SOCIAL-ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN NUBIANS AND
THE AMERU OF MERU COUNTY; 1925-2014

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DECLARATION

This study is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or institution of higher learning.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved family, who sacrificed every aspect of their life to support my education.
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To complete this work, it did not only take individual effort but also the effort of others. However, it is impossible to thank everyone independently.

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ABSTRACT

Relations between communities in Kenya have been at the center stage of political, social and economic debate, and the Nubians have not been an exception. Nubian community landed in various parts of Africa during the colonial period. In 1900s, many of the Nubians came into East Africa as British soldiers under the command of Fredrick Lugard. In East Africa, majority settled in Uganda and Kenya. In Kenya, the Nubians first settled mainly in Kibera, from where they dispersed to other regions in Kenya. This study focused on the Nubians who settled in Meru County in the period 1925-2014 and it examined the migration, dispersal and settlement of the Nubians in Meru County. The main objectives of the study were; to trace the dispersal and settlement of the Nubians in Meru County in the period 1925 to 1963, examine the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County from 1964 to 1978, investigate the changing socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru in the period 1979-2002 and interrogate the dynamics in the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 2003 to 2014. The study was qualitative in nature and historical research design was used to provide chronology of the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru as they unfolded. The study was guided by social network theory and resilience theory. The study was carried out in Meru County and more specifically in Mjini slums. The population sample comprised of Nubians and the Ameru of Meru county aged 18 years and above. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the population sample. The researcher used both primary and secondary data. The findings indicated that Nubians are a minority group in Kenya and they originated from South Sudan, but moved to East Africa and more specifically in Meru as KAR soldiers. It was also established that once in Meru; the Nubians settled around Meru hospital and formed Nubian villages, which are referred to as Mjini slum, Kibra Ndovu, and Salama. It was further established that settling in Meru led to increased interaction between the Nubians and the Ameru through cultural exchange. It was also apparent that social, economic and political factors led to the changing relations between the Nubians and the Ameru. The findings also indicated that Nubian-Ameru relationship had certain implications such as political discrimination and assimilation of the Nubians into the Ameru culture. The study is significant because it helps to identify the contribution of the Nubians towards Kenya’s cultural heritage. It also enriches the historiography of ethnic interaction not only in Kenya but also globally. The study concluded that the interaction between the two communities has led to the assimilation of the Nubians and the marginalization of the Nubians and this threatens the future existence of the Nubians in Meru County. From the study, it was recommended that the government should look for a way of tapping manpower of Nubians in the social, economic and political development in Kenya. Additionally there is need of establishment of a cultural center so as to preserve the rich and beautiful Nubian culture to avoid its extinction.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CORD------Coalition for Reform and Democracy
ERT--------Equal Rights Trust
FGM--------Female Genital Mutilation
GDP--------Gross Domestic Product
GEMA------Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru Association
HF---------Haifa Foundation
IBEAC-----Imperial British East Africa Company.
KAR--------King’s African Rifles
KANU-------Kenya African National Union
KHRC------Kenya Human Rights Commission
NARC------National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
NFD--------Northern Frontier District
NRF--------Nubian Right Forum
WWI--------World War I
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Nubians: Refers to the residents of Mjini slums in Meru County who trace their origin from Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt.

Socio-economic relations: Refer to the mutual connection of communities through intermarriage, trade, and religious interaction.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This section comprises of the background of the study, the statement of the study, the research objective, question, and the premises. In addition, it contains justification and significance of the study as well as the scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Socio-economic relations among communities remain a globally explosive issue because no community can live in isolation. Among political and social scientists, this problem has continued to attract enormous scholarly scrutiny and attention (Omenya, 2010). Different ethnic groups relate to each other locally, nationally and internationally, and the Nubians have not been an exception to this. The Nubian community consists of seven non-Arab Muslim ethnic groups that originated in Nubia region between Aswan Dam, South Egypt and Northern Sudan (Ammar, 1996; Joshua, 2010).

Reasons for the migration and settlement of the Nubians globally have been documented (Dafalla, 1975). Due to the encroachment of the Ottoman Empire upon the Nubians in the 1880s, the Nubians migrated to remote areas along the River Nile, and distinct groups were formed depending on the location settled. For example, those who settled in Dongolo came to be known as Dongololawi (Joshua, 2010).
The construction of Aswan High Dam led to the relocation of Nubians into new Nubia (Allen, 2014; Joshua, 2010; Amnar, 1996; Dafalla, 1975). However, some men went to cities to look for jobs.

Nubians speak Nubia as their main language although they use Arabic in business. Their economy was dependent on agriculture where they grew wheat among other crops (Ammar, 1996).

From the new Nubia, the Nubians started dispersing to other regions in the world. In their new region, they interacted majorly through the army as well as trade and intermarriage. The impact of this interaction was the assimilation of the Nubian community (Kareithi, 2012). However, incidents of Nubian discrimination have been reported throughout the Nubian villages.

In East Africa, the historical background of Nubians can be traced back to the 1890s when many of them were enlisted in the colonial army of the British Empire to help open up the interior part of East Africa (Adam, 2009; Amone, 2014; Burite, 2008; Haiba Foundation, 2013; Atieno-Odhiambo, 1977). The Nubians made the King’s African Rifle Army (KAR) in 1902 (Haiba Foundation, 2013). However, the soldiers were later scattered all over East Africa and continued to retain an outstanding record of the British colonial government. However, in Tanzania the Nubia community have been almost rendered extinct after assimilation by marriage (Kareithi, 2012).

Kohli (2014) studying Nubians in Uganda noted that Nubians were not a product of the colonial situation but of the pacification that established colonial rule. During the colonial period, Nubians received little attention by the Christian missionaries; therefore, few were in schools. However, they
formed small trading networks that connected different Nubian settlements in the towns of Uganda and set up stores near cotton collection centers where they sold beer and distilled *enguli*.

Amone (2014) notes that by 1900s authorities had begun recruiting Africans into King’s African Rifle but the core of the KAR were the Sudanese troops who were merged with Swahili troops. From the start, the Sudanese troops were people of strength, but after sometime, they found themselves shifting between regular and irregular military employment, legitimate and illegitimate trade, and slave trading, raiding cattle and playing off one Acholi chief against another. This posed serious threat to the establishment of the British protectorate of Uganda. The soldiers felt that they had worked without compensation and that they needed mutiny. As a result, the British reduced their numbers by employing the Indians and other Africans in Uganda, and the Nubians were punished by not being taken back to their homeland (Kareithi, 2012). Instead, they were taken to Kenya.

In Kenya, the ethnic group seemed to have been detribalized as noted by Balaton-Chrimes (2015). Given such marginalization, the Nubians had limited access to national identity cards and citizenship status, something that denied them land ownership and access to education. However, to counter the problem, the Kenyan Nubians living in Nairobi discarded their stranger ethnic status and positioned themselves as indigenous to Nairobi to obtain the same quality of citizenship as enjoyed by other Kenyans.

Studying Kenya's ethnic communities, Ng'ang'a (2006) notes that Nubians have no established clans, and their social units were extended families linked
by marriage rather than blood. The Nubians lived in urban areas and had received little exposure to western education hence they took little advantage of opportunities of modernization.

Johnson (2009) asserts that in 1912, the British government gave them 4197 acres of land in Kibra, present day Kibera. The same British government was later to categorize them as detribalized group in Kenya. Accordingly, they were denied rights to claim land on native reserves. However, as the years passed, Kibra was occupied with other Kenyan ethnic groups, making the Nubian village one of the largest slums in Africa. Accordingly, since independence, Kibera land was contested and the Nubians were considered squatters there. They were denied recognition by the Kenyan government socially, politically and economically. In fact, during census, they were classified as others. They faced challenges in getting national identity cards, passports and land title deeds (ERT and KHRC, 2012; Atieno-Odhiambo, 1977; Balaton-Chrimes, 2015).

Nubians introduced delicacies, such as mandazi, samosa and pancakes, into Kenya. They were also the masterminds behind the art of brewing *chang’aa* (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1977). Other Nubian settlement areas in Kenya include Kisii, Kisumu, Kapsabet, Eldama Ravine, Isiolo, Meru and Mombasa (Isaboke 2011; Johnson, 2009).

In Kisumu, Mbaria (2002) notes that like any other Nubians elsewhere in the country, they were also discriminated. Other people with the connivance of the government officials grabbed their land. The Nubians lived with a feeling of being persecuted by fellow Kenyans (Mbaria 2002). This made them
strengthen their social bond and turned them inward. The Nubian community in Kisumu town lived in what is termed as social cocoons. This was because they rarely interacted with non-Nubians except when it cannot be avoided. The Nubian ladies were even socialized from a tender age to shun men who do not belong to the Nubian community, especially non-Muslim men. Furthermore, the community prohibited their girls for intermarrying with the non-Nubian.

The locals in Kisumu regard the Nubians as foreigners who should go back to Sudan, the land where their ancestors’ umbilical cord was buried (Mbaria 2002). This group of Nubians also faced discrimination in obtaining civil registration documents such as national identity cards, passports, birth and burial certificates. However, the community had a group known as the Nubian Muslim community that brought them together.

In Kisii County, Lassi (2014) notes that the Nubians were marginalized and discriminated against by both the locals and the county government. The colonialists settled this group of Nubians in Nubian village in Kisii County. However, they were not given land title deeds; instead, they were given allotment letters. Land belonging to the Nubian people in Kisii County was grabbed by some businessmen in the town. The lack of representation in the county government led them to being sidelined in job appointment in the public service.

Researching on Nubians in Bungoma, Tomia (2014) notes that the national census in 2012 in Bungoma County had 3500 Nubians scattered in major towns. They are majorly found in Majengo, Kimilili, Lwakahakaha and Mjini.
This community entered Bungoma through Malaba and Lwahaha after fleeing for safety from Uganda once Milton Obote overthrew Idi Amin. They first settled in Bungoma where they were later displaced to construct the prison without any compensation.

Kulei (2014) notes that in Eldama Ravine the communities were overcrowded in a small piece of land. They did not possess land title deed; instead, they had allotment letters. Nubian women had to pay a fee of Kshs. 100 on a monthly basis to the Koibatek District forest officers to get permission for collecting firewood in Lembus and Mumberes forests, and they sell the firewood in the town. Furthermore, the community was not represented in the County Assembly. Therefore, they could not be able to participate in the recruitment of Kenya security forces because the exercise was done in district levels and they did not have an ancestral village apart from Nairobi. Unfortunately, the government did not consider Nairobi a rural place. In Isiolo County, the Nubian community were also treated unfairly (Tumaini, 2014). For instance, this was demonstrated in what transpired during the national tourism week that was hosted in Isiolo County. The Nubians only received Ksh. 5,000 yet over 30 people contributed each 30 thousand to build the house, buy goods for exhibition and resale them(Kulei, 2014).

Studying the Islamic faith in Meru County, Kubai (1995) notes that Nubians in Meru first settled in NFD ridge, which was the township land. It had supplies stores and a dispensary, now Meru hospital. This ridge came to be known as Mjini slum. Despite such studies, there is little in-depth literature analyzing the dispersal, settlement and the socio-economic relations between
the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County, particularly in the period 1925-2014. This is the gap that the current study sought to fill.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nubians in Kenya live in urban areas including Kisii, Kisumu, and Kibera. In Meru County, the Nubians mainly live in Mjini, Kibra Ndovu and Salama slums. Since independence, the Nubians in Kenya have been regarded as minority group evident in the categorization as ‘others’ by the national census in 2009. Several efforts have been made to integrate the Nubians as Kenyans without much success since most still live in the Nubians villages. Despite this, the Nubians have had relations with the locals in their villages something that has not been given serious scholarly attention. Much of the works on Nubians focus on those living in Kibra hence sidelining those in other cities in Kenya and more specifically those in Meru and this raise the demand to examine the Nubians in Meru County and their relations with the Ameru of Meru County.

