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# Campaigning Against Women's Rights? Britain's Global Colonial Legacy in the Early UN Women's Rights Agenda 1950–1962

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## ABSTRACT

This article assesses the impact of British colonialism in relation to UN women's rights conventions in the 1950s and early 1960s. Building on the body of scholarship on the role of colonialism on the development of human rights frameworks at the UN, it focuses on Britain's diplomatic engagements on women's rights at the global level and finds that Britain's global colonial legacy on the UN women's rights agenda in this period was as a conservative and obstructive state actor. Britain's lack of interest in conventions to support women's rights, and insistence on the need for 'Territorial Application Clauses,' outweighed any acknowledgement of the importance of establishing universal rights for women, or the importance of these rights for indigenous women within British colonies. Further still, Britain's conservatism impacted the very contours and political weight of the conventions themselves. As well as exposing the geopolitics of British colonialism on these specific conventions, this article highlights the critical need to challenge myths surrounding British colonial benevolence and to interrogate the notion that that 'Western' governments such as Britain have consistently sought to export women's rights at the UN.

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## Introduction

An emerging research agenda exploring the linkages between colonialism and contemporary world order is gaining increasing attention within the field of the History of International Relations and beyond.<sup>1</sup> A pivotal part of this agenda explores key ways in which colonialism has played a role in defining the evolution of the human rights agenda at the United Nations. This work turns the notion that human rights are 'western' on its head; rather unearthing the way in which colonial interests – defined here as the strategic interests of colonial powers in maintaining their empires – served as a constraint on the development of UN human rights standards.

While the fledgling UN began to debate the need for universally-applicable human rights standards soon after its inception, historians such as Fabian Klose and Roland Burke have shown that the idea of human rights had the potential to delegitimise and threaten the colonial project on the global stage.<sup>2</sup> Colonial subjugation jarred with the emerging notion of the *equal* application of human rights: the risk that the provisions included within human rights agreements at the international level would theoretically be extended to indigenous populations in the colonies

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galvanised the resistance of colonial Member States.<sup>3</sup> Burke illuminates that the 1950s to 1970s marked vital years in which decolonization ‘virtually remade the UN’. He evidences how newly independent former colonies, harnessed the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the Human Rights Commission, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories to forge progress on human rights in the face of Western racism and apathy.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the ‘contested decolonisation’ in Kenya and Algeria<sup>5</sup> saw universal human rights narratives become the ‘armour’ of the anticolonial movement at the UN.<sup>6</sup>

The insertion of Territorial Application Clauses offered colonial powers a practical means by which they could sign up the metropole to the human rights obligations defined therein, without automatically having to extend the rights to the indigenous populations of their colonies as well. Rather, they argued, that colonies could sign up under an opt-in basis when their domestic legislation aligned with the convention.<sup>7</sup>

Samuel Moyn and Brian Simpson have shown that anticolonial voices utilised the human rights agenda as a means to assert the principle of self-determination and colonial liberation (as opposed to asserting human rights as individual rights as understood today).<sup>8</sup> These conflicting views meant that the UN human rights agenda became a prime site in which the fault lines around colonialism and anticolonialism were exposed. Consequently, colonialism proved a key factor in the development of human rights frameworks at the UN in the 1950s and 1960s. Debates around national self-determination were critical in the emergence of the two covenants on human rights agreed in the 1960s: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), with the right to the adoption of self-determination agreed explicitly within their articles. The role of Asian, Arab and African states was hugely significant in achieving these provisions, as well as the incorporation of the principle of self-determination into the landmark 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.<sup>9</sup>

Building on these insights on European colonial interests and the UN human rights agenda, this article demonstrates the impact of British colonialism on the early UN women’s rights frameworks specifically.<sup>10</sup> It looks across three UN women’s rights conventions developed the 1950s and early 1960s which paved the way for the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979.

To this end, it examines the extent to which Britain sought to limit the existence of these instruments in the first place, weaken the provisions therein, and limit the degree of applicability of these instruments through the use of Territorial Application Clauses. Secondly, it details the narratives Britain invoked around colonial autonomy in order to try and sell its policy positions amid an increasingly hostile audience of anticolonial UN Member States. Here, the context of the Cold War is significant as such hostilities were also inflamed by the USSR, who championed the anti-colonial cause as a form of diplomatic proxy war against the *West*.<sup>11</sup> Finally, it will assess the impact of British colonialism on the UN women’s rights agenda itself. That is to say, it will determine the way in which British colonial concerns and their associated diplomatic strategies, shaped and affected the legal and political strength of the UN’s women’s rights conventions in this period. It will look to the behaviour of other colonial powers to ascertain whether Britain was isolated its approach and influence and thus had its own particular impact.

The article reveals that colonial interests were very significant in shaping Britain’s approach to the early UN women’s rights agenda. Rather than looking at the role of colonial policy in promoting or restricting women’s rights within British colonies themselves, it looks at the global level as a distinct arena worthy of examination in aiding our understanding of Britain’s colonial legacy. It is clear that Britain’s colonial interests trumped – and undermined – any potential interest in the objectives of these instruments within the international women’s rights agenda. It makes an important contribution to the work of Katherine Sikkink by forcing us to reconsider the notion that global human rights were driven by the *West*,<sup>12</sup> and affirms that Britain was a laggard

in its approach to women's rights at the UN *because* of its colonial interests. However, Britain's conservatism towards these women's rights frameworks was limited and challenged in different aspects by the domestic campaigns of women's rights organisations back in Britain, by the growing strength of anticolonial campaigns within the UN, and a broader context of another colonial power (France) who proved less obtrusive in its approach to the women's rights agenda. Crucially, these actors challenged Britain's policy positions and narratives and showed that a different approach was possible.

The three international treaties considered in this article are the Conventions on the Political Rights of Women (1952), the Nationality of Married Women (1957) and the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1962) (hereinafter Convention on the Consent to Marriage), which began their journeys in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), before moving to higher bodies of the UN and their agreement in the General Assembly. While the UN Women's Rights agenda at the Commission on the Status of Women covered additional issues during the period under review, these three conventions have been selected as particularly significant in developing new international norms on women's rights.

