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Sustaining Sexual Norms: Content and Flow of Information in Luweero Sub-County.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CoHeRe……Developing Sustainable Community Health Resources in Poor Settings Program

DNA………….. Deoxyribonucleic acid

FGD…………….Focus Group Discussions

HIV…………….Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IDI……………..In-depth Interviews

IRB………………Institutional Review Boards

LGBT…………...Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender

MDGs…………..Millennium Development Goals

UBOS…………..Uganda Bureau of Statistics

VHT…………….Village Health Team
Even as African governments continue to usher their population more and more into the cyber world and cyber space, the pumpkin in the old Homestead should not be uprooted.

Aaron Mushengyezi (2003)
Abstract

This six weeks’ ethnographic research explored how information about sexual norms travels in the community of Luweero sub-county, Uganda. Considering that limited literature exists on packaging and circulation of information in communities of Buganda, the study hoped to fill the gap by documenting the grassroots information system using sexual norms as the guiding topic. It focused on what people know about sexual norms, structures that transmit this information, reasons for their ascription and communication techniques employed in the transmission process. Qualitative data collection techniques were combined to facilitate triangulation of field data. Expert views were obtained from interviews with one senga, one youth leader and one clan elder and one local authority. Seven in-depth interviews with five youth aged between 18-35 years and two respondents aged above 35 years gathered individual and cross generational perspectives. Four focus group discussions and four pile sorting sessions were separately held with; sengas, youth aged 18-35 years, individuals from the general public aged above 35 years and clan elders to capture community attitudes. Participant observation at social places and social events captured information content and communication techniques. Informed consent was sought from all participants and anonymity ensured at all stages of the research. A feedback session was held with the study community to validate the collected data.

A hierarchical clan system facilitates transmission of customary sexual norms to grassroots level. Other forms of information including health can potentially be transmitted by the same system. Formal and non-formal techniques are used to transmit information. Experience, knowledge and power contribute to the credibility for information sources. Sociocultural transformation and emerging liberal ideas may gradually reconstruct some aspects of this indigenous communication system.
Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This research explored aspects of content and flow of information in the community\(^1\) of Luweero Sub-County in Luweero district, Uganda. This district is also part of Buganda kingdom, an administratively autonomous political entity within the state of Uganda. Consistent health behavior is dependent on health education (Botman 2009) yet current investment in health financing including health communication, is reportedly unsustainable (Okwero et al. 2010). This study recognized the need to identify locally available resources to sustain some components of health services including health communication. It assumed that alongside other factors, an inadequately documented grassroots information system accounts for the consistent sexual norms in Buganda that have defied sociocultural transformation without deliberate institutional resource input. The study imagined that adopting some aspects of this grassroots information system that have been limitedly investigated may improve sustainability of health behavior at community level. By studying grassroots communication, this research set out to identify local communication resources that can be utilized to sustainably spread other messages across the community.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite investment in health infrastructure, human resource and health education (Okwero et al. 2010), Uganda’s pace is reportedly too slow to achieve the health MDGs by 2015 (Odaga and Lochoro 2006:1-20). High fertility at 6.7 children per woman (Bbaale and Mpuga 2011), high population growth at 3.4% (Wakabi 2006:558) and reports that HIV incidence is not falling in rural Uganda (Shafer et al. 2008:1641), raise concern on health sector performance

\(^{1}\) A group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings (MacQueen et al. 2001).
against important sexual and reproductive health indicators. This scenario attests that investment in health infrastructure and human resource cannot independently influence health behavior in Uganda (Botman 2009). Sustainable delivery of health information at community level may be one way to transform health behavior. Integration of local communication practices may mitigate the unsustainable high cost and alienation associated with existing formal health communication (Okwero et al. 2010). Available literature describes sources of information about sexual practices in Buganda but is silent on how this information is composed, packaged, circulated and sustained at community level (Nyanzi et al. 2008:518-539; Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2009:367-380; Nobelius et al. 2010:663-676; Friedrich 2004; Muyinda et al. 2003:159-167). This study attempted to fill this gap by exploring and documenting grassroots communication. Following restoration of the Ugandan kingdoms, traditional institutions were predicted to only grow in influence (Englebert 2002:345-368) as already manifested in the popular commercialization of senga and kojja services in Buganda (Tamale 2005). *Senga* is a title given to the sister of a child’s father who plays a key role in the sexual development of her nieces. *Senga* is the ‘if’ part of a longer sentence - *senga teyali mukazi yandibadde taata* whose translation in English is; *if she was not a woman she would have been my father* (Muyinda et al. 2001:353-361). *Kojja* is the brother to the mother who is tasked with the sexual development of his nephews. Both *senga* and *kojja* are assigned these tasks because they can mediate between the children and their parents on sex matters. Studying content and flow of information at grassroots level shall contribute extra knowledge to existing effort to integrate indigenous communication methods in the formal health systems to improve retention and sustainability of health messages in Ugandan communities.

1.3 Justification of the problem

Identifying sustainable ways to communicate is one of many alternative avenues to improve health sector performance (Botman 2009). Buganda’s grassroots communication system may
provide clues to sustainable health communication because some aspects of its sexual norms have been consistent against sociocultural and political transformation (Muyinda et al. 2001:353-361; Muyinda et al. 2003:159-167; Muyinda et al. 2004:69-79; Tamale 2003:17-29). Buganda customs’ resistance to sociocultural transformation is historical and represents a consistent power struggle between indigenous and alien systems (Roscoe 2005). For example during the 1966-1993 ban on kingdoms that undermined traditional institutions including *senga* and *kojja* (Griffiths and Katalikawe 2003:93), people of Buganda persistently consulted them regardless (Muyinda et al. 2001:353-361). Baganda identify themselves by clans through which the lineage of individuals can be traced. Each clan is uniquely attached to a totem and is made up of individuals that are genetically linked to the same ancestor. There are 52 clans in Buganda that serve as administrative units under one King (Roscoe 2005; Low 1971). Marriage to non-filial clanmates remains unthinkable in Buganda even when the penal code act introduced by the state does not consider it incestuous. Understanding sustenance of Buganda’s sexual norms may inform attempts to establish pragmatic, relevant and sustainable health communication strategies.
Chapter 2

2.1 Conceptual framework

Studying content and transmission of information on sexual norms cannot be done in isolation of bio-politics, social interaction and cognitive processes by which information is channeled and conceived. For this reason, symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1980:409-419; Boeije 2002:391-409; Griffin and Park 2009:56-62), Foucauldian assertions on bio-politics (Foucault 1978) and cognitive anthropologist views on memes and imitation (Atran 2001:351-381; Bloch 2005; Blackmore 1999) combine to form this conceptual framework.

Information that influences sexual norms is composed at political level, communicated by social interaction through conversations, social activity, shared meanings and through normative behavior. Bio-political edicts spell out reward and penalties for compliance. However, it is important to note that cultural norms are not static and their continuity may be affected by socio-cultural changes like shift of political power across groups.

Figure 1: Conceptual model
2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Advanced by Herbert Blumer, George Herbert Mead (Blumer 1980:409-419), and Goffman (1981), symbolic interactionism contends that the self is constructed by others through communication, interaction and flexible social processes. Symbolic interactionism considers that talking to each other is the most human and humanizing activity that people engage in (Griffin and Park 2009:56-62) and in this study, focus was on what individuals communicate about sexual norms. Symbolic interactionism advances qualitative research methods as most appropriate for investigating social interaction because they facilitate researchers to immerse in respondents’ routine. This immersion facilitates internalization of vital symbols and meanings. Emphasis on relevance of information, meanings and interaction in influencing individual behavior and preference for qualitative data collection methods made symbolic interactionism thematically and methodologically relevant for this community based study.

2.1.2 Memes and Imitation

Cognitive anthropologists advance memes and imitation as potential explanations for construction and retention of social behavior. Atran (2001:351-381) defines memes as cultural elements transmitted by non-genetic means. Atran (2001:351-381) borrows from Darwinism to explain that non-replicated behavior fails to transform into norms because it dies off during natural selection. Norms are therefore mental representations that survive because they are easily produced, remembered and communicated (Atran 2001:351-381). This view is supported by Bloch (2005) who asserts that memes are a pedagogical tool through which knowledge and behavior can be transmitted. These assertions were tested by observing interactions between individuals and interviewing them to establish how they obtained knowledge on sexual norms.
2.1.3 Foucauldian perspective

Although he wrote in a European context, assertions made by Foucault (1978) on sexuality are relevant to Buganda as well. Like the Victorian bourgeoisie, structural regulation of sexuality in pre-colonial Buganda was inspired by a quest to consolidate power over labor and population growth. Buganda’s sexual norms therefore represent bio-political techniques to limit recreational sex and regulate reproduction (Foucault 1978). Tamale (2003:17-29) echoes this assertion in her argument against patriarchal status quo and suppression of sexual pluralism. Torgrimsen (2005) narrates that Buganda’s patriarchal norms are so deeply entrenched in communities that efforts to empower women are frustrated by potential beneficiaries’ perception of themselves, their children and belongings as men’s property (Torgrimsen 2005). Understanding sustenance of Buganda’s kinship system and community compliance over the years (Roscoe 2005) could meaningfully inform efforts to entrench health messages in communities of Buganda. For example if health workers interact with the agents of the indigenous information systems they may learn and adopt the techniques that these use to sustain their communication. They may also negotiate for their messages to be included in the information package delivered to the population through the indigenous communication system.

Foucault (1978) argues that structures enforce norms created by individuals because power is dialectic. This implies that the power that structures use is given to them by the people who have the option of accepting or rejecting the structural edicts. In the context of Buganda, this suggests that pre-colonial sexual norms are consistent against new bio-political systems because individuals in Buganda appreciate and maintain them (Foucault 1978). The impression here is that the people choose which edicts to follow and will resist imposition of norms that they don’t appreciate. As if to illustrate this, Abu-Lughod (1990:41-55) demonstrates how top-down behavioral prescriptions are resisted at grassroots level. Although
Lughod posits that *where there is resistance there is power*, turning around Foucault’s *where there is power there is resistance*, both allude to the fact that structural positions are maintained by opinions and actions of individuals that make it up. This complementarity plays out in Buganda’s maintenance of some aspects of pre-colonial sexual norms despite pressure to abandon them especially in context of intense sociocultural transformation. Neocolonial state positions on health behavior, disenfranchisement of monarchies and a new world order that is introducing new socio-economic and political values form part of this sociocultural transformation against which customary norms are sustained.
2.2 Literature review

This section discusses: 1) the role of bio-politics in sustenance of Buganda’s indigenous sexual norms, 2) the role of history in formulation, acceptance and rejection of messages on sexual norms, 3) the importance of information in shaping bio-political techniques that influence community response to prescribed sexual norms and 4) the benefits for Health communicators in studying and adopting indigenous communication techniques.

2.2.1 Bio-politics

Roscoe (2005) asserts that pre-colonial Buganda kingdom had bio-political techniques (Foucault 1978) that regulated sexuality. These include a clan rule that forbids marriage between clanmates (Roscoe 2005; Low 1971; Torgrimsen 2005) and which is aimed at expanding clan influence by recruiting new members. It is a politically orchestrated edict (Roscoe 2005) that lends credence to claims that structures make use of their people’s sexual bodies to consolidate their power (Foucault 1978). In Buganda, successive neocolonial states have attempted to weaken indigenous bio-political edicts. For example while Buganda’s pre-colonial description of incest includes sex relations with non-filial clanmates, the neocolonial state’s penal code act limits incest to sexual relations between close biological relatives (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza 2005). Even with this ‘incentive’, formal marriage between clanmates remains unheard of in Buganda. The pre-wedding kukyala function at which the groom and bride’s families make first contact is to confirm that they are not marrying people of the same clan (Kaduuli 2006). Understanding how individuals are informed and convinced to sustain Buganda’s sexual norms may provide clues to sustainable and effective communication.
2.2.2 Historical perspective

Wrigley (2002) attributes maintenance of sexual norms in Buganda to strong pre-colonial ties between the kingdom and the grassroots. He narrates that missionaries and colonialists were surprised that Buganda had long before their arrival, maintained a sophisticated political structure with an army, council of leaders, judiciary and a king. Although colonialists introduced their own edicts on sexual matters, Buganda’s system maintained communication with grassroots and still influences their family decisions (Torgrimsen 2005). At the climax of their conflict, the neocolonial state banned monarchies between 1966-1993 to exert its influence and silence an obdurate Buganda kingdom that also had alternative bio-political techniques (Griffiths and Katalikawe 2003:93).

During the abolition that weakened but did not deter traditional institutions, the *senga* and *kojja* institutions were covertly but effectively operating (Muyinda et al. 2001:353-361). This continuation and reported effectiveness during banishment was most likely enabled by systematic grassroots communication. Although other factors may be at play, the role of communication in sustaining these norms is worth evaluating and documenting. This study investigated this indigenous communication system to open avenues for some of its aspects to be integrated in contemporary formal communication practice.