This study, therefore, undertook an in-depth examination of the dispersal, settlement and socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1925-2014. It began by tracing the dispersal and settlement of the Nubians in Meru County and the reception that they received from the Ameru. It also examined how the Nubians and the Ameru related socially and economically, and interrogated how these relations changed overtime. Such aspects, like marriage, trade, religion and social events participation, were analyzed. The impacts of the interaction were also be interrogated.
1.3 Research Objectives

This study intended to achieve the following objectives;

a. To trace the dispersal and settlement of the Nubian community to Meru County in the period 1925-1963.

b. To examine the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1964-1978.

c. To investigate the changing socio-economic relation between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1979-2002

d. To interrogate the dynamics in the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 2003-2014.

1.5 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions.

a. What factors informed the settlement of the Nubians into Meru County in the period 1925-1963?

b. What was the nature of socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1964-1978?

c. To what extent did the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County change in the period 1979-2002?

d. How have the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County progressed in the period 2003-2014?

1.4 Research Premises

The study was premised on the following assumptions

a. Colonial penetration in Meru informed the settlement of the Nubians
in Meru County in the period 1925-1963.

b. The socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru were symbiotic in nature in the period 1964-1978.

c. That negative ethnicity during Moi’s era informed the changing trends in the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru in the period 1979-2002.

d. That the socio-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru has led to the assimilation of the Nubians culture in Meru County in the period 2003-2014.

1.6 Justification and Significance

Several scholars have studied relations between Nubians and the Africans. Such studies include Kubai (1995), Balaton-Chrimes (2016), Moyse-Bartlett (1956), Balaton-Chrimes (2013), Kareithi (2012), Ochieng (2006), and Smedt (2011). Despite these studies, very little scholarly attention has focused on the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County. Moreover, for a long time in Kenya, Nubians have been treated as a minority group. Recently in 2016, the government declared Nubians as Kenyans and promised to give the Kibra Nubians land. However, given the fact that Nubians live across Kenya, (not Kibra only), this raises the demand to find out whether, and this is the case with Nubians in Meru County. A study as this one was important since cases of foreigners adapting the Ameru lifestyle, especially in businesses, have been witnessed in the region. Thus, there was need to carry out a research to find out whether this was the case with the Nubians in the region.
The study was, therefore, important because it diverts from the national approach of Nubian relations in Kenya to a local investigation into the study area. The main reason for this is that it was easy to unfold various factors that might have been omitted by adapting a national approach.

The year 1925 provided a good historical starting point since it was when the Nubians first settled in Meru County. This was after the British ceded Jubaland to the Italians (Kubai, 1995).

The year 2014 marked the historical period to end the study because it was when Kenya celebrated its jubilee. It was therefore, significant to examine the changing dynamics on the Nubians and the Ameru relations.

Meru County was significant to this study because it was the entry point of Nubians who came to Kenya from Somalia. This was after the British had ceded Jubaland to the Italians in 1925 and the KAR soldiers were moved to the Kenya colony and settled in Meru (Smedt, 2011). It also offers a mixed environment upon which various ethnic groups exist. The Nubians were important to this study because they are a minority group in Kenya. In addition, political power is at the core of social and economic relations among communities. The Ameru were therefore significant to this study because they have demonstrated the ability to give political power to foreign race (Indians) as a member of parliament in the 2013 general election in Meru town. Thus the need to examine the relations that they have with other minority group such as the Nubians.

Findings from this study thus helped to identify the contribution of the Nubians towards Kenya’s cultural heritage as well as elsewhere in Africa. It
also enriched the historiography of ethnic interaction not only in Kenya but also globally. Additionally, it added knowledge on the existing literature about Nubian relations with other ethnic groups throughout the globe.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

Relations between the Nubians and other communities in Kenya are important. However, owing to time and financial constraints, other relations were only studied as far as they related to the socio-economic aspects. Therefore, the study focused on the social-economic relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1925-2014. The year 1925 was selected for the study but the period before this was also examined to inform the reader on the context within which Nubians came to Meru County. In addition, the study stretched beyond 2014, in order to understand the dynamics of the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru in the 21st century.

The study was limited to specific areas in Meru County, and due to the vastness of Meru County, only a few areas were selected. They included Mjini slums, Kibra Ndovu and Salama village.

The researcher encountered several challenges in the course of the research. Language barrier was one of the challenges since the communities being interviewed were both Nubians and the Ameru. This was solved with the use of a research assistant who was conversant with both languages, ensuring clear communication between the researchers and the participants.
Another limitation was that given the sensitive nature of ethnic interactions in Kenya and fear of further marginalization, some participants feared to provide information. However, this was delimited through assuring the participants that their anonymity was to be maintained and that this research was for academic purpose only. Another limitation faced by the researcher was that tracing respondents, which was difficult, but it was resolved through the help of the area chief.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Introduction
This section contains review of already existing literature on ethnic relations not only in Kenya but also globally. It also shows the identified gaps that were left by other scholars as well as highlighting the theoretical framework that was used in the study

1.8.1 Review of related literature.

A lot of literature exists on ethnic relations not only in Kenya but also globally. Such works include Ammar (1996), Joshua (2010), Burite (2008), Kohli (2014), Ng'ang'a (2006), Smedt (2011), Kareithi (2012) and Ochieng (2006), Allen (2014), Balaton-Chrimes (2015), which are of immediate relevance here.

Ammar (1996) notes, Nubians are a non-Arab population living in Nubia in South Egypt and Northern Sudan. He notes that this community was displaced from their original homeland during the construction of Aswan High Dam in Egypt. The author further provided the settlement patterns of Nubians. He also notes that their economy mainly depended on agriculture where they grew
crops such as wheat, barley, and dates lupines among others. In their marriage, dowry was essential, and intermarriage with other ethnic groups was rare. His ideas were relevant to this study because he provides the life of Nubians in all aspects be it social, political or economic. His study, however, deviates from the current study because he focused more on impacts between of the Nubians and other ethnic groups in ancient Egypt while this study focuses on Nubian-Ameru relations in Meru County. Furthermore, the study was carried out in Egypt whereas the current study was carried out in Meru County. This was the geographical gap that the current study intended to fill.

Allen (2014) looks at the historical background of the Nubians. She notes that the construction of Aswan High Dam was important to the relocation of Nubians from Egypt. She also provides their development in the post-colonial state as well as discussing on their right to return. Her work was relevant to this study because she mainly looked at the origin of the Nubians who were the main point of focus for this study. However, she did not deal with the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru, something that this study addressed with a special eye in Meru County.

Dafalla (1975) studies the exodus of Nubians from Egypt to Wadi Halfa. He notes that the construction of Aswan High Dam in 1970 led to the migration of Nubians from Egypt to other places, something he agrees with Allen (2014). He looked at the modern social and economic characteristics of Nubians in Wadi Halfa, especially social customs and land economy. His work informs this study on the modern social and economic status of the
Nubians. However, his study was in Wadi Halfa while this study was carried out in Meru County in Kenya.

Joshua (2010) studying Nubians notes that this community consists of the seven non-Arab Muslim ethnic groups that originated in Nuba region between Aswan High Dam in South Egypt and Northern Sudan. In this way, the author agrees with Ammar (1996). He also notes that many Nubians speak in Nubia while others speak Arabic, a language of trade and business and that they did agriculture. However, men also went to towns to look for jobs. This is another point of agreement between Joshua (2010) and Amnar (1996). Joshua's ideas inform this study as far as the life of Nubians in Egypt was concerned. He also sheds light on the origin of Nubian and how they came to East Africa. He, however, gives no details where they settled in Uganda and Kenya and how they interacted with the communities. He also gives no information on the impacts of their interaction with other communities. The study seeks to fill this gap.

Studying the Nubians in Uganda, Burite (2008) notes that the Nubians make over 10,000 of Uganda's population. He also shows that they are members of the Islamic faith in Uganda, and it was because of their hospitable customs and friendliness that the Nubians settled easily there. He undertakes a study on the origin of Nubians in Uganda and notes that presently Nubians occupy areas of the Acholi and some parts of the Northern Uganda such as Bombo. His ideas were relevant to this study because he showed the Nubian migration and settlement in Uganda and some of their customs like their wedding ceremonies. His study, however, focuses on Nubians in Uganda while this
study focuses on the Nubians in Kenya and more specifically Meru County. Thus, his study provides a geographical gap that this study fills.

Amone (2014) studying the creation of the Acholi military ethnocracy gives a detailed account on how the Nubians arrived in East Africa. He notes that by 1900s, authorities had begun recruiting Africans into King’s African Rifle but the core of the KAR was the Sudanese troops who had been merged with Swahili troops. From the start, the Sudanese troops were people of strength but after sometimes, they found themselves shifting between regular and irregular military employment, legitimate and illegitimate trade slave trading, cattle raiding and playing off one Acholi chief against another (Amone, 2014). The soldiers became a problem to Uganda. This posed serious threat to the establishment of British protectorate in Uganda. The soldiers felt that they had worked without compensation and that they needed mutiny. As a result, the British reduced their numbers by employing the Indians and Africans in Uganda. His work was relevant to this study because he traces the origin of Nubians in East Africa and more specifically in Uganda. However, he fails to provide information on their interaction with other ethnic groups in Uganda. He also did not tell us whether these groups of individuals still do exist in Uganda up to date. This is the gap that the study fills in Meru County in Kenya.

Ng'ang'a (2006) studying the Kenya's ethnic communities notes that the Nubians originated from Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt, agreeing with Joshua (2010) and Ammar (1996). He also shows the reasons for their dispersal. The author also notes that the Nubians social units are extended
families linked by marriages rather than by blood. He also shows how the Nubians related to other Kenyans politically. His ideas inform this study as far as the origin of the Nubians is concerned, their social units and the political relationship of the Nubians and Kenyans. He, however, does not show the impacts of these interactions with other communities. This gap is what this study fills, but more specifically in Meru County.

Balaton-Chrimes (2015) examines the political marginalization of Nubians in Kenya. She notes that the Nubians in Kenya have limited access to ID cards and citizenship status, something that denied them equal political participation and land ownership as other ethnic groups in Kenya. Her work was relevant to this study because she looks at how Nubians are marginalized by other ethnic groups in Kenya. However, her ideas deviate from this study because she looks at Nubians interaction with other ethnic groups in Kenya in general; the Ameru are in part not a subject of her study. This study fills this gap by studying the Nubian Ameru economic and social relations in Meru County.

Parson (1997), talks about the social history of the Nubians in Kibera. His work was relevant to this study because he gives an account of the origin of the Nubians in East Africa. He also shows how Nubian villages were formed in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. However, in his discussion, he only looks at the social history of the Nubians in Kibera, and in a way, he sidelines the Nubians who occupy other areas in Kenya. This is the gap that this study fills but in Meru County.

Studying the Kenyan Nubians, Isaboke (2011) notes that Nubians in Kenya are found in Kibera, Kisumu, Mumias, Kisii, Isiolo, Kapsabet, Migori,
Eldama Ravine and Meru. He notes that they came into Kenya as British colonial military under the King’s African Rifles. He also notes that they were retained as British subjects without compensation. The author further notes that the Nubians faced legal discrimination in Kenya. Accordingly, they devised survival tactics such as intermarriages and going to other areas in Kenya. His ideas shed light on this study on the residential areas of Nubians in Kenya, which include among others Meru, which is the main focus of this study. He also provides marriage as one of the interaction methods as well as survival tactic of Nubians in Kenya. He, however, did not provide the impacts of such intermarriages that are the main focus of this study. He also looks at Nubians from a nationalistic point of view thus he has overlooked important information as far as the study of Nubians is concerned. This study fills this gap but more specifically in Meru County.

ERT and KHRC (2012) reporting on discrimination and marginalization in Kenya note that most Kenya Nubians were de facto stateless due to discrimination in access to citizen that include arbitrary denial and repeated delay in the provision of identification cards and passports. The report also notes that police officers harass Nubians because they do not have ID cards. Many Nubians had to retire to their residents early to avoid the police. The report is relevant to this study because it gives the state of Nubians in Kenya. However, it only provides the discrimination aspect and does not address issues such as where are they settled in Kenya and how did they interact with other Kenyan ethnic groups. It also gives no information on the origin of
Nubians in Kenya. These were the gaps that the study intended to fill with specific focus on the Meru County.

