all this is the fact that, the current US government is pursuing an agenda of spreading US’s liberal democracy to the world as an effort at decriminalising the restriction place of minority sexual rights.

Contextually, therefore, the author readily understood the suspicious and nationwide backlash from the religious constituency that greeted the US Vice President. In this paper, the author’s aim is, therefore, to discuss the various major issues that complicated the visit of Kamala Harris to Ghana. The author will argue that, the cultural wars in America; the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine have re-enchanted Ghana’s religious sphere towards an eschatological vision of protecting the frontiers of the family. As the author will argue, the re-enchancement of Ghana’s religious frontiers has similarly unveiled the social and cultural construction of the state—highlighting the complexities of citizenship, patriotism and sovereignty. The author will achieve the aim of the paper by relying on online newspaper, particularly as circulated on WhatsApp and social media. The novelty the author brings to the discussion is that, he takes US–Ghana international relationship into a new area, focusing specifically since the turn of the millennium, that is yet to receive extensive academic attention.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The next section discusses the world at the issues of globalisation and its impact on geo-politics. This is followed by a discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 and the Russian-Ukraine war in re-enchancing Ghana’s religious frontiers—the author will argue the destabilising impact

of the two events have reshaped the role of Ghana's religious constituency in public governance. The author will then discuss the intersection between the two events and the issues of Western cultural war—identifying how it affects Ghana's religious frontiers—given that, America's cultural wars seeks to interfere with pre-political moral issues, it has ipso facto reinvested the public sphere with religious ethics. The last two sections will be dedicated to analysing how the country's religious frontiers responded to the visit of the US's Vice President and the impact of the re-enchantment of Ghana's religious constituency and the "secular" state. The author will draw conclusions from the discussion, indicating the complicated issues of "secularism"; religion and public governance.

Globalisation and Its Impact on Geo-Politics

As part of the author's ongoing research on globalisation and Ghana's international relations with the Western world in 2022, the author extensively utilised Ghana's national archives, Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD, Accra) and the George Padmore Library, also in Accra—focusing on public conversations on the eve of the millennium. Several Editors and Columnists of the State's Newspapers, particularly the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* shared different perspectives on the future of Ghana and Africa. But what was readily discernible was that, the writers and later joined by academics were not very convinced the prospects of the country, particularly, Africa as a whole in the globalised world (Akokpari, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2000; Taylor & Nel, 2002).

On the international front, however, considering the end of the Cold War, with Russia appearing to have lost its political verve and America's liberal democracy making waves globally, the general assessment of the millennium was positive and favourable. Represented by towering social scientists, including Francis Fukuyama, globalisation was considered the end of centuries of human history of war, authoritarianism and dictatorship (Fukuyama, 1992). Away from Fukuyama's vision of the ethos of liberal democracy charting new pathways for human history into an imagined utopian world, others such as Thomas L. Friedman provided an economic vision of globalisation (Friedman, 2012). Friedman provided the Golden Arches Theory which stipulated that no two countries that both have McDonald's have ever fought a war against each other since they got their McDonald's. Put together, these scholars assumed that, two key factors—politics and economics—which actually drive public governance and shape international relations would stem the tide against wars and conflicts that undermine human quest or prosperity. Yuval Noah Harari became one of strongest proponents of the utopian vision of end of wars and conflicts to birth global prosperity against climate science, wars, and diseases (Harari, 2018).

The vision of optimism is shared by the philosophical positions of both the capitalists and socialists, which Samuel Huntington (2011) cautioned must be tempered with tolerance for cultural variation to avoid the clash of civilisations. The capitalists' vision of political liberation and the neo-liberal economic strategies birthing a utopian world of prosperity is discernible in the theories of Fukuyama and Friedman. Meanwhile, since the dividends of politics and economics all decline when re-distributed, the vision of the millennium has hardly been achieved. The promise of capitalist-informed globalisation has rather proven to be a myth—as it has not engendered economic equality across the globe (Chang, 2019).