2.2.3 The role of information in sustaining sexual norms

By arguing that effective power operates through discursive production, Foucault exalts information as a determinant of how people perceive their sexuality. His argument implies that indigenous and neocolonial state’s bio-political systems wrestle for control of information in Buganda to influence people’s sexuality, control their reproduction and their resources. He adds that individuals in the community retain the power to maintain, adopt or reject norms basing on how information about them is composed and packaged to attract consent (Foucault
1978). Torgrimsen (2005) demonstrates how the state and transnational bodies’ sexuality and gender development programs are frustrated by grassroots’ appreciation of indigenous edicts on sexual matters that contradict state and transnational expectations. Nyanzi et al (2008:518-539) demonstrate an inherent passion among Baganda to uphold customary practice. They cite ritual sex that is still observed at funeral functions in Buganda despite the associated risk of HIV infection. However the fact that some successfully negotiate to have symbolic ritual sex indicates that norms may gradually change with circumstances and discussion (Foucault 1978). Studying how information is composed, transmitted and shared among grassroots populations may therefore help to identify avenues for discourse generation and lead to sustenance or adjustment of sexual norms. Ranger and Hobsbawm (1992) argue that traditions are made and maintained through discussions among individuals in the community and agree with Foucault (1978) that norms will only remain if individuals within a system consider them relevant. The techniques invested in making individuals in Buganda kingdom appreciate and sustain indigenous sexual norms are worth investigating for potential replication.

2.2.4 Other potential contributors to sustenance of sexual norms and emerging voices

Roscoe (2005) and Low (1971) demonstrate that Buganda kingdom’s sexual norms are maintained by an uncompromising patriarchal clan system. For example individuals in Buganda kingdom who were found guilty of sex offences especially marriage to clanmates, were punished with death (Roscoe 2005). Roscoe (2005) and Torgrimsen (2005) illustrate that women, children and whatever they own is the property of men who unsurprisingly, frustrate all efforts to change the status quo. Torgrimsen (2005) argues that patriarchy is unchallenged because children and women are subdued and severe penalties meted on offending individuals. Tamale (2005), argues that sexual pluralism (LGBT) and gender equality in Buganda are suppressed to maintain patriarchy. However, it is important to note that
arguments by Tamale (2003:17-29; 2005) may be signs of emerging discourses on sexual norms and possibility of eventual transformation as these voices gain ground.

Although available literature provides some insight into sources of information on sexual norms in Buganda, it is not detailed enough to cover how information about these norms is composed, packaged, and circulated in the community. It also does not cover the power and gender issues and the emerging discourses on sexuality. This study attempted to fill this gap by investigating these aspects of communication and establishing how traditional sexual norms among people of Luweero sub-county are transmitted and retained.

2.3 Research question

2.3.1 Main question:
How are traditional sexual norms composed, transmitted, and retained in Luweero district?

2.3.2 Sub-questions

• What do people know and discuss about sexual norms?

• What are the processes and techniques used to impart and sustain information on sexual norms within the community?

• Who are the people and structures responsible for transmission, sustenance and replication of information on sexual norms in the community?

• What gives credence to the people and institutions that impart knowledge on sexual norms?
2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Study design

This exploratory ethnographic study was conducted for six weeks in the community of Luweero Sub County, Luweero district. This sub-county is located in Buganda kingdom that runs parallel government structures to those of the state including a ministry of health. This made it an appropriate setting to study the bio-political contest between the monarchy and the state as they wrestle for control of information on sexual norms.

I conducted this research with support of the CoHeRe programme that aims to identify and develop sustainable community health resources in Uganda. Access to participants was preceded by formal introduction to the Chief Administration Office at district headquarters. This is the top most technical office in the district that oversees activities of government and civil society agencies. Its clearance grants the researcher security and right to mobilize research participants. Village local council support was crucial in mobilizing gatekeepers and participants with the required attributes to participate in FGDs and pile sorting activities. The Buganda kingdom official at parish level was contacted to mobilize clan elders. Interviews, participant observation, FGDs and pile sorting were conducted within the participants’ schedules to avoid postponements (Torgrimsen 2005). Interviews took an average of 45 minutes per session. The FGDs were recorded and transcribed verbatim and a feedback session was conducted to validate data and create data ownership.

2.4.2 Study population

Participants were selected from the community of Luweero Sub County representing both rural and peri-urban settings. They were female and male adults exposed to sexual norms by way of decision making, receiving counseling and sharing information about sexual norms.
2.4.3 Sample size

Four focus group sessions attended by 11-15 participants (Carey 1994:225-241), four pile sorting activities of 9-12 participants each (Van der Sijpt 2010:1773-1779), In-depth interviews with seven individuals and key informant interviews with four people were organized.

Expert views were obtained from four key informants that included one senga, one youth leader, one clan elder and one local authority. An interview with each of these was considered adequate to provide the overview impression of information on sexual norms in the community. These were considered because they regularly interact with sexual matters by virtue of their occupations.

Four FGDs and four pile sorting sessions were conducted with sengas and kojjas, youth aged 18-35 years who regularly encounter sexual matters, non-youth individuals aged 35 years and above that have wide experience dealing with sexual matters and clan elders that enforce customary sexual norms.

2.4.4 Sampling procedure

Selection of study participants was purposive and guided by local contacts. During field orientation, friendships were rekindled and new ones made to identify and engage gatekeepers. Rapport was made with potential participants to obtain prior knowledge of structural, cultural and social issues that could have affected the interview process. This was done to avert any tension likely to develop and also to facilitate free expression during the interviews which is made easier when respondents have prior interaction with their interviewer (Zheng 2011:173-195). For security reasons and to ensure that the interviewee characteristics match those stipulated in the study protocol, at least one member of the local council was asked to participate in mobilizing and scheduling interviews with participants.
2.5 Data collection

This section describes in detail, the procedures by which data were obtained.

Interviews and FGD data were collected using interview guides, topic guides and a voice recorder. The guides were lists of open questions with potential to generate conversation and lead to extensive discussion (Morgan et al. 1998) and reflexivity (Rubin and Rubin 2011).

2.5.1 Field orientation

Considering that the study involved immersion in the population’s routine, effort was invested in establishing rapport with key contacts in the community that could mobilize the different categories of study participants. This was crucial to create free interaction and facilitate inter-subjectivity. Reconnaissance was done to search and familiarize with key places that were considered strategic for participant observation and those with historical significance. Friendship was used as a method to court gatekeepers (Tillmann-Healy 2003:729-749; Bailey 2008:253-264) of closed groups like the sengas, clan leaders, local authorities and institutions. Friendship helped to familiarize with participants’ register, interact with the study population at grassroots level and decode exclusive diction.

2.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

These were conducted to capture expert views on communication of sexual norms. Interviewees included one senga, one clan elder, one local authority leader, and one youth leader. These were selected because they are by occupation and status committed to transmission of sexual norms. They are in position to demonstrate and explain the content and techniques of transmitting information and how they create and consolidate credibility. Considering their expertise, one interview with each of them was adequate to provide an overview of the technical issues concerning transmission of information on sexual norms.
These interviews were facilitated by one interviewer using an interview guide and informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interview began.

2.5.3 In-depth interviews

Seven in-depth interviews were conducted with consenting individuals who had interacted with transmission of information on sexual norms. In-depth interviews provided individual perspectives and supplemented data generated from Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. Four of the seven in-depth interviews were with youth aged 18-35 years and three were held with people aged above 35 years. The age gap among respondents enabled collection of cross generational views and experiences. Interview guides for in-depth interviews were designed to capture individuals’ experiences, opinions, emotions and knowledge (Patton 1990) of transmission of information on sexual norms in Buganda.

2.5.4 Ethnographic diary

An ethnographic diary was maintained to keep a sequential record of field events. It facilitated documentation of the research process and captured contextual influences on data that are crucial in contrasting research results with pre-field assumptions and previous studies. The diary notes enabled me to recollect and reflect over field events that could potentially affect the research results and on appropriateness of different approaches (Burgess 1981:75-83). For example while contemplating on which local council chairman to approach for the first interview, I recalled that a police woman I had talked to on my initial visit to the field had mentioned an active chairman and I traced his name and village name from the ethnographic diary. This and other solutions were aided by use of the ethnographic diary.

Field notes and deductions of collected data were done on daily basis to check coverage of all important aspects of the investigation. Regular reflection helped to identify areas of data collection that needed emphasis.
2.5.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted to capture community attitudes and beliefs that underlie communication of sexual norms (Carey 1994:225-241). Four sessions were separately held with; sengas, youth aged 18-35 years, older population aged 35 years and above and clan elders. Sengas were selected for these discussions because they are customarily tasked with imparting knowledge on sexual matters.

The youth aged 18-35 years were selected for these discussions because they are targeted by both state and customary communication on sexual matters. The youth FGD was made of in-school unmarried youth, out of school youth that are not cohabiting with partners and out of school youth in marriage or living with partners.

The FGD for people aged 35 years and above facilitated cross generational contrast and discussed among others, experiences of enacting and transmitting information on sexual norms. Their FGD was made of individuals who are formally married, those who are cohabiting with partners but who are not formally married, parents of at least one formally married child and parents of at least one child who is cohabiting with a partner outside formal marriage. This categorization was made to cover wide experiences of interaction with sexual matters.

Clan elders were selected to participate in these discussions because they have a structural role to formulate and enforce customary edicts including sexual norms. These came from different clans of Buganda.

Considering the moral sensitivity of sexual matters, care was taken to neutralize normative responses and cause a candid discussion of issues (Carey 1994:225-241; Bailey 2008:253-264). Caution was also taken to ensure that respondents did not participate in more than one FGDs.
A topic guide was used to moderate each of the five FGDs conducted by a facilitator and a note taker. Informed consent was sought from each participant.

Probing and interruption was occasionally done to extract more information from participants and redirect discussion.

2.5.6 Pile sorting

Pile sorting was employed as a cognitive technique to assess participants’ perceptions and priorities (Hines 1993:729-746). It provided the respondent’s perspectives and concretized community ownership of data (Van der Sijpt 2010:1773-1779; Rifkin 1996:509-526; Borland 1998:310-321; Scheper-Hughes 2000:117-140). Cards bearing data from FGDs and interviews were distributed to participants to arrange in order of popularity, importance, usefulness and accessibility. Participants were also asked to map the listed items including estimated distances.

Except for timing, instruction and collecting the sorted cards, the facilitator did not play any role in this activity. Participants were adults that have experience of making decisions on sexual matters in the study setting. Four pile sorting sessions were separately held with sengas, youth aged 18-35 years, clan elders and non-youth population aged 35 years and above.

2.5.7 Participant observation

Participant observation was done at two pre-wedding functions kukyala and kwanjula (Kaduuli 2006), one funeral rites ceremony, bars, video halls and football matches. These visits provided an overview of norms, ceremonies and key actors at customary functions and emerging social places. Access to the kukyala and kwanjula functions was strategically arranged during the key informant interview with senga. Being a friend to another senga whose niece was about to introduce her boyfriend, she introduced me to the family and I was allowed to access the
preparations and the function. This facilitated closer access to the ladies as they prepared meals for the guests and also to feel the tension of both the bride and her *senga* and the carefully chosen words that the host was using. The groom was equally careful choosing to answer only questions directly addressed to him.

Informed consent for participant observation was sought from individuals responsible for targeted social places and those to whom grand tour questions were asked. These were owners, managers and employees of social places like hotels and bars. Informed consent for participant observation at private functions like *kukyala* and *kwanjula* was sought from the heads of family, the bride and the groom. Consent for participant observation was managed in this manner because contrary to conditioned research settings, obtaining informed consent from each individual at busy social settings may disrupt the natural setting and is not time efficient. Barrie Thorne (1980:284-297) explains this position thus:

“If one is recruiting subjects for an experiment, a survey or an interview, one must ask them to do something special: to come to one’s lab and follow instructions, to fill out a questionnaire, to answer questions. Asking subjects to sign a consent form can be fitted fairly easily into the opening phases of research. In contrast, participant observers don’t recruit individual subjects. They go to natural settings and tend to work their way in slowly... Participant observers hope their subjects will continue their usual activities as if the observer weren’t there; nothing special is typically required of the subjects except putting up with the observer’s presence... In some situations there is such rapid turnover of participants …that it would be impossible to gain consent from every individual one might observe. In addition, the nature of the situation may be at odds with action of providing formal choice points as in a bar setting…” (Thorne 1980:284-297)
2.5.8 Time and Place

Local contacts were asked about places associated with transmission of sexual norms in the community. These gave information on their historical significance, the content of information they transmit, how they transmit it and their pragmatic position to spread this type of information in the community (Basso 1996).

The schedule for data collection activities was adjusted to suit potential respondents’ routine (Torgrimsen 2005) because understanding respondents’ time and space enables researchers to observe them in their natural settings and eliminates postponement of research activities (Mogendorff 2007:269-287).

2.6 Data management and analysis

2.6.1 Data management

Raw field data was collected electronically by use of a voice recorder and camera. Field notes were also made in form of an ethnographic diary. Data on the voice recorder and camera was downloaded onto a password protected computer. Data was downloaded from the voice recorder and transcribed verbatim into Ms-Word. This data was exported to Nvivo qualitative data analysis program for coding and analysis. Data from pile sorting was collected in card form and kept under key and lock for future reference. Field notes and deductions of collected data were done on daily basis to check coverage of all important aspects of the investigation. Regular reflection helped to identify areas of data collection that needed emphasis.