Studying Nubians in Bungoma, Tomia (2014) notes that the national census in 2012, Bungoma County had 3500 Nubians scattered in major towns. They are majorly found in Majengo, Kimilili, Lwakahakaha and Mjini. This community entered Bungoma through Malaba and Lwakhakha after fleeing for safety from Uganda once Milton Obote overthrew Idi Amin. They first settled around Bungoma Prison. However, they were later displaced to construct the prison without any compensation. In addition, he says that their Nubian names such as Marjana, Deka, and Dinka among others are fading away because they gave them hard times while looking for jobs (Tomia, 2014). Her ideas are relevant to this study because she provides an analysis of the origin of Nubians in Bungoma County. Her ideas deviate from this study because this study focuses on the Nubians in Meru County. She also does not provide all the relations of Nubians with other ethnic groups in Bungoma. This study fills this gap but more particularly on the Nubians in Meru County.

Ochieng (2006) studies the discrimination of Nubians in Eldama Ravine. He notes that the community has a council called the Nubian council of elders. He notes the Nubians could not participate in the recruitment of Kenya security forces because the exercise is done in district levels and for them they do not have an ancestral village apart from Nairobi. The government does not consider Nairobi a rural place. They blamed the second president of Kenya for their problem especially those living in Eldama Ravine. Like many others, Ochieng (2006) concentrates on the challenges of Nubians in their villages.
He does not give the history of Nubians in Eldama Ravine nor does he provide any information on their interaction with other ethnic groups. This study fills this gap but more specifically in Meru County.

Studying the statelessness of Nubians in Kenya, Adam (2009) notes that the Nubians were economically, socially and politically discriminated in Kenya. The author further notes that the Nubians arrived in Kenya as a concentration of people belonging to different ethnic groups. His ideas inform this study on the origin of Nubians in Kenya and to some extent their presence in Meru. He also sheds some light on the Nubian interaction in Kenya; they are silenced and discriminated. However, his history of origin in Meru was just but piece of fragmented information thus the need for more research to establish in-depth information on the origin of Nubians in Meru County. Furthermore, he does not provide any information on the interaction in Meru County. He seems to defend his ethnic group; the Nubians thus cannot fully be relied on in the writing of the state of Nubians in Kenya. This is because he was likely to be biased. This study fills the above gap.

Haiba foundation (2013) notes that the historical background of Nubians can be traced in the 1890s when majority were enlisted in the colonial army of the British Empire to help open up the interiors of East Africa. The author notes that these Nubians made the KAR in 1902. However, the soldiers were later scattered all over East Africa and continued to retain an outstanding record for the British colonial government. They settled in places like Luba, Bondo, Kibirigo, Kisumu, Kendu Bay, Kibos, Migori, Isiolo, Mumias, Oyugis, Bungoma, Busia Marsabit, Kamagwambo, Meru and Kibra in Kenya. The
report further notes that throughout their career the Nubians intermarried with other ethnic groups whom they interacted with and that their children became Nubians by assimilation and association. He also notes that the Nubians had flourished culturally despite their marginalization and intermarriage. Their population is estimated to be around 250,000 (Haiba foundation, 2013:87).

This report is relevant to this study because it presents the aspects of how Nubians interacted with other ethnic groups in Kenya, which is the primary objective of this study. However, the report provides the Nubian history in Kenya from a general point while this study deals specifically with the Nubians in Meru County. The report further does not provide the impacts of the Nubia interaction with other ethnic groups, which was the focus of this study in Meru County.

Lassi (2014) notes that land belonging to the Nubian people in Kisii County was grabbed by some businesspeople in the town. He also notes that the CORD nominated senator had told the county government to address the Nubian crisis in the area (Lassi, 2014:2). The author further indicates that the Nubians did not have a single slot in the county assembly and that they were even overlooked in job appointment in the public service. Lassi's study was in Kisii County while this study will be in Meru County thus a geographical gap that this study fills.

Tumaini (2014) writing on the forgotten soldiers in Isiolo County notes that the Nubian community in Isiolo were being treated unfairly. He gives an incident that transpired during the national tourism week that was hosted in Isiolo County. For this accusation, the money that was contributed was 600,
000 by thirty people, which would be used to build tents, buy goods for exhibition and sale during the tourism week. The money was supposed to be distributed equally but the Nubians only received Ksh. 5000. He also notes that while the Nubian community was able to contribute to the national events in the region it was without struggle and conflict. The author further notes that during the tourism week only the Borana and Samburu were selected to be featured on the national TV. The Nubians were misguided to wait for two days in an empty stadium for the TV crew that was never coming (Tumaini, 2014). A freelance journalist instead filmed them. This study deviates from his ideas because his focus was in Isiolo County while this study was in Meru County.

Mbaria (2002) give details about Nubians in Kisumu. He notes that like any other Nubians elsewhere in the country, Kisumu Nubians were also discriminated. Other people grabbed their land with the help of the government officials. The report notes that the Nubians live in what can be termed as social cocoons, rarely interacting with non-Nubians except when it cannot be avoided. The Nubian women were socialized from a tender age to shun men who do not belong to the Nubian community especially non-Muslim men. The locals in Kisumu regard the Nubians as foreigners who should go back to Sudan the land where their forefathers’ umbilical cord was buried. The report shed light to this study on the Nubian interaction with other communities, which was the focus of this study in Meru County.

Studying the history of Eldama Ravine, Kulei (2014) notes that the town was established in 1887 by the Nubians who worked as soldiers and transporters
for the IBEAC. In this way, the group agrees with Mwangi (2015) that associates that emergence of the town to the Nubian soldiers in 1887. He furthermore says that the Nubian community that lives in Eldama Ravine were overcrowded in a small piece of land. They do not possess land title deed; instead, they had allotment letters. Nubian women were forced to pay a fee of Ksh. 100 on a monthly basis to the Koibatek district forest officers to collect firewood in Lembus and Mumberes forest. These women sell the firewood in the town (Kulei, 2014). Very few Nubian children went to school in the region and employment was scarce. Furthermore, the community was not represented in the county assembly in 2013 general election. The study shed light to this study on the Nubian interaction activities in the Eldama Ravine, which was majorly through trade. However, the study focuses on the Nubians in Eldama Ravine while this study focused on the Nubians in Meru County.

Kareithi (2012) reporting on the Nubians articulates that in Tanzania, Nubians were almost rendered extinct after assimilation by intermarriages. He however points out that this was not the case in Kenya. He articulated that the British government punished them by not repatriating them to Sudan after the mutiny that took place many years ago. The author further points out that the Nubian introduced such delicacies as mandazi, sambusa and pancakes into Kenya. They were also the masterminds behind the art of brewing chang'aa. The Nubians are not a single ethnic group, but a community of different ethnic group. It was only that when they reached Uganda they were collectively referred to as Nubians and that their present-day predicament was a payment of the mutiny staged by their grandfathers in Uganda long time ago.
His ideas inform this study on the origin of Nubians in Kenya and how they interacted with the Kenyans bringing in new delicacies. He also tells us the state of Nubians in Tanzanian and the impact of intermarriage on the Nubians in Tanzania. He also provides the root cause of the Nubian problems in Kenya in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. However, he does not provide us with any information concerning the Nubians in Meru County, which is the focus of this study. He also studies Nubians from a general perspective thus may have overlooked certain feature that were essential. Accordingly, an in-depth study is needed to establish this.

Amino (2013) notes that during the 2013 general elections in Kenya, the Nubians endorsed President Uhuru Kenyatta. The reporter notes that the Nubians expressed their dissatisfaction with the CORD presidential candidate Raila Odinga, who was the immediate and former MP of Lang’ata. They blamed the CORD leader on land injustices and claimed that he sidelined them in the slum upgrading system. They also said that he was unable to solve their problems for a long time. His ideas were relevant to this study because he shed light on the Nubian political interaction with other communities in the Kenya political arena, which was the focus of this study in Meru County. However, he reports on political interaction only, thus the need for more research to interrogate the social and economic interaction. He also does not give the impact of such interaction, which is the case this study examines in Meru County.

The literature reviewed indicates that extensive studies have been done on the Nubians in the world and more specifically in Kenya and Uganda. However,
there were many gaps that the review identified that needed serious scholarly attention. Many of the existing studies on Nubians addressed the Nubians from the discrimination point of view for instance works of Balaton-Chrimes (2013), Joshua (2010), and Isaboke (2011) among others. This study addressed these gaps by looking at the origin of Nubians, and their interaction with the Ameru people in Meru County in Kenya as well as it examined the impact of such interactions.

1.8.2 Theoretical framework

There are many theories that can be used to explain relations between and among communities and groups of people. Such include the symbolic interaction theory, interactionism perspective, resilience theory and the social network theory. It is important to review these theories with an intention of borrowing some of their aspects to this study.

The symbolic interaction theory was developed by George Herbert Mead in the 1920s. The theory analyzes society by addressing the subjective meaning that people impose on objects, events and behavior of other people. For instance, individuals interpret one another’s behavior. It is these interpretations that create social bonds. These interpretations are known as the ‘definition of the situation.’ Race and gender relations can also be explained using this theory. This is because as human beings, we make use of socially constructed meanings of race and gender to help us decide who to interact with and how to do so (Blumer, 1986).

The theory is relevant to this study since a society is usually constructed through human interaction. However, despite this, the theory has its own
weaknesses. To begin with, symbols may be interpreted incorrectly or differently among different groups of people, thus it is subjective by nature. It also overestimates the ability of individuals to make their own realities thus ignoring the degree to which people live a world of their own creation. In addition, it looks down upon the emotional aspects of human conduct, focusing mainly on logical behavior (Blumer, 1986).

Interactionism was developed from the ideas of George Herbert Mead (1934), Charles Cooley (1902) and William Thomas (1931). The theory holds that the society is a product of the daily social interactions among various people. It emphasizes more on smaller-scale social interactions, such as the interactions between individuals or small social groups. It focuses on how individuals act, or make conscious choices concerning their behavior that proceed from how they interpret situations. In a nutshell, humans not only react to social stimuli but also are social actors and must adjust their behavior depending on the actions of other social actors (Denzin, 1973).

However, the theory has several weaknesses. It gives little attention to the social structures. Additionally, it perspective concentrates too much on the small-scale, relatively trivial, aspects of social life. It tends to immerse itself in the minute details of social existence while ignoring the much bigger picture of life at a society-wide level of analysis. Lastly, it fails to adequately address questions of social order and social change.

Given the weaknesses of the above discussed theories, this study was augmented by social network theory and resilience theory. Social network theory was coined in the late 1890s by Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand
Tonnies in their theories and research of social groups. Tonnies coined that
groups can exist as both personal and direct social ties that link people who
share common values or society. On his part, Durkheim gave a non-
individualistic explanation of social facts. He argued that those social
phenomena arise when interacting individuals constitute a reality that can no
longer be accounted for in terms of the properties of individual actors.

The social network theory has fundamental principles namely, independence
of actors; relations or ties consisting in the flow or transfer of resources; the
constraining and/or enabling of individual actors by networks; and the
generation of long-lasting ties and networks by social structures (Kadushin,
2004).

This theory holds that studying any single relationship in isolation from the
network of which it is part is not right. This is because the relationship
between two actors, is the building block of a network, but is itself
conditioned by the network. It also hold that across social network studies, the
actors or the nodes have been variously defined as individuals, groups,
companies, or even countries. The relationship or tie is a flow of resources
that can be material or non-material. The resources might include social
support, emotional support, companionship, time, information, expertise,
money, business transactions, shared activity, and so on. Resources shared
across ties are generally finite, and therefore scarce. As a result, the property
of hierarchy enters an otherwise neutral network structure. In addition to
hierarchy, two other characteristics of social networks will inform the analysis
in this paper: transitivity and homophily. Transitivity means that if A is tied to
B, and A is tied to C, it is likely that B is tied to C. Homophily reflects that a person’s ties tend to be with people like them. So our personal networks tend to be homogeneous and defined by the following characteristics, in ascending order: gender, occupation, education, religion, age, and most of all race and ethnicity.

The theory is relevant to this study because it explains the relations between individuals and models society as constitute of networks made up of sets of relations or ties between nodes. In this study, Nubians and the Ameru comprise of the Nodes of the social strand. The two communities are dependent to each other. However, they relate in various aspects creating long lasting networks. Resources may be trade, expertise and money. The theory was used to explain the connection between the Ameru and the Nubians. It also explains how they relate and why they interacted in the way, they did.