This article is based on two types of sources. Firstly, British Foreign Office briefings and communications to its UN delegations to the CSW sessions over the period under review, as well as correspondence with the Colonial Office, provide an insight into the motivations of the British government. Secondly, UN summary records from the CSW and other UN organs including the UN Economic and Social Council and UN General Assembly help to contextualise Britain's behaviour and illuminate the argumentation it put forward at the UN. By using these two types of sources in combination, we reach a deep understanding of Britain's colonial motivations and strategies.<sup>13</sup>

## Colonial Britain and the limitation of universal women's rights agenda

Taking the three women's rights conventions which emanated from the UN in this period - Conventions on the Political Rights of Women (1952), the Nationality of Married Women (1957) and Convention on the Consent to Marriage (1962) - repeating patterns of British conservatism are evidenced. In all three cases, Britain's preference for its colonial interests over a universal women's rights agenda can be observed in its policy positions and tactical approaches taken at the UN.

### *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*

At the 1950 CSW session, the Mexican delegation called for a convention on women's political rights to encourage governments 'to recognize the equality of women in the sphere of politics'.<sup>14</sup> From the outset of the discussions around the convention, Britain tried to derail momentum, arguing that such a convention was unnecessary. Rather, it argued that it would be better to report on progress annually than bring in a legal convention.<sup>15</sup> In the session, the UK delegate argued that it was for women of countries which had not yet been granted rights to fight for them, 'and not wait for the Commission to solve their problems for them'.<sup>16</sup> Yet, such dismissal on the role of international norm setting was not the majority view; the CSW voted in favour of pursuing the convention.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, a draft was prepared ahead of the 1951 CSW session, which affirmed women's right to vote, to be elected or appointed to public office and exercise public functions. With a draft now to hand, internal Foreign Office correspondence noted that it would likely be 'unacceptable' to the Colonial Office as well as additional domestic concerns.<sup>18</sup> Yet while Britain led the charge in trying to obstruct the progression of the convention at the 1951 CSW session, it later became isolated in its position. The US as well as other colonial powers France and the Netherlands

were in favour. New champions for the convention also emerged at the session, including the Dominican Republic and Haiti, which both noted the important role of international moral pressure in helping to induce governments to grant equal political rights for women.<sup>19</sup> Britain was joined by only Poland and the USSR in abstaining on the draft convention text at the CSW session, with 12 votes in favour, none against.<sup>20</sup>

Britain's attempts to stymie the progression of the convention had ramifications back home. A range of women's rights organisations including the British Federation of University Women, the Married Women's Association and the Women's Liberal Foundation wrote to the Foreign Office to express their indignation that Britain would fail to support an instrument designed to guarantee equal political rights of women to vote in elections and exercise public functions. As the various regional branches of these organisations each took up the campaign to write to the Foreign Office over the summer of 1951, they also garnered the support of MPs across the political spectrum.<sup>21</sup> One of the government's own Labour MPs, George Porter, tabled a Parliamentary Question seeking clarity as to the voting instructions given to the UK delegates at the CSW session in light of the abstention. This is significant in understanding that domestic groups challenged the British government's pursuit of colonial interests over women's rights and that the *realpolitik* of British colonialism had boundaries that were openly challenged.

Indeed, such pressure landed uneasily with officials in the Foreign Office who urged a reconsideration of Britain's position on the convention 'in view of the public interest expressed on these topics' ahead of a further vote on the matter at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session that summer. Notably, they acknowledged Britain's isolation within the CSW since other countries felt 'that the adoption of a Convention might offer some advantage... to the progress in backward countries of political rights for women'.<sup>22</sup> Yet importantly, the Colonial Office rejected a rethink of Britain's position, refusing to give any scope to the idea of supporting the convention without the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause. It noted to the Foreign Office that 'we should reiterate that without a colonial application article the United Kingdom would be unable to sign any Convention on the rights of women unless and until all the territories for whose international relations His Majesty's Government are responsible had agreed to its extension to them'.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Helen Laville's research on Britain and the CSW shows that that Colonial Office was particularly concerned about the drafting of conventions since it felt that 'that women's rights were integral to social, cultural, economic, religious, and political structures and relationships in colonial territories. Forcing change by convention, rather than encouraging it by education, risked resistance and disruption'.<sup>24</sup>

The Colonial Office's resistance to the convention was reiterated when the draft text of the convention was later circulated to governments in 1951. It instructed the Foreign Office to stress that the convention was unacceptable in its draft form since it would be 'unacceptable in many of the Colonies' which it argued were 'deeply founded in native law and custom'. The Colonial Office continued to maintain that without a Territorial Application Clause, Britain could not become a party.<sup>25</sup> Thus while the campaigns by domestic women's rights organisations (and subsequently parliamentarians) encouraged the Foreign Office to rethink the weight granted to its colonial interests as the convention progressed, the Colonial Office continued to obstruct any movement towards prioritising women's rights given its insistence that such rights should not be made universal in the colonies.

As the convention moved to the General Assembly Third Committee to debate its final clauses, Britain was now in the company of India who supported the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause. Despite hailing from a newly independent state, India's delegate argued for the inclusion of such clause on the basis that it was 'designed to secure as many votes as possible for the draft convention, particularly the votes of the administering Powers.' This was a means to an end he argued: 'Once they had signed the convention, the administering Powers would not be able to justify a refusal to grant political rights to women in the Trust Territories.' Britain's support for the inclusion of the clause, resulted in a short term victory for the amendment.<sup>26</sup> Thus Britain's policy

position was clear and unwavering: it continued to call for a Territorial Application Clause in the final stages of the convention drafting, prioritising this over the universal application of women's political rights. But, much to Britain's disappointment, the clause was later lost again when it was debated in the General Assembly in 1952.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Convention on the Nationality of Married Women***

Britain's insistence on the insertion of a Territorial Application Clause emerged again in the discussions on the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women during the mid-1950s. Questionnaire and survey data gathered for reports to the CSW from its first days in 1947, had revealed that conflicting laws in many countries meant that a woman who married a man of a different nationality could find herself deprived of her own nationality, and in some cases stateless, in the event of divorce.<sup>28</sup> As initial drafts of a convention on the matter were put forward to the CSW by Cuba in 1953 and 1954, Britain decided to take early and decisive action on the need to include a Territorial Application Clause. Making clear that the inclusion of such clause was specifically related to Britain's territorial obligations, the UK delegate argued that such a clause would allow Britain to 'become a party at an earlier date while consultation with the governments of the territories was proceeding'.<sup>29</sup> It also sought to dampen momentum, arguing it did not believe such an instrument was 'really appropriate'.<sup>30</sup> Thus in contrast to its reluctance to support the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Britain decided to begrudgingly support the draft convention, while simultaneously pushing for a Territorial Application Clause to be included within the final drafting. Yet, at the same time it also sought to discourage the need for the convention generally.

