

Family Solutions to African Traditional/Cultural Practices Harmful to Women: Exploring Men's Role in The Eradication Process

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What is Female Genital Mutilation?



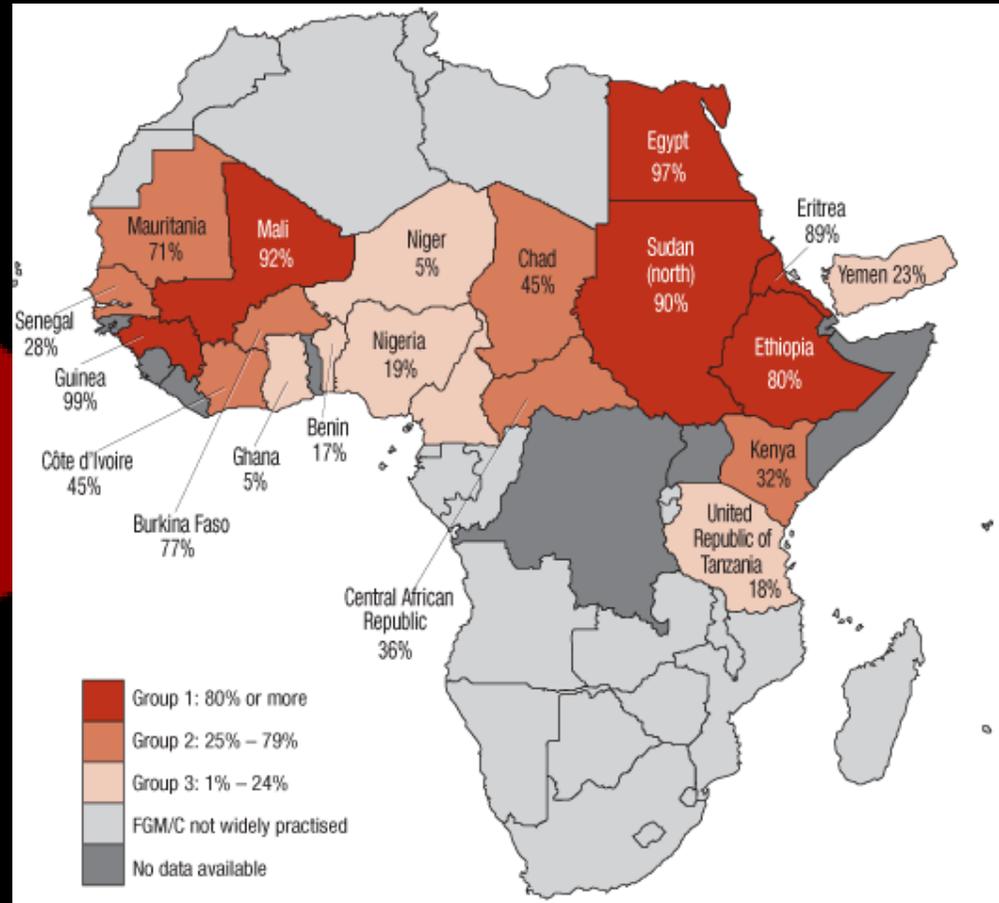
According to the World Health Organization: FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the genital organs whether for cultural, religious or other non-therapeutic reasons (WHO, 2008)

Fact Sheet

- 140 million females have undergone the procedure
- About 3 million girls are at risk every year. 30 girls will be cut by the end of this presentation
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometimes between infancy and age 15.
- The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women
- FGM is deeply embedded in cultural practices
- FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women
- FGM has no religious endorsement

Where is FGM practiced?

Africa
Asia
Australia
Europe
United States
Middle East



A Harmful Practice...