However, social network theory has a weakness. In the interpretation of relationships or ties, the theory can be subjective since it can be influenced by personal feelings, tastes or even opinions of people (Kadushin, 2004). At such, the theory can be biased and thus cannot give a suitable account of the impacts of such connections and interaction between communities.

In looking at the impacts such connections and interaction between the Nubians and the Ameru communities, the study employed the resilience theory. The theory was developed by Michael Ritter in 1985. He noted that resilience is usually created when protective factors initiate certain processes among people in a community for example, building of self-image and also
reducing the effects of risk factors (Rutter, 1985). Therefore, resilience is a process and not a trait.

The theory also denotes that a distinct community can have the capacity to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness (Healy, 2006). Thus, culture can play as a resource for resilience in a community against other cultures.

The theory was used to explain how the Nubian and Ameru relations have changed over time and the implications of Nubian-Ameru relations in Meru County. It was also used to explain reasons behind the resilience of some cultural aspects by the two communities.
1.9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction
This section contains research design, site of the study, target population, sampling technique and sample size. It also encompasses data collection instruments, data collection procedure, reliability and validity. Lastly, it also comprise of analysis of data, data management and ethical consideration.

1.9.1 Research design
This study used historical research design and made use of the qualitative approach. The research design was important since it provided chronology of the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru as they unfolded. Qualitative approach provided an in depth collection of data.

1.9.2 Site of the study
The study was conducted in Meru County and more specifically in Mjini slums, Kibra Ndovu and Salama. This is because the inhabitants of Meru County are the Ameru and also the Nubians. The County is made up of nine constituencies namely; Igembe South, Igembe Central, Igembe North, Tigania West, Tigania East, North Imenti, Buuri, Central Imenti and South Imenti. The County has nine sub counties, 28 Divisions, 133 Locations and 351 Sub-Locations.

Meru County shares its borders with Counties like Isiolo in the North, Tharaka Nithi to the South West Laikipia to the West, Nyeri to the South West and Kirinyaga to the south. The County is in the Eastern province in Kenya
and covers an area of 6,936 km². The commercial and administrative headquarter of the region is Meru town.

The climate of Meru is mainly cool and warm. It receives an average of between 500mm and 2600mm every year. Agriculture is the main economic activity carried out in the region and the main cash crop grown is Miraa, which enables people to meet all their financial needs. Other crops grown in Meru County are cotton, millet, beans, sorghum and maize. Animal farming is also practiced.

### 1.9.3 Target population

The study targeted Nubian and Ameru residents of Meru County both male and female aged 18 years and above. The Nubians were targeted because they are the primary focus of this study. The Ameru community was targeted because they in one way or another interact with the Nubians in this County. The community leaders such as chiefs, clan elders and religious leaders were also targeted because they had some information about the Nubians participation in the government activities and also because the Nubian community resides where they operate.

### 1.9.4 Sampling technique and sample size

The study used random and purposive sampling techniques to select the study population. Random sampling technique was used to ensure that each person had an equal opportunity of being selected. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants like chiefs, religious leaders, clan elders, men and women because they possessed vital information to offer to this study.
Out of about one million people in Meru County, 143 participants were interviewed through random and purposive sampling technique. This consisted of 17 oral interviews, 16 KII and 11 focus group discussions with each group consisting of ten participants. The participants were obtained depending on their availability, accessibility, willingness and knowledge on the subject matter.

1.9.5 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from direct field interactions with the participants. This was done through the use of oral interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. This mainly targeted the Nubians, Ameru and community leaders to gather varied information and save time.

Secondary data was obtained from books, journals, reports, thesis, magazines, dissertations, articles, and periodicals. Archival sources were also used to capture some aspects of origin of the Nubians in Meru County.

1.9.7 Data analysis

To avoid loss of information, data analysis started in the field. Tape recorded data was transcribed, typed, coded and then analyzed thematically and periodically.

Secondary data was subjected to both intrinsic and extrinsic criticism to ascertain their relevance to this study. The final information was then reported in form of narrations coupled with first hand quotations from primary data where necessary.
1.9.8 Data management and ethical considerations

Respondents were interviewed on voluntary basis and confidentiality and anonymity was ensured. Any work referred to was highly acknowledged. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Kenyatta University and research permit from NACOSTI. The researcher then presented the letter to the county administrators in Meru, booked an appointment with them and the respondents, and then briefed them on the purpose of the study. This helped the researcher to create personal contact and familiarize herself with the respondents. Any relevant sources were highly acknowledged in these work.

1.9.9 Conclusion

The chapter provided the background of the study, then proceeded to give the study gap that needed address as well as the objectives, research questions and premises that guided the study. Additionally, the chapter provided an extensive literature review, theoretical framework and the research methodology.

The next chapter provides an overview of the entry of Nubians in Kenya.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 NUBIAN ENTRY INTO MERU; 1925-1963

2.1 Introduction

Before looking at the Nubian entry into Meru, it was significant to look at the origin of the Nubians in Kenya. In so doing, the researcher addressed such issues like where the Nubians in America came from, why they came to Meru, reception they got from the Ameru and how they related with their hosts at the time of their arrival in the regions. Lastly, examined the Nubian culture particularly their political, social and economic activities.

2.2 Origin and settlement of the Nubians in Kenya (1925-1945)

Official records in Kenya reveal that Kenya has 42 ethnic groups (Kenya information guide, 2015). However, many other groups have not been included in those groups. During the National census in 2009, these groups were classified as others; such groups include the Bajuni, the Waata and foreign groups. In an oral interview, a Nubian youth in Salama noted that:

“…We the Nubians are among the minority groups in Kenya. Even in the census, we are only classified as others. We have not yet been fully recognized by the Kenyan government” (Marjan, O.I, 30/08/2014)

The remarks agree with scholars who note that the Nubians are among the minority groups in Kenya. Despite the fact that the group is found everywhere in Kenya’s major towns in the country, There is no official figure of the exact number of Nubians and that this ethnic group is still classified as others (Kohli, 2014; Adam, 2009).
Parsons (1997) notes that Kenyan Nubian are part of the larger community that is found in East Africa, and was shaped by the institution of slavery and military services. The author further notes that the South Sudan was the source of slave soldiers for the Sudanese kingdoms like Sennar, Tegali, Darfur and Muhammad Ali’s Egypt. These people had been isolated from their communities, their culture, their distinctive languages and they settled in colonies of ex-soldiers near military camps known as zaribasor garrisons.

This agrees with Johnson (2000) and Smedt (2011) who note that these armies were composed of various ethnic groups not only from Nubia but also throughout Sudan. Here, they produced their own military identity through assimilation of weaker ethnic groups, marriages, and adoption of orphans. Scholars’ further note that creation of military identity led to formation of social and economic communities and arabisation in terms of language and Islamisation due to the influence of slaves captured in the Muslim and Arabic speaking areas in Egypt and Northern Sudan (Nasseem and Marjan, 1992 & Atieno-odhiambo, 1977). These slave soldiers were known as Nubis or Sudanese. This agrees with Johnson (1989) and Leopold (2006) who note that the term Nubi was used at different times and for different purpose but mainly it was used to refer to slaves who came from Nubia prior to European imperialism.

Smedt (2011) notes that the Nubians trace their origin in Sudan. In 2000 BC the Nubians were captured by Egyptians in their homeland as slaves to build their glorious kingdoms in Egypt. This agrees with Welsby (2004) who notes that as early as 2700BC, Egyptians used to get Nubian slave soldiers from
Sudan and they referred to them as *jihadiya*, which means black slave army. In Egypt, life was never conducive to these slaves and as a result, many became undisciplined, lawless and lack of basic entitlement like cloths where they wore rags. However, in 1890, a landmark event occurred in the Nubian history when Sir Fredrick Lugard arrived in Kampala as a representative of the East Africa British company. This was after Anglo-German agreement, which made Uganda a sphere of influence by the British. Since the British government did not want to be involved in the administration of the country, it sent the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) on its behalf to help in aid in the ruling of the British protectorate in Uganda (Vere-Hodge, 1960).

The colonial master wanted to run the colony at a very minimum costs thus there was need to make use of soldiers who needed no pay or very little pay. This concurs with Kohli (2014) who notes that Lugard wanted soldiers so that he could be able to strengthen his alliance with the Baganda chiefs as a result; he went to Cairo where he found Nubians who were in miserable condition. However, he was impressed by their loyalty to the Egyptian and thus sought to have these able-bodied men to offer protection in Uganda (Smedt, 2011).

Smedt (2011) further notes that Lugard realized that he needed more manpower thus; he went back for more soldiers in Sudan. The slave soldiers were recruited from Emin pasha who had slave soldiers in his administration as governor of Equatoria province in Southern Sudan (Kohli, 2014). Emin Pasha was a German Jewish doctor who had turned to Muslim and he was the successor of Gordon as the governor of Equatorial province in 1877 (Gray, 1961). However, in 1881, Mahdi revolt arose in Northern Sudan and he got
massive support from the Sudanese people and these led to the defeat of the Egyptian army both in Northern and in Southern Sudan (Smedt, 2011). The Mahdist uprising went on for more than a decade, and at this period, the Sudanese soldiers were isolated from the outside world at Wedalai, which is known in the 21st century as West Nile, and they returned to a life of banditry and became a group based on adoption as a form of pidgin, Arabic and their religion was Islam. This was the first step toward formation of the Nubi community. As a result, in 1891, Emin Pasha signed an agreement with Lugard where the Sudanese troops would be transferred to the service of IBEAC in Uganda (Amone, 2014). They later became the backbone of the protectorate armed forces then of the colonial armies in Kenya and Uganda where they played a crucial role in projects of the imperial government in East Africa (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015).

Balaton-Chrimes (2015) further point out that the recruitment of the Nubians by Fredrick Lugard was a new chapter for the Nubians since it was a continuation of their military group. One important element of the military group is that it was also made up of civilians who were mainly family members of the soldiers. The civilians helped the group to grow to be a community and later on to be an ethnic group in East Africa but more specifically in Kenya. In their new environment, they were referred to as Nubis. The name was mainly used to refer to communities of slave soldiers and their families who came from Sudan.

Amone (2014) notes that in 1893, the IBEAC became bankrupt and this led to the British government to assume responsibility for the country. The task of
the government was to establish a coercive force to rely on not only to keep the country united but also to fulfill Britain’s imperial interest. Therefore, in 1895, Amone (2014) notes that the Britain approved the Uganda rifles and these soldiers were used to promote internal security in the protectorate. This, however, created a problem among the soldiers because they had been based in garrisons without moving much and this garrison life allowed them to plant crops and have families. Furthermore, this garrison life made them feel comfortable

Thus, having numerous expeditions all over East Africa with hardly any rest meant that these soldiers would not have a comfortable life. This agrees with Thomas & Scott (1935) who noted that the Sudanese soldiers had a right to complain to the British since they had marched to different parts of East Africa with little consideration or promise of rest. In furtherance, they were deprived of any settled life with their families, they earned a fraction of the pay received by similar troops in the protectorate and they often found themselves in an expedition of a destination unknown to them or even duration. Smedt (2011) further notes that this was the main cause of mutiny among the Sudanese troops and it began in mid-September 1897 after a long march to and from Eldama-Ravine in Kenya where a company of soldiers refused to join an expedition to Central Sudan under the command of Major Macdonald.

Scholars further note that the British were able to stop the mutiny after seven months with the help of soldiers from India, the Swahili and Somali. They later reorganized the Uganda rifles by diversifying the composition of the
military to prevent another mutiny (Thomas & Scott, 1935). The British mainly organized the soldiers into four battalions, which led to the birth of King’s African Rifles. Parsons (1997) argues that the Sudanese who served in the Kings African Rifles were originally recruited for the Uganda rifles later known as the fourth battalion. Scholars have noted that the KAR was formed in 1902 and was consolidated from the central African rifles, the Uganda rifles, which made the fourth battalion and the East African rifles, which made the third battalion in the KAR. These were the British colonial military in East Africa before and during the First World War (Thomas, 2015; Nunneley, 1998; Smedt, 2011; Isaboke, 2011).

