

Perceptions and cultural attitudes toward same-sex marriages and their implications for family structure in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the culture and attitudes of gay marriages in Kenya with a focus on how these attitudes overlap with and can counter the sustenance of African traditional family values. In the backdrop of increasing global campaign for LGBTQ+ rights, Kenya stands at a cultural juncture where rights-based discourses of the modern era meet deeply rooted African values that define family as man and woman union, primitively geared towards procreation, continuity of lineage, and community solidarity. To probe into such dynamics, the research employed a systematic literature review, based entirely on secondary data. Utilizing reliable scholarly databases such as JSTOR, PubMed, and Google Scholar, a precise search was conducted with tactical search terms such as "same-sex marriages in Kenya," "continuity of family system," and "LGBTQ+ rights in Africa." The review emphasized peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and case studies released between 2010 to 2023 to guarantee that the analysis captured the historical and dynamic legal and sociocultural features of same-sex unions in the context of Kenya. Thematic analysis of the selected literature revealed that most of the sources treat same-sex marriage as a cultural revolution, one generally recognized as incompatible with conventional African ideas of the family. Key concerns were around perceived loss of intergenerational continuity, subversion of gender roles, and destabilization of society conventionally based on heterosexual family structures. At the same time, the literature projected a modest but emerging counter-narrative among rights movements and youth for inclusivity and legal enfranchisement of non-traditional family forms. The study concludes that while the attitudes towards same-sex marriages are gradually shifting in certain urban and cosmopolitan settings, the culture narrative within Kenya is strongly opposed to the enfranchisement of nontraditional family values. It underscores the importance of placing any family reform discussion in culturally sensitive contexts that respect African communal heritage and intergenerational knowledge, while proposing policy debates bringing together human rights and cultural preservation and civic education to foster critical but respectful dialogue with changing social realities.

KEYWORDS: Same-Sex marriage, Traditional African values, Cultural attitudes, LGBTQ+ rights, Family structure, Civic education.