The world's entry into the millennium, was heralded by group of aggrieved men who decided to strike the twin tower of the World Trade Centre, epicentre of America's/Western capitalism on 11th September, 2001, which is famously called "9/11". Watching the news, the author was surprised to see the caption and subtitle, "America under attack." The attack on the US drew different responses around the world. With the increasing politicisation of religion, particularly Islam in this instance, the audible cry of "*Allahu akbar*"—to wit, "Allah is great"—that supposedly embellished the attack profiled the attackers as Islamic terrorists. In response, the Republic President of the US, George Bush Jr decided to go on a long mission of separating good Muslims from bad Muslims in what he and his government labelled as "War against terrorism" (Mamdani, 2005).

Considering the geo-politics of the world since 9/11, with Islam under very relentless critique, the Ghanaian religious frontier has been very sensitive to external influences in the nation's politics. More so, as the post-9/11 saw the US securitising its national and international relations with strong "panopticons" and restricted immigration policies, the anger of the young people in several countries in West Africa has turned against their leaders. As several countries in West Africa, especially the Sahelian region, experiencing continuing economic morasses, aggrieved young men have identified the political elites as culpable. They have profiled the elites as incompetent and complicit in fostering Western economic and cultural imperialism, which majority of them measure against their Islamic religion—or at least as they understood.

It was, therefore, during this period of America's war against terrorism that the Boko Haram—to wit "Western education is forbidden". This actually could also be read as Western civilization, which as the author understood it was symbolised by America's promotion of its notion of women's rights, as incompatible with Islam. The author is not arguing that, Boko Haram is not also politically driven by a group of people who are leveraging or as some authors have said, hijacking Islam to achieve their own interests. It is rather to say that, the America's interference with local political economy of Islam around the world rather sustained any imagination of America's as anti-Islam. All this morph into the fact that, the turn of the millennium also witnessed a strong pressure

from a selection of the Muslim community, fronted by the Federation of the Muslim Women's Association, to mainstream the public acceptance of the veil among in public institutions, particularly secondary schools ([Prempeh, 2022](#)). The Christians, who also feel quite uncertain about the future of their faith, also remained adamant at making amends to accommodate the veil as an index of Islam in the historic mission schools in the country ([Prempeh, 2022](#)).

For all this tensions, the American government of George Bush Jr decided to appeal to the sympathy of Ghanaian Muslims. This was against the fact that, some of the reformist/Wahabi Muslim leaders were charging their constituencies against Islam—of such Muslim clerics was Sheikh, Tawfiq Ibrahim in Kumasi. Gaining more followers with his hard-line teachings against America, the US diplomatically facilitated and financed his visit in the company of Hajj Umar Ibrahim Imam to visit the US ([W. Ibrahim, personal communication, March 11, 2022](#)). The American initiative was to convince the Muslim community that, contrary to what had been circulated globally as a result of America's war on terrorism, America was not against Islam. So, by 2003, these Muslim Leaders and others visited the US and returned with a new agenda towards rebuilding a positive image between the Muslims in Ghana and America ([W. Ibrahim, personal communication, March 11, 2022](#)). Hajj Umar has deepened his support for Western education and became nearly indifferent about the veil—to the point of indicating that, the education of the Muslim girlchild should be prioritised over denying them education especially in schools that do not allow the veil ([Prempeh, 2022](#)) The religious situation in Ghana, especially between Muslims and Christians remained one of conviviality and occasional misunderstanding over religious symbols in the public sphere ([Prempeh, 2020](#)).

The Coronavirus and the Redefining of Ghana's Religious Frontiers

The rather fragile interaction between Muslims and Christians underwent a seismic change following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which hit the world and Ghana in March 2020. The oversized impact of the pandemic against human ability to keep life afloat rather unveiled and rendered more visible systemic injustice—indexed by poverty, famine and unequal distribution of economic prosperity. All this definitely cast the prospects of global economic prosperity that globalist envisioned in very blur and dark dystopian perspective. At this point, some of the leaders of the world, including the US, appealed to the religious community to invest in prayers to help the nations. The President of Ghana also called upon the religious community to broaden their frontiers to the highest of heaven to stem the tide against the pandemic.