In this way the author agrees with the respondents views that some of the Nubians in Meru came to Kenya as soldiers. The same remarks were echoed by another Nubian Key informant Interviewee who noted that his father who died at the age of 92 years was a First World War soldier official in Kenya (Mohamud, K.I.I, 30/08/2016). However, in an oral interview another Nubian man noted his grandfather was a soldier who mainly guided the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. This agrees with Parson (1997) who notes that some of the Nubian soldiers who came from Uganda were used to guard the construction of the new railway in Kenya and to promote internal security and border defense. For instance, they fought against local slaving efforts in central Africa, Nandi of Kenya, Mad Mullah of Somali and Uganda kingdoms (Thomas, 2015; Nunneley, 1998; Smedt, 2011).

In a focus group discussion with Nubian traders at Salama village, it was revealed that when these soldiers came to Kenya, they first settled at Kibra.
This is where the colonial government established a camp for KAR soldiers (Nubian traders, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with scholars who notes that the Nubian soldiers were loyal while serving the British protectorate and they had good fighting skills thus they formed the backbone of the KAR and were known as native officers and senior African non-commissioned officers until the beginning of the Second World War (Parsons, 1997; Smedt, 2011; Isaboke, 2011; Burite, 2008). Their loyalty to their master shows why the number of these Nubians in the battalion grew as time went by such that by 1902 they were half of the entire battalion (Parsons, 1997). Furthermore, the British also allocated land to the Nubians to settle around military forts, which later came to be known as Nubian villages in Kenya, Uganda and Somali (Smedt, 2011; Johnson, 1989; Moyse-Bartlett, 1956). Even though Nubians came to Kenya through Uganda, there were other ways in which Nubians found their way to Kenya. Another way was through Tanzania to Kenya. In 1890 after the Anglo-German agreement, Tanzania was declared a German protectorate. Scholars note that the new colonial government started the policy of violent repression to the local communities and it led to uprisings by the local people like the Hehe rebellion, Majimaji rebellion and the coastal revolts. Montana (2014) argues that the German administration was not fully able to suppress the rebellions, and this led to Captain Hermann Von Wissmann to be sent from Germany to help the situation. On his way, he stopped at Cairo, Egypt where he recruited Sudanese soldiers who had been released from their service in the Egyptian army after
their defeat at the Mahdist revolt. The author further notes that the soldiers were used to facilitate the occupation of German hegemony over Tanzania.

Mann (2002) further notes that during the last decade of the 19th Century, more and more local tribesmen were recruited to be incorporated in the German army due to the number of Sudanese army reducing because they were old and some even died on duty. Therefore, the German allocated land to the retired soldiers like how the British in Uganda and Kenya did. In an oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu, it was revealed that there were Nubians in Kenya who trace their origin in Tanzania and they came to Kenya to look for better settlements (Ishmael, O.I 29/08/2016). This agrees with Isaboke (2011) who notes that by 1917, some Sudanese soldiers that retired had moved to Nanyuki, in Kenya to look for better settlement and others still continued to stay in their villages in Dar-as-Salaam, Tanga, Moshi and Arusha but with time, Nubians in Tanzania have disappeared due to assimilation into the Muslim culture in Tanzania.

Another explanation had it that the Nubians in Kenya trace their origin from Sudan. In this view, participants in a focus group discussion with a group of Nubian traders who were both male and female at Salama argued that the Sudanese Nubians came to Kenya in search of jobs, while others came through trade and decided to settle in Kenya. Others noted that the long decades of protracted conflict and war in Sudan forced them to free the nation for their safety (Nubian traders, FGD, 4/09/2016). In this regard, it was noted that some Nubians came to Kenya as war refugees and have never gone back. One respondent noted that:
“We came in Kenya with my family while I was very young. My mother and father fled Sudan due to the civil wars that were on by then. On arriving here we joined other Nubians who said that they were once soldiers from Uganda under British commander” (Habiba, K.I.I, 2/09/2016).

These remarks concerning the Nubians in Kenya agrees with Anyulo (2014) who notes that the long protracted conflict in Sudan made many Nubians to flee the nation and settle in Kenya because majority were faced with food security crisis.

Another explanation holds that Nubians also entered Kenya through Somali. Smedt (2011) notes that after the signing of the Anglo-Italian negotiation in 1886, Jubaland was declared a British protectorate and this led to formation of a KAR garrison in Kismayu. The author further notes that mobility within the battalion was inevitable thus soldiers from Egypt and Sudan straight to Somalia got mixed with those that came to Kenya through Uganda. Despite the fact that these soldiers worked in different regions in East Africa, they spoke the same language and this helped them to integrate more easily with one another. The soldiers were also permitted to travel with their wives while others married Somali women. Those who came through Uganda moved to Kismayu at a later stage and kept their families in Kibra. Others came with their families to Somalia. The British allowed these soldiers to travel with their families because it was a KAR policy to stimulate soldiers to have wives or even concubines to keep stability and discipline within the battalion. In 1925, Jubaland was handed over to the Italians and all KAR soldiers were moved to Kenya.

Namaswa (2015) notes that Nubians in Kenya comprise of groups such as Dinka, Muru, Kotoria, Bari, Kuku and Lendu who trace their origin from
Congo and Sudan. His works agrees with remarks by a Nubian lady in Salama who noted that Nubians in Kenya are made of many sub groups and that they trace their origin from diverse regions including Congo and South Sudan, and they became one group through the military recruitment as soldiers by Lugard (Haggai, O.I, 30/08/2016). Concisely, it can be elucidated that although scattered in towns like Kisumu, Kisii, Eldama Ravine, Isiolo, Kibra among others, the Nubians are said to trace their origin outside Kenya. This study mainly concentrated on the Nubians who came from South Sudan because it was their ancestral homeland.

Throughout Kenya’s census history, the Nubian community has never been individually counted and classified; thus, there is no exact figure that has been officially provided to account for the Nubian population in Kenya. In an oral interview with the county administrator in Meru, it was revealed that many people did not even know the existence of Nubians in Meru county. It was further revealed that those who knew their existence, treated the ethnic group as one single minority group (Waweru, O.I, 31/08/2016). This agrees with Adam (2009) who notes that Kenya in the 21st Century did not have the official figures of the Nubians and did not include them in the census report but only classified them as others.

Given this notion of being immigrants, it is instructive as a historian to first discuss the Nubian entry and settlement in Kenya and Meru County, which was the main focus of this study. In this way, it helped clarify the clear origin of the Nubians who settled in Meru and clarify the academic debate behind
their ancestral homeland. With such a migration and settlement history, the researcher was in a position to explain how the Nubians settled in Meru.

2.3 Dispersal and settlement of the Nubians in Meru

There have been many explanations that were put forward to explain the entry and settlement of Nubians in Meru County. The first explanation holds that the Nubians who live in Meru in the 21st century trace their origin from Uganda. In an oral interview with a Nubian elder in Mjini slums, it was revealed that some of the Nubians in the village came from Uganda. He noted that:

“My grandfather came to Kenya from Uganda and specifically here in Meru as a Second World War soldier but after the war he never returned. He continued staying in Kenya since the place was such a conducive environment for him. This explains why we his descendants live here up to date” (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016).

Another oral interview with an old Nubian woman in Mjini revealed that some of the Nubians came from Uganda. She noted that:

“My great grandfather came from Uganda as a KAR soldier to Kenya. He settled in Kibera but later on he moved to Meru where he settled” (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016)

Although the current Nubian community in Meru is made up of the third and fourth generation, the community used oral tradition in explaining their origin and settlement in Meru. They argue that it was their grandparents and great grandparents who passed these explanations of origin to them through story telling.

In this regard, they argue that the Nubian ancestors came from Uganda mainly as British soldiers to fight under the East Africa British protectorate. When these soldiers became too old, sick or injured for further military value they
were settled in different places in East Africa for instance Kibra. Scholars note that in those days, it was a habit in the military forts in Africa to allocate land to the soldiers to cultivate and grow crops for their families, the British allocated land to the Nubians to settle around military forts, which later came to be known as Nubian villages in Kenya, Uganda and Somali (Smedt, 2011; Johnson, 1989; Moyse-Bartlett, 1956). In addition, the community were just detribalized veterans who had nowhere to go when they retired.

In Kenya, Nubians settled in Kibra, Kisii, Mumias, Eldama Ravine, and Mazeras (Isaboke, 2011). Concisely, regardless of the reason behind the settlement, it was apparent that the main area where these Nubians settled was Kibra, which was the main KAR barrack in Kenya. In a key informant interview with a top government official revealed that where these Nubian settled came to be known as the Nubian villages (Maina, K.I.I, 31/08/2016). This agrees with scholars who note that in those days, retired and demobilized soldiers were allowed to settle around military barracks or garrison towns where they were allocated land to build a house and cultivate. In this way, Nubian villages were established in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (Smedt, 2011; Parsons, 1997).

After the end of the First World War, these soldiers continued to stay in Kenya and Kibra was given to them as a residential place (Smedt, 2011). However, an oral source revealed that during the preparation of Kenyan independence, the colonial administration made a mistake. After settlement in Kibra, the colonial government and the independent government failed to recognize the large settlement of the Nubians in Kenya arguing that land could
not be taken as a compensation for their services to the colonial masters (Anyulo, 2014). As a result, the Nubians could not be allocated land after independence. These could later affect their residence and social life. The administration did not recognize the Nubians in land allocation something that the independent government in Kenya also upheld (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016).

This concurs with Parsons (1997) who notes that in 1926, the original KAR residency passes of the Sudanese were withdrawn by the colonial government in Kenya. By 1928, the Kenyan government and the KAR agreed that no more permits were to be issued, and the plots of deceased residents would not be reallocated to other Sudanese veterans. Kenya's senior commissioners, meeting in the same year, decided that ‘detribalized’ natives squatting on the KAR Reserve had no special privileges. They optimistically declared that the Sudanese would be moved when the operational headquarters and barracks of third KAR battalion was shifted from Nairobi to Meru in 1928.

When interrogated on why they never went back to Uganda after the war, one clan elder in Salama noted that:

“We do not know our original ancestral land. Even in Uganda our forefathers were fighting under the command of a British, Lugard. We only have close ties with Nubians in Uganda since we believe we are one although separated by distance. We cannot exactly trace our homeland since our fathers who knew about our origin have died, but we know that it is either we are from Sudan or Egypt”. (Abdishakar, K.I.I, 27/08/2016).

Another explanation on their exodus from Kibra to Meru, an oral source revealed that the Nubians moved simply because Kibra became a breeding ground of crime and the government sought to make it orderly by relocating them. He further noted that the first place they were to be settled was Fort Hall
because of the large tracks of land in the region. However, the relocation failed. The main reason for this was that an expedition of KAR soldiers was sent to Embu to curb Embu resistance and this expedition led to the formation of an Embu garrison (Abdi, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Parsons (1997) who notes that by 1911 Kibra had grown and it became a breeding ground for crime and resistance for colonial rule. The author further notes that from 1920s the colonial administration tried to evict the Nubian veterans so as to even redevelop the settlement in a more orderly manner. This failed because Kibra was more like the ex-soldiers colonies of Sudan where the community grew through intermarriages and assimilation of people. It is from this background that Nubians from Kibra begun to move to other major towns in Kenya such as Meru because of different reasons like in search of a more comfortable and settled life.

Another oral explanation on the exodus of the Nubians from Kibra to Meru, revealed that Nubians moved from Kibra as soldiers in the British expedition to make Kenya a British protectorate (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016). This concurs with Moyse-Barlett (1956) who notes that after the headquarter of KAR was transferred to Nairobi mainly in Kibra in 1904. KAR soldiers were mainly used to extend the administration of the British from Nairobi towards the Mount Kenya region and this led to the establishment of the first station in this region in Fort Hall (today referred to as Muranga). The author further notes that in 1906, an expedition made of KAR troops was sent to Embu to curb Embu resistance and this led to the establishment of an Embu garrison for the KAR troops. Kubai (1995) further noted that in 1908, the garrison was moved
to Meru with Edward Butler Horne the acting District Commissioner in effort to curb the Somali disturbances in the NFD region. Scholars further note that Meru later became the headquarters’ of NFD ridge after the decision to build a road from NFD to Wajir in 1916 (Moyse-Bartlett, 1956).