2.6.2 Data analysis

Data was electronically analyzed using Nvivo qualitative data analysis package. Codes were generated from imported text and tagged to emerging themes. Prominently emerging themes were analyzed in relation to the research question. Prominent themes that do not relate to the research questions are reserved for future research (Green and Thorogood 2004). Data from pile
sorting shall be interpreted and pictorial or tabular representations made where appropriate. Except for demographic and trend analysis that may be easier to discern diagrammatically, all results for this analysis is presented in prose.

2.7 Ethical considerations

IRB clearance was obtained from Makerere University College of Health Sciences at the School of Public Health. Information sheets were read and explained to participants. Consent forms were signed by both participants and researcher. Information sheets were left with participants for future reference. Confidentiality was observed by use of anonymous interviews and skipping potential identifiers during transcription. To ensure anonymity, names and locations were not mentioned during interviews or omitted during transcription. Interview sessions were electronically recorded only with interviewee’s approval.

2.8 Feedback

On completion of data collection, a feedback session was conducted to validate the collected data and further engage the study population in the study. These views confirmed the initial deductions made about the data and gave way to basic themes. Given the potential of controversy over published data (Scheper-Hughes 2000:117-140; Borland 1998:310-321) this session was important to gauge the study population’s impression.
Chapter 3

Results

This section presents in detail the sexual norms in the community of Luweero sub-county. These are the rules, beliefs and behaviors that people associate with sex through the stages of courting, cohabiting and management of children when they are born. To understand their construction, I explore the sources that inform members of the community about the rules, beliefs and behaviors and how these transform into norms. The sources of information to which study participants attribute community knowledge of norms are outlined. The reasons for the community to attribute their knowledge of sexual norms to these sources of information are also listed. These include characteristics of individuals and structures that qualify them to be credible sources of information in the community. Techniques used to transmit information to the community are listed and details of how they operate provided. This covers technical effort and strategies deliberately invested to facilitate the process of transmitting information.

This section therefore outlines the important sexual norms, the sources of information that contribute to construction and sustenance of sexual norms, the reasons for attributing this information to the identified sources and the techniques used to transmit information to the community.

3.1 Sexual Norms

3.1.1 Marriage to clanmates is forbidden

Sexual relationship with a partner who shares the same clan with one’s father or mother is forbidden in Buganda. These are considered clanmates. A man dating a girl of his mothers’ clan is considered to have dated his mother because a sister to one’s mother is considered a mother herself. She is referred to as *maama omuto* – which means the young mother. If a girl
dates a man of her mother’s clan she is considered to have dated her maternal uncle. Boys
dating from their fathers’ clans are said to have dated their *senga* while girls who date from
their fathers’ clans are said to have dated their fathers because a brother to one’s father is
*taata omuto* which means young father. By calling clanmates sisters and brothers to parents,
sexual relations with them are brought as close to incest as possible.

“First of all the lineage of the clan as we have told you comes from one person and spreads
as people have children. It means that all those who descend from this one person at the
rooftop (akasolya) are sisters and brothers regardless of where they come from.” (FGD with
clan elders)

Only two of the 52 clans of Buganda are exempted from this norm and these are the Ngabi
and the *Mamba* clan who are the most populous. Realizing that their population was growing
and that their people were likely to often date each other, elders of these two clans sought
permission from the king to allow their people to date within the clan and this was granted. In
these two clans, people may marry clanmates as long as they don’t belong to the same sub-
clan. For example a member of the *Ngabi-ennyunga* can date from *Ngabi-ensamba*. Both will
be of *Ngabi* clan but from different sub-clans; the *Ennyunga* and the *Ensamba*.

This norm against marriage between clanmates serves structural, political and spiritual
purposes. Structurally, Buganda custom dictates that children must have a maternal family
‘*obukojja*’ because it is assigned unique roles at important stages of a child’s life. One of the
important roles for the maternal family is teaching male children responsible sexual conduct.
This is assigned to the maternal uncle who also takes on the role of identifying the appropriate
partner for his nephew. The information that the uncle shares with his nephew is what
determines his sexual behavior. Respondents explained that a child whose parents are of the
same clan will have no maternal family to perform these roles and may miss the valuable
information they give, may fail to hold important functions in his life or may perform them low key for lack of family support and to avoid embarrassment. The paternal family may avoid these functions for fear of being asked the whereabouts of the maternal family. Any breach of the rituals may in some cases spell calamity on the affected family. Some extracts from the data expressly put this point across:

“A person of a certain clan like Lugave cannot marry a woman of Lugave. This is because it is not allowed because you will give the child a name of its mother’s clan and that means that the child would not have bukojja—the maternal family. The people you hear of Mamba clan that are allowed to marry each other also have many different sub-clans within them that cannot marry among each other although they share one general name—the Mamba clan”.

(FGD with senga)

A child in Buganda belongs to his father’s clan because Buganda is a patriarchal society. If the mother is of the same clan as her child it implies that the child has only his father’s clan. It puts the mother in the unenviable position of sister and paternal auntie—senga to her own son.

Every family needs a nephew or niece borne by one of its daughters. Although the maternal family is that important to the child, it also needs the child for spiritual reasons. For example when one commits suicide by hanging, the dead body can only be cut off the noose by a nephew born to one of the girls in the family. A family without such nephews to rescue them from such calamity is doomed to retain the spirit of death by suicide if the noose is cut by a person who is not a relative or a relative who shares the same paternal clan as the deceased. The nephew is tasked to cut this rope because he is a relative but who does not share the same paternal clan as the deceased. It is believed that when the nephew cuts the noose, the deceased’s spirit will be disconnected from his paternal family and wander in the wilderness. The police, if accessible, often take on the task of undoing the noose if the deceased does not
have an accessible nephew to cut the rope but normally leave it to the family if one is available. After cutting this noose, the nephew walks away without looking back.

For this and other roles, the family structure must include a maternal family for each child which may not happen if both parents belong to the same clan. Not having a maternal family is therefore considered structurally inappropriate in this community because the child loses out on the important ritualistic and educative roles that maternal families play. One of the elders explains this situation thus;

“The danger in being sexually involved with a sister or brother is that the child would have no people to call maternal uncle. If am a member of the Lugave clan and my wife belongs to the same clan there wouldn’t be someone to solve the bibamba- misfortune associated with spirits. It is the task of the mujjwa – the nephew who must not be of the same clan with the affected relative. Other tasks also call for relatives to be of different clans for example if the owner of the home commits suicide by hanging, his body is cut off the rope by one of his sister’s children because such a child would not be related to the victim’s clan. Also in stopping unwanted rainfall, it is the child of the girl in the homestead that has to pound an empty mortar to stop the rain.” (FGD with elders)

Politically, participants reasoned that the norm against clanmates’ marriages is emphasized because it creates unity among clans of Buganda. Intermarriage prevents war among clans because they share children and wives. The rule forbidding marriages from within clans also helps to avoid isolation of some clans. Clan elders explained that marrying from the same clan creates exclusion. The interaction between clans meant that they share information and can easily mobilize critical mass for political organization.

One common reason advanced for the increasing sexual relations among clanmates is the change in courtship patterns. Unlike in the past when potential partners were initially
approved by the *sengas*, today’s relationships are initiated and nurtured by the partners themselves and the *senga* is involved later at the stage of formal marriage. People meet at schools, in discos, on streets and churches or mosques and begin sexual relationships without prior investigation of their clans.

“We elders are usually not there when they meet. The issue is that once they already have had sex you have nothing to do. But they cannot come to the home and formally introduce each other”. (IDI with *senga*)

Some couples of clanmates get to learn of their filial connections when they are already sexually involved. This happens because some people’s surnames cannot be accurately associated with specific clans yet surnames are the only way for people to know each other’s clans if they do not ask from their families. Surnames that are not directly associated to the clan are referred to as *ag’olugero*. These are proverbial names attributed to the circumstances of the child’s birth. For example a child born when it is raining may be called *Nkuba*-meaning ‘rainfall’. A name of this kind is not attached to any clan and can easily confuse potential sex partners because it is used across clans.

Some people grow to adulthood without knowing the names that are associated with particular clans especially if they have not had chance to talk to elders. These may unintentionally have sexual relationships with their clanmates.

“**Respondent:** They got to know it when it was too late. They were already in love.

**Interviewer:** Did he not first ask the name of the girl?

**Respondent:** He asked but he may not have heard of it before. It seems. It is possible for someone to have a name that does not obviously identify them with the clan – such a name is called *elinnya ly’olugero- name based on proverbs.*” (IDI with businesswoman)
Cases of people hiding their names to deliberately dupe clanmates into sexual acts were reported. Respondents reported that some boys who get to know prior that the girls are their clanmates sometimes tell them false names just to have sex with them. Others dodge the subject of clans and drag the relationship knowing very well that it will never end in a marriage. This is not helped by the fact that matters of clan are often discussed late into the relationship when the couple is planning to meet each other’s family members.

“Men commonly do not tell their real names. It happened to me during the election campaigns. I have a close male friend who wanted me to be his girlfriend but I had not known his second name. So one day he said he wanted me and I told him I want to know his real name. When he told me I discovered that we are from the same clan and same lineage within the clan. He then tried to deny the name that he had just told me. When he began denying his name I sensed that he wanted me for sex and if I got close to him again it would tempt us.”

(IDI with youth counselor)

Some clanmates genuinely love each other and attempt to challenge the customs. These often end up in banishment. Few have gone to courts of law without success while others have colluded with their mothers to change their clans. However, it was emphasized in the research that most clanmates’ relationships end when they realize that they are clanmates and cannot be married.

“Respondent: I have a friend who had a relationship with a man for some time but she only got to know recently that the man is of the same clan with her mother. But they have dated for a long time. And the man is the one who takes care of her so she is now confused.

Interviewer: would the parents allow her to marry him if she insists that he is the one she loves?
Respondent: (laughter) I don’t know but from the way they tell us about these norms they cannot allow. It would be considered like defying them.” (IDI with youth counselor).

Failure of clanmates’ relationships is explained by their inability to result into formal marriage. This is so because the first step of formal marriage in Buganda is to ascertain the clan and lineage of both the bride and groom so that they are immediately disqualified if found to be sharing the same clan. This is done by the bride’s senga when the bride introduces the groom to her. It is repeated at the kukyala function – the first visit by the groom to the bride’s family and the kwanjula function when the groom returns to pay dowry and formally receive his bride from the family. The lineages of both bride and groom are therefore repeatedly checked throughout the marital process. This makes it difficult for clanmates to successfully get married.

Penalties for breaking this norm are various and severe. Commonest among the punishments for those who proceed with sexual relations even after knowing that they share the same clan with their partners is okuboola- isolation. This means that the penalized couple is not invited to any clan functions including initiation ceremonies, weddings and funerals. They are denied the right to give their children clan names. If they insist and do so, these names are not registered by the clan. They are not allowed to conduct kwalula, the official initiation and naming ceremony. This isolation extends to the children of the couple if they have any.

“The offending person is isolated. The clan disowns you. Even when you die they do not dig your grave. They don’t come to attend vigils at your home. They don’t attend your wedding ceremonies and they don’t eat with you. They put you aside. That is called okuboola-isolation.” (FGD with elders).

Other punishments are spiritual. Couples of this nature end up suffering mysterious calamities that respondents attribute to the fury of ancestral spirits. These include all children dying upon
birth, mental illness of both parents and their children if any survive and unexplained
disappearance of both children and their parents. Extreme poverty is another spiritual
punishment that clanmate couples were reported to commonly suffer. Interestingly, families
that had these experiences are well known across the community. Youth who are suspected to
be in relationships with clanmates are usually warned by referring to calamities that befell
those families.

“..The elders say that you cannot be peaceful and that even if you have wealth it can get
finished. My mother’s auntie had a son who was very prominent. He was a driver to the
former vice president (name omitted). That man married his paternal cousin ...but the wealth
he had accumulated began fading and he ended up renting a house even when he had a farm,
cars, a home and lots of property before he took her. When they reached the house the woman
gave birth to triplets. The second birth she had a set of twins and on the third delivery she
gave birth to one child but he was abnormal. The man got an illness that made him lame. But
he persisted, borrowed some money and purchased maize for milling and lost all of his stock
to thieves. He has now disappeared to avoid the people who had lent him money. Nobody
knows where he is. So when we see such an example we confirm that there are serious
consequences when you break the norms. Even if you get a child it may fall sick. You get
problems.” (IDI with cultivator)

“...my senga also married a man called (name omitted) and they had 4 children. The only
promising child among them died at 20 years of age. The other three children disappeared
and no one knows where they are. I am not telling lies because even this chairman (seated
next to him) knows it. These happened at Bunyaka. If you go there and ask about the blind
woman who was the mother of a girl called (name omitted) they will ask if you have seen the
girl because she disappeared in the ’70s. I also did not see her. (Name omitted), another of
her children was a thief. He stole at Dekabusa in 1982 when we were young children and the
people beat him up very badly. Another time he stole music equipment from Jimmy Katumba (a famous musician) and took them to Katuumu village but since then we have never seen him. So none of her children has had a meaningful life.” (Interview with an elder)

Clanmate couples which apologize and give up their relationship are forgiven by the elders. They are fined a sheep and its blood spilled on them in a cleansing ritual.