After the draft was sent to governments for comment, it was discussed in the CSW in 1955. Britain used this opportunity to reiterate the importance of a Territorial Application Clause. While in this case the colonies would fall under the same citizenship rules as the United Kingdom, the concern lay with the category of 'other territories which have their own citizenship' such as Southern Rhodesia and the Kingdom of Tonga, but for whom the British government was still responsible for their international relations.<sup>31</sup> Yet, the question of the inclusion of the clause was deferred, leaving Britain supporting the progression of the convention in 1955.

As the draft convention moved through the Third Committee of the General Assembly later that year, a number of amendments for a Territorial Application Clause were proposed, with one put forward by Britain.<sup>32</sup> While these various iterations failed to make it through the Third Committee, Britain ploughed on, continuing to call for a Territorial Application Clause at the General Assembly plenary debate stage in 1957. This time – much to the surprise of the British delegates – they succeeded.<sup>33</sup> As with the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Indian delegate supported the amendment, alongside the Pakistani delegate who argued that 'women of dependent territories were equally entitled to protection of the Convention and the amendment was a means of holding metropolitan governments responsible for its application to them'.<sup>34</sup> A Territorial Application Clause was voted into the convention in its final stage of debate. Furthermore, Britain had now created a base from which to call for the inclusion of such clause within later conventions on women's rights (and broader human rights instruments) in this period.

### ***Convention on Consent to Marriage***

The call for another convention followed shortly thereafter with a convention on marriage practices, and Britain once again demonstrated a similar resistance to the idea of universal application. Discussions on international standards on marriage practices began in earnest at the 1957 CSW session. As before, colonial interests dominated Britain's engagement on the convention. The issue was a pertinent one: child marriage was prevalent in the British colonies at the time.



For example, in Sierra Leone there was no local legislation fixing a minimum age of marriage, and in Tanganyika (Tanzania) a man of Asian or African descent could marry a girl under the age of 12.<sup>35</sup>

At the 1958 session, France pushed on the matter, calling for a convention as a 'pressing necessity', with the support of Czechoslovakia and the USSR.<sup>36</sup> As with the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, Britain pushed a two-pronged approach in its resistance to universality, simultaneously ensuring that its attempts to dampen momentum for a convention generally were complemented by a campaign for a Territorial Application Clause from the outset.<sup>37</sup>

As the convention continued to gain momentum in the 1960 CSW session, the UK repeated its general opposition, calling solely for a non-binding recommendation in its stead and for the matter of the convention to be deferred by circulating the text to governments for comment.<sup>38</sup> Yet the groundswell of energy for action led to the agreement of text for both a convention and recommendation at the session.<sup>39</sup> Significantly, it was in the progression of these two instruments to ECOSOC for further voting that year that Britain again sought to slow their development. Here, it sponsored a joint resolution with Japan and the US which called for the reopening of the convention and recommendation for governments to submit observations.<sup>40</sup> ECOSOC reopened for discussion the question of whether the convention or recommendation were needed at all, as well as the specific provisions contained within each.<sup>41</sup> Once again, within the session itself the UK explicitly argued in favour of a recommendation rather than a further convention.<sup>42</sup>

Yet despite Britain's successful attempt to delay the process and dampen momentum for a convention, the Colonial Office noted internally to the Foreign Office that they were 'not optimistic about the prospects of the Commission now agreeing to drop the idea' at the upcoming CSW session in 1961.<sup>43</sup> Further, Britain's new delegate (Joan Vickers) to the CSW, was ramping up the pressure on the Foreign Office to find a more progressive stance. Vickers – a British MP – pushed against instructions whereby Britain would be seen as 'dragging its feet' by abstaining on the convention, given the notion had majority support in the commission.<sup>44</sup>

As such Britain began to adopt a new approach which was seemingly more proactive. It began attempting to find ways to look like a champion of the convention by seeking to craft a version which included softer provisions, but continued to make these calls alongside the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause. It co-sponsored a draft which removed references to any specific minimum age of marriage (which had been previously stated at 15 in earlier drafts) and instead called for any minimum age to be determined by State Parties to the convention.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, the delegate brief for the 1961 session also noted that support for this language was to be conditional on the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause.<sup>46</sup> Thus even the idea of a *universal* standard which merely called for a for the age of marriage to be determined by each State Party proved too much for Britain to support.

After winning the CSW round on the amended provisions, the convention draft then moved through ECOSOC and the General Assembly. Despite Britain's success in cementing its proposed softer provisions, the question of the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause now became paramount for Britain.<sup>47</sup> As with the convention on the political rights of women, this insistence persisted through the debates in the Third Committee of the General Assembly in 1961. But by the time of the final stages of the Convention on marriage practices, Britain knew that the writing was on the wall. The British Permanent Representative to the UN warned the Foreign Office that with new member states from Africa and the Americas joining the UN, Britain would struggle to achieve the clause with this new-look General Assembly.<sup>48</sup> Indeed Britain lost its campaign for the clause by 53 votes to 23 with 7 abstentions in the Third Committee.<sup>49</sup>

Yet, it persisted again, attempting one final time to insert the clause as it moved to final plenary debate in the General Assembly. In advance of the session, the *Minister of State at the Foreign Office* (Joseph Godber) instructed a lobby effort to take place at capital level in an urgent appeal to the fifteen countries which had voted against the clause in the Third Committee, four that had abstained, and seven had been absent.<sup>50</sup> However, once again, the clause was defeated.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, looking collectively across these three conventions we can see that Britain's colonial interests trumped - and undermined - any interest in universal women's rights. As such the geopolitics of colonialism played a leading role in Britain's initial attempts to dampen the evolution of these conventions, or even resist the convention throughout its development as in the case of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women. We see that this rejection of new international norms on women's rights was held by Britain in order to ensure that the provisions embodied in the conventions would not apply in its colonies and thus maintain the status quo. This rejection became explicitly pronounced as Britain held its ground on the issue of Territorial Application Clauses in all three cases. Yet in both the conventions on the Political Rights of Women and Consent to Marriage, Britain was ultimately unable to push the clause through. It was only in the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women that Britain found success in inserting its universality-limiting clause and safeguarding its obligations to its dependent territories.