Indeed, the religious leaders prayed for God's help. But they did something more, which re-invested primal vision of the state in the modern. Against all the pretensions

of the world or Ghana as secular, the pandemic reinfused religion into Ghana's public sphere. First of all, the Christian and Islamic religious figures re-theologised to rationalise their constituency to comply with lockdown rules (Prempeh, 2021b). This trend was because much as the country has passed an emergency—which has recently been quashed—to allow the state to hold people's right to movement and sociogenic activities in control, the state could not use power to enforce it. The controversial lockdown rules were so disorienting that the security had to be deployed to foster compliance from citizens, the result of which included instances of security abuse of civilians (Nkrumah et al., 2020). With the state failing in its legitimate use of both legislative and brute force, it was the religious figures who succeeded in ensuring citizen's compliance, which on the whole was successful.

Secondly, the religious communities overreached themselves to provide food and other services to their members (Prempeh, 2021b). Needless to say, the pandemic worsened the economic prospects of the urban poor and the poor, in general. The state provided some intervention, which was also not enough. For the reason of state's inadequacy in providing for its citizens, the religious communities stepped in the help. The country's largest Pentecostal denomination, the Church of Pentecost, even offered to the country its multi-purpose edifice at the Gomoa Fetteh in the Central Region to the state for use as isolation centre for persons infected with the virus.

When the country and the world started bouncing back to normalcy, the country's religious frontiers had undergone seismic change. First, the pandemic increased the migration of religious service online, which also allowed religious people to shop and choose from a wide range of religious sermons, other than what they were used to. Second, the pandemic-induced intensified online service democratised the religious space away from pre-pandemic strong ecclesiastical control. Concurrently, new religious voices emerged whose teaching challenges the pre-pandemic mystified teachings such as that of a religious figure who often transmogrified. Also, the religious groups became more susceptible to critique with several members asking the clergy to render accountability for gifts and tithe the churches receive.

Almost in a pre-pandemic world, following the WHO's declaration in May 2023 that the pandemic is over, the author argues that, it appears to be temporarily over for some religious figures. For example, since the social distancing rules were significantly liberalised and now completely removed, all the previous famous pastors and prophets laying claim to some spiritual supreme with very controversial claims have all not returned to the *status quo*. Similarly, the religious communities realised more consciously a need to reinvest in social service more than they had done before the outbreak of the pandemic—and, indeed, they have kept to that to keep members who may not want to church to do so. This is also because, internal critique religious

communities have faced have surged to mainstream a need for the religious bodies to carefully blend both the providing of social services to satisfy the needs of this-worldly without losing sight over the other-worldly.

More importantly, the impact of the pandemic in broadcasting and making systemic inequalities very visible demonstrated the superficiality of the state. At least, much as the religious bodies were realigning themselves to new demands to provide social service, several citizens, particularly the young people, did not see the state political elites to be doing enough to ameliorate the challenges these young people faced. The distress of the young people crystallised with an online mobilisation that resulted in the formation of a pressure group called *#FixTheCountryMovement*. The Movement led by individuals such as Ernesto Yeboah, Joshua Buernortey Boye-Doe known popularly as KalyJay, and Oliver Mawuse Barker-Vormawor. As leaders, they demanded a complete revision of Ghana's constitution, which they identified as the country's main problem as it invested so much power in the hands of the country's President.

Amidst all these agitations, by 2021, a group of academic and civil society leaders mobilised to push for the acceptance of minority sexual rights in Ghana ([Prempeh, 2023](#)). This group of activists who also identified themselves as allies of Joe Biden's leftist agenda to promote LGBTQ+ rights globally, registered their presence to protest a Bill in Ghana's Parliament that would legislatively censor all LGBTQ+ issues, including advocacy. The Bill was sponsored by the country's overwhelming religious constituencies and chiefs and fronted by a few Members of Parliament. It was occasioned by the continuing interference foreign diplomats in Ghana seeking to promote LGBTQ+ agenda in the country—contrary to the country's current laws against sodomy and religious sentiment of the majority. Not only that there is also hardly any evidence that members of the LGBTQ+ were really marginalised. What remains very obvious is that, the country's religious frontiers have been served as guardrail against Western Cultural Revolution.

