

An Investigation of Factors that Contribute to Homosexuality within the African Context

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Abstract

Homosexuality is a practice that has received global attention in recent years. Some nations in the world have advocated and legalised it, but others have strongly denounced the practice viewing it as a threat to society’s well-being and moral foundation. This study investigates practices promoting homosexuality, including polygamy, the Kamba cultural marriage of Kaweto, Female Genital Mutilation, and other factors like same-sex boarding schools. The study argues that although cultural practices like polygamy, FGM, and Kamba cultural marriage of Kaweto had no association with homosexuality, they are increasingly seen as practices that enhance homosexuality. The qualitative study used interview-guided questions.

Keywords: Homosexuality, Sexuality, Kamba, African Cultures, FGM, Polygamy.

Introduction

In the contemporary world, homosexuality threatens to tear apart families and communities. In contexts that still value their traditions and in religious circles, same-sex relationships is seen as unnatural and deviant behaviour. In the Bible, the practice is considered ungodly and unacceptable before God (1 Cor 6:9–10; Rom 1:26 –27). Homosexuality has been defined as romantic or sexual attraction between persons of the same gender, female and female or male and male or female to both male and female and vice versa. Homosexuality is not a new practice; however, it has been amplified by the advancement of technology by making information about it and its knowledge available to all, whether young or old. At the same time, the media has increased the vulnerability of this isolated group through “media



stereotyping and political attack.”¹ Same-sex relationships have become more prevalent than before. Technology shapes societal behaviour and lifestyle, and it is slowly, and its advancement leaves no one unreached. Therefore, homosexuality is no longer a discussion behind closed doors but a public matter that should not be ignored,

Technology is a vitally important aspect of the human condition. Technologies feed, clothe, and provide shelter for us; they transport, entertain, and heal us; they provide the bases of wealth and leisure; they also pollute and kill. For good or ill, they are woven inextricably into the fabric of our lives, from birth to death, at home, in school, and paid work. Rich or poor, employed or nonemployed, woman or man, ‘black’ or ‘white,’ north or south - all of our lives are intertwined with technologies, from simple tools to large technical systems.²

This paper examines practices within African cultures that have been abused, thus becoming incubators of homosexuality. They include communal oneness, gender segregation, age sets, polygamy, iweto custom of the Akamba and the Agikuyu communities, and circumcision rituals. We cannot talk about the above practices without touching on culture. Understanding what it is and its influence on people. Culture involves

Patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.³

This definition then informs the choice of the discussion on the cultural practices that enhance the existence of same-sex relationships within the African culture. Enhancing does not mean that they are intentionally promoting homosexuality but that they have provided a platform for introducing people to homosexuality.

The topic of homosexuality though rarely found on the table of discussion due to its nature and sensitivity, has become a fume of moral erosion in the world. However, recently we have noticed a turnaround of events where homosexuality has become a discussion in the government institutions and all the Kenyan society’s stakeholders: religious leaders, women

¹ Gross, Larry. *Up from Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America*. (Columbia University Press, 2001), 15.

² Donald A. MacKenzie and Judy Wajcman, eds., *The Social Shaping of Technology*, 2nd ed. (Buckingham, Eng.; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999), 1.

³ Hanif Muhyi and M Si, *The Policy of Culture Under Local Government and Development of Civil Society*, 2004.



groups, and non-governmental organisations. In Kenya, on 24th February 2023, the Supreme Court of Kenya ruled in favour of the LGBTQI+ that they have a right to association.⁴ This ignited mixed feelings among the citizens, who the majority are conservative.

The people in the African culture live in communities, and they co-exist; “The sense of community or commonality refers to the awareness which identifies an individual not as an isolated ego, but as an entity whose being and survival is consequent upon its union with other human beings within an identified locality.”⁵ In contrast, there is minimal individualism in most African setups. As people co-exist, a well-defined order exists of how men and women should interact. It defines how people live, including opposite-sex relationships.

Homosexuality Perceptions in Kenya

The lifestyle of humanity is determined by the set guidelines of a group of people living together. In every society, issues are held close to individuals’ hearts, “Close to the heart of our cultural and political system is the pattern of roles associated with sexual identity: Our conception of masculinity and femininity of the ‘normal’ and the ‘natural’ attributes and the responsibilities of men and women.”⁶ As times change, the improvement of technology continues to open global conversations on issues that were not in public discourse in the past.