### **Selling British colonial interests in the face of anticolonialism at the UN**

Britain's consistent attempts to limit the evolution and territorial scope of these three emerging women's rights conventions *because* of its colonial interests were not an easy sell within the UN amid a rising swell of anticolonial sentiment. Increasing numbers of newly independent member states joining the UN meant the 'winds of change' (as noted by the British Prime Minister in 1960) were not only sweeping across Africa in this period but onto the world stage too.<sup>52</sup> Cold War divisions also led the Soviet bloc to engage in issue of universality in battle for soft power to delegitimise the model of western colonialism. As such, Britain sought to find progressive arguments to defend its case on the global stage. Claims of colonial benevolence and guardianship were critical given these new dynamics of anticolonialism. Additionally, where Britain sought to deplete momentum for these conventions it made the case for factors other than universal legal norms to be of prime importance; those being education and a general deference to local custom.

After failing to amass sympathetic voices for its challenges as a colonial power in signing up to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, British interventions now began to challenge the very notion of universality as a progressive idea. As such it argued that applying conventions to colonies across the board equated with *imposing* conventions across the colonies.

This tactic first bore success in Britain's engagement with the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. Here, the UK delegate (Katherine Elliot) stressed in the final General Assembly plenary debate that such article was necessary because dependent territories were being advanced towards self-government and conventions such as this could not therefore be applied to them without consulting them and securing their consent. Therefore 'such an article [Territorial Application Clause] was in no way discriminatory against dependent territories; it simply recognised that the metropolitan power had no right to impose its decisions on territories which had an independent choice in the field in question.'<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, in Britain's campaign for a Territorial Application Clause within the Convention on Consent to Marriage, within both the debates in the UN Third Committee and final plenary debates of the General Assembly, it stressed that rather than limiting rights for the colonies, this was about permitting colonies *more autonomy* to set their own standards 'since it contributed to the growth of self-government and progress towards independence of the territories concerned'.<sup>54</sup>

This deference to local legislation was a key part of Britain's attempt to establish a sense of colonial benevolence, as part of a journey towards independence. As the UK Foreign Secretary addressed the UN General Assembly in the final debates on the convention, he stressed the progress in UK policy in 'bringing forward dependent countries to independence' before adding that a Territorial Application Clause 'marks the mile-stones of progress towards the complete



independence of the territories concerned.<sup>55</sup> He affirmed that it was his wish for Britain to become a party to the convention and to be able to extend it as widely throughout the colonies as possible.<sup>56</sup>

But while Britain's narratives of colonial benevolence provided a convenient case for Britain's policy position, its argument of promoting national level sovereignty also appeared as disingenuous in the context of the very nature of colonial domination. This contradiction was indeed noted by its adversaries at the UN as its policy of resistance to the universal application of new standards on women's rights across the British Empire clashed with anticolonial sentiment within the CSW and higher UN organs, particularly by the late 1950s and early 1960s. The UK Mission to the UN in New York reported back to the Foreign Office that its attempt to gain a Territorial Application Clause in the Convention on Consent to Marriage in the Third Committee in 1962 was thwarted by anticolonial politics. They noted that the Latin Americans 'in particular appear to have accepted the Soviet line that a vote in favour of a Territorial Application Clause would be a vote in favour of perpetuating colonialism.'<sup>57</sup> Chile threatened Britain 'that in the months and years to come they would be subjected to increasing pressure, both in the General Assembly and outside the United Nations' on the issue of self-determination, and would refuse the Territorial Application Clause on these grounds.<sup>58</sup> The USSR delegate argued that Britain's campaign on the clause was bound with its reluctance to bring an end to colonialism since it meant 'legalizing the continued existence of colonial rule for an indefinite time'.<sup>59</sup>

In the final plenary debate of the Convention on Marriage practices, an anticolonial alliance responded to Britain's claims that a Territorial Application Clause offered more autonomy with disdain. The delegate for Ghana pointed to 'latent' colonialism still in existence and was joined by the delegates for Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) and Iraq by insisting that the UN Declaration for Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples did indeed make it unsuitable for Territorial Application Clauses to be included in conventions. The answer, rather, should be immediate independence. The delegate for Nigeria agreed with this assessment, arguing that the UK proposal to insert a clause was contrary to the principle of universality.<sup>60</sup>

Such anticolonial sentiment had also been voiced in Britain's campaign for the Territorial Application Clause in the earlier Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. Burma argued that the inclusion of such a clause would mean that the 'United Nations would be countenancing the violation of human rights in the dependent territories'.<sup>61</sup> Czechoslovakia argued that there could be 'no compromise with the evil of colonialism',<sup>62</sup> while Tunisia and Uruguay argued such a clause would 'perpetuate colonial practice' and the 'continuation of colonialism'.<sup>63</sup> Saudi Arabia drew out the issue of universality explicitly, arguing that a 'restrictive clause was out of place in a convention which should be universal in application'.<sup>64</sup>

Britain made a different case around the Convention on the Political Rights on Women, as it sought to derail momentum for a convention from the start. For the majority of the final debates on the convention within the CSW in 1952, it tried to attack the very *theory of change* of the convention, arguing that 'education and enlightenment' offered a more appropriate strategy for women's political empowerment in the colonies. It pushed against the idea that conventions held any role in international norm setting, arguing it would play no part in 'inducing those states which have not yet accepted this principle to pass legislation giving effect to it'.<sup>65</sup> Again, as the convention moved to the Third Committee of the General Assembly later that year, Britain continued to question its relevance, urging that 'customs could not be changed overnight without damaging the body politic' and that 'a convention was not a good substitute for a process of social education'. Further, the UK delegate argued that demanding political rights was the 'product of angry, militant women demanding political power' rather than 'an offer of true companionship to address difficult matters together'.<sup>66</sup>

It was when India sponsored an amendment for a Territorial Application Clause as the draft Convention on Political Rights of Women reached the Third Committee of the General Assembly that fault lines with the anticolonial voices can once again be observed. While India made the case that such clause was necessary in order to obtain support of the colonial powers,<sup>67</sup> the

delegate from Chile argued such a clause 'would enable discriminatory distinctions to be drawn between one territory and another'. The Philippines stressed the importance of the provisions being equally applicable in the dependent territories. The Iraqi delegate went further, arguing that 'it could not feel sympathy for the technical administrative difficulties' Britain faced given that, while it may not be able to ratify a convention in the name of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, it nevertheless had the power to declare war in their name.<sup>68</sup> In this case, as in the debates on the conventions on the Nationality of Married Women and of Convention on Consent to Marriage, difficulties of colonial extension were dismissed in favour of the principle of universality. And in the process, the arguments put forward by anticolonial Member States weakened the legitimacy of colonialism on the global stage.