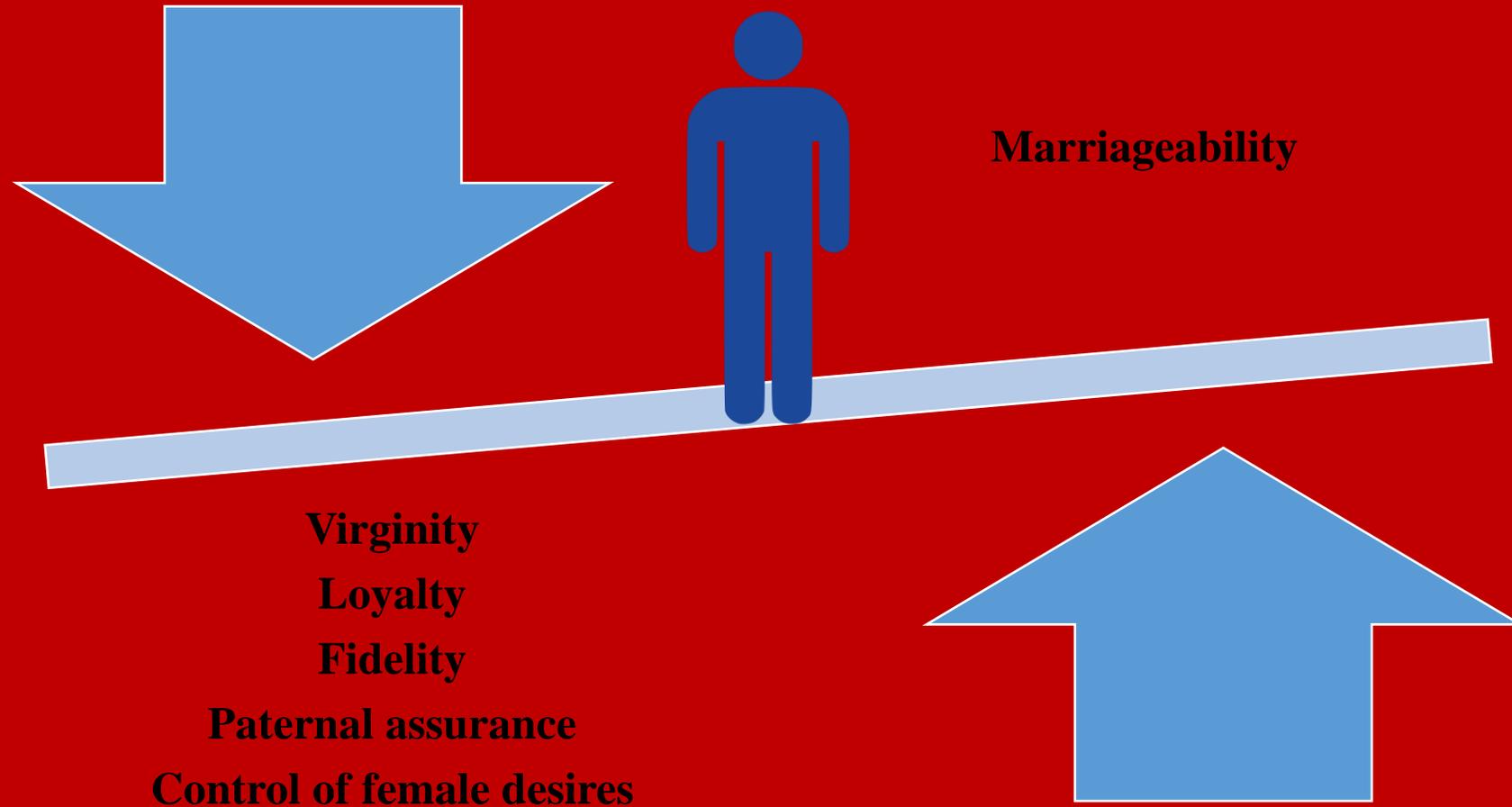


Obstructed labour in a woman with infibulation (Courtesy: Assoc Prof Moustapha Toure, Mali Hospital, Bamako, Mali).

Consequences and Perceived Benefits



Linking The Family Man to a Harmful Practice



Quest for female purity / virginity

Virginity = a pre-requisite for marriage

- Associated with female and family honor and decency
- FGM reduces or eliminate women's/girls sexual desires
- Lessen temptations for potential extra marital affairs