Homosexuality has been handled and discussed as a Western concept that does not affect African people. The former president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, said it wasn’t a concern for the Kenyan people. While this remains true, there are elements within African cultures that can enhance homosexuality. Some practices have been long practised, normalised, embraced and tolerated, yet they could enhance homosexual behaviour.

The ruling of the Judiciary on 24th February 2023 that homosexuals have the right of association opened conversations about homosexuality countrywide.⁷ There has erupted more

⁴ Brenda Wanga, “Supreme Court Rules Gays, Lesbians Have Right of Association,” *Citizen Digital*, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.citizen.digital/news/supreme-court-rules-gays-lesbians-have-right-of-association-n315056>.

⁵ Ogbujah Columbus, “African Cultural Values and Inter-Communal Relations: The Case with Nigeria” (2014): 209.

⁶ Larry Gross, *Up from Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 13.

⁷ Brenda Wanga, “Supreme Court Rules Gays, Lesbians Have Right of Association,” *Citizen Digital*, last modified February 24, 2023, accessed March 7, 2023, <https://www.citizen.digital/news/supreme-court-rules-gays-lesbians-have-right-of-association-n315056>.



discussion and awareness of the existence of homosexuals, and the growth of the same has gotten into the gates of the law. There is now more awareness due to the technological advancement that continues to be enhanced. Knowledge has increased, and the reality of life that was in the past lived under closed doors is now in the open. Across Kenya and globally, people are now more aware of the things that were initially not known and those that were not of concern to society. With the availability of knowledge, people are becoming more and more open and curious about what is happening in the world. Homosexuality has penetrated every part of society, from the smallest unit, the family.

This, therefore, brings about the need to discuss some critical issues in African culture that can be enablers of homosexuality. It is worth noting that most African communities do not tolerate homosexuality. Homosexuality is illegal and punishable by law, as stated in the relevant articles in Kenyan law (2010),

Article 162. Unnatural offences Any person who— (a) has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature, (b) has carnal knowledge of an animal; or (c) permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years: Provided that, in the case of an offence under paragraph (a), the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for twenty-one years if— (i) the offence was committed without the consent of the person who was carnally known, or (ii) the offence was committed with that person’s consent but the consent was obtained by force or using threats or intimidation of some kind, or by fear of bodily harm, or using false representations as to the nature of the act. [Act No. 5 of 2003, s. 32.] 163. Attempt to commit unnatural offences Any person who attempts to commit any of the offences specified in section 162 is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for seven years. 164. Deleted by Act No. 3 of 2006, Second Sch. 165. Indecent practices between males Any male person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another male person, procures another male person to commit any act of gross indecency with him, or attempts to procure the commission of any such act by any male person with himself or with another male person, whether in public or private, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.⁸

However, the legal apparatus has not controlled the practice from spreading, not just in Kenya but globally, “If we look at specific parts of the world: the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, the South Pacific, we find that many countries in these areas have laws which call for the criminalisation of same-sex intercourse. Still, none of these areas has as high a percentage of

⁸ “Kenya Law: The Sexual Offences Act: Omissions And Ambiguities - Kiarie Waweru Kiarie,” accessed August 23, 2022, <http://kenyalaw.org/kl/index.php?id=1894>.



countries that condemn homosexuals as African nations.”⁹ In the past, those who were uncontented with these practices stayed and persevered through the pain in silence, but today technology has provided avenues for these groups to form online communities and advocacy initiatives.

African Practices that Possibly Enhance Homosexuality

It has been wrongly assumed that homosexuality is primarily a Western phenomenon, not African. This is because Western culture seems more accommodating of alternative lifestyles than African cultures and taboos. Homosexuality as it exists nowadays is unknown to traditional African societies since there was no man-to-man sex. In contrast, traditional chiefs of priests, in the process of their enthronisation, were known to have lived in isolation and therefore participated in ‘recurrent’ masturbation to satisfy their sexual desires, and this is what was perceived as homosexuality.¹⁰ Seemingly, there were no laws or rules about homosexuality before colonisation; “Given the textual references to pre-colonial homosexuality in Africa, we must assume that the presence or lack of legislation regarding homosexual activity in African nations does not derive from a lack of historical practice.”¹¹ Therefore, homosexuality is not new to Africa but has existed without definition. The view on homosexuality in most African nations is almost the same. It is viewed as indecent and unnatural, fracturing people’s morality. Most African nations define homosexuality as “acts against the order of nature, violations of morality, a scandalous act, indecent act, unnatural offence, indecent practice, gross indecency, and lewd acts.”¹² This definition mirrors people’s perceptions and attitudes toward homosexuality.