“The girl got pregnant and when she was asked who was responsible she revealed that it was her brother. She claimed that he had raped her but stories had been circulating in the community that they were having an affair. Their parents were the same. So after consultations with elders, a sheep was sacrificed and the blood spilled on them.” (IDI with businesswoman).

Despite being emphasized at every stage of the social structural hierarchy, the norm against sexual relations between clanmates is threatened by the socio-economic and political changes in the community. These are gradually altering the social fabric and threatening to mobilize agentive action against this norm. For instance in all interviews conducted, respondents knew at least one couple that were clanmates but involved in a sexual relationship. This is an indication that the norm is being overlooked by a certain section of the community. Although they cannot be formally married, their insistence on keeping these relationships despite the customary edicts indicates that opposition to this norm may be mounting.

Sentiment against this norm further manifests in the reported attempts to challenge it in courts of law. Two cases of couples that sought redress in courts of law were mentioned in the data. These cases could not be concluded because the couples gave up after realizing that they would lose. Both couples defended their relationships by attempting to deny membership of their clans to create opportunity to marry their partners. In both cases it was the girls who wanted to deny their clans. They relied on their mothers to manipulate the cases for them.
Before Uganda acquired DNA testing machines, mothers were the most convenient determinants of children’s paternity. The alternatives of transporting samples to South Africa and consulting ancestral spirits were expensive in terms of money and time. Communities relied heavily on the mothers to tell the actual father of the child. In cases of this nature, girls conspired with their mothers to disown fathers and the entire clan that would be blocking their marriage. The mother would declare that her husband is not the biological father of the girl in question. With the arrival of DNA testing machines in the recent past, any contention on children’s paternity is solved by DNA tests and not what the mother says. This has made it difficult for girls to maneuver their way into marriage with clanmates by altering their paternity. Although the current potential for dissenters to alter this customary edict is minimal, the fact that they have expressed need to change it is enough to threaten this norm’s continuity in its current form. It points to the possibility of mobilization within the community to alter its current status. The common scenario of challenges against this norm is described by one of the elders thus;

“The father of the girl refused the marriage because both families were of the Ndiga clan. The pastor then planned to confuse the court....I don’t know what he gave her but the girl’s mother reached court and claimed that she was not the biological daughter of her husband so that she may claim that the girl belongs to another clan. The father of the girl insisted and offered to pay for the DNA test ...The court eventually refused the marriage to take place.”

(FGD with clan elders)

The norm that forbids clanmates from marrying is therefore firmly communicated and enforced through the social structure that in its current form looks to be impermeable and faced with minimal opposition. The clan system that enforces this edict is represented at each stage of the courtship and marriage procedures, making it difficult for any couples to break the norm.
3.1.2 Visiting the senga

Another prominent sexual norm is the visit to the senga. According to elders, the senga was chosen to discuss sexual issues with children because the father figure in Buganda is aloof and gains his respect from not discussing petty issues while the mother is considered soft on children. The senga is the mid-point between the tough father and the overly soft mother and commands love and respect from children. These two qualities are useful while discussing sexual matters with children because they need to be free to open up and listen seriously to what they are told.

The visit to the senga entails preparation of girls for sexual activities and home management. Being the sister to the father and being considered the authority on sexual matters in every family, the task to prepare girls for their sexual life and home management naturally falls on the senga’s shoulders. The process begins early in the girls’ life usually before they get married and after their initial menstruation. It is initiated by the parents of the girl. They occasionally send her to live with the senga whenever they can or whenever they feel that she needs some training. This training is both mental and physical. The mental training includes personal conduct, hygiene, receiving visitors, cooking and looking after children. The auntie talks to her niece several times about these issues and develops a close personal relationship with the girl to ease future interaction especially when she gets a suitor.

“You have to emphasize cooking to any girl child because they are made to cook unless they are lucky to marry rich men who may give them maids. Another such activity is digging. For us who live in villages, the training may involve going with her to the garden and showing her how it is done. Such a girl does not usually find problems in cooking when she gets married.”

(IDI with senga)

Although the senga talks for most of the time, some of the training involves the senga doing things for the girls to watch and practice after several trials. These include the way she kneels
down to greet visitors, her posture while listening to guests, the tone of her voice when she is
talking to people of different social status, basic hygiene, the chronological order of cooking
activities, her general behavior towards her husband. This kind of training entails imitation
and emulation as an avenue for effective communication (Blackmore 1999) with the sengas
showing examples of the action that they want their nieces to emulate.

“The sengas also received visitors in a way that made them comfortable but would not tell us
directly that this is how you should receive visitors and that you don’t greet visitors in a hurry
but continue asking questions like nyoooge, mirembe (are you peaceful where you have come
from?). But today girls just say one word and don’t even wait for the reply before standing
and walking away. But the senga used to sit and calmly receive the visitors with many
questions. We also observed how she receives visitors, the time she spends greeting them and
also learnt how to do the same.”(IDI with businesswoman)

The physical aspect of training during the visit to senga entails an elaborate face to face
session in which the senga holds herbs in her hands and pulls on to the girls’ labia to make
them longer. It is believed that lengthening these labia makes girls more sensitive to their
husbands during sex. The sengas believe that a girl who has visited the bush will sexually
satisfy her husband and that he would not be tempted to cheat on her. This activity is called
okukyalira ensiko- which literally means visiting the bush but connotes the secrecy under
which it is done and the herbs that have to be got from the bush.

“In Buganda there is a way women are prepared. They visit those forests (pulling the labia)
and that too is an important part of their preparation. She has to be prepared in such a way
that her vagina is contracted to be narrow- okuwundawunda. She is told that she has to lay
her husband’s bed, mop the marital bedroom and not to keep the child’s excreta in the room.
Long time ago girls used to be told to wear bracelets and waist beads. The sengas know all
those. Those bracelets were used to wake men up at night if they slept without doing their sexual duties...And by the way even maternal uncles used to talk to boys, telling them how they should handle women in the home. For example that a boy should sleep half way so that he may be alert and know what he needs to do when the woman shakes her bracelets and waist beads (laughter)” (FGD with sengas).

However these visits to senga are threatened by urbanization and education that have transformed the socio-economic situation. Migration from homesteads to sparse habitats and even far off cities has affected proximity between the sengas and their families. Education has increased the time girls spend in school, prolonged the age at which they get married, reduced their interaction with sengas and changed parents’ spending priorities as they focus on their children’s education. Sending children to their sengas and kojjas is not as easy as it used to be for most families even in this rural setting because it is costly in terms of time and money. It was reported that these economic considerations have limited parents’ enthusiasm to send their children to their aunties. They reason that they would rather prioritize this money for more urgent issues like school fees. The sengas and kojjas are also not keen to receive children because they do not have money to maintain them. Because of migration to far off places, many fathers find themselves with no nearby sisters to send their children. Education and occupation seem to have introduced new priorities in the lives of the population and reduced attention previously accorded to marriage and sengas.

“These days things are affected by lack of time. These children that used to be sent to the kojja or senga used to spend about a year or spend the school holidays. But now if you send your child to the senga or kojja he may tell you that he is already failing to buy food for his children and now you are adding him more. That is the problem. The money is a problem and time is also scarce because people go to work and have no time to discuss.” (FGD with sengas)
These circumstances have given rise to a new concept of the commercial *senga*. This concept is attributed to the high demand for pre-marital counseling that has emerged because the family *sengas* are not available to train their nieces. Contrary to the assumption that commercial *sengas* are only in the city, they have spread to the villages and have schedules for both urban and rural settings. Although the *sengas* refer to them as seminars, the people refer to them as shows or concerts, mainly because of the drama and music that is used to entertain clients in between sessions. A show of the commercial *senga* at the community hall costs Ushs5000 = 1.5 Euro and is advertised for at least a month before the scheduled date to ensure good attendance and earnings for the *senga*. To the parents, this is more affordable than sending a child to where her auntie lives because it costs time, transport, feeding, shopping, airtime to inform the auntie plus pocket money for the child.

With the advent of education and increased female participation in economic activities, the girls of today are not marrying young and will have experienced sex many times before their marriage. This makes the *senga*’s pre-marital guidance on sex and management only ceremonial. *Sengas* report that at the time of marriage, some of the girls have already experienced sex and visit them for help few days towards the wedding when they cannot do much for them. Such visits are only meant for the *senga* to appear at the ceremony to conduct the *senga*’s role of identifying the groom but not really to teach the girl about marriage. Some of the brides are years in their relationships and only formalizing their marriage or are too educated and embarrassed if not disgusted by someone checking their genitals. *Sengas* are offended when the girls show this attitude. They complain that some refuse to be checked, just laugh at them or politely tell them that they already did what *senga* wants to check.

“I see that most of our children like you have gone to school. You are no longer keen on custom. You only come when you are going to get married. Even if you come when you are about to be married you don’t fully submit to the norms. For example some girls loudly
wonder why I should check if they pulled their labia and often refuse. There is no humility among modern girls. I just look at such girls and know that I will not manage them. I just retain my senga title but I don’t tell them all that am supposed to tell them. Some of them just laugh when I ask them questions about marriage and they ask if I think they have not known anything at their age. So they fail me sometimes.” (IDI with senga)

However for those who turn up late and cooperate, the senga trains them in that short period how to manage the family and their husbands. She also teaches them how to carry themselves like decent ladies. She concentrates on pulling at the labia to try and get them to some respectable length if the girl has not pulled them yet.

“Respondent: For me I receive children from my brothers but they mainly come when they are about to get married. They tell me ‘there is the girl, please let her spend a week at your place’. They come and we discuss issues of marriage in detail. There are issues that women are supposed to do when they visit the bush. So I ask her ‘did you pass there?’

Interviewer: what happens if she never visited the bush?

Respondent: You have to try your best that week so that she pulls at least some length that can be appreciated by the man.” (IDI with senga)

Prior to the advent of education and the penal code act that prohibits marriage of girls under 18years of age, the sengas could not be faced with such challenges because the girls married young and so needed detailed briefing on how to handle men. Much as the norm of visiting sengas is still upheld, sociocultural transformation has greatly impacted on their role and calls for sengas to revise the way they operate to remain relevant.
“For us we were married off at a young age around 14 years of age so that we don’t get spoilt. The children of the past used not to get spoilt before marriage because they were married young. But these ones that wait to be old learn things in school and we find when they have already experienced sex.” (IDI with senga)

3.1.3 Kwalula abaana- child naming ritual and witchcraft to catch cheating partners

Kwalula abaana is a norm that is held after babies are born to verify that children born to the family are actual biological descendants of that lineage before they are given clan names. This function involves elaborate acts of witchcraft that enable the family to know if ‘their’ woman was having sex with men other than their own kinsman. During this clan function, a lot of information is shared about the clan’s history, the rules that govern clan members’ social behavior including sex, the hierarchy of leadership and the role of each authority in the hierarchy. The kwalula rituals are meant to initiate and introduce newly born children to the living clan members and ancestral spirits believed to be elders of the clan that died many years ago. These ancestral spirits take charge of the function after the clan diviner has evoked their appearance. The clan elders only present the baby’s umbilical cord and leave the verification to the spirits, commonly known as jjajja—grandparents. Penalties differ across clans for the promiscuous wives and partners that bear children outside the clan. These range from ridicule to death of the child.

Elders and diviners narrated the details of the kwalula abaana functions across clans. Most perform almost similar rituals except for few clans that I elaborate here.

The Lugave clan rituals at the kwalula abaana function reflect the general practice across most clans. It begins with the mothers submitting their children’s dried umbilical cords to clan elders through their mothers-in-law. This is the physical proof that a child was born. Amidst chanting from the clan members present, the umbilical cords are mixed in a concoction of
ghee, *olweza* and *ebombo* herbs and coffee beans. A back cloth is laid on the ground, and a weaved basket filled to the brim with water, is placed on it. Each umbilical cord is dropped in the weaved basket and observed as it sinks to the bottom and returns to the surface to remain floating until it is removed. This is the normal scenario for a child who belongs to the clan. If the child does not belong to the clan, the umbilical code sinks and does not return to the surface. The child whose umbilical cord sinks is named *Kyaligamba* which in Luganda means we shall go by what the baby’s mother tells us. This name implies that the child’s biological father is known only by the child’s mother.

The *Butiko* clan complicates this norm a notch higher. For this clan, the umbilical cords are submitted to the clan diviner who mixes them with a concoction of ghee, herbs and coffee. He then picks them from the concoction and inserts them one after the other in a standing mature banana stem through a small slit. If the child belongs to this clan, the umbilical cord travels through the stem and finds its way to the tip of one of the leaves of that banana tree. If the child is female they use a stem of *nakitembe*, a banana breed considered to be female and if the child is male the umbilical cord is inserted into the male *mbidde* breed also used to brew local beer. If the umbilical cord gets stuck in the stem or does not enter into the stem, it means that the child does not belong to the clan and like the *Lugave* clan, the child is named *Kyaligamba*- that they will go by what the baby’s mother tells them.