Interestingly, the theory of change around education over legislation was also pushed by Britain in its attempt to deplete momentum for a Convention on Consent to Marriage, although this was more explicitly combined with its campaign for a Territorial Application Clause from the outset of its diplomacy. For example, the British delegate (Ruth Tomlinson) argued it was wise and more effective, though it took more time, 'to give education priority over legislation, so as to ensure that public opinion was sufficiently well prepared to provide a firm basis for permanent progress'.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, a deference to local custom was also employed by Britain as an escape from the bounds of universally reaching conventions. When Britain tried to weaken the strength of the provisions within the Convention on Consent to Marriage, (i.e. away from a universal standard age but rather that there simply be a minimum age as defined by state parties), it sought to delegitimise the idea of universality by elevating a deference to cultural relativism. The Foreign Office cited 'climatic conditions' to bestow a superiority to local opinion as a reason to shy away from international standard setting:

'...the differences in social progress achieved in different countries and in climatic conditions in different parts of the world mean that, for the time being at least, local opinion as to the suitable minimum ages must inevitably vary considerably...'<sup>70</sup>

Thus, Britain learnt to make its case around limiting universality as one in which to empower colonies to not be dragged into conventions by their metropolises. But while this worked in the case of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, the rising strength of anticolonial voices at the UN meant that by the early 1960s this no longer held as a tenable argument in the discussions around the Convention on Consent to Marriage. Where Britain sought to limit the evolution of the conventions more broadly, it rallied behind the idea of education over legislative measures as a more effective theory of change. But this too proved of little success in the context of a CSW or the General Assembly where Member States were keen to move forward with international standard setting through legal means. Britain's arguments on education or cultural relativism, while a means to preserve social order in its colonies, became redundant in this new arena for international action, particularly as anticolonial voices sought to harness the conventions as a means of empowerment.

## **The footprint of Britain's colonial manoeuvrings on the UN women's rights agenda in context**

It is important to acknowledge that Britain's attempts to derail and weaken the provisions and territorial scope of the three conventions reviewed here not only had implications for Britain's willingness sign itself - and its colonies - as a State Party, but also impacted the very contours and political weight of the UN conventions themselves. That is to say, the strength and reach of key international instruments for women's rights were in part shaped by Britain's geopolitical interests around colonialism. The legacy of the conservatism of British colonialism thus has a

footprint on the women's rights agenda in this period. In some ways, Britain was not the only colonial power curtailing the evolution of universally-binding women's rights norms. In many cases its strategies toward the women's rights agenda in this period mirrored the colonial interests of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. But this began to diverge in the end of the period under review with the Convention on Consent to Marriage. Britain's conservative role, therefore, is particularly significant.

To an extent Britain's conservatism was tempered. Across all three conventions Britain's attempts to derail political momentum – both overtly and softly – were unsuccessful. Yet a British footprint can be observed on the conventions in the ways it managed to *weaken* the territorial scope of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women through the insertion of a Territorial Application Clause, and through its role *weakening* the provisions in the Convention on Consent to Marriage – removing the reference to a minimum age of marriage (15) entirely from the final draft convention.

While the conventions on the Political Rights of Women and Convention on Consent to Marriage passed without Territorial Application Clauses, Britain's footprint can still be observed as it utilised one final line of defence. While it felt compelled to vote in favour of these conventions in the General Assembly (the former passed without a dissenting vote),<sup>71</sup> it refused to immediately become a State Party. Not all colonial powers took such a resolute position. France became a signatory to both, and used the reservations process of the convention to exempt its colonial territories from the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.<sup>72</sup> Britain's obstinance can also be explained by its reluctance to utilise the reservations process more broadly within UN conventions, as argued by Helen Laville.<sup>73</sup> Indeed by 1957 Britain openly acknowledged in the British Parliament that the lack of Territorial Application Clause in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women was the 'main obstacle' to its signature, as other domestic concerns had rescinded.<sup>74</sup> Britain's refusal to become a State Party meant that both it and its colonies in the British Empire were not bound by it, as indeed was the case with Britain's refusal to sign the Convention on Consent to Marriage. This obstinance also had a wider impact around the overall political momentum behind these conventions. Britain's decision to withhold its signature for both until 1967 and 1970 respectively, diminished the political pressure for other Member States to accede to the convention. In this way it acted in a way which inhibited the potential norm-cascade effect of the convention. Of note, the British Permanent Representative to the UN, Patrick Dean, who led Britain's diplomatic engagement on the Convention on Consent to Marriage, lambasted the Foreign Office for its legal concerns around compatibility with British law, making the general point that Britain 'should give more weight to the political aspects of Conventions such as this and not approach them purely from a legal point of view'.<sup>75</sup>

Again, not all colonial powers proved so stubborn throughout this period. Indeed the French delegate (Hélène Lefauchaux) actually played a critical role in pushing for the idea of a convention on marriage practices. At the 1957 CSW, France joined Cuba in sponsoring a resolution for 'Governments of all countries to take necessary steps to introduce a system of compulsory registration of marriages'.<sup>76</sup> The following year France capitalised on a Secretary General report presented to the CSW on consent to marriage and age of marriage as it was presented to the CSW, calling for action as a 'pressing necessity'.<sup>77</sup>