The last explanation holds that the current Nubians in Meru entered Kenya through Somalia. In a focus group discussion with a group of Nubian traders who were both men and women in Salama village, one participant noted that his great grandfather was a British soldier in Somalia and later the British moved them from Jubaland to Kenya (Nubian traders, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that after the signing of Anglo-Italian negotiation in 1886, Jubaland was declared the British protectorate. As a result, KAR garrisons were established in Kismayu with many soldiers in them being Sudanese (Nubians). These Sudanese soldiers came from Egypt after being recruited by the British in Northern Sudan and in Egypt. In 1925, the British ceded Jubaland to Italians, KAR solders were moved to Kenya, and they settled in Meru, Mazeras, Nyanza and Kibra. An archival source further notes that these KAR soldiers settled in Meru but more specifically in Salama and they still occupied the area, which in the 21st century is near the Meru hospital (DC/MRU/2/4/10).

Although a few respondents refuted these remarks, noting that some came from Uganda and settled in Isiolo and Meru without going to Kibra, a good number of evidence from the field indicated that Kibra is the major receiving point of Nubians in Kenya.
This, therefore, implies that there is no single explanation that can independently be employed in discussing the origin of Nubians and their settlement in Meru. However, this study mainly dealt with the Nubians who came to Kenya from Sudan since this was their ancestral homeland. Furthermore, upon settlement in Meru these individuals became one group with similar social organization, economic structure and political ideas.

2.4 Reception of the Nubians by the Ameru

In the study, it is important to look at the reception given to the Nubians and the Europeans when they arrived in Meru. A clan elder in an oral interview in Kibra Ndovu noted that:

“Prophets from the Ameru community known as Mugwe predicted the total destruction of the community by the invaders who had pink faces and there would be no possible prevention of the impending calamity that was coming” (Mohammed, O.I 29/08/2016).

This remarks concurs with Kenya Advisor, (2016) which note that the coming of the Europeans had been foretold by prophets in the Ameru society who were known as Mugwe after a decade before they arrived in Kenya. Scholars further note that the psychological weight of the prophecies of the coming of the Europeans led to the rise of a conflict between the warriors and the Ameru council of elders referred to as the Njuri Ncheke. This is because it is against the Ameru warrior hood to submit to an enemy and they were really enraged by the prophecies, which termed Ameru people as a defeated community (Kubai, 1995). Despite this conflict, the elders maintained supremacy because they had the final word on matters pertaining national importance. Moreover, the prophecy was being fulfilled and the defeat of the Embu community convinced the Ameru people of the futility of resistance.
Fadiman (1993) notes that on arrival in Meru, Edward Horne and his KAR soldiers camped at Mwitari’s homestead. Later, they made a permanent camp that came to be known as *Boma* at the edge of the surrounding forest near the Kazita River. A key informant interview with an Ameru elder in Meru town revealed that:

“When the Europeans arrived in Meru, they were given land near the edge of the forest near the Kizita forest because according to what we believe, they would be dealt with by the spirits of the dead that inhabited the forest” (Kimathi, K.I.I 2/09/2016)

Kubai (1995) concurs with the above remarks pointing out that the Ameru people gave Hornes this land to settle because they believed that the forest was inhabited by the spirits of the dead. Furthermore, they would be potentially open to attacks from the lowland raiders like the Maasai. Thus, Hornes and his soldiers would be dealt with by the spirits and the Maasai who occasionally raided the area. However, Fadiman (1993) asserts that according to Horne’s perspective, the ridge was high, sharply defined and also it had permanent water source. This ridge was earlier known as *Kaithe* but today it forms the core of modern Meru town. Therefore, despite the beliefs of the Ameru people, Hornes continued to govern the NFD ridge and Meru became the headquarter. Therefore, more soldiers were deployed in the district. This made Hornes to give the Nubian soldiers the area as a form of payment as they retired. This came to be known as the Nubian villages in Meru (DC/MRU/22/4/1930).
2.5 The Nubian Culture

Before embarking on the interaction of Ameru and Nubians. It will be of significance to examine the Nubian culture. Some of the respondents in Meru town noted that there are no Nubians in Meru. One noted that:

“Hapa kuna wanubi? Mimi najua wanubi wako Mombasa” translated to: are there Nubians here? Nubians are found in Mombasa.” (Ameru men, F.G.D, 6/09/2016)

The same remarks were echoed by the National government administrator who seemed to have no idea on the Nubian presence in Mjini slums (Mutwiri, K.I.I, 30/08/2016). However, the Mjini chief and assistant chief categorically acknowledged the presence of this community, noting that the inability to recognize them was due to assimilation into the Ameru culture especially due to intermarriages (Kelly, K.I.I, 27/08/2016).

2.5.1 Social activities of the Nubians

A clan elder in Kibra Ndovu noted that during Jomo Kenyatta’s era (1963-1978), the Nubian identity was well and distinct. In this regard the Nubians exercised and practiced their culture (Mohammed, O.I 29/08/2016). This agrees with Namaswa (2015) who notes that Nubian identity includes shared values, mannerism and customs. For instance, when a young man greets an elder, he is supposed to clasp their hands, place them in the chin and then on their forehead as a sign of respect of them. Namaswa (2015) further notes that Nubians affirm their identity through socialization so as to remind their children who they are, and this transcends from physical, mental to communal ’Nubianness.’ This concurs with the remarks of a Nubian elder at Mjini who
notes that Nubians in Meru preserve their culture through socialization (Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016).

This socialization was achieved by taking part in various ways such as taking part in Nubian dances. They practiced their dances like the doluka, especially, during marriages. An oral source at Mjini slum revealed that during such dances they wore their Nubian attires normally referred to as gurubaba along with dira, a goat skin drum normally called kigoma that was also used as their music accompaniment in most of the dances(Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016).

In addition, Islam was their main religion as respondents in a focus group discussion at Kibra Ndovu noted that there are no Christian Nubians. The manifestation of Islamic religion was evident in the existence of four close mosques and a madrassa school near these Nubian villages. This agrees with Namaswa (2015) who notes that most of Nubian children attend madrassas, which are Islamic religious classes to learn Islamic laws. This implies that the Nubian children were usually socialized to Nubian way of life through attending madrassas.

When interrogated whether they would marry Christians, respondents at Salama village noted that marrying a Christian meant that the Christian had to convert to a Muslim. A Nubian clan elder in Salama noted that;

“If it is a Nubian woman who wants to be married to a Christian man, the lady has to convince the man to convert to Islam. For there is no dowry that can be paid in such a marriage if the man is a Christian. This will be haram” (Osman, O.I 30/08/2016).

The same views were echoed by another Nubian woman in Kibra Ndovu who noted that
“For me I had to convince my husband to convert from Christianity to Islam or else my people were never going to allow our marriage. He had no option other than converting” (Khadija, O.I 29/08/2016)

In matters pertaining to marriage, the Nubians never accepted pre-marital relationships, thus marriage was allowed for virgin ladies only. The marriage normally took place at night in a mosque or at the girl’s home and it was presided over by a Sheikh (Burite, 2008). *Nikah* began by the boy initiating a relationship before the couple informs their parents. However, some of the conservative families still chose suitors for their daughters ignoring the daughter’s preference. This was according to the Islamic belief that a parent should marry off their daughter in the best way they saw it fit (Nubian Forum, 2016).

A focus group discussion with Nubian women at Salama village, it was revealed that marriage preparation took two weeks or more. During this period, the lady was socialized into womanhood and wifely roles. The participants in the focus group discussion further revealed that the mother of the lady together with other elderly married women in the community who were close to the family played a key role in this socialization. The girl was taught how to behave as a responsible wife, mother and caregiver in the family. Obedience to the husband and his kinsmen was highly emphasized as well as being hospitable to visitors wherever they paid a visit (Nubian women, F.G.D, 4/09/2016).

According to Burite (2008), Nubian weddings are also referred to as *Nikah*, which took a period of three days. The author further notes that, on the first day, the boy’s parents first of all got in touch with the girl’s family to sort out the formalities for their children’s marriage. Later, there was the payment of
dowry to the bride which was also known as *Selah*. This agrees with Rxaxlxf (2016) who notes that wedding activities were centered on the bride’s place.

First of all the groom offered bride price to the future in-laws. Burite (2008) further notes that there was also deliberation on the related terms and conditions like for example the agenda of gifts that would be received by the bride’s family. Items like sugar, money, cooking oil, cultural wedding ornaments and outfits like a white sheet that the bride wraps around her body during the *nikah* were demanded. The author further notes that before *nikah*, the groom would get a chance to talk to the bride and this session was referred to as *mahare*, which mainly involved the bride being given gifts. At this session, the groom was supposed to ask the bride what she would like him to give to her. The essence of the ceremony was to get the couple to be committed to marriage because they would feel indebted to each other.

Kohli (2014) further notes that before the bride said what she wanted during the *mahare*, she was supposed to first reach a consensus with the groom on terms of fulfillment of the items. When the man failed to commit himself to the delivery of the girl’s demand, the marriage would be halted but also the man could also pay part or pledge his commitment to fulfill it. On the second day during the wedding, the man wore European type of dresses or the Muslim *kanzu* dress especially when going to the mosque Rxaxlxf (2016). The author further notes that in the mosque, the bride did not make an appearance as she was expected to stay hidden. At the mosque, she would be represented by the brother or father so that to protect her from temptation in case she sees other men who might easily lure her out of committing her life to the groom.
An oral source in Mjini slum revealed that on the wedding day, the lady was also forced to jump over a slaughtered goat and then join the husband (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). One key informant interviewee in Salama noted that:

“I had to Jump over a slaughtered goat which was an outward sign of the marriage covenant between my family and my husband’s, and between my husband and I “(Ahmed, K.I.I, 1/09/2016).

Namaswa (2015) further notes that the third day of the wedding was the reception where the groom would be adorned with derira. Then there would be a customary dance called doluka where the guests participated. At the reception, foods like gurusa, layu, pilau, kisira and beef were normally served. In addition, at the reception the bride started her roles as a wife. This was demonstrated by carrying a special dish of meat balls served with kisira or gurusa for her husband, cooked at her home. An oral source revealed that apart from these meals, the bride also carried other gifts to the in-laws. This agrees with scholars who note that the bride also carried a mat for her father-in-law, a traditional tray called tabaga/fendezia, and a food cover called kuta (Rxaxlxf, 2016).

In an FGD in Mjini, the wife of a Sheikh noted that, the third day was the end of the wedding (Residents of Mjini slums, F.G.D, 6/09/2016). This agrees with Namaswa (2015) who notes that the third day, which was the reception of the wedding, marked the end of the wedding. On this day, the bride was officially handed away to her husband and thus went to her patriarchal residence to start a family with her husband. Burite (2008) further notes that after the reception, the bride was supposed to prepare a meal for her new family which was referred to as the ‘testing the hand of the bride.’ This was mainly done to confirm her potential to make a responsible wife and if the
family was not impressed, the bride can be sent back to her parents to be taught perfect cooking skills.

An elderly Nubian widow at Salama village, explained that, in the family set up, the husband was the head of the family and took part in public spheres while the women were more confined to the domestic sphere (Kendi, K.I.I, 1/09/2016). This agrees with Namaswa (2015) who notes that women in the domestic sphere practiced crafts like basketry, making mats, which are called *fendezia* and food covers, which are known as *kuta*, which are used to cover food. In this regard, Nubian men like any Islam community took part in politics, were trade merchants and were the sole breadwinners of their family. All the children born in the family also belonged to the man an indication that the Nubian community was patriarchal in nature. Accordingly, it can be argued that the Nubian community emphasized on patrilineal ownership of children, and only married men could take part in politics. A clan elder in Salama remarked that,

“At no point does a child belong to a mother. All children belonged to men. This explains why even after divorce, the children could always remain with their fathers” (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016)

Despite the fact that the community was patriarchal in nature, it is important to note that, women had important roles to play in the society among the Nubians. In a focus group discussion with Nubian women traders in Mjini slums, participants revealed that, women played roles like giving birth, babysitting, cooking and taking care of the family while the husband was away. The participants further noted that these roles were very important because they all centered at taking care of life which according to them is
sacred and God given hence respect to women was upheld (Women traders, F.G.D, 6/09/2016). In regard to this, one sheikh in Mjini slums noted that;

“We value women so much since, they are camels of life”. (Ishmael, O.I, 27/08/2016)

This statement agrees with Burite (2008) who points out that women traditionally and in the 21st century, occupied an important place in the Nubian society. In ancient Nubian kingdoms, queens led the soldiers to battle. In the 21st century, women especially expectant ones got special attention for example, they were prohibited from wandering in the dark because of the evil eyes or ‘Lest enasheta umile’ which causes a mishap (Namaswa, 2015). This statement was a demonstration that despite the fact that Nubians regarded women as weak compared to men, they had a great value of respect attached to their women.