African society, a majorly communal society, has communal set rules of living within each segment of the society: “Every individual, every family, and indeed, every society has principles and standards which are appreciated and held in high respect, as well as those which are abhorred. When these principles and/or standards are commonly held by people,

⁹ Sean Whipple, “Homosexuality in Africa: The Causes of State Discrimination Based on Orientation” (n.d.): 29.

¹⁰ Sean Whipple, “Homosexuality in Africa: The Causes of State Discrimination Based on Orientation” (n.d.).

¹¹ Whipple, “Homosexuality in Africa: The Causes of State Discrimination Based on Orientation.”

¹² “Grappling with the Issue of Homosexuality: Perceptions, Attitudes, and Beliefs among High School Students in Kenya,” 255, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.2147/PRBM.S112421?needAccess=true&role=button>.



they are termed social values.”¹³ Cultural practices such as communal oneness, gender segregation, age sets, polygamy, iweto custom of the Akamba and the Agikuyu communities, and circumcision rituals, in one way, put the community together. These practices exist to unite society and guard the relationships within which the people live. They cause people to live together in peace, harmony, love, care, and concern for each other. It promoted unity among the people, and some played as boundaries. These practices set a clear line in the lives of the persons living together. They enhance morality and nurture character in the people; “People’s values elicit certain types of attitudes which generate specific kinds of behaviours.”¹⁴ They prevent members of society from harming each other in one way or the other and are passed from one generation to the other either orally. However, these practices can be abused and misused.

Consideration of the Iweto Concept among Kamba People

The Akamba is an ethnic group mostly living in the eastern side of Kenya. It is part of the Bantus, which emigrated from the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania.¹⁵ This group is the third to the fourth largest tribe in Kenya. The Akamba people are communal, and their cultural practices enhance their growth and help them participate in building their community and the lives of each other.

Iweto is an African cultural practice where a woman marries another woman for the sake of childbearing or in search of a male child, traditionally considered as an heir of the family of son-bearing. Culturally, the woman-woman marriage was applicable in family situations where a woman was barren or a couple failed to get a baby boy, even if they had girls. Such a woman would go to great lengths to find herself a ‘wife’ who would give birth on her behalf. She would arrange for the courtship, payment of bridewealth and even look for the right person to stay with the newly married woman. This kind of marriage was rare and not ideal. It could sometimes mean getting a stranger (outside the family) to bring forth offspring. The barren woman was more interested in ‘using’ another woman to get a child without much consideration of the man who was the father. But the *iweto*’s children, without

¹³ Columbus, “African Cultural Values and Inter-Communal Relations: The Case with Nigeria,” 208.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁵ Nancy E Horn, “English Language in the Akamba Classroom: Competition and Culture” (n.d.): 4.



exception, would adopt the name of the man of the home, whether he was alive or dead. This was because it was his lineage that *iweto* was perpetuating. Whereas the original plan was and is not to have sexual attraction between the woman-husband and woman-wife, many homosexuals have claimed this practice looks like a same-sex marriage affair.

Kaweto Marriage of the Akamba Community in Kenya

Different ethnic groups in Kenya have different ways of looking at the makeup of society for the common good. The Akamba of Kenya looks at the growth of their community and keeping the society together through marriage. One of the systems to safeguard the marriage is through Kaweto. This is a term used by the Akamba to refer to a woman married to another woman who is childless or unable to bear a son for procreation,

Woman-woman marriage may also be beneficial to the persons involved other than the woman who initiates the marriage (the so-called female husband). The motivations of the other participants are also examined. Cross-culturally, women take wives under three circumstances, all of which enhance the status of the female husband: 1) barren women take wives to gain rights over children produced; 2) rich women accumulate wives to gain prestige and wealth in the same way men do through polygyny; and 3) in societies where women possess the right to have a daughter-in-law, a woman without a son may take a wife to give her a non-existent son.¹⁶

The practice ensured a continuation in the family, marriage and communal life. This is a practice that was passed from one generation. The Akamba culture and religion have been practised for ages and have no known founders, “While most of the other world religions, such as Islam and Christianity, have founders who started them, the Akamba traditional religion does not have such founders: it evolved slowly through many centuries as the Akamba responded to the situations of their life and reflected upon their experiences.”¹⁷ This is part of the traditions that bring the people together.

The Akamba traditional cultural practice that has a trace or can be used as a justification for embracing same-sex marriage within the Akamba community is the concept

¹⁶ R. Jean Cadigan, “Woman-to-Woman Marriage: Practices and Benefits in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 29, no. 1 (1998): 89-98.