The most risky *kwalula abaana* function is conducted by the *Nonyi* clan. These ask the mother in law to first talk to her daughter in-law to confirm that the child she is submitting for *kwalula* is actually a biological child to her son. This is to avert death, the only punishment that the spirits of this clan give to children of mothers who attempt to falsify the paternity of children. The mothers in-law elaborately brief their daughters in-law not to subject their babies to *kwalula abaana* if they have reason to doubt their paternity because the consequences are fatal. The children who are not presented for *kwalula* are then named
Kyaligamba while the false ones who are subjected to the kwalula process die in the exercise. In this process, the child is made to sit on a mat and placed on the surface of a river to float on a papyrus mat. If the child drowns, then it is concluded that it was not belonging to the clan while those that float are confirmed, given clan names and welcomed to the clan. The spirits protect the genuine child and drown the ‘false’ child.

“They get a mat, put it on the river or lake and sit the baby on it. If the baby drowns they know that the child is not theirs and if it keeps floating then the child is theirs. So they smear some millet flour on the child, pour some milk and ghee and place it on the water. The person who takes the baby uses a boat but leaves the baby to float on the mat in the middle of the river or lake.” (FGD with clan elders)

The kwalula abaana function is a crucial process for the Baganda because it acknowledges their membership to their clans. It is one of the processes through which the people are made to feel an eternal belonging to their clans and to their kingdom. Communication about the developments within the clan is made by clan elders and members contribute general updates about events in their own families. It also involves interaction between clan members. It is by attending these functions that people get to know extra details about their clans. Children get to know the names of their clans, the duties that they are supposed to do for the King as a clan, the taboos in their clan and learn physical work like setting up fireplaces.

This ritual is also a check against sexual promiscuity in the family and keeps the wives loyal to their husbands because they fear to cheat and get pregnant with another man’s child.

Kwalula abalongo is a function that similar to kwalula abaana because the purpose is the same. The difference is in the beneficiaries of the function. Whereas the kwalula abaana is for ordinary children, the kwalula abalongo is held for twin babies. Twins are highly revered because the spirits that guard them are vicious.
“Twins are so dangerous in the sense that if their brother or sister who is not a twin dies, there are some things that are tied to them. But if you don’t announce to them separately about the death they can kill their mother or one of their own family members. You have to announce to them independently and formally.” (FGD with general public)

This is why upon birth, the twins’ father walks to the home of his in-laws to announce their birth but he uses the word okubika that means death announcement in Luganda. He announces at a distance before he reaches the in-laws’ house “I have come to kubika- announce death of twins”. By that he announces their birth but which is also symbolic of looming death if the rituals associated to twins are not conducted.

“And after you have announced their birth to your wife’s parents, the twins cease to share the same meals with you and the main family and you must not visit your wife’s parents’ home until the rituals related to the twins are over. And on your way to announce the birth of twins to your in-laws you must wrap yourself with Olweza and Ebbombo herbs. When they see you even from a distance they get to know that you have had twins”. (FGD with elders)

Parents who skip these rituals may be subjected to death or skin burns that give them pink spots as a punishment from the twins who are considered to have supernatural powers.

Kwalula abalongo norm is thus crucial for the survival and wellbeing of both the twins and the parents. They have special names. The boys are named Kato and Wasswa for the younger and older twin respectively and the girls are Nakato and Babirye in the same order. Their parents immediately take on other names. The male parent is called Salongo while the mother takes on Nalongo. These become permanent names in their lives.
“The question of twins is really detailed and delicate. Same sex twins are called maddugavu (dark) and male and female set is meeru (white). This is the kind of language that you use when announcing to your wife. Even the words used to announce are the opposite of normal language. For example the word okubika is normally used to announce death but it can also apply to twins. This is because twins are a complicated issue. If you go through the customs related to them you must complete all of them. But if you start and you don’t complete it you may get burnt. One of them may even die or even both of them. Some of the customs attached include okwalula abalongo. The songs sang at such functions are usually obscene (laughter).”

(FGD with elders)

During this initiation, relatives of both parents of the twins engage in sexually provocative dances and shout obscene words at each other while singing and chanting. They kill chicken and animals to appease the gods and the parents engage in mock display of the sexual act to demonstrate how they got the children. Invitation to this function is strict because of the unusually obscene activities and words that participants don’t want to openly associate with. Events at this function are kept secret between the people who attend them.

However like the other sexual norms, kwalula abaana and kwalula abalongo are in constant confrontation with contemporary social dynamics including religions of Islam and Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church, Anglican and Muslim faiths discourage but tolerate this practice. However, the Pentecostal churches are completely hostile to them. When individuals convert to Pentecostal faith, their churches ask them not to participate in any of these functions. Many have attempted to burn the small grass thatched huts where the ancestral spirits are kept but often fail because not all family members are Pentecostals and many fear to offend the ancestral spirits associated with their surnames. This power struggle reflects the bio-political struggles and the dilemma of competing norms (Foucault 1978).
3.1.4 Kukyala – Family visit

*Kukyala* (Kaduuli 2006) is an important norm among the Baganda at which the family of the groom is introduced to the family of the bride. This function is attended by close relatives and friends of the bride and groom. *Kukyala* is done at the home of the bride and it is then that the *senga*, who will have been visited earlier, tells the family about the groom. Both families get to know each other and discussion of possible encumbrances like clans, tribe, the boy’s manners, education and general potential to manage their daughter is done. Issues of bride price, wedding date, the type of worship center and introduction date are discussed. A special kiganda dish known as *oluwombo* is served to the groom and his team. Because the food is always much and the groom must finish it, he usually tells his friends to eat less of theirs and more of his so that he does not embarrass the girl’s family. If he does not finish the food they accuse him of despising their cooking.

“The Interviewer: what happens if he eats all of it or eats much?”

*Respondent:* I would say that he has enjoyed. He has to eat and finish his food. But normally he comes with friends who accompany him and they help him to eat the food because it doesn’t look good if he does not finish the food prepared for him.” (IDI with *senga*).

Besides the clan issues, some families are strict with the quality of life that their daughter will lead during her marriage and they set standards of wealth for the groom before they allow their daughter to introduce him to the whole clan. It is at this *kukyala* function that the groom is tested for some of these qualities and if found wanting, the daughter may be told not to proceed with the introduction function and he will not be charged any dowry.
“These days another reason that can make you fail to get a woman is poverty. You don’t take your poverty to a family and ask them to give you their daughter. In the past parents used to insist that the spouses of their children should come in open shoes so that they would know whether they had no nails in their toes—a sign of poverty.” (FGD with elders).

This norm is an important component of customary marriage because families want to get a basic appreciation of the partners that their daughters marry.

3.1.5 The Kwanjula function

*Kwanjula* (Kaduuli 2006) or introduction is the last among customary marriage norms and is considered a complete marriage function recognized by the courts of law. It precedes the mosque or church wedding. A marriage is respected as one only if the customary process has been completed. Although most people have been made to think that a couple is not wedded until they are blessed by God in the church or mosque, the legal marriage is the customary function where the bride is handed over to the groom before her parents, relatives and friends. The couple can obtain a marriage certificate from the civil courts or any sub-county office after *kwanjula*. It is at this function that the dowry is paid and bride bade farewell by her family and close friends. All members, friends and in-laws of both families are expected to attend. The *senga* plays the most important role of identifying the groom from a crowd of his relatives and taking him to his rightful position. A groom who cannot be identified by the *senga* will be sent back with his entourage because it means that he did not go through the process of meeting the *senga* or is trying to hijack the place of the genuine groom. This explains why it is important for the girls to introduce their boyfriends to the actual family *senga* as opposed to the commercial *senga* because they are the ones that attend the function at home if they are still alive. This ought to be done before the function.
The *kwanjula* function climaxes with the bride’s family handing her over to the groom, publicly granting them permission to have sex and wishing them many children. The groom is taken to a special room in the house and served a sumptuous meal followed by eating dried coffee beans which signify friendship with the new family and wishes of a strong high sex drive that coffee beans are believed to give. After the meal the couple is allowed to decide their next destination. However, the *senga* is supposed to be present as the couple has its first sex if the girl has not been living with the man or if she is a virgin. The *senga* also has the right to first have sex with the groom to test his virility and to show the girl how it is done practically. In the course of this research, it was pointed out that the practice of *sengas* having sex with their nieces’ husbands has been discouraged since the advent of HIV although the main reason for its gradual phase out is that many couples are of late marrying after they have already had sex. This makes it irrelevant for the *senga* to sit in there because she has nothing to teach the girl and no virginity to confirm. This procedure is therefore skipped in many marriages today. However it is still one of the procedures to be observed if the girl is a virgin because it attracts accolades and there are prizes to win. To revive virginity among young girls, the queen of Buganda has established a fund to reward every muganda girl that is proved to be a virgin at marriage with a registered piece of land. Rewarding virgins is expected to contribute to prevention of early sex, early marriages and HIV among young girls.

For the auntie to prove that the girl was a virgin at marriage, she takes the bed sheet on which the bride and groom had their first sex and shows the blood stains that are expected when a girl is a virgin. This is the evidence that the queen bases on to reward the reported virgin. The role of the *senga* and issues of virginity are illustrated thus:
“Respondent: The senga also has a right to be next to the girl when she is having sex for the first time and is the one who sees if the groom and bride are sexually compatible. She actually sits there on the bed and watches and reports to the father of the girl whether the girl is virgin or not.

Interviewer: Are these things being practiced these days?

Respondent: They are being practiced. What brought in some change is the HIV scourge. Since the HIV came, the senga can no longer first test the man to see if he is potent. Initially the senga used to first have sex with the groom to confirm if he is sexually potent. So when the HIV came, that practice was eliminated but the rest of the roles are played especially if the girl is a virgin because if the senga does not sit there to prove that the girl is a virgin, the girl’s family misses the extra prize of a goat that is supposed be given to them.” (FGD with elders)

In appreciation of the virginity, the husband is obliged to buy a young she-goat that has never been mounted and give it to the senga to take to the girl’s parents. Upon receiving the goat, the senga must run fast to get it out of the groom’s compound before it urinates or makes any droppings because that would spell barrenness on the married girl. The parents must slaughter the goat on receipt and cook it immediately. They must not put salt in its meat if the groom did not tie it around the goat’s neck. They risk spelling barrenness on their daughter if they add salt that has not come from their daughter’s husband. It is also a rule that only the parents eat all the goat’s liver and this must be done in the bedroom. The parents are obliged to have sex after eating this liver to celebrate their daughter’s achievement but more importantly so that their daughter and her husband may have the same happiness in their marriage.
“Respondent 7: It is a belief. The mother and father are the only ones who eat the liver. They eat it in their bedroom because they are the ones who ‘struggled’ to have her (laughter).

Respondent 6: The bones must be buried to avoid dogs eating them.

Respondent 9: They think that if dogs eat the bones the girl does not give birth.

Respondent 7: You see when you give birth to a child in the village, the second child (placenta) is buried in the roots of a banana tree called ‘nakitembe’ if the child is a boy and if it is a girl the placenta is buried in roots of a banana called ‘ebbide’. When the mother is burying the placenta she recites that only a fertile dog that has already had puppies should eat this ‘child’ and the infertile dog should never eat it. It is from that practice that the idea of burying the bones of the virgin bride’s goat originated.

Respondent 8: If an infertile dog eats the bones the girl may not give birth. The man may wonder why his virgin wife does not give birth yet it is the infertile dog that ate the bones of the goat that he took to her home to reward them or that the family mixed salt in its meat before eating.” (FGD with sengas)

This norm of rewarding virgins is however idle and threatened by scarcity of virgins. Among the eleven experienced sengas that participated in the sengas’ FGD, only one had ever received this goat and many were doubtful of the existence of any virgins of marriage age in the community.

At the kwanjula ceremony therefore, the senga, the unit family, clan elders, friends and relatives gather to witness the official sanctioning of the girl’s sex life and celebrate the respect it comes with. It is a sign that the family raised their girl well and if she is a virgin, it brings surplus pride to them because these are reportedly rare.
3.1.6 Testing for HIV as a norm

Although non customary, testing for HIV was frequently mentioned as a sexual norm. People consider it as one of the imperative norms of dating. It was prominently mentioned through the study that people ought to test their potential partners. This was surprising considering the difficulties that have been associated with mobilizing people to test for HIV in the recent past. Although the six weeks allotted to this fieldwork could not allow follow up investigation, I feel that this norm should further be evaluated at health center level. Observing a popular Bukedde Television program abanonya that airs women and men searching for sexual partners, I noticed that most men and women who appear on that program want potential partners to be ready to take an HIV test. This resonates with the prominence of HIV testing as a norm in the interviews.

3.2 The sources of information on sexual norms

Various sources were mentioned as avenues of information not only on sexual norms but also other social matters. These included the sengas, the clan meetings, friends, senior women at school and elders. Each of these is discussed in detail below.