Meanwhile, the tide appears stronger than the LGBTQ+ advocates and its international inspirers could contain. This is because, as the world was reaching a leverage against the pandemic, war—arguably inspired by primordial territorial aggrandisement—broke between Russia and Ukraine. The ongoing war has further dimmed the prospects of an immediate an earlier anticipated economic bounce back for the world, and particularly the so-called developing economies. This trend of continuing economic downturn has not stopped the US from promoting minority sexual rights, almost at the expense of real existential “bread and butter” issues. This leads to the last section of the paper, which is how the state in Ghana is responding to the US's cultural ideological globalism.

The US' Ideological Globalism, the State of Ghana and its Religious Frontiers

The author has indicated that, the pandemic has already altered the religious map in Ghana to the point where the religions are pushing more into providing social services. It is also as previously stated, the US is investing in promoting minority sexual rights, and as if what people do in private is of any concern to public governance. As America, under its arguably most converted leftist leader, Joe Biden, pushing for the legislation and liberalisation of LGBTQ+ matters around the world, Ghana has become a major target ([Prempeh, 2021a](#)).

Meanwhile, nearly all the African leaders who have commented publicly on the subject have downplayed the necessity of the LGBTQ+ issue as an agenda for Africa. Dealing with post-Covid and the overflow of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict on the economies of their respective countries, African leaders are rather asking the Western world for favourable economic deal than sexual matters. It was partly against all this that, the US VP visited Ghana. But as the author has said, her visit and what she said rather infuriated the Ghanaian religious community against America and reinvested the vision of remnant socialists. This trend is also against the background that, the US VP promised to support Ghana and other West African countries, including Benin, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Togo with \$100 million to fight extremist threat ([Linskey, 2023](#)). Nevertheless that promise had not had any major impact on the religious community to see the US Biden sexual revolution in a good light. The religious community remain resolute in their stance in support of the Family Bill in Parliament. At the same time, the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), whose MP, Sam George, is a major voice in defence of the Bill, is leveraging the situation against the sitting President's party—the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In a by-election that took place at Assin North in the Central Region of Ghana on 27th June, 2023, the issue of the LGBTQ+ featured prominently. During the elections, the NDC conspired against the NPP's candidate, Mr Charles Opoku, that the NPP was seeking to win an election in order to get more votes in the country's hang parliament to vote against the Family Bill. Much as the NPP's communicators, including Reverend John Ntim Fordjour an NPP MP for Assin South and one of the promoted of the Family Bill, rebutted the claim, the NPP lost the by-election.

During the media interview with several of the voters, they claimed that, among other things, they were of the view that, the NPP would not support the Family Bill in Parliament, for which reason they voted against the party's contending MP. Certainly, the constituency is almost like a swing seat, but a few things arguably make the LGBTQ+ issue a credible decider of election outcome. Firstly, the NDC candidate who own lost his seat, after his first debut in an election and in Parliament in January 2020. This was because, he was charged of holding dual citizenship—Ghana and Canada—at the time

he filed to represent the NDC. Secondly, he is still facing criminal charges, even though time has allowed him to fully complete the renunciation of his dual citizenship issue to contest. Thirdly, the NPP had invested unprecedented social services and road construction just a few months before the by-elections. The NPP ostensibly did all this to sway vote in the swing constituency to its side. The party topped the above with incumbency advantage. Much as it is said that, Mr James Quayson may have benefited from sympathy votes, the issue of the LGBTQ+ weighed heavily against the NPP's candidate, who did not even declare support for the LGBTQ+ community. But certainly, his federal head appeared to have done so on his behalf ([Asiedu-Addo, 2023](#)).