Such necessity was particularly so in the context of mass global decolonisation with the potential for conventions such as these to influence newly independent governments as they began to write their own laws. The Soviet Union delegate utilised this point to full effect arguing that 'In the newly emerging States international norms were often taken as a model for domestic legislation'. This attack put pressure on Britain's status as a colonial power and demanded action on the basis of its duty to *decolonise* in the early 1960s. But, surprisingly, it was not only anticolonial voices leading this charge: the French delegate also argued that imminent independence should 'prompt action on the draft convention' given this held the potential to 'benefit millions of young girls and women who urgently needed help'. She argued from the perspective of

needing to set clear global priorities to the Governments of former French African territories who were 'on the whole favourable to the idea of a convention...and should be given the opportunity to include its provisions in their new legislation'. Thus she argued that 'If the Commission did not act, they might assume that the matter was unimportant and turn their attention elsewhere.'<sup>78</sup>

Some of this emphasis may have been due to the Feminist background and relative autonomy enjoyed by the French delegate to the CSW who held a reputation for her high calibre.<sup>79</sup> This was notably so in comparison to the stricter handling the Foreign Office kept on the British delegates. But when it came to the debates on the Territorial Application Clause, it is significant that France shifted its position between the two separate votes on the proposed convention in 1962. While initially supporting Britain's first attempt to include the clause in the UN Third Committee, France voted against Britain on its final attempt in the General Assembly plenary debate.<sup>80</sup>

This is interesting because over the period of the three conventions France moved away from the positions of its fellow colonial powers (including Belgium and the Netherlands). Previously France had stood with Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands in support of a Territorial Application Clause in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in the Third Committee debates in 1951.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, France and Belgium worked to push a Territorial Application Clause within the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women which permitted the metropolitan state to notify the Secretary General which of its dependent territories the Convention would apply to.<sup>82</sup> (In fact, this clause was wider reaching than the text Britain sought in its proposed clause, which was more limited to special types of colonies which had achieved greater autonomy.<sup>83</sup>)

Thus, France's move away from supporting this clause demonstrates that the geopolitics of colonialism had a limit, and the importance of sustaining colonial interests were outweighed during the final stages of the debate on the Convention on Marriages. For Britain, the *realpolitik* of colonialism proved more potent and enduring throughout this period, despite the attacks to its reputation made by anticolonial powers and the apparent movement of one of its allies, and despite the fact that it was slowly granting independence to more and more of its colonies

Indeed, contrary to Britain's refusal to sign the Convention on Consent to Marriage, France signed as it opened for signature in 1962, listing no exemptions for its colonies (although taking half a century to ratify the convention).<sup>84</sup> Thus not only was Britain a conservative force in dampening the political momentum for the conventions on the political rights of women and on marriage practices – both during their germination and when they opened for signature – it was more obstructive than France in this insistence on pursuing colonial interests over the emerging UN women's rights agenda.

## Conclusion

To this day, Britain's true behaviour in limiting the development of *international* human rights norms *because of* its colonial interests has been masked by sentiments which stress the benevolence of the colonial project.<sup>85</sup> This article has exposed the reality of Britain's defence of its position as a colonial power at the expense of the normative agenda for women's advancement. It contributes to the body of work on colonialism and the UN to evidence that Britain's broader resistance to granting universal human rights – because of the risk of colonial extension – can also be observed in the intergovernmental debates around women's rights conventions at the UN in the 1950s and early 1960s.

In this context, the geopolitics of British colonialism, and the staunch position taken by the Colonial Office explicitly, meant that its global colonial legacy on UN women's rights frameworks in this period was a conservative one. Britain's interests in the maintenance of its Empire trumped – and undermined – any interest universal women's rights. Such conservatism led Britain to attempt to derail or weaken the provisions and territorial scope of the three conventions reviewed here.

Yet its narratives on the importance of education over legislation, and colonial benevolence in which it sought Territorial Application Clauses to grant *greater* autonomy to its colonies, had varying degrees of success.

Further, this article has shown that Britain's actions had a concrete impact on the very contours of the conventions themselves. Where Britain failed to limit the territorial scope of these conventions through Territorial Application Clauses it chose to delay accession, thus not only withholding their application in the colonies but dampening political momentum and norm-cascade for the conventions more broadly.

This is significant, not only in challenging notions of any benevolence around British colonial rule, but forces us to reexamine the idea that women's rights are *Western*, and the associated assumption that therefore Western governments such as Britain have steadfastly supported women's rights at the UN since the mid-twentieth century. Rather it was the voices of the newly independent Member States, Latin America and Soviet bloc that were strongest in calling Britain and other colonial powers out on attempts to weaken these conventions as a consequence of colonial interests. This resonates with Skikkur's plea to play greater attention to the role of *Southern*, rather than *Northern*, states in global norm development and global governance.<sup>86</sup> Further, Britain was a laggard among the European colonial powers. France, another colonial power, proved less obstructive by the early 1960s. Far from any kind of women's rights champion, Britain was willing to discourage and distort the emergence of women's rights for its own political gain.

## Notes

1. See *International Affairs* special edition on 'Race and Imperialism in International Relations: Theory and Practice' Jan. 2022 produced in response to the spotlight being increasingly turned on the legacy of colonialism in global political relations.
2. Fabian Klose, 'Source of embarrassment' in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (ed), *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 238; Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence*, 1st edition. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), Burke, *Decolonisation and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 114.
3. Burke, *Decolonisation and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 114, 145.
4. Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 3-58.
5. Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence*, 5.
6. Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 5.
7. For further on the attitudes of European Colonial powers on the role of colonial application clauses to prevent the roll out of universal human rights see Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 40.
8. Brian Simpson, *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 300; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (London: Belknap Press, 2010), 4-5, 84-86.
9. Helen Laville, "'Woolly, Half-Baked and Impractical'? British Responses to the Commission on the States of Women and the convention on the Political Rights of Women 1946-67', *Twentieth Century British History*, 23, no.4 (2011), 493; Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 35.
10. This draws Caroline Green, *The Impact of Colonialism on Human Rights Diplomacy: Britain's Colonial Legacy and the UN Agenda for The Advancement of Women 1950-1975* (PhD thesis, 2000, London School of Economics and Political Science).
11. Shelley Wright, *International Human Rights, Decolonisation and Globalisation* (London: Routledge, 2001), 20.
12. Kathryn Sikkink, 'Latin America's Protagonist Role in Human Rights', *International Journal on Human Rights*, (22), Dec. 2015.
13. See Jan Eckel's critique of the over reliance on human rights summary records in international historical works in 'Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and Open Questions' in *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, vol. 1, no.1 (2010), 120.
14. Mexican delegate (Castillo-Ledon), CSW Summary Records 8-19 May 1950, E/CN.6/SR.71, UN Documents.
15. UK delegate (Sutherland), CSW Summary Records 8-19 May 1950, E/CN.6/SR.67, UN Documents. The US delegate also held this view.