3.2.1 The senga as a source of information

The sengas are assigned by the clans to transmit information on sexual matters to their nieces. By virtue of this structural role, they command respect as custodians of knowledge on sexual matters in the community. Fathers assign their children to the senga basing on her knowledge, goodwill and experience and this is often judged basing on performance of their trainees in marriage.

“It is my brothers who trusted me. They give me their daughters to prepare them and they eventually succeed in their marriage so I have that reputation of training girls well. They say that my girls do not divorce or separate from their husbands.” (IDI with senga)
The *senga*’s personal relationship with the nieces is another determinant of whether she will be consulted.

“*Some sengas do not wish their nieces well and may tell them wrong things. Some really don’t wish them well... she may ill advise you about how to manage your marriage problems. Your senga may tell you to respect your husband but when you get a temporary problem and return home she gives you advice that only worsens the relationship with your husband. So she gives you wrong advice.*” (IDI business woman).

For training their nieces, the *sengas* are rewarded with gifts and respect from the fathers and their daughters. At every *kwanjula* function, the girl asks the groom to carry a special gift for the *senga*. The father of the girl is obliged to reward his sister for preparing his daughter well after the *kwanjula* function and she goes back to her home with gifts of appreciation.

For the commercial *sengas*, the content of what sengas communicate to their clients and their age influences their credibility. While some are excited by their bold statements on sex, some clients who expect the *senga* to transmit more than sex discussions are not impressed and prefer the family based *sengas* that have more time to discuss other issues.

“But the *sengas of today mainly focus on sexual performance and do not consider behavior. Their focus is on bedroom issues. Those are the sengas that we have but they don’t tell you extra issues that are in marriages. Another issue is that the sengas are very young and do not have experience. People do not live for long as it was in the past. But I am left with two sengas who are in their ‘80s and when I get a problem they are the ones I go to.” (IDI with businesswoman)

The *senga* is a widely respected institution that can potentially transmit more information than sexual norms. However the way family and commercial *sengas* operate is highly dependent
on the socio-economic dynamics that they need to monitor if they are to remain relevant in the field of transmitting information.

3.2.2 Clan meetings and communication structure

Clan meetings and family rituals are used as avenues for informing clan members on new developments, exposing the young ones to customary practices and getting clan members to know each other. General meetings occur once annually for all clans while clan elders meet monthly to discuss clan issues and what to communicate to members at grassroots level.

The clan communication is hierarchically structured. The top most level that receives information from the legislature is the *owakasolya* (rooftop). He is followed in descending order by the *abamasiga* who are leaders of the sub-clans that are spread across the kingdom. The *abamasiga* communicate to the *abemituba* who represent them in regions where members of the sub-clan are spread within the kingdom. Under the *abemituba* are the *abennyilili* who link households within communities at village and parish level. These often know all the homesteads where their clansmates are located. The lowest communication level is the *aboluggya* who operates at homestead level. A homestead includes different family units that live within the same compound. This may include the head of the home and the families of his children, brothers and other members of the immediate family. When these move to other places even far off, they still consider themselves as members of that homestead. This clan based communication structure enables regular delivery and monitoring of information from the highest to the lowest level.

Parents take advantage of family functions like funerals, installation of heirs and weddings to expose their children to procedures of tradition. These functions are also used to introduce the children to family relatives that they have not met before.
At functions like the general clan meeting and funeral rites, elders recite the clan history and this helps the children to get a glimpse into the origins of their clan, important names and heroic deeds associated to their ancestors. Clan meetings specifically add to the knowledge of the children and elders about their clan.

**Figure 2: Hierarchical clan structure**

![Hierarchical clan structure diagram]

### 3.2.3 Individual friendships

Friendship networks were mentioned as a formidable source of information. Individual members of the community obtain information from their friends and associates within and outside the community. Information on private or sensitive topics is discussed within a network of trusted friends that will not reveal it. Whereas the older generations trust the institutional communication channels, the younger generations insist that they trust their peer circles more and considered them as the main sources for their information on sexual norms.

“Now like us boys, we have our groups and friends. Some of our friends know these things and they tell us how to avoid or solve sexual problems when they show up. For us that is how
we get to know about these things. Sometimes we hear them from the elders when they are talking. ” (FGD with youth)

3.2.4 Senior women

Data indicates that senior women at schools are reliable sources of information for young girls, akin to the sengas. Senior women are the female teachers in schools that are trusted with the role of teaching female children how to grow into ladies. They provide sex education for the girls including guiding them on how to pull their labia, how to monitor their menstruation periods, the importance of virginity, how to avoid pregnancies in school and how to respect elders and their future husbands. These are the sengas of the girls in a school environment. With the reduced contact between family sengas and their nieces reported in this study, the senior women fill the void. Some respondents attributed their knowledge on sexual matters to their senior women.

The fact that these senior women are trusted by both the school administrations, parents and the children makes them a formidable communication avenue in the community even for issues outside sex norms.

“From primary level we are given senior women who start teaching girls what a woman has to do from around P5 (average age 10years). She teaches them how to be a real woman including visiting the bush.” (FGD with Youth)

The trust that the senior women enjoy is derived from their practice of balancing customary and state edicts. They take the good elements of both systems to make a combined information package relevant to the children’s life. Some leaders fail to make this balance and look like extremists. For example while the state and health agencies promote use of contraceptives and encourage family planning, some local authorities encourage unlimited fertility. The chairman of Luweero district who is also a vocal traditionalist publicly
encourages people to have as many children as they can and rewards those who have twins with piglets to boost their income. These sharply conflicting positions on social issues reflect a bio-political clash between state and indigenous systems that can only be solved by integration of aspects of both systems. Involving clan leaders in the health communication process may help them appreciate the messages and transmit them to the grassroots where they wield influence.

3.2.5 The fading role of kojja

Although traditionally assigned to communicate to their nephews about sexual norms, maternal uncles were reported to be inactive. They were instead reported to visit but not talk to the children they are supposed to address. The main reason for this situation was the increasing economic challenges in the community that occupy men as they look for survival of their families.

“On the ground, these kojjas are not functional. The problem is that our fathers marry women from far off places and the uncles don’t find time to sit with the boys. In my own experience when the maternal uncle visits a home, the boys spend their time running after chicken to slaughter for him. Although I don’t know where my mother’s home is and I don’t know my uncles, I have never heard any of my friends saying that he had been briefed about sex by the kojja. Another point is that men have a lot of responsibility. They don’t have time to spend discussing sexual issues. Personally I think the grandparents discuss sexual issues more effectively than the kojjas.” (FGD with elders)

“Interviewer: But there is this issue that you have mentioned. The issue of kojjas. Do they still play this role?

Respondent 3: They are not there anymore.

Respondent 8: They are not there anymore. They no longer have time.” (FGD with sengas)
3.3 Reasons for believing the sources of information

Sources of information in this community derive their ascription from experience, relevance and spiritual influence.

3.3.1 Experience

Experience is an important reason for the sources of information to be trusted. Even with *sengas* it is not enough to be biologically related to one’s father or exposed to knowledge in the case of commercial *sengas*. Sources of information are trusted more if they have undergone the situation that they are discussing.

“The *senga* talks about many issues including good manners, respecting people and how to deal with men in case you are grown up. They even tell your origin tracing clan lineage and telling you your grandparents and great grandparents. These young sengas do not mention such issues.” (IDI with businesswoman)

“**Respondent 12:** But the *senga* is the only one who can tell you the truth about these things. She has experience and has done all the things you intend to do. But if you have a friend, they give advice like ‘if my husband beats me I also beat him’. But the sengas have all the experience of being beaten and sorting it out and know how you can get out of it.

**Respondent10:** Sengas are like teachers who are more experienced in specific fields. There are teachers who teach a subject better than those who have not had specific training in it. These sengas examine things that we do not know and they advise on issues in our relationships that we have not thought about. You may tell her a problem and she points out what you have all along failed to do. She may tell you that your wife is well disciplined but you will fail to manage her because of your own fault and goes on to tell you what that fault is. In most cases you don’t know these faults and you could even be at the edge of dismissing
her from the home and then because of senge’s advice, you continue in marriage year after year. All that is because they know all the tricks of relationships.

**Respondent 6:** They have experience and because they were also trained by their sengas, they know what to do, what a woman needs to do, everything. I think it is not only the senge but also any old person can advise you because these are modern times of King Mutebi. Anyone can advise as long as they love you and have experience.” (FGD with Youth)

### 3.3.2 Spiritual power

The supernatural element of some sources of information makes people believe that they derive their wisdom from the creator and therefore cannot be questioned. Clan elders and clan diviners who perform the rituals at clan functions benefit from this perception which could explain the continued defiance of state backed positions on social issues like family planning, early marriages and levirate marriages. For as long as the grassroot leaders have not agreed to state edicts, the population will not be in position to comply because they feel that they will be offending the representatives of the spirits. Although they don’t have control of forces of coercion like the police and military, clan elders are more influential because they are not disobeyed by the population. Communicating through them may be strategic because they can rally a critical mass.

**“Respondent 2:** Let me go back to the issue of power. These clans are very powerful. For example if someone dies in a family, the immediate family does not have the right to conduct his funeral rites without the permission of the head of the clan. And you have to begin with the hierarchy starting from the head of the compound, to the head of the line, to the head of the family tree up to the head of the essiga-sub clan. If the person has been an important well accomplished member of the clan, it reaches the rooftop level.
**Respondent 1:** Even if you are very rich and you live in London and then come with 400 million from there ready to complete your father’s funeral rites, you cannot do it without first applying to the elders. They have to first agree on the date, consider previous applications and may tell you to go back and return on the date that they give you. *Money is the last consideration they make.*” (FGD with elders)

### 3.3.3 Political power

The social status and authority of individuals that channel the information has a bearing on their credibility as sources of information. For example people believe in their elected leaders and would trust that what they tell them is correct. Although they are not considered to be as powerful as the spiritual leaders, elected political leaders and businessmen who address people’s grievances on a regular basis are trusted by the communities. The power associated to the conveyor of the message or what he represents determines if the people will believer or act on what he advises.
3.4 The techniques used to transmit information to the study participants

Information in the community is channeled both formally and informally.

Parents teach their children the customs of their clans and tribe by exposing them to funeral rites celebrations, get together functions like kwalula and okusamila – the customary prayer sessions in which ancestral spirits are alleged to participate. This is how they were helped to learn about their norms and it is the way they are teaching their children. By this exposure, the child becomes an expert at procedures of conducting rituals, gets to know all the taboos and develops a spirit of loving their clan and tribe.

Because they know that parents love to move with their children at traditional functions, most of the traditional functions are conducted during the school holidays.

“There is no last funeral rites function that I attend without taking my son. This is because I want all my relatives to know him because he is the one who will be my heir. I have personally tried to take my 11 year old son everywhere to know his people. My intention is also for him to know the norms of Buganda in detail including the history. He should also know the details and purpose of the functions like last funeral rites.” (FGD with elders)

At any such clan and family gatherings, all children are assigned duties that are customarily aligned to their gender. The boys are given axes to work alongside older men splitting firewood, raising tents, clearing bushes while girls are sent to the kitchen and the wells. Most of the children especially those from boarding school and those who live in towns where traditional cooking methods are not used, take this opportunity to practically learn the customary ways. These functions are an opportune time for the sengas to discuss girl issues in their tents and teach the children about their sexuality and expected conduct.
“People who don’t know the purpose of these traditional functions think we go there to eat food but they are important. Most of the time my son and I spend the night at the funeral rites function because it is at night that the main issues are discussed and the children’s initiation is done.” (FGD with elders)

Children who are exposed to these functions become experts on rituals when they are still young and organizing customary functions feels natural to them.

“Just by seeing where the fireplace-ekyoto is placed at a funeral, I can tell the kind of person that has died. I can know if it is the head of the household, a child, a wife, a porter, a girl or a boy. The boy’s fireplace would be on the right side of the house as you enter and the girl’s would be on the left. Even for the last funeral rites, I can tell the person for whom last funeral rites were held by looking at the location of the hut- lwayaba where the installation ceremony of the heir was done.” (FGD general public).

Among them, children form thriving solidarity networks as they grow up. This network builds an identity among themselves as members of a specific clan. As such groups develop each year, the clan edicts are retained and enforced across generations.

“They get to know these things through their parents and village mates. They tell them you are a son of so and so and this means you belong to this or that clan. Sometimes they even address them by their clans for example instead of calling their name, someone may address them as; ‘ggw’owengabi’- you of the Ngabi clan.” (IDI with senga)

Formal communication is done through the clan hierarchy and this is expressed by the scheduled monthly clan leaders’ meetings that discuss new developments and transmit these to grassroots through their hierarchy of communication. Leaders at every level receive information from those above them and pass it on to their charges until it reaches grassroots level.
Chapter 4

3.1 Discussion

Sexual norms in the study community are significantly influenced by customary edicts established and communicated through a hierarchical clan structure. These norms include; forbidden sexual relations among clanmates, mandatory girls’ visits to the *senga* before they get married, *kwalula*-initiating and naming of children, *kukyala*-family visits by the groom and testing HIV before sexual relations.