Polygamous marriage was common with the Nubians using the Islam religion to justify this. Normally, one would marry up to four wives if at all they had the ability. A sheikh in an oral interview in Mjini Slum noted that, marrying more than one wife was not bad so long as the man was able to cater for their physical, and emotion needs in a satisfactory manner. He further added that, even the prophet Mohamed had more than one wife, thus polygamy is rooted within the very fabric of Islam religion. However, the first wife played a role in deciding whether the husband should marry another wife. Normally she had to be consulted and she was the one who took the marriage proposal to the ladies’ family (Ishmael, O.I, 27/08/2016). An oral source in Salama further revealed that, it was the first wife who accompanied the husband to the market to buy clothes. Moreover, other essentials that the other wives needed
(Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016). All the other subsequent wives were under the control of the first wife.

One clan elder in Kibra Ndovu noted that although polygamous marriages existed, the process and wife consultation had changed. He remarked that:

“We normally do it secretly and introduce them to our wives after begetting children because our first wives do not want us to have many wives. (Mohammed, O.I, 29/08/2016).

In a nutshell, it can be argued that polygamy was part and parcel of the Nubian community. However, it should be noted that the Nubian polygamy was not rooted in the community’s customs but in the Islamic religion.

In the initiation rites of passage, a respondent from Mjini slum pointed out that, traditionally, the Nubians circumcised their ladies as a rite of passage from being a girl to being a woman (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). In a focus group discussion in Mjini Slums with elderly women from the Nubian community in Kibra Ndovu village, remarked that;

“Going through circumcision was not only a sign of transition from childhood to womanhood but also it was a way that was used to ensure, that tradition was being followed and that girls’ sex drive and preventing them from being prostitutes. Not being circumcised meant that one would face dire consequences like never getting married, little dowry, or no dowry at all” (Elderly women, FGD, 6/09/2016).

These remarks agrees with scholars who note that, in the traditional African society, ladies were expected to be circumcised as a rite of passage from childhood to womanhood, to reduce the girls’ sex drive and also to prevent them from becoming prostitutes (Boseley, 2016). WHO (2016) echo the same remarks, noting that female circumcision was driven by sexual behaviors, which were mainly the belief in virginity and chastity. Further, scholars have argued that practitioners of female circumcision view it as an
integral part of their cultural and ethnic identity, and some perceive it as a religious obligation (Althaus, 1997). However, for the Nubians another important driver of female circumcision was the notion that it was found in the Koran thus a religious command (Smedt, 2011).

According to Smedt (2011), female circumcision among the Nubians is referred to as Taaru and this was the procedure that involved the total or partial removal of the external female genitalia. The author further notes that female circumcision among the Nubians was introduced when the Nubians were slaves in Egypt. This was when they were part of the Egyptian army. However, it should be noted that none of the southern Sudanese practiced female circumcision but northern Sudan and Egypt had long history of circumcision.

An oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu revealed that Nubians practiced circumcision because it was their culture and is a religious command (Ishmael, O.I, 29/08/2016). This agrees with Johnson (2009) who notes that the Nubians incorporated the practice into their culture and they still maintained it even after they moved to Kenya and Uganda. In the female circumcision, it was the grandmothers who decided when it was right for their daughters to be ‘cut’ when they were between six to ten years (Smedt, 2011). A midwife arranged when to do the cut which was very early in the morning and the girls did not know in advance what was going to happen. A key informant interviewee with an old Nubian widow in Salama village revealed that:

“When I was being circumcised as a young girl, a group of women held both my legs and hands so that I would not move while the
cutting was being done. Later on, my legs were tied together for a whole week so that the wound would heal without movement. This was the worst moment I have ever had in my life” (Kendi, K.I.I, 1/09/2016).

The following remarks agree with Smedt (2011) who noted that during circumcision women would hold the girl and the legs while the cut was being done. The cut involved the total removal of the *labia minora* and *majora* as well as the tip of the clitoris. The author further notes that there was no stitching of the wound since the midwife would apply a paste of fermented flour or even ground coffee to stop bleeding and reduce infection. Then, the legs would be tied together for several days until the wound had healed (Johnson, 2009)

An oral source in Salama revealed that after the cut, the girls were put under seclusion for some days (Haggai, O.I, 30/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that seclusion were exercised so that the girls can be quite and obedient. Those remarks agree with a key informant interviewee in Kibra Ndovu who notes that during seclusion they were trained on being good wives (Ahmed, K.I.I, 1/09/2016).

There was also the organization of a party with food and drinks and family, friends and neighbors were invited. Gifts were presented to the girl. It is important to note that circumcision was just a step towards marriageability of the girls since they were only 6-12 years of age. Further, a focus group discussion in Salama village revealed that uncircumcised girls could not be married since no wedding would take place (Elderly Nubian men, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with other scholars who notes that only circumcised ladies were eligible for marriage (Smedt, 2011).
For the boy circumcision, the practice still continued. A key informant interview with an imam in Salama village revealed that normally the Nubian male circumcision was based on the religious belief that Abraham was ordered to circumcise all male members of his household on the 8th day as it is written in Genesis 17:23 (Aliyu, K.I.I, 2/09/2016). Accordingly, the Nubians circumcised their boys as early as the age of one month. This concurs with Namaswa, (2015) who notes that Nubian boys were usually circumcised when they are weeks, months or even 3 years old.

In burial ceremonies, the Nubians bury their dead within 24 hours because of the Islamic law. A key informant interview with an elderly Nubian man in Salama revealed that the graves differed according to genders, and that from the physical look of the grave, one could tell a female grave and a male grave(Ahmed, K.I.I, 1/09/2016). This agrees with Thomas (2015) who notes that, the graves of the males differ from those of the female. Men graves were left bare mounds of earth whereas for the women have small tree, flower or shrubs in the middle of the mound. Furthermore, women do not attend burials but could visit afterwards. All these aspects are rooted in the Islamic religion. In a nutshell, the Nubian community culture is more rooted in Islam. Every aspect of their daily life, be it marriage, initiation rites, dress code, and food, their explanation were found in the Quran or from Mohamed’s hadiths.

In matters pertaining education, religious education was very important to the Nubians since it taught them the way of life through learning the Islamic law. However, secular education in the past was not considered as important. An oral interview with a clan elder in Salama noted that;
“Education of this world only benefits one in this world whereas education about God serves one even after he or she dies” (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016).

The remarks agree with Smedt (2011) who notes that Nubians avoided the secular education because of fear of influence by Christianity. Therefore, boys spent their time roaming Mjini slums and they participated in dholuka dances. Smedt (2009) further notes that the only education the Nubians received was the informal education. For the girls, they were kept secluded inside their homes where they were trained how to be good wives, learning how to make handcrafts like the food covers and how to cook the traditional food. The author further notes that for the boys, they were taught how to be good soldiers and during the Second World War, they were expected to join the army when they reached adolescent (Namaswa, 2015).

2.5.2 Economic activities of the Nubians

Nubians carried out both subsistence and commercial activities. An oral interview with an elderly Nubian man in Salama revealed that Nubians practiced farming of different kinds of crops and they also kept different types of animals like cattle and goats in their small farms (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016). This agrees with the Horn of Africa (2013) which notes that Nubians practiced subsistence activities and agriculture was the basis of Nubian economy, especially, in their small farms allocated to them by the British. They also grazed cattle, sheep and goats. The author further notes that in the 21st century, the Nubian men practiced blacksmithing, carpentry and hair shaving to the non-Nubians. Moreover, Nubians did petty jobs like security guards and shop keeping in the small shops they have in town. Baskets of Africa (2011) further notes that Nubian women sold their traditional baskets to the local
communities. In one way, they got profit but also they were able to preserve their native culture through basket weaving. This baskets were made from papyrus stalks on the inside and palm leaves on the outside.

An elderly Nubian woman in Mjini slums interviewed pointed out that, in terms of meals the Nubians had several food stuffs, such include; *Vitumbua, Kisira, Goruka* and *Bumia*. Other meals included *Anjera* and *Gurusa* which they sell to the local communities (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Namaswa (2015) who notes that *Kisira* is a meal that is made from maize and wheat flour combined with fermented simsim paste. He further notes that *Gurusa* is also known as *Anjera*, which is a flat baked bread. Another type of food among the Nubians is the *lebere*, this shows that in a way the Nubian meals were more a kin to those of the Swahili people.

An oral interview with an elderly Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu, it was revealed that it was the Nubian who introduced gin (Changaa) in Kenya (Mohammed, O.I 29/08/2016). This agrees with (Smedt 2011), who notes the Nubians were the main producers of gin in Kibra, something that led to high crime rates due to drunkenness of very many people in Kibra forcing the government to think of restructuring the region in an orderly manner. In addition, Kohli (2014) notes that without land, and special skills Nubians became petty traders. For example, they would set up stores near cotton collection centers, and urban areas where they sold beer and distilled gin (*enguli*).

In addition, every Nubian family brew the gin regardless of religious status because they were jobless, and thus had to do it. The author further notes that, even in cases where the husband were against gin brewing in the households,
the woman could do it strongly (Smedt, 2011). The same views are echoed by Namaswa (2015) who notes that the women were the ones who would make the Nubian gin or Arak among the Nubians. Scholars have noted that, gin brewing made the Nubians rich. An oral source revealed that in 1930s and 1940s, everybody was rich to gin brewing in the Nubian village.

2.5.3 Political activities of the Nubians

An oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu revealed that in the domestic sphere, the man were the head of the family and the woman was supposed to obey him (Ishmael, O.I 29/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2009) who notes that men dominated the Nubi community and they used the strict military discipline to rule the community whereas the women were expected to be quiet, obedient and confined to the homestead. Therefore, the Nubian community was patriarchal in nature.

The Nubians have a council of elders known as the Kenya Nubian Council of elders and its chairperson was known as Issa Abdul Faraj (Johnson, 2009). This council helped to solve the community’s problems perhaps starting with the ongoing portrayal of Nubians as outsiders. An oral interview with a Nubian elder in Kibra Ndovu noted that:

“The Nubian council of elders was and is still an important part in the Nubian community because it maintains law and order. It also helps the community to retain their identity through socializing the younger generation on their values, meals, taboos and morals of the community (Mohammed, O.I 29/08/2016)

The following remarks agree with Horn of Africa, (2013) which notes that the council tried to maintain the legacy of the Arabic language among the Nubians. In the colonial period, all the Nubians had to understand the Arabic
language and all instructions were given using the Arabic writing known as *kinubi*. The author further notes that this legacy still lives on which is an important part in retaining the groups cultural identity.

2.6 From Soldiers and Immigrants to Residents (1945-1963).

It is significant to note that before they settled in Meru, the Nubians had to undergo a series of challenges and struggles. A clan elder in a key informant interview in Kibra Ndovu noted that:

“Settling here in Meru was not an easy task. Getting the land to put a structure was just by grace. We were foreigners and the land belonged to the government that never recognized us. We suffered for a long time before the government could allow us to reside within this Nubian village. One had to make several applications before one was given an opportunity (Sayid, K.I.I, 2/09/2016).

These remarks were echoed by another Meru resident who noted that the Nubians lived under terrible conditions before they got their villages at Salama and Kibra Ndovu. All the same, the land was still not permanently theirs. This agrees with an archival source that reveals that in 1956 a Nubian woman was denied an opportunity to build a house in the Mjini village by the Meru local board (LND.16/6/4). Similarly, in a letter dated 22/10/1955, a Nubian man was pleading to be given space in the Swahili villages in Meru because the government had destroyed his house and had stayed in Isiolo since his childhood. However, like several other request his plead was all in vain, as the Meru land council remain to its principle that there were no more space to allocate other people except for the natives.