¹⁷ “Mutunga Rose_The Akamba Traditional Religion Tr and Christianity- a Philosophical Study(2).Pdf,” n.d., 16, accessed March 16, 2023, http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/19220/Mutunga%20Rose_The%20Akamba%20Traditiona1%20Religion%20Tr%20and%20Christianity-%20a%20Philosophical%20Study%282%29.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.



of the Iweto. In this practice, the “Maweto are women who are socially married to other women for procreation. In the Akamba traditional society, the woman who married an Iweto (singular) was herself a married woman, who was either barren or had given birth to daughters only.”¹⁸ This is a practice where women marry another woman has been seen as an element that borders homosexuality. Originally, this practice was not and is not to support homosexuality or same-sex marriage but is a cultural practice with the connotation that women can marry women,

A woman marrying another woman has globally been practised. In Africa, it exists as a means of ensuring the continuity of a household in the absence of a son. This study focused on woman-to-woman marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo District, Kenya. This form of marriage is referred to as Iweto marriage and has persisted among the Akamba, contrary to Christian teaching, where marriage is exclusively monogamous.¹⁹

The events that necessitated the Iweto concepts were a married couple without children, unmarried single mothers and poverty. First, when a woman got married and, after some time, they could not have male children, she was expected to bring another woman at home who then would have children on her behalf with the woman’s husband. In this case, “An iweto is a woman married to another woman among the Kamba. It is a phenomenon where a barren woman marries another woman to sire children in the name of her husband.”²⁰ This would facilitate the continuity of lineage of her family and that of her husband. The married lady to the woman is referred to as Iweto. She is married here to have children who she and her husband will father.

This is a practice that worked to uphold the continuity of a generation. It is argued that it did not have homosexual connotations to it, “Iweto practice still occurs in some areas, but we need to point out that iweto does not necessarily indicate lesbian sexual orientation because the two women involved do not relate sexually; rather, the iweto provides “children from a person known in the lineage of the husband to the barren woman.”²¹ The generation of a couple that did not have children whom the unmarried woman continues through Iweto.

¹⁸ Serah Ngila, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, and Michael Katola, *The Persistence of the Iweto Marriage: Among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo District, Machakos County, Kenya* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012).

¹⁹ Ngila, Nasimiyu-Wasike, and Katola, *The Persistence of the Iweto Marriage*.

²⁰ Cheryl Potgieter and Finn Reygan, “Disruptive or Merely Alternative? A Case Study of a South African Gay Church” (January 1, 2011): 148.

²¹ Potgieter and Reygan, “Disruptive or Merely Alternative?,” 148.



This sounded good and worked for the cultural practice. However, in some cases, this cultural practice enhanced the existence of the idea of the same sexual attraction between women. This cultural practice could be an incubator of the idea of same-sex marriage within such a community.

There existed a liking that would become more erotic love. Another aspect of this practice that facilitated the existence of same-sex marriage is the heart of the Iweto. The children born by the Iweto were conceived by the family of her wife's husband. The man with whom she conceived was a close relative of the family she married. This practice stands a chance of enhancing or being used to justify same-sex relationships. The challenge with this kind of marital arrangement is that due to its nature, the woman married as Kaweto is subjected to societal mockery and exposed to several sex partners for procreation chosen for her by the 'husband.' They suffer social and psychological pain that they may be unable to address due to its acceptability within their community. Kaweto only finds solace in the woman who married her. Her needs for affection and romance are met by her woman husband, especially when she is expecting a child. Thus, this has the potential to breed homosexuality.

Polygamy and Dysfunctional Marriages

The second cultural element is polygamy or polygyny, which refers to having more than one wife. Mwambene, define polygyny as “a traditional practice whereby only a man is allowed to marry more than one spouse.”²² Africa, especially in Islam-dominated cities, is known for this practice more than any other continent. Marriage of more than one wife is most associated in the African continent, “Polygamy is a phenomenon often associated with African people. In almost all African societies, polygamy is an acceptable and valid form of marriage; monogamy has been associated with people of lower social status.”²³ As long as one is considered wealthy and can manage a family without financial struggles, they are expected to have more than one wife. Polygamy is also allowed in Islam, “One of the

²² Lea Mwambene, “What Is the Future of Polygyny (Polygamy) in Africa?,” *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 20, no. 1 (2017): 2, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/pelj/article/view/165855>.