The above context raises questions about the nature of the state and the place of religious bodies in public governance. Why is that, despite all the investment of the NPP to win the by-election, they still lost the case? The answer may lie as the author said in the nature of the modern state. The postcolonial state of Ghana is a social and cultural construct, like any modern state—at least since the Christian Reformation of the 16th century. The state is also based on invented traditions that inscribe sacredness to mundane emblems that are mainstreamed as national emblems. Meanwhile, since the invention of tradition is not necessary inventing new tradition but recuperating primordial ones, especially the mystification of material objects, the modern state's invention is not arbitrary and random. It is deliberately and intentionally curated and cultivated to foster an imagined state of “we the people.”

Concomitantly, the difficulty the political elites have had since the country's independence in 1957 to deliver the utopian vision of the decolonisation agenda has rather segmented the nation. The nation is segmented basically into three camps of unequal strength in terms of loyalty. These segments are religion, family and politics. The author will discuss all these segments to explain the tension that circumscribed the visit of the US's VP and why the country's religious constituency is hardly in favour of Biden's Cultural Revolution. Family is the basic unit of society that is needed to serve as the primary agent of socialisation to raise responsible citizens for the nation. The family is also pre-political, in the sense that the State does not have any right or families do not convey to the state the right for the state to determine specific family issues, especially those that do not border on crime. The State is not, therefore, responsible for defining how families structure their marriages and determine gender roles. The State only comes in to endorse what the family accepts as normative practice and given the rights to protect the normative. That is why the marriages are registered with the State, after it has been established at the family level. Every marriage must therefore have a prior support before it can be registered by the State. The State offers marriage national protection, not create validity for marriage.

Also, procreation also comes across to the family as the only means of recuperating and replenishing themselves. There is no way of going around procreation other than heterosexual marriage. The modern world of science has developed an in vitro fertilisation (IVF) as alternative to the constitution of heterosexual marriage as the historic means of procreation. But, there are a few concerns with the IVF debate. First, it is arguably necessary for a heterosexual couple who biologically are unable to conceive. Second, for non-heterosexual relationships, it is almost needless but parts of the capitalist world of even monetising the means of procreation. This leads to the third reason, for couples in developing economies, who may even decide to practice same-sex relationship, IVF, given the high cost involved, is almost an impossibility to undertake. Consequently, the issue also remains that, a child needs a social context where the couple involve bring their unique different ontological biological features to nurture a new baby. Mothers and fathers of different ontological biological categories provide unique different but complementary perspectives and experiences in nurturing a baby.

The above issue brings in the religious segment of the State. The sustenance of the Ghanaian/African family rests on religion. Religion has had different shades of definition since the 19th century when some Western scholars decided to study religion from the perspectives of evolutionary theory to rationally dismiss religion as superstitious. Nevertheless, religion remains what it is—beliefs as worldview that provides reasons and justification for the mundane things of life. This is also to say that, rationality and all the subjectivities involved would not be enough to persuade people to pursue the commonest aspired value of society such as altruism, for, after all, one man's rationality is another man's idiocy. For Ghana's religious constituency and given the complications involved in the marriage establishment as a merging of two human beings with self-centred interest, religion, as worldview, helps to keep the institution afloat.

It is also not to say that, religion in support of family life is conjured by religions people—certainly, the author disagrees with the Western scholars' efforts at dismissing religious reality from the evolutionary perspective (Kundt, 2015). Instead, what the author seeks to do is to argue that, for Ghana's religious constituency, religion is pre-political that provides reason for human material undertaking. Reducing this to the basic expression, for Ghana's religious constituency the existence of God as the epicentre of religion is taken for granted and not debated. The Akan of Ghana simply indexed with the saying, "No one teaches the child about the existence of God." Taking the existence of God as given, family life among Ghana's religious constituency is largely informed by religion—at least from the perspective of religious orthopraxy—or practices. For example, for both Muslims and Christians, marriage is not just cultural; it is also religious, which individuals undertake as a fulfilment of God's command to procreate. Muslims see marriage as a religious act—*ibadah*—that when fulfilled

constitutes fulfilling half of one's religious requirement. For Christians, marriage is a covenant that is between two individuals of biological male and a biological female who enters the institution as part of fulfilling a divine cultural mandate—with God as the star witness. In indigenous cultures, particularly the Akan, marriage entwines the non-binary world of the physical and spiritual, such that it is through marriage that the ancestors are also immortalised ([Prempeh, 2023](#)).