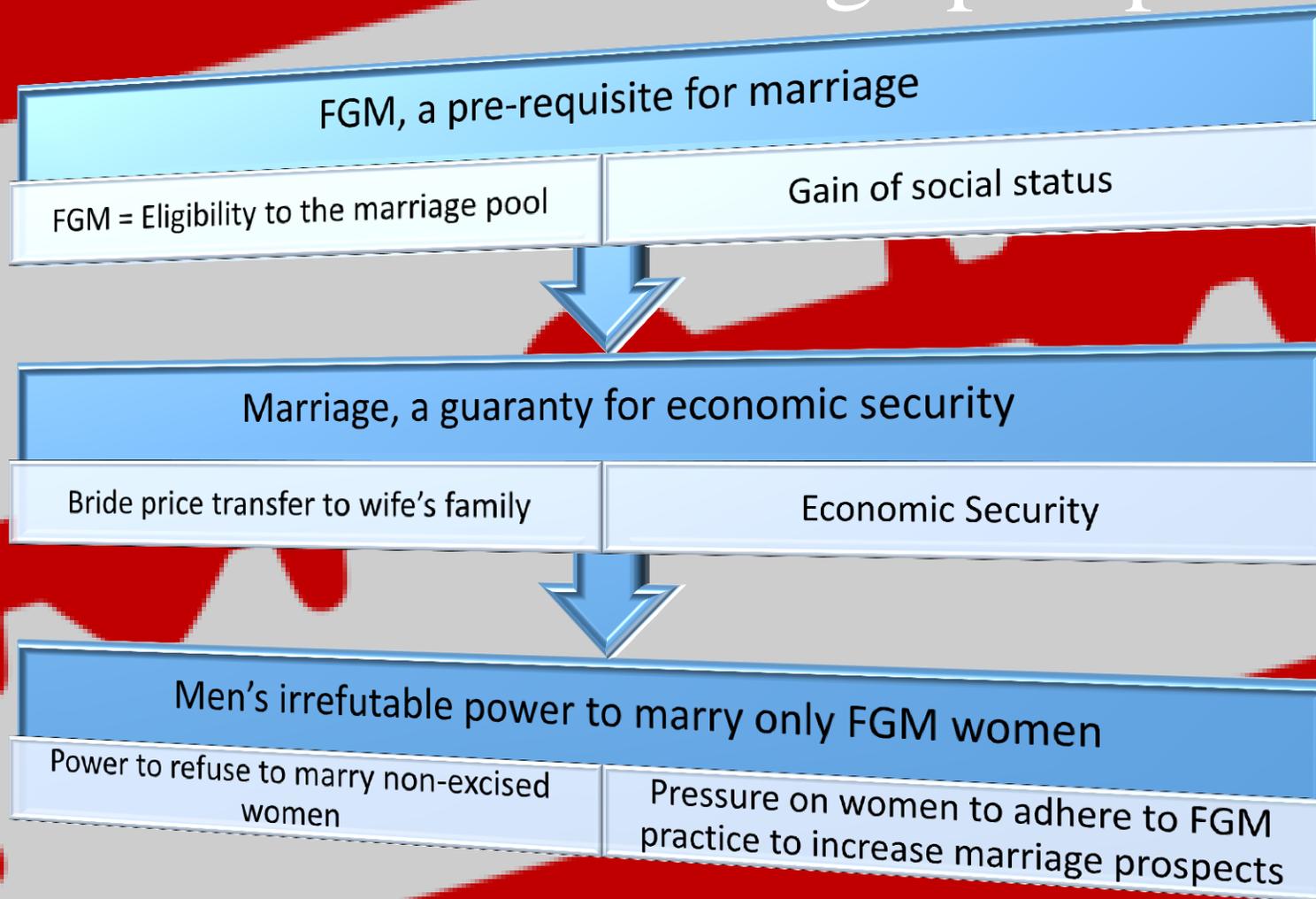
(Kaplan et al, 2013)

Men's role in the maintenance of FGM

- **61.8% of men embrace its continuation**
- **60.7% intend to have it performed on there daughters**

(GDHS, 1999)