Though reported to be patriarchal and uncompromising on its edicts (Roscoe 2005; Low 1971; Tamale 2005; Tamale 2003:17-29), the Buganda clan system was in this study found to have adjusted some of its components to suit the prevailing sociocultural circumstances. HIV testing before sexual relationships was adopted as a norm while the *senga*s right to have sex with her niece’s husband was revisited. Both adjustments respond to social dynamics caused by the advent of HIV. They are reminiscent of earlier research by Nyanzi et al (2008:518-539) demonstrating that society does not totally discard but adjusts its sexual norms to suit existing social, economic and political circumstances. Therefore the sexual norms identified in this study are maintained by a hierarchical information system powered by spiritually and politically influential clan structures that are sensitive to sociocultural dynamics.

The well-coordinated hierarchical clan structures and some of the sexual norms observed in this study are historical and have survived generations (Wrigley 2002). This survival can be attributed to loyalty and reverence that community members attach to their clans. Loyal clan members ensure that all rituals are respectfully conducted and pass on their knowledge to younger generations to ensure continuity. This accounts for the long history of Buganda custom. Clan leaders and diviners show undisputable spiritual prowess when they invoke ancestral spirits to make babies float on water and slide umbilical cords through banana stems.
at kwalula functions. The clan leaders’ supernatural displays convince clan members to believe in clan systems. Communication from clan leaders is obeyed with less coercion. Most clan members fear the wrath of ancestral spirits and cannot afford to offend them. Customary activities continue to increase following the restoration of Buganda kingdom that the state had banned between 1966-1993 and prediction is high that loyalty to ancestral spirits and clan structures continues to grow (Englebert 2002:345-368; Griffiths and Katalikawe 2003:93). It may therefore be strategic for health and other communicators to broaden their outreach by engaging clan structures in their communication activities.

The collision of customary and state bio-political systems (Foucault 1978) manifests through the parallel systems that communicate different content about similar issues. Political power in Uganda lies in the hands of state agencies. However following its restoration, the Buganda monarchy runs a cabinet of ministers who the state insists must restrict their activities to cultural development. The kingdom argues that they do not need to limit their scope because every aspect of life is cultural. So they keep a large cabinet including a ministry of health. A silent competition for public loyalty has grown overtime between the state and the parallel government of Buganda kingdom.

While the state bases its edicts on western systems adopted during and after colonialism, Buganda kingdom bases its edicts on indigenous custom. Their messages sometimes conflict and give way to an open bio-political clash (Foucault 1978; Griffiths and Katalikawe 2003:93; Englebert 2002:345-368). For example while the state and transnational agencies invest in promoting contraceptives for family planning and population control, the kingdom officials deride them for depopulating the kingdom. Considering that Uganda’s population growth rate at 3.4% is the third highest in the world (Wakabi 2006:558), the aggressive family planning outreach programs may be registering minimal impact. Torgrimsen (2005) suggests that the state may benefit from incorporating the clan structures to expand uptake of its programs.
because they have significant influence on the population. She faults Buganda’s grassroots communication systems for frustrating women’s microfinance projects to retain patriarchal authority over women and children. To deal with communities that are loyal to the kingdom as this, there is need to court clan elders to participate in communication programs (Mushengyezi 2003:107-117).

Sources of information in this study are outlined as clan elders, the *sengas*, friends, senior women and *kojjas*. Some of these sources like the *senga*, *kojjja* and clan elders operate through the clan structure while the school based senior women extract information from both state and indigenous systems. Communication among friends is horizontal and involves peers discussing edicts from indigenous and state systems. Friendship as a source of information was popular with the younger respondents. This preference may have a bearing on the future of contemporary sources of information like the *senga*, *kojjja* and clan elders. The hierarchical clan structure is the foundation of sexual norms in this community but it is in a constant tug of war with external socio-economic and bio-political forces (Foucault 1978) that try to introduce new sources of information, new messages and new social norms. Neutral communicators like health workers should not be caught in this tug of war because both customary and emerging sources of information can be used to channel health and other information. What is crucial for the practitioner is to flexibly package their information to suit the context of the various target groups. Aspects of each form of communication that are found irrelevant to the current social needs may be ignored to allow relevant communication (Mushengyezi 2003:107-117).

Reasons that lead to credibility of sources of information are; experience, political power and spiritual power. Communication of sexual norms is trusted with individuals who have experience dealing with sexual matters. This is because they give confidence to listeners as they are believed to be discussing events that they have faced and dealt with. They are
therefore in position to provide working solutions. The preference for older *sengas* was hinged on this logic. Holders of spiritual and political power are believed to know about sexual edicts because they are responsible for making them. Foucault (1978) asserts that regulation of sexuality was initiated by political authorities and that political power determines the course of sexual edicts. The sources of information are therefore trusted for their exposure as authors and as subjects of the sexual norms.

Individuals share information through conversations, formal clan meetings and exposure. Horizontal conversations between peers and vertical conversations with *sengas*, *kojjas* and clan heads contribute to individual personality and determine normative behavior. This study finds that formal and informal conversations in meetings, at home, workplace and in schools help to transmit sexual norms, influence individual personalities and give credence to claims by symbolic interactionism that ‘the self is constructed by others’ (Blumer and Duster 1980:211-238; Mead and Mind 1934).

Children in the study community learn by seeing what their *sengas* and other elders do at home and outside. This exposure develops within them an emotional attachment and desire to imitate. This results into replication of these practices across generations. Children emulate their elders’ cooking, sitting postures and voice tones. The systematic replication of norms by imitation observed in this study community vindicates cognitive anthropologists who attribute survival of norms to their reproducibility (Blackmore 1999; Bloch et al. 2001:43-68; Atran 2001:351-381). Parents who ensure that their children attend every customary are exposing them to information that they want them to imitate and are convinced that they learn by exposure (Blackmore 1999). Interesting as it may sound, the success of this method in communicating cultural attributes to children may require further research for it to be authoritatively fronted as one of the effective ways to communicate cultural attributes in Uganda. Its current claim can also not be disputed without further research.
The emerging voices that transmit divergent views on social norms represent the power of agency that contributes to behavior change. The voices in the study community that seek to change existing sexual norms cannot be ignored in the process of reviewing communication because they represent a section in the community and their currently isolated ideas may become popular in future (Tamale 2005). Lonely voices demonstrated in this study represent the change agents in this highly patriarchal society. These voices should not be suppressed but used to reach out to those that subscribe to their ideas (Tamale 2005).

This study was able to document sexual norms, sources of information, reasons for their credence and techniques of information transmission. Some of the interesting findings of this study are; the intensity of supernatural interventions at child naming functions, the relationship between clan names and ancestral spirits, hierarchical clan structure, the relative flexibility of clan structures, the stiff competition for public recognition between state and indigenous communication systems. Also interesting was the people’s will to resist edicts of the state without physically confronting it. For example the community’s refusal to use contraceptives even when they are brought nearer reminds me of works by Abu-Lughod (1990) among the Bedouin of Egypt that demonstrates the subtle resistance of grassroots communities against suppression and emphasizes the power of agency. The study findings indicate that introduction of new administrative structures like the state, did not end operations of the clan system.

3.2 Strengths and limitations of the study

This study used qualitative research methods that enabled me to immerse into the community routine and strike an open relationship with the community. It was however limited by the period of time that was not adequate to establish some trends that may require longer observation periods.
3.3 Conclusion

Although this research cannot claim to have exhausted all components of information over the six weeks research period, results suggest that sexual norms in this community are significantly influenced by the customary clan structure.

This research established that this clan structure has been maintained across generations. Older generations systematically expose and interest younger generations in sustaining the structure and practices. However it is sensitive to socio-economic and political changes and has managed to remain relevant by adjusting some of its components without losing much of its original outlook.

This research study established that clan structures communicate through a hierarchical information network. All stages in the hierarchy are well defined.

The study established that the clan elders and diviners are revered on account of their political and spiritual power. Engaging them in future communication procedures may be strategic for community outreach of health and other communicators.

Although it has been suggested that the communication structure identified in this study may conduct other forms of information as well, it will take another investigation to establish the feasibility of such a suggestion.
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Fiedrich, M.


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Goffman, Erving


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## APPENDICES

### I. LIST OF THE CLANS OF BUGANDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of clan/totem in Luganda</th>
<th>Name of clan/totem in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lugave</td>
<td>Pangolin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mamba</td>
<td>Lungfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ngeye</td>
<td>Colobus monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Njaza</td>
<td>Reedbuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ennyange</td>
<td>Cattle Egret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fumbe</td>
<td>Civet cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ekkobe</td>
<td>Liana fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mbwa</td>
<td>Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mpeewo</td>
<td>Oribi antelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mpologoma</td>
<td>Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Namujoona</td>
<td>Pied Crow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ngo</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Donge</td>
<td>Otter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Njovu</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nkejje</td>
<td>Sprat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nkima</td>
<td>Vervet monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ntalaganya</td>
<td>Blue duiker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nvubu</td>
<td>Hippopotamus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nvuma</td>
<td>Pearl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Bugeme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Butiko</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kasimba</td>
<td>Genet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Kayozi</td>
<td>Jerboa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Kibe</td>
<td>Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mbogo</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Omusu</td>
<td>Edible rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ngabi</td>
<td>Bushbuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Nkerebwe</td>
<td>Jungle Shrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Nsuma</td>
<td>Elephant-snout fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Nseenene</td>
<td>Edible grasshopper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Abalangira</td>
<td>(Descendants of male Royalty from Buganda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Babiito</td>
<td>(Descendants of male Royalty from Buganda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td>Basambo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>Baboobi</td>
<td>Millipede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td>Kasanke</td>
<td>Finch with black wings and white chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td>Kikuba</td>
<td>A pad used to brush aside morning dew when walking through tall grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td>Kinyomo</td>
<td>Type of ant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td>Kiwere</td>
<td>Purple dye plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td>Lukato</td>
<td>Stiletto or awl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td>Mbuzi</td>
<td>Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td>Mpindi</td>
<td>Cowpea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td>Mutima</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td>Nakinsige</td>
<td>Brown grass finch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td>Ndigia</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td>Ndiisa</td>
<td>small basket used for coffee berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td>Æjaali</td>
<td>Crested Crane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td>Njoebe</td>
<td>Marsh antelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Nkebuka</td>
<td>Red finch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Nkula</td>
<td>Rhinoceros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Nsunu</td>
<td>Kob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Nte</td>
<td>Ox or cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Nswaaswa</td>
<td>Monitor lizard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Research Instruments

Interview guide for In-depth interviews

Research Title: Sustaining Sexual Norms: Content and Flow of Information in Uganda.

Demographic information (Tick the appropriate box)

Sex: M [ ] F [ ]   Age: ___ Education level: Pr [ ] O Level [ ] A Level [ ] Tertiary [ ]

Marital Status: Married [ ] Single [ ] Cohabiting [ ] Divorced [ ] Employment: ________

Date: ___/___/_______   Venue: ____________________________________________

Q1. What do people in your community consider as important rules before deciding to engage in sexual relationships?

Probe areas: Partner selection (clanmates); the ‘right’ time for sexual relations, location.

Q2. How do people in your community get to know about these rules?

Probe areas: who makes the rules, who passes them on, assigned institutions, processes and communication techniques.

Q3. What makes people believe trust the information channels?

Probe areas: information sources, reasons for ascription, purpose of the norms, power of the information agents.

Q4. How does information on sexual norms travel in the community?

Probe: information transmission and retention techniques, interaction between people, roles, discourses.
Q5. From what you observe, do people actually follow these rules?

   Probe areas: compliance, commitment of society, rewards and penalties to conform, perceived barriers to both breaking and conforming to rules.

Q6. Apart from those we have so far discussed, what other sexual norms are observed in your community?

   Probe areas: what the rules are, who enforces them, the possible consequences of not observing them.

Q7. In your opinion, what is the future of the existing sexual norms in your community?

   Probe: deliberate retention strategies, awareness of new discourses, emerging liberal minds, adjustment to external influences, individual commitment to existing norms
Interview Guide-Key Informant Interview

Research Title: Sustaining Sexual Norms: Content and Flow of Information in Uganda.

Demographic information (Tick the appropriate box)

Sex: M [ ] F [ ] Age: ___ Education level: Pr [ ] O Level [ ] A Level [ ] Tertiary [ ]

Marital Status: Married [ ] Single [ ] Cohabiting [ ] Divorced [ ] Employment: ___

Date: ___/___/_______ Venue:________________________________________

Q1. What sexual norms do the people in your community observe?

Probe areas: partner selection (clanmates); the ‘right’ time for sexual relations, location.

Q2. How does information on sexual norms travel in the community?

Probe areas: transmission techniques, interaction between people, roles, discourses

Q3. What specific roles do the different information agents play in the process of transmitting information on sexual norms?

Probe areas: breakdown of responsibilities, criteria for allocation of these tasks, training if any

Q4. What makes people trust those who tell them about sexual norms?

Probe areas: political authority of information sources, political influence, purpose of the norms, social status of agents, relevance of the norms

Q5. From what you observe, do people actually follow these rules?