²³ Elijah M. Baloyi, “Critical Reflections on Polygamy in the African Christian Context,” *Missionalia : Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 41, no. 2 (August 2013): 164–181.



principles of Islam limits the number of wives to four, a regulation strictly respected by Muslims and even non-Muslims.”²⁴

There are reasons for the existence of polygamy and why it is more pronounced among the two groups. For Muslims, it is an unintended religious curriculum though not all Muslims practice polygamy. According to Islamic teaching, Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, had married more than one wife, hence his followers. It is instructed, “Marry of women that please you; two, three or four, but if you feel you cannot be able to deal justly, then only one or what your right hand possess. That would be more suitable to prevent you from doing injustice.”²⁵ For the Africans, polygamy was/is for communities to have more children for the growth of clans leading to societal honour and respect. However, Polygamy in Islam was motivated by the need for numerical religious growth through having multiple wives for numeral growth to facilitate Islamic expansion.

Polygamy ensures that a generation continues when no children are in a monogamous marriage, “There are many strong cultural arguments in support of polygamy among African societies from the social, economic, cultural and traditional points of view. Wherever polygamy is a culturally accepted form of marriage, it is preferred over and against monogamy.”²⁶ Sometimes, the wives are encouraged or even forced to live together under one roof. Some have lived in bitterness and anger for each other while others have had to accept a cowife.

While collecting data for the study on factors contributing to the emergence of homosexual behaviours and practices among Christians and Muslims, two wives disclosed that they were married to one husband. The first wife explained this happened after the husband had an affair outside his marriage and bore a child. This made him more absent from his wife and children, which made the wife ask him to bring over the child’s mother as a co-wife. Since they lived together, the first wife initiated a relationship that ended up being a sexual attraction between the two wives. These two claimed to be enjoying their sexual affair as cowives that they do with their husband. They both mentioned that the husband is happy to see them happy though he wasn’t aware of their sexual relationship. The respondent

²⁴ Amyra Shechtman Grossbard, “The Economics of Polygamy,” (n.d.): 389.

²⁵ Translated Maulawi Sher Ali, “The Holy Quran - Arabic Text and English Translation” (n.d.): 1028.

²⁶ Bedru Hussein, “Polygamy: An Ethical Case Study,” 10 (2002): 82.



remarked, “I just wanted us to live in peace and harmony with my husband’s mistress. I showed her care and love for her to feel accepted because I didn’t want to lose him. Then, one thing led to the other, and we are happily enjoying each other.” She added that their husband had no idea that they were involved sexually. He only brags that his two wives share a bed with him.

There are several reasons why one man would marry more than one wife in cases where the first wife did not have children, for the continuity of generation. The man got another woman as a wife. For the harmony of the house, the first wife had to accept the second wife and work in having a working relationship as they raised a family together. A respondent from the Islamic faith responded, “Our husband thinks that we love him. We live together and share a bed with him. We live in peace and love each other. However, he does not know that we have found each other. We have a love indescribable between us and are happy.”

In these cases, polygamy, an acceptable practice, seems to foster homosexuality. When a man has more than one wife, the wives are bound to eventually grow in love with each other or live in severe hatred. It can enhance the existence of same-sex relationships. Those who have grown up in homes with violence have ended up with psychological traumas that affected how they socialise. Bubelwa, in his dissertation, observes the effects of broken marriages on children. He states, “Conversely, parents in a dysfunctional marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by conflicts with their spouse and cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate parenting style worsens parent-child relations.”²⁷ These children grow up hating heterosexual relationships hence the alternative lifestyle; Homosexuality. The mother-father relationship significantly impacts the thoughts, feelings and emotional makeup of the children they are raising.

²⁷ Cornel D Bubelwa, “Effects Of Broken Marriage on Primary School Pupils’ Academic Performance in Ilala Municipality,” (n.d.): 11.



Female Genital Mutilation

FGM refers to the circumcision of women. It is “the procedure of removing healthy external genitalia from girls/women for socio-cultural reasons.”²⁸ This is a practice that is common and practised in many African communities. It has remained illegal in Kenya, but some communities still practice it, “Female genital cutting is a widespread practice, having been documented across a broad region of Africa, extending in West Africa from Mauritania to Cameroon, across central Africa and in the east reaching from Tanzania to Ethiopia.”²⁹