16. UK delegate (Sutherland), CSW Summary Records 8-19 May 1950, E/CN.6/SR.67, UN Documents.
17. The CSW requested its parent body to request the UN Secretary-General to prepare a draft. CSW Summary Records 8-19 May 1950, E/CN.6/SR.71-79, UN Documents.
18. These domestic concerns included women's exclusion from the House of Lords, unequal terms of employment in the Foreign Service (including upon marriage) and lack of equal pay in the Civil Service.
19. Delegate for the Dominican Republic (Bernadino), CSW Summary Records 30 Apr. -14 May 1951, E/CN.6/SR.84, UN Documents; Haitian delegate (Guery), CSW Summary Records 30 Apr. -14 May 1951, E/CN.6/SR.85, UN Documents.
20. The CSW was a limited membership body so not all Member States were able to vote on the draft convention.
21. For example Irene Ward (Conservative), Alice Bacon (Labour), Richard Winterbottom (Labour) and Peter Roberts (Conservative). See letter from Irene Ward MP to the Foreign Secretary (Herbert Morrison), 12 June 1951, 1734/71, FO 371/95870, UK National Archives; letters from Alice Bacon to the Foreign Secretary (Herbert Morrison), 10 July 1951, 1734/83, FO 371 95871; letters from Richard Winterbottom, 22 July 1951, and Major Peter Roberts, 23 July 1951, to the Foreign Secretary (Morrison), 1734/90 and 1734/91, FO371/95872. All in UK National Archives.
22. Internal Correspondence Foreign Office, US1734/72, FO 371/95870, 1951, UK National Archives.
23. Letter from Colonial Office (E. Burr) to Foreign Office (E. Howard), 20 July, 1951, 1734/85, FO 371/95871, UK National Archives.
24. Laville, "Woolly, Half-Baked and Impractical'? British Responses to the Commission on the States of Women and the convention on the Political Rights of Women 1946-67", p481.
25. Letter from Colonial Office (E. Burr) to Foreign Office (E. Howard), 20 Oct. 1951 on the decisions of ECOSOC relating to the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women, 1734/109, FO371/95873, UK National Archives.
26. Indian Delegate (Mani), Third Committee debates of the General Assembly Wednesday, 17 Dec. 1952, A.C/3/SR.480.
27. A Territorial Application Clause was agreed in the Third Committee debates of the General Assembly but failed to be adopted in the General Assembly Plenary.
28. United Nations, *The United Nations and the Advancement of Women*, p19-20.
29. UK delegate (Atlee), CSW Summary Records 22 Mar. – 9 Apr. 1954, E/CN.6/SR.159, UN Documents.
30. Telegram from UK delegation to the UN to Foreign Office, 5 Apr. 1954, 17312/66, FO 371/112482, UK National Archives.
31. Speech by UK delegate (Sayers) at CSW session, 23 Mar. 1955, UNS1739/24, FO 371/117563, UK National Archives.
32. UK Delegation Record of General Assembly 11th session, 17 Dec. 1956, FCO371/129972, UK National Archives.
33. Telegram from UK delegation in New York to Foreign Office, Feb. 3 1957, UNS17314/4, FO371/129972, UK National Archives.
34. Pakistani delegate (Chaudhuri) in telegram from UK Mission in New York to Foreign Office on the General Assembly plenary debate for the draft Convention on Nationality of Married Women, 3 Feb. 1957, 17314/4, FO 371/129972, UK National Archives.
35. Reply from Tanganyika to Secretary-General's questionnaire on consent to marriage, minimum age of marriage and registration of marriages, 1 Sep. 1959, UNS 17314/68, FO 371/145423, UK National Archives; Reply from Sierra Leone to Secretary-General's questionnaire on consent to marriage, minimum age of marriage and registration of marriages, 1 Sep. 1959, UNS 17314/69, FO 371/145423, UK National Archives.
36. Delegates for Czechoslovakia (Leflerova) and USSR (Ershova), CSW Summary Records 17 Mar. – 3 Apr. 1958, E/CN.6/SR.265, UN Documents.
37. UK Delegate (Tomlinson), CSW Summary records 17 Mar. – 3 Apr. 1958, E/CN.6/SR.265, UN Documents.
38. UK delegate (Tomlinson), CSW Summary Records 28 Mar. – 14 Apr. 1960, E/CN.6/SR.320-321, UN Documents.
39. Ibid.
40. Joint draft resolution E/AC.7/L.370 ECOSOC documents 1960; US delegate (Finger) ECOSOC Summary Records, Fifteenth Session, 1960, E/AC.7/SR.427, UN Documents.
41. UN Report to ECOSOC on the 1961 session of the Commission on the Status of Women, E/3464, UN Documents.
42. UK delegate (Hoare) ECOSOC Summary Records, Fifteenth Session, 1960, E/AC.7/SR.427, UN Documents.
43. Colonial Office (Titchener) comments to Foreign Office (Key) on brief for 1961 session of CSW, 3 Mar. 1961, UNS17314/17, FO 371/161038, UK National Archives.
44. Foreign Office Minute about UK Representative to CSW (Joan Vickers), 20 Feb. 1961, UNS17314/20, FO 371/161038, UK National Archives; Minute by Foreign Office (Key), 9 Mar. 1961, UNS17314/19, FO 371/161038, UK National Archives.
45. Internal Foreign Office Minutes (G.Marshall), 4 Oct. 1961, UNS17314/69, FO 371/161040, UK National Archives.
46. Draft brief for UK CSW delegate to the 1961 session, UNS17314/19, FO 371/161038, UK National Archives.
47. Cabinet Office Briefing for General Assembly September 1961, UNS17314/77, FO 371 161040, UK National Archives.