The discussion also leads to the issue of abortion and women's autonomy over their bodies, which the US VP and her party are seriously promoting in America and wanted to promote in Ghana. Given that, marriage is also a religious act for Ghana's religious constituency, the autonomy of a couple is not guaranteed. As a religious act, marriage as worship to the Muslims and covenant to the Christian, also involves submission of *self* to the *other* to achieve what God commands a divine-cultural mandate. The sublimation of *self* to the *other* in marriage is idealistic, but it is what religion prescribes, as anyone in marriage would admit that without submissiveness and love—as in needing the other and living with the other in harmony as part of God's command—marriage would not work. The author argues, therefore, that, any revolution that seeks to prioritise woman's autonomy ipso facto puts itself on the contrary course of marriage as religion or worship.

Now, the author wants to engage the hard facts. Marriage, as sociologists and anthropologists have identified, is often ridden with challenges ([La Fontaine, 2009](#)). The challenges have usually resulted in men abusing women—including wife battering and murder. But more than that and here is what the author considers as the base of both the abortion issue and the subject of woman's autonomy, marriage redefines the life of the couple fundamentally, but unequally in terms of what the couple would do after childbirth. In the 1950s, Simone de Beauvoir ([2011](#)), a major voice and architect feminist scholarship deployed existentialism as a philosophy to deconstruct marriage. Armed with the philosophy of existentialism, de Beauvoir stated emphatically that, "One is not born, but becomes woman." This statement of de Beauvoir that indexes an explicit application of existentialism begins for her and late feminist scholars, the journey towards radical feminism and discarding marriage institution. The point is that, first and foremost de Beauvoir identified marriage as the basic institution that fosters separation of gendered roles between men and women. She argued that, marriage with its consequent childbirth keeps the woman in a domestic space undertaking repetitive and unexciting immanent role of nurturing. But since the man is not directly burdened with childcare, at least not in the early stages of a child life, a man is free to perform transcendental innovative and creative roles in public life. In the end, while de Beauvoir did not argue against the abolition of marriage, future feminist writers picked up from

where she left off and embarked on a campaign against marriage and if marriage happened against abortion.

The author argues that, de Beauvoir was right, because it is fundamentally pregnancy and childbirth and nurturing that remains a major obstacle in the feminist agenda for equal rights. This is because equal rights would involve women and men doing as they please—but as the author agreeing with de Beauvoir has identified, marriage life and the package it brings—including childbirth—crashes ideas of equality. Social scientists have rightly discovered that, the more women receive education, the less likely she will marry and the lower the birth-rate. This is also true because; more education would empower the woman but it would also mean more time away from issues of marriage. So, the author argues that, much as education is good, the kind of education and what it is intended to achieve and its impact of couples are all of importance to religious people.

It is against the above context that the religious constituency in Ghana have been particularly active in disengaging from the state on issues of marriage. The State, as the author has said, is completely as social construct and exists fundamentally—at least if judge from the perspectives of Western theoreticians of social construct ([Hobbes, 1904](#); [Locke, 1924](#); [Rousseau, 1973](#)) exist to protect the rights of citizens. Much as these Western philosophers may disagree on fine details in terms of how the social contract should be established, the fact is that they generally agreed on a need to preserve citizens from tyrannical rule. Building the modern State on the idea of a social contract, there is the need to consider the sovereignty of the people of Ghana so as to govern from the perspective of the Constitution. This is also a necessary condition because; citizenship is not a social construct—or a choice for people; the idea of Ghana is based on the sacralisation of symbols as national representation to unite discrete people, some of whom never agreed prior and during colonialism. Thus, part of the establishment of modern Ghana is for the political elites to agree on the agreeable—having a constitution that protects the rights of the various segments that constitutes the State. In short, governance in Ghana and elsewhere is to have a constitution that manages differences.

