


Chapter 4

Human Rights Theory vis-a-vis LGBTQ2S+ Culture in Africa: A Philosophical Reflection

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at locating the offshoot of the 20th century sexual revolution, LGBTQ+ sexual deviation, within the context of human rights in Africa. This chapter argued that human rights hinge on the individualistic norm and as such can readily find cultural justification in the West. However, since it could be said that communalism has been Africa's traditional status quo, to that extent LGBTQ+ is a cultural anachronism. This chapter has posited that to subscribe to the perceived logicity in hinging LGBTQ+ on the human rights dictates is to legitimise cultural imperialism. The author has further asserted that the Westernisation of LGBTQ+ in Africa is, amongst others, one of the regrettable imports that renders the one way traffic called globalisation already suspect. To achieve this, the author employed critical analysis and the dialectical method as methods for this research.

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INTRODUCTION

‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’, this is Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2015). This and 29 other ‘rights’ are expressed in a 1948 document adopted by 48 out of the then 58 United Nations members-states. They hinge on a handful of principles popular among which are liberty, equality, dignity, and brotherhood. They are presumed to apply to every human being. However, given the compelling power of globalisation especially the cultural strand, it is observed that a handful of foreign cultures are beginning to find expression in cultures where they did not originate initially.

Cultural globalisation may be deemed as the transfer of intangibles such as values, meanings and ideas around the world in view of increasing social relations among peoples. Through cultural globalisation, there is the diffusion of certain artifacts like fashion, cuisines, religion across cultures. Nevertheless, one of the criticisms against cultural globalisation rests on the perceived Westernisation of globalisation even its tripod – economic, political and cultural (Kraidy, 2005). The Americanisation/ Europeanisation of globalisation as seen in a one-way traffic of wares from the West to seemingly weak globalising partners has made the trend already suspect (Globalisation, Americanisation or Europeanisation?: An Ibuanyidandaist Critique, 2016). In fact, Tomlinson has referred to this as cultural imperialism (Globalisation and Culture, 1999). Here, there is the destructive overhauling of cultural expressions dominated by a homogenised western culture.

According to Nyok and Osuala, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) culture which is evidently western, is understood by some to be another dimension of cultural globalisation (2016). Basically, the practice of physical, sexual attraction for a similar gender is alien to traditional Africa. For instance, in response to visiting and LGBT-advocating US President Barrack Obama, who had said, ‘When you start treating people differently not because of any harm they are doing to anybody, but because they are different, that is the path whereby freedoms begin to erode,’ Kenyan President, Uhuru Kenyata would reply in rebuttal, ‘there are some things that we must admit, we don’t share (with the US). Our culture, our societies don’t accept (TheGuardian, 2015). The west hinges advocacy for LGBT+ on human rights that are universal and inalienable. In this work, I make an inquiry into whether the human right narrative is sufficient to justify LGBT+ in Africa. The reason for embarking on this study is to show the irrationality in basing LGBT+ in Africa solely on human rights. The contention here is that human right hinges on the Western value of individualism unlike Africa that embraces communalism.

The in-road of the alien practice of LGBT+ culture in Africa is becoming advanced in contemporary times. This is as a result of the overt titling of Africa’s traditional

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