Probe areas: compliance, commitment of society, rewards and penalties to conform, barriers to conforming, solutions to improve compliance

Q6. In your opinion, what is the future of the existing sexual norms in your community?
**Probe:** deliberate retention strategies, awareness of new discourses, emerging liberal minds, adjustment to external influences, individual commitment to existing norms
FGD Topic Guide

Research Title: Sustaining Sexual Norms: Content and Flow of Information in Uganda.

Date: ___/___/_______   Venue:………………………….

Start time:……………..End time:……………

Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q1. What in your experience are the norms that people in your community attach to sexual activities and giving birth?

Probe areas: partner selection (clanmates); the ‘right’ time for sexual relations, preparation for sexual life, location where people have sex, naming children, twin ceremonies, pre-birth rituals, after birth rituals.

Q2. Tell me about the development of these norms and how they have been sustained.

Probe areas: genesis of the norms, who composes information about these norms, who enforces them, individuals and institutions assigned to transmit, communication techniques, political motives.

Q3. Where do the people who transmit information on sexual norms derive their credibility?

Probe areas: political authority, individual popularity, spiritual anointing, social status, relevance of information.

Q4. What are the challenges of communicating sexual norms to the community?
Probe areas: non-compliance, lack of social commitment, enforcing rewards and penalties, barriers to conforming, sociocultural transformation.

Q5. In your opinion, what is the future of the existing sexual norms in your community?

Probe: deliberate retention strategies, awareness of new discourses, emerging liberal minds, adjustment to external influences, individual commitment to existing norms.
Observation guide

Research Title: Sustaining Sexual Norms: Content and Flow of Information in Uganda.

Venue: _____________ Event _____________ Date ___ / ___ / ____ From (time) ____ to ______

List of issues to observe

• Social interaction: power relations, influence of information transmitters, who talks to who, any exclusive diction or register

• What people discuss about sexual norms (listening),

• Response of people who receive information on sexual norms,

• Common places to transmit information on sexual norms,

• Common times to transmit information on sexual norms,

• Generational, social status and other differences in commitment to sexual norms

• Unique techniques used to transmit information on sexual norms

• Common individuals and structures in the transmission process

• Formal and informal communication on sexual norms: popularity and impact rating

• Relationship between the agents of information and those who receive it.

• General attitude to sexual norms.
III. ETHICS

Information Sheet

Title: Sustaining Sexual norms: Content and Flow of Information in a Ugandan Community

Introduction: You are being asked to participate in a research study that seeks to establish how information about sexual norms travels within the community. You were selected as a possible participant because of your exposure and knowledge on sexual norms. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the research. This study is being conducted by a researcher from Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research of University of Amsterdam and CoHeRe programme based at Makerere University and operating in Luweero Sub County, Luweero district.

Background Information

This research explores the nature and flow of information related to sexual norms in the community of Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda. It will try to establish what the community knows about sexual norms, how information on sexual norms is transmitted within the community, the people and structures that transmit information on sexual norms in the community and reasons why they are trusted to conduct that role.

Procedures

If you agree to be a participant in this research, you will be asked to participate either in a group conversation or face to face dialogue with the researcher conducting this study. These conversations are both about sustenance of sexual norms at community level and last about 45 minutes. The group conversation shall be conducted at a central meeting place in your community while the face to face dialogue shall be at a place of your choice and conducted in your local language.
The researcher needs to capture every word of your conversation and doing so while talking to you would be time consuming and may affect his and your concentration. A voice recorder is therefore used to enable you and the researcher to converse uninterrupted and in good time. This voice recorder shall be used only if you agree to it. The interviews are totally anonymous. This means that your contribution shall not be attributed to you by name, address or any other identifier.

**Risks and Benefits to Being in the Study:**

Your participation in this study shall not expose you to any risks. Nothing you say or do during your participation shall be held against you and the conversations shall be totally anonymous. No direct financial or other benefit is currently associated with your participation.

**Compensation**

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and shall not be financially or materially rewarded.

**Confidentiality**

The records of this research will be kept under key and lock and a password protected computer. Access to study data is limited to the researcher and his supervisors, the University review board responsible for protecting human participants and regulatory agencies. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. The data on the voice recorder shall be totally anonymous and accessed only by the researcher and his supervisors.
**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University or the project. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not participating or for discontinuing your participation.

**Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study is Jude Tibemanya Rwemisisi on telephone **0779802365**. He is supervised by the following people who you may contact if you have any additional questions, concerns or complaints about the study.

1. Dr. John Ssempebwa, Chairman Institutional Review Board, Makerere University College of Health Sciences.
   Tel: +256703744404

2. Prof. Robert Pool, Head CoHeRe Project, Email: r.c.pool@uva.nl OR robert.pool@cresib.cat

3. Dr. David Mafigiri, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: mafigiridk@yahoo.com  Tel. +256773371781

4. Dr. Achilles Katamba, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: akatamba@yahoo.com  Tel: +256753040922
Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Sustaining Sexual norms: Content and Flow of Information in a Ugandan Community

Introduction: I acknowledge that I have been asked to participate in a research study that seeks to establish how information about sexual norms travels within the community and understand that this study is being conducted by a researcher from Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research of University of Amsterdam and CoHeRe programme based at Makerere University and operating in Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda.

Background Information

I have understood that the purpose of this research is to explore the nature and flow of information related to sexual norms in the community of Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda. It will try to establish what the community knows about sexual norms, how information on sexual norms is transmitted within the community, the people and structures that transmit information on sexual norms in the community and reasons why they are trusted to conduct that role.

Procedures

I have understood that if I agree to participate in this research, I will be asked to participate either in a group conversation or face to face dialogue with the researcher conducting this study. These conversations are both about sustenance of sexual norms in my community and shall last about 45 minutes. The group conversation shall be conducted at a central meeting place in my community and face to face dialogue shall be at a place of my choice and conducted in my language. I have understood that the researcher will use a voice recorder during our conversation because he needs to capture each word of our discussion as we
converse and attempts to do so without a recorder would take much of our time. I also understand that the interviews shall be anonymous.

**Risks and Benefits to Being in the Study:**

I understand that my participation in this study shall not expose me to any risks and that my statements and actions during the study shall not be held against me. No direct financial or other benefit is currently associated with my participation.

**Compensation**

I understand that my participation in this study is totally voluntary and I shall not expect any financial or material reward.

**Confidentiality**

I understand that the records of this research will be kept under key and lock and on a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher and his supervisors, the University review board responsible for protecting human participants and regulatory agencies. I also understand that the reports published under this study shall not identify me as a participant.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that if I choose not to participate, it will not affect my current or future relations with the University or the project. I also understand that there is no penalty or loss of benefits for not participating or discontinuing my participation.
Contacts and Questions

I understand that the researcher conducting this study is Jude Tibemanya Rwemisisi on telephone 0779802365, supervised by senior researchers whose contacts have been availed to me in case I have any additional questions and concerns:

1. Dr. John Ssempebwa, Chairman Institutional Review Board, Makerere University College of Health Sciences. Tel: +256703744404
2. Prof. Robert Pool, Head CoHeRe Project, Email: r.c.pool@uva.nl and robert.pool@cresib.cat
3. Dr. David Mafigiri, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: mafigiridk@yahoo.com Tel. +256773371781
4. Dr. Achilles Katamba, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: akatamba@yahoo.com Tel: +256753040922

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research. I am at least 18 years of age.

[ ] Yes, I consent to being audio recorded and that I have the right to change my mind

[ ] No, I do not consent to being audio recorded

Print Name of Participant: ___________________________________________
Information Sheet: Participant Observation

Title: Sustaining Sexual norms: Content and Flow of Information in a Ugandan Community

Introduction: You are being asked to participate in a research study that seeks to establish how information about sexual norms travels within the community. You were selected as a potential participant because you are exposed to the environment that is potentially informative to our research by virtue of physical presence, managerial position and ownership of ceremonies or premises. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the research. This study is being conducted by a researcher from Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research of University of Amsterdam and CoHeRe programme based at Makerere University and operating in Luweero Sub County, Luweero district.

Background Information

This research explores the nature and flow of information related to sexual norms in the community of Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda. It will try to establish what the community knows about sexual norms, how information on sexual norms is transmitted within the community, the people and structures that transmit information on sexual norms in the community and reasons why they are trusted to conduct that role.

Procedures

If you agree to be a participant in this research, you will be asked to allow the researcher to access the premises or ceremonies under your charge. The researcher shall observe the activities, interact with the crowd, listen to what people are discussing and take notes. During the course of observation, the researcher may need to ask you general questions about some observations and may ask to use a recorder because it is not possible to accurately write down your conversation as you talk. Although the recorder shall save yours and the researcher’s
time, it will be used only if you consent to it. This short interview shall last less than 25 minutes. The interviews are totally anonymous and your contribution shall not be attributed to you by name, address or any other identifier.

**Risks and Benefits to participation:**

Your participation in this study shall not expose you to any physical, emotional or other risks. Whatever you and the others present at your ceremonies or premises say or do during this activity shall not be held against any of you. Observations shall be reported anonymously. Conversations shall be totally anonymous. No direct financial benefit is currently associated with your participation.

**Compensation**

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary and shall not be financially or materially rewarded.

**Confidentiality**

The data collected at your premises and ceremonies will be kept under key and lock and a password protected computer. Access to study data is limited to the researcher and his supervisors, the University review board responsible for protecting human participants and regulatory agencies. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you or any of the people observed at your premises or ceremonies. The data on the voice recorder shall be totally anonymous and accessed only by the researcher and his supervisors only.
Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University or the project. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not participating or for discontinuing your participation.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Jude Tibemanya Rwemisisi on telephone 0779802365. He is supervised by the following people who you may contact if you have any additional questions, concerns or complaints about the study.

1. Dr. John Ssempebwa, Chairman Institutional Review Board, Makerere University College of Health Sciences.
   Tel: +256703744404

2. Prof. Robert Pool, Head CoHeRe Project, Email: r.c.pool@uva.nl OR
   robert.pool@cresib.cat

3. Dr. David Mafigiri, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: mafigiridk@yahoo.com Tel. +256773371781

4. Dr. Achilles Katamba, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: akatamba@yahoo.com Tel: +256753040922
Informed Consent Form: Participant Observation

Study Title: Sustaining Sexual norms: Content and Flow of Information in a Ugandan Community

Introduction: I acknowledge that I have been asked to participate in a research study that seeks to establish how information about sexual norms travels within the community and I understand that this study is being conducted by a researcher from Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research of University of Amsterdam and CoHeRe programme based at Makerere University and operating in Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda.

Background Information

I have understood that the purpose of this research is to explore the nature and flow of information related to sexual norms in the community of Luweero sub county, Luweero district, Uganda. It will try to establish what the community knows about sexual norms, how information on sexual norms is transmitted within the community, the people and structures that transmit information on sexual norms in the community and reasons why they are trusted to conduct that role.

Procedures

I have understood that if I agree to be a participant in this research, I will be asked to allow the researcher to access the premises or ceremonies under my charge and that the researcher shall observe the activities, interact with the crowd, listen to what people are discussing and take notes. I have understood that the researcher may need to ask me general questions during the course of observation and may use a recorder because it is not possible to accurately write down our conversation as we talk. I have understood that although the recorder may save mine and the researcher’s time, it will be used only if I consent to it and that the short interview shall last less than 25 minutes. I have understood that the interviews are totally
anonymous and my contribution shall not be attributed to me by name, address or any other identifier.

**Risks and Benefits to Being in the Study:**

I understand that my participation in this study shall not expose me to any risks and that my statements and actions during the study shall not be held against me. Apart from sharing information with co-participants, no other benefit is currently associated with my participation.

**Compensation**

I understand that my participation in this study is totally voluntary and I shall not expect any financial or material reward.

**Confidentiality**

I understand that the records of this research will be kept under key and lock and on a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher and his supervisors, the University review board responsible for protecting human participants and regulatory agencies. I also understand that the reports published under this study shall not reveal my identity or that of any of the people observed at my premises or ceremonies.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that if I choose not to participate, it will not affect my current or future relations with the University or the project. I also understand that there is no penalty or loss of benefits associated with my refusal to participate or decision to discontinue my participation.
Contacts and Questions

I understand that the researcher conducting this study is Jude Tibemanya Rwemisisi on telephone **0779802365**, supervised by senior researchers whose contacts have been availed to me in case I have any additional questions and concerns:

1. Dr. John Ssempebwa, Chairman Institutional Review Board, Makerere University College of Health Sciences. Tel: +256703744404

2. Prof. Robert Pool, Head CoHeRe Project, Email: r.e.pool@uva.nl and robert.pool@cresib.cat

3. Dr. David Mafigiri, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: mafigiridk@yahoo.com Tel. +256773371781

4. Dr. Achilles Katamba, Supervisor CoHeRe Project, Makerere University Kampala
   Email: akatamba@yahoo.com Tel: +256753040922
Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research. I am at least 18 years of age.

[____] Yes, I consent to being audio recorded and that I have the right to change my mind

[____] No, I do not consent to being audio recorded

Signature of Participant: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Print Name of Researcher __________________________________________

Signature of Researcher: ________________________________ Date: ____________