The practice is painful for the victim, leaving them wounded physically and psychologically, causing emotional damage. The result is that the victim lives with a low self-perception leading to low self-esteem and a sense of worthlessness. The victim also lives with such immense sexual fears, thinking that they are not able to have sexual fulfilment with the opposite sex, thus the choice of the same sex. It is noted that “It is often at the onset of pregnancy and/or during childbirth that the effects of FGM/C become problematic, with midwives often the first health care professional to recognise that the woman has had the procedure.”³⁰

Thus, homosexuality becomes an option for those hurting from psychological damage due to FGM. The hurt, pain, and embarrassment they go through can, in a reactionary manner, lead to homosexuality. The effects of the pain and suffering because of the decisions made by one’s guardians or parents cause wounds in the heart and soul, leading to bad choices by the victims. It has been rightly noted that FGM is carried out during early childhood with the parents, guardians or grandparents as the decision-makers.³¹ Sadly, this

²⁸ “(PDF) The Psychological Impact of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) on Girls/Women’s Mental Health: A Narrative Literature Review,” 469. “(PDF) The Psychological Impact of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) on Girls/Women’s Mental Health: A Narrative Literature Review,” accessed October 10, 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267641373_The_psychological_impact_of_Female_Genital_Mutilation_Cutting_FGMC_on_girlswomen's_mental_health_a_narrative_literature_review#read.

²⁹ Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund, *Female “Circumcision” in Africa: Culture, Controversy, and Change* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

³⁰ “The Psychological Impact of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) on Girls/Women’s Mental Health: A Narrative Literature Review,” 471, accessed May 16, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/02646838.2014.949641?needAccess=true&role=button>.

³¹ Rose Grace Grose et al., “Community Influences on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Kenya: Norms, Opportunities, and Ethnic Diversity,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 60, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 86.



leaves the victims wounded for life. It is notable that presently, Kenya has experienced a substantial decline in the prevalence of FGM.³²

Same-sex Boarding Schools

Another element unrelated to African culture is the issue of same-sex boarding schools. Research shows that homosexuality is practised in schools where there is one gender of students. This is not to allude that mixed boarding schools have sexual activities going on. The psychological association with girls can have the boys and the girls knowing the role of each gender and their functions. However, when they grow in isolation, they seem to develop characteristics that incubate homosexuality. The boys and girls in high schools are in their puberty development stage, of the human body's sexual identity is developing. A study done on high school students indicated that,

Homosexuality is mostly practised in single-sex boarding schools, specifically boys' boarding schools. Consequently, they believed that homosexuality is caused by sexual starvation. However, when asked whether these students will change their sexual orientation after they graduate from high school, the majority responded by saying no. On the contrary, these students believed that prayers and counselling could change one's sexual orientation.³³

During the research on factors incubating homosexuality, there was no given biological factor that led one to homosexuality. From the respondents and scholarly work examined, no gene carries homosexuality. Homosexuality is a practice and behaviour that is acquired after one has already been born as one develops; Homosexuality is not inborn or genetically inherited. Sexual orientation is a lifestyle that is cultivated in young minds through family, friends, and relatives, electronic media and corrective institutions like prisons. It represents a boy child struggling to find his way in the confused and malfunctioning family and social institutions.”³⁴

³² Grose et al., “Community Influences on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Kenya,” 87.

³³ “Grappling with the Issue of Homosexuality,” 258.

³⁴ Evah Maina, Dennis Butto, and Mary Murigi, “Predisposing Factors to Homosexuality among Men in Kilifi Town- Kenya,” *Universal Journal of Medical Science* 4, no. 3 (May 2016): 93.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Homosexuality is a discussion that should not be avoided, even in religious circles. It is a practice that has disrupted the family setup as biblically and traditionally understood. Since those involved consciously decide to be homosexuals, they can still choose to stop the practice depending on where they are psychologically, spiritually and emotionally.

The present study has looked at aspects that have allowed people to develop same-sex relationships. First, the traditional practice in Africa of women marrying other women for heritage and childbearing. Whereas the purpose intended was not sexual intimacy, this has been used by propagators of homosexuality to argue that Africans practised homosexuality in the past. African Christian theologians must engage in these contextual issues. Second, polygamy and dysfunctional marriages can indirectly lead to homosexuality. Third, FGM, though illegal, has continued to persist in deep secrecy. There needs to be a community awareness of the psychological effects of this practice on the victims, who might sometimes be tempted to explore same-sex relationships. Fourth, it has been observed that homosexuality is prevalent in same-sex boarding schools. The sexual identity of school-going children should be safeguarded at this formative stage. Lastly, the church needs to be aware of what is taking place in the people's lives at the family, national and global levels and provide a proper biblical and theological response for stable families and societies.

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