FGM Increases marriage prospects



Men demand assurance for paternity confidence

Men demand for virgin brides

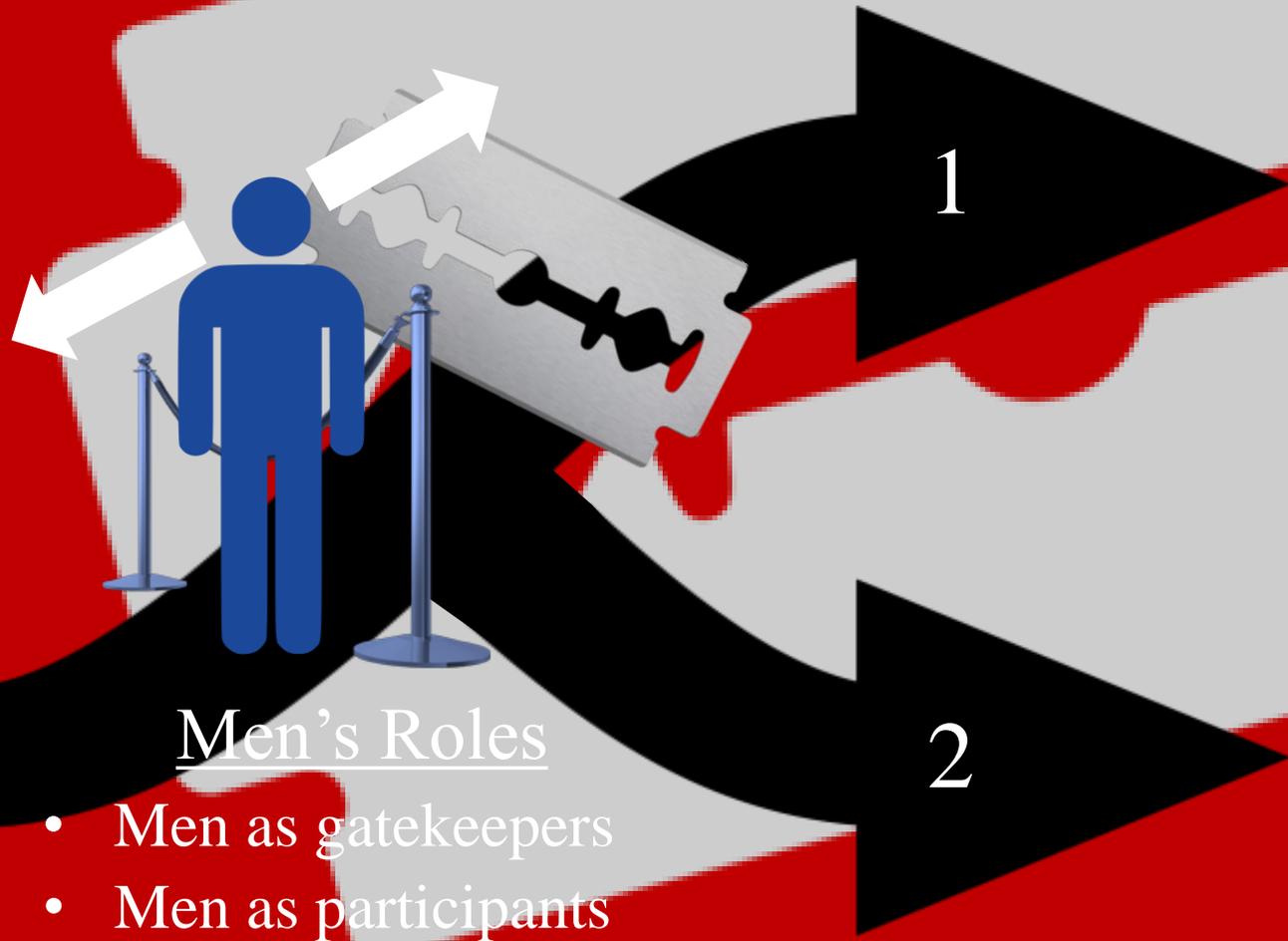


Men prize FGM



Men demand fidelity and loyalty

Social Convention Theory



Men's Roles

- Men as gatekeepers
- Men as participants

Follow the Social Convention

- Eligibility (For marriage)
- Fidelity (In marriage)
- Paternity (From marriage)

Break the Social Convention

- Ostracization
- Isolation
- Exclusion

Men's Role in the Eradication Process



Conclusion

- Most women believe that FGM is totally preserved by men as they have the irrefutable power to refuse to marry non-FGM women.
- Men who possess greater social power are the gatekeepers of FGM and protectors of the current social order.
- Regulating female sexuality & reproductive function, family honor, fidelity, & loyalty, female virginity, male sexual pleasure, and paternity confidence seem to revolve around male preoccupation
- Need for men's collaboration, involvement, and contribution in the anti-FGM campaign.
 - Need for men's advocacy at all social level
 - Need for men as agents of change / Advocates

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