48. Letter from UK Mission in New York to the Foreign Office, 12 Oct. 1961, UNS17314/74, FO 371/161041, UK National Archives.
49. Report of the Third Committee, 31 Oct. 1962, A/5273 accessed in S-0445-0138-14574, UN Archives.
50. See telegram to capitals on the draft convention on marriage practices, UNS17314/74, FO 371/166941, circa Oct. 1962, UK National Archives.
51. The final vote was 27 in favour, 75 against, 6 abstentions.
52. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 'Wind of Change' speech acknowledged the growing push for independence across Africa, and was delivered in Cape Town at the end of a six-week tour of the continent on 3 Feb. 1960. See Sarah Stockwell and Larry Butler, 'Introduction' in Sarah Stockwell and Larry Butler (eds), *The Wind of Change* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1–12.
53. Telegram from UK Delegation to UN to Foreign Office, 3 Feb. 1957, UNS17314/4, FO371/129972, UK National Archives.
54. UK delegate (Glover), Third Committee Summary Record, 5 Oct. 1962, A/C.3/SR.1143, UN Documents.
55. UK delegate and Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Joseph Godber), General Assembly 1166th Plenary meeting, 7 Nov. 1962, A/P.V.1166, UN Documents.
56. Ibid.
57. Telegram from UK Mission in New York to Foreign Office, 8 Oct. 1962, UNS17314/73 FO 371/166941, UK National Archives.
58. Chilean delegate (Diaz Sasanueva), Third Committee Summary Record, 5 Oct. 1962, A/C.3/SR.1144, UN Documents.
59. USSR Delegate (Nikolaeva), Third Committee Summary Record, 5 Oct. 1962, A/C.3/SR.1143, UN Documents.
60. Delegates for Romania (Ionascu), USSR (Nikolaeva), Indonesia (Idris), Czechoslovakia (Leflerova), Ghana (Dadzie), Upper Volta (Ouedcaogo), Iraq (Yasseen), and Nigeria (Adebo), General Assembly 1166th and 1167th Plenary meetings, 7–8 Nov. 1962, A/P.V.1166 and A/P.V.1167, UN Documents.
61. Burmese delegate (Thwin), Third Committee, 6 Dec. 1956, A/C.3/SR.702, UN Documents.
62. Czechoslovakian delegate (Pudlak), Third Committee, 6 Dec. 1956, A/C.3/SR.702, UN Documents.
63. Delegate for Tunisia (Messadi), Third Committee, 5 Dec. 1956, A/C.3/SR.701, Delegate for Uruguay (Brena), Third Committee, 6 Dec. 1956, A/C.3/SR.702. All UN Documents.
64. Delegate for Saudi Arabia (Baroody) Third Committee, 5 Dec. 1956, A/C.3/SR.701.
65. Responses from Member State governments to the draft convention presented in Documents for the CSW session 24 Mar. – 5 Apr. 1952, E/CN.6/184, UN Documents.
66. UK delegate (Emmet), Summary Records of the Third Committee, 15 Dec. 1952, A/C.3/SR.478, UN Documents.
67. Indian delegate (Mani), Summary records of the Third Committee, 15 Dec. 1952, A/C. 3/SR.480, UN Documents. The amendment was adopted by 28 votes to 17, with 6 abstentions.
68. Iraqi delegate (Afnan), Summary Records of the Third Committee, 16 Dec. 1952, A/C.3/SR.479, UN Documents. In these debates USSR, Afghanistan Iraq and Yugoslavia also attempted to pass a clause which explicitly called for the extension of the convention to the colonies. But while they lost, the idea of universality remained as a principle in the final draft regardless.
69. UK Delegate (Tomlinson), CSW Summary records 17 Mar. – 3 Apr. 1958, E/CN.6/SR.265, UN Documents.
70. Ibid.
71. United Nations, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women: History and Commentary*, 125.
72. Ibid, 125.
73. Laville, "'Woolly, Half-Baked and Impractical'? British Responses to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women 1946–67", 489–490 which argues that Britain felt reservations should only be used against individual articles of the convention, not to limit the application by a general exclusion of dependent territories from the scope of the convention.
74. Parliamentary Question 25 Mar. 1957, UNS 17314/30, FO 371/129972, UK National Archives.
75. Letter from UK Mission in New York (Permanent Representative Patrick Dean), 13 October, UNS17314/78, FO 371/161040, UK National Archives.
76. UK delegate (Sayers), CSW Summary Records 18 Mar. – 5 Apr. 1957, E/CN.6/SR.252, UN Documents.
77. French Delegate (Lefauchaux), CSW Summary Records 17 Mar. – 3 Apr. 1958, E/CN.6/SR.264, UN Documents.
78. USSR (Korshunova) and French delegates (Lefauchaux), CSW Summary Records 28 Mar. – 14 Apr. 1960, E/CN.6/SR.321, UN Documents.
79. Internal Foreign Office Correspondence, UNS17314/44, FO 371/123800, UK National Archives. Hélène Lefauchaux had been a member of the French resistance and had been elected to the Paris Committee of Liberation, the Provisional Municipal Assembly of Paris and the post-war French National Assembly. See Karen Garner, *Shaping a Global Women's Agenda: Women's NGOs and Global Governance 1925–85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 146.
80. Report of the Third Committee, 31 Oct. 1962, A/5273 accessed in S-0445-0138-14574, UN Archives; General Assembly 1167th Plenary meeting, 8 Nov. 1962, A/P.V.1167, UN Documents.

81. UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands all supported India's amendment for the inclusion of a Territorial Application Clause.
82. UK Delegation record of General Assembly 11th session, 17 Dec. 1956, FCO371/129972, UK National Archives.
83. As such the Belgian and French version of the Territorial Application Clause made the application of the Convention obligatory to territories whose inhabitants possessed the nationality of the metropolitan state yet at the same time it took account of the constitutional necessity in some instances of securing the consent of territorial bodies which had jurisdiction in the matter of nationality. See UK Delegation Record of General Assembly 11th session, 17 Dec. 1956, FCO371/129972, UK National Archives.
84. See UN Treaties website available at: [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg\\_no=XVI-3&chapter=16&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg_no=XVI-3&chapter=16&clang=_en).
85. Robert Booth, 'UK More Nostalgic for Empire than other Ex-Colonial Powers', *The Guardian*, 11 Mar. 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/11/uk-more-nostalgic-for-empire-than-other-ex-colonial-powers> (accessed 11 March 2020).
86. Kathryn Sikkink, 'Latin America's Protagonist Role in Human Rights', 215.

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