The above logic of governing plurality explains the rationality of Ghana's constitution not having fine details about how families establish marriages; who determines how many children one gives and when one decides to have children. Also, it is for this reason that no one goes to the State to ask for marriage. All these are determined at the family level, because Ghanaians did not hand over their family rights to the State as part of the social construct. What they handed over to the State, on the face of the constitution, is for the State to protect what they define as marriage. Against, this background, every marriage in Ghana is required to be registered for the State to

have an oversight responsibility of protecting the marriage. And for the author to make his point even clearer, the State requires that, every marriage that is registered is first accepted by the families of the couple. A condition against which such a rule could be set aside is when the families of a would be couple who are more than 21 years are adducing reasons against a marriage that is itself a threat to the nation as a social construct. For example, if ethnocentrism specifically (and less of religious fanaticism) is adduced as a reason to suspend a potential, then the State is compelled to intervene to adjudicate. But even here, the State would insist that, such a couple have had the right approval based on what Ghana's constitution considers as marriage as fundamentally heterosexual.

All said, family and religion are conjoined as pre-political in determining the role of the State—which is also true because the sovereignty of Ghana to determine the internal and external matters of the country is constitutionally vested in the people, not the President. The *people* may itself be hardly defined, but what it means is that, shared vision of the people who make up what is Ghana. The people could also be read as the pre-political virtues and values that those who live in Ghana share as human beings—and in the author's analysis it is marriage and family life. The author argues that, this may explain the indifference Ghanaians may expressed on economic and political matters—and as a matter of fact get divided over such matters. But Ghanaians, at least, as it remains a religiously-dominated country with an enchanted public sphere have all united in forming a Coalition to challenge any efforts at overturning marriage and childbirth as a religious duty.

All this explains the support and argument of the Speaker of Parliament. Parliament is the representation of the voices of Ghana. Ideally, parliamentarians are expected and ought to say what the people in their constituencies want them to say. But since that is nearly impossible for the current political regime, Parliament is still expected to represent the cherished views of the people. Ghana's Speaker of Parliament was therefore right in reminding the President to understand the functional role of the Legislature and the Executive. The executive does not determine what Parliament does. In fact, the President of Ghana, representing the executive risks being impeached by the people—through parliament—if the President abuses the sovereignty the people have *spared* him. The President is spared the power to rule at least for not more than two terms of 4 years each, if the President is likely to be voted into power after the first term. For all this, the author argues that, the response of the President of Ghana to the US VP was unconstitutional and needless—even if he intended to be diplomatic in begging the US for financial aid. The US VP also angered the religious constituency because she was considered as a bully and an anarchist who wanted to push a neo-colonial agenda of cultural ideological imperialism. As the author also argues, the US VP was not wrong

in her use of “we” as Americans are not united over the issues of same-sex rights and women’s autonomy over their bodies.

CONCLUSION

In this article, the author has argued that, the US VP’s visit to Ghana, instead of achieving what she may have surreptitiously rationalised as seeking to strengthen diplomatic ties with the country was a failure. The intention of the visit was read by the Ghanaian religious constituency as decoy to cower Ghana into submitting to America’s cultural wars and imperialism—which is indexed by Biden’s democratic agenda of spreading same-sex rights and women’s autonomy across the world as indexes of democracy. As the author has argued, both the President of Ghana and the US VP all constitutionally erred in assuming that, their personal and/or political views was in faithfulness to the social construct that establishes their nations as both social and cultural constructs. Both leaders were involved in interfering with the family and marriage aspect of the religious life of a people that is not part of the social construct of their countries. Both leaders were also involved in pretending that, the sovereignty to rule lies in their hands, and not the people who voted them into office. In the end, the author argues that, Ghana’s engagement with the US on the issue of LGBTQ+ would hardly be resolved with financial aid—as the US President sought to do. More importantly, the effect of the pandemic and the current war between Russia and Ukraine has reinforced the resolve of the religious community to see themselves as directly responsible for their own social welfare, which has seen both Muslims and Christians investing more in social services. The author concludes by suggesting a need for future research to explore how the political culture of Ghana would turn in the face of US’s efforts at compelling the political elites to support same-sex agenda.

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Data Availability Statement

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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