In Meru, the Nubians settled behind the Meru hospital. Although majority did not know why the area was chosen, a few old people in the Salama village
noted that this was the only place where there was public land, which was not occupied, (Nubian residents, F.G.D, 4/09/2016). However, with the expansion of Meru Hospital, and the construction of Meru KMTC, these Nubians again were forced to relocate.

Archival source revealed that due to the intention of expanding the Native Civil Hospital which today is referred to as Meru hospital in 1946, the Nubian villages had to be moved and those occupying the plot were to be compensated for disturbance and allocated to Kibra Ndovu (LND. 34/2/2/LV/7A). The information from the source agrees with majority of respondents who noted that unlike during the colonial time when the colonial master never gave the Nubians an official place to construct houses, the Kenyan government constructed houses at Kibra Ndovu and Salama where these Nubians were relocated.

Each family was granted a one big mud house which could accommodate the entire family (Residents of Kibra Ndovu, FGD, 5/09/2016). The same remarks were echoed by another archival source which notes that the ex-soldiers living around the hospital were compensated two hundred Kenyan shillings each for land taken due to the expansion of the Native Civil hospital. These houses later on came to be referred to as Nubian villages known as Kibra Ndovu (LND 175/29/46). The remarks concurs with the researchers’ observation during the study as indicated in figure 1 in Appendix three which were makeshifts each with four rooms.

As result of the expansion of the Meru hospital, there was difficulty in balancing the interests of the Nubians and the Ameru people welfare (LND
7/110/16/05/1946). This therefore implies that the interests of the local people had to be taken in first at the expense of the Nubians.

Sources consulted revealed that by 1950s the local people wanted to take advantage of the new Nubian villages by changing their names to Nubian names to get plots at Kibra Ndovu. For instance, according to a letter dated 2/11/1954, a Kamba man changed his name to Hamisi in order to secure a place in the Nubian village.

Despite the fact that they had been settled in the new Nubian village, the Nubians were not granted an opportunity to conduct businesses like hotels ownership, shoe shops, and butcheries. Many of them who applied for the permit to operate their business were denied an opportunity while some trade license request took over a year to be replied (LND/16/6/4). The main reason for not being granted the opportunities is because they were viewed by the rest of the people in the region as foreigners who could not be given the opportunities at the expense of the residents in Meru.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explain the Nubian origin and settlement in Kenya but more particularly in Meru County. It was noted that the Nubians are among the minority group in Kenya who were never been recognized as an official group even in Kenya’s census records. It was established that at first the Nubians originated from South Sudan and entered Egypt as slaves from where they were recruited as armies by Sir Fredrick Lugard. From Egypt these group moved to eats Africa as KAR soldiers.
The chapter also revealed there were four main explanations about the origin of Nubians in Meru. One explanation hold that group that argue that they came from Uganda as soldiers under the command of Lugard, a British commissioner during World War I. We designated this as the Ugandan soldiers’ version. The other explanation holds that the Nubian in Meru came from Sudan as war refugees, through trade and search of greener pastures only to remain in Kenya up to date. We called this explanation, the Sudanese immigrants’ version. The third explanation had it that the Nubians in Meru were soldiers in Somali when the British controlled the Jubaland up to 1925 when the ceded the colony to Italian. From Jubaland these KAR soldiers from Jubaland later settled in various towns in Kenya including Meru. The fourth explanation had it that Nubians in Kenya also came from Tanzania where they came to look for a better place to live at and look for jobs in Kenya.

However, the explanation that noted that the Nubians came from Sudan was mainly used because Sudan was their ancestral homeland thus the researcher decided to settle on this as the main origin. However, given the idea that others came from Uganda and Somali we concluded that majority of the Nubians came from Sudan. However, a few trace their origin directly from Uganda while others came from Somalia through Egypt. However, upon reaching Kenya the three groups joined and lived in Nubian villages. Thus, one can conclude that the Nubians in Meru are a mixture of Nubians who came from Sudan and entered Kenya through Uganda, Somalia and South Sudan.
It was also established that once in Meru, the Nubians settled around Meru hospital, the then Meru Native Civil hospital. However, due to the need to expand the hospital the community was relocated to a new Nubian village in Kibra Ndovu. It is vital to note that not all Nubians were able to secure space in the Nubian villages since priority was given to the ex-soldiers. Therefore, it implies that getting a plot within the village was a struggle as indicated by the consulted sources.

It was also noted that the Nubians as a community had their own distinct culture. The culture entailed aspects like marriage patterns, initiation rites, meals, dress code, music and dance. Findings in this chapter revealed that in the period 1963-mid 1980s, the Nubian culture was still intact something that accelerated their discrimination socially, politically and economically in Kenya.

In a nutshell, the settlement of the Nubians in Meru was marked by struggle and miserly. Both the local people and the government were not sincerely welcoming to the visitors who had decided to settle in the region. However, despite all odds, this community could later on settle and interact with their host (Ameru) in different ways, as it will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 NUBIAN-AMERU SOCIAL ECONOMIC INTERACTION AT INDEPENDENCE: 1964–1978

3.1 Introduction

Ideally, no community can live in isolation or exist in a vacuum; each community in the globe is a node in the social network. This is what the proponents of the social network theory suggest. As communities migrate and settle in different regions and places they in one way or another interact with other communities. In this regard, the social network theory suggests that the forms of interaction form a strand in the social network. With this in mind, it is of significance to examine how the Nubians interacted with the Ameru upon their settlement in Meru. We therefore proceed to ask questions for instance, in which ways did the Nubians interact with the Ameru in 1964 – 1978? In addition, this chapter addressed the general expectations of the Nubians after independence.

3.2 Independence in Kenya

The acceleration of independence in Kenya began in the 1950s with the Mau Mau rebellion, which was a militant African nationalist group that opposed colonial rule and exploitation of the native population (Karanja, 1966). To the Kenyans, independence meant hope of a new life and better living standards but to the Nubians this was a different case. In an oral interview with a Nubian elder in Mjini slums, it was revealed that independence to the Nubians had different meanings to the older generation and to the new generation. To the older generation they had hopes that their loyalty to the white man would help
them to have a good position as a community in the Kenyan society even after independence. To the younger generation, independence meant new life that did not involve working for the Europeans or even showing loyalty to them (Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016). These ideas concur with Atieno-Odhiambo (1977) who notes that decolonization to the Nubians meant pulling their loyalties in two directions where one was establishing themselves as Kenyans in political terms and not only in military terms. Balaton-Chrimess (2015), further notes that pulling their loyalties in two directions, brought contrary opinions among the community where the older generation held on to the relationship they had with the British because of the military history they had with them and also because they wanted to preserve their privilege and rights they had in the British colony.

The scholar further notes that this older generation did not want to be treated like other Africans since they even preferred to pay non-native tax rather than paying indigenous native tax like the rest of the Africans. In an oral interview with a Nubian youth, revealed that:

“My grandfather used to refer himself as a Sudanese rather than a Nubian. This is because he insisted that his forefather came from Sudan and therefore he was not a Kenyan” (Marjan, O.I, 30/08/2016).

This remark agrees with Clark(1971) who notes that before independence the older generation used to refer to themselves as Nubians since they had this ideology that after independence they would be sent back to their native land Sudan. Scholars further note that this generation even made effort not to be associated with the Mau Mau movement or even the nationalist groups that were emerging at the time. All this they did so to prove their loyalty to the
British (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015). This shows that their attachment to the British was only an option that this older generation had as a guarantee for a place to stay and continue to live with their families.

Clark (1971) notes that this was not the case to the younger generation, who were beginning to identify themselves as Africans who wanted independence from the Europeans. In a key informant interview with one Nubian clan elder in Salama revealed that:

“We do not know our ancestral land in Sudan because our forefathers were fighting under the British throughout East Africa. This made us to lose touch with the country of our origin entirely. Therefore today, if the Kenyan government would tell us to go back to our native land, Sudan, we would be strangers” (Mohamud, K.I.I 30/08/2016).

The following remarks agree with scholars who note that prior to independence, the Nubian younger generation started to refer to themselves as Nubians rather than Sudanese because they saw the need to establish an identity that would lead to harmonious relations with other Kenyans after independence since they could not go back to their ancestral land, Sudan. Furthermore, they had lost touch with the country, they had nowhere to go, Kenya was the only home they knew and they had established deep ties to Kenya (Clark, 1971; Balaton-Chrimes, 2015).

3.2 The Kenyatta Regime Political Context (1964-1978)

Upon Kenya gaining independence in December 12, 1963 after a long intensive contest between the African nationalist and the British colonialists, the Nubians still remained not sure of their position in Kenya despite the fact that they had established a home in Kenya (Smedt, 2011). The scholar points out that this is because the British left in a hurry and they did not resolve their
status as a community. They were not also offered title deeds for the land given to them, therefore their status remained tenuous. After independence, Kenyatta became the president and his era was characterized by stability and economic progress in Kenya which was achieved through centralized and an authoritarian state (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015). The author further notes that president Kenyatta had inherited a country that had never been cohesive but was divided along ethnic lines through the structure of provincial administration. To solve the problem, Kenyatta chose to use certain patterns of social, economic and political hierarchy that had been used during colonialism for example ethicized patrimonial networks (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015; Smedt, 2011).

During the Kenyatta era, grievances that Kenya face in the 21st century started to occur for example ethnic conflict, unequal distribution of land and inequitable development between ethnic groups. Balaton-Chrimes (2015) further asserts that there was the introduction of land policies to restructure land ownership along ethnic lines and reward the elites that were loyal to the president with large tracks of farmland. Despite all this negative factors that occurred during this era, there were also positive aspects that occurred like stability and economic progress. Hornsby, (2013) is emphatic that in the 1960s, Kenya’s GDP grew by 6% annually and it was contributed by a combination of commercial agriculture of crops like tea and coffee and small scale agriculture in the country. Stability in the country was also achieved through having a centralized economic planning which was supported by modeled colonial economic policy and private enterprise(Hornsby,2013). In an key informant interview with a chief in Mjini slums, she articulated that:
“From when I was a youth, I can say that president Kenyatta’s era was when us Kenyans saw and received real change in this country compared with other eras of other presidents because there was economic growth and also the Kenyan currency was very valuable at the time”(Kelly, K.I.I, 27/08/2016).

This concurs with Hornsby (2013) who asserts that among the ordinary Kenyans, Kenyatta’s era was a period when they experienced real change with increase in income and easy access of education. Furthermore, the Kenyan currency was very valuable and this shows that many commodities were being sold at a cheaper price compared to today.

To the Nubians, these time was characterized by rapid decline in status and lifestyle. This is because they were not well positioned or even equipped to handle the political landscape in the country (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015). In furtherance, they were lost without their former military power and they did not know how to proceed or even how to fight for their rights as a community. Their military history, colonial loyalties and their small population worked against them since they did not have much political influence and this reinforced their stranger status. In a nutshell, Atieno-Odhiambo (1977) points out that Nubian position in Kenya during this era was characterized by invisibility on multiple fronts. As a community, they did not experience tension around land that was happening in other parts of the country like in the Rift Valley province and they did not suffer landlessness like the Kikuyus who lived in that province.

Even though the community did not receive any exclusion from the country and its resources, their invisibility in the town and assumption that urban areas were not sites of ethnic contest but they were in government lands meant that the Nubians assumption that land given by the white man was theirs was
never to be the case. Therefore, this shows that Nubians were not immune to the culture that land is a patronage resource that was created during this Kenyatta era (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015).

In Meru County, Kubai (1995) asserts that even though the Nubian village was never moved from the site given by the Europeans or given out to other ethnic groups, it later became part of a growing town. What happened was that Nubian settlement was shrinking day by day to give room to the expansion of Meru hospital and the influx flow of the Ameru people in Mjini slums. These remarks are also echoed by a Nubian elder in Salama who notes that:

“When Kenyatta was the president, there was land grabbing by the Ameru people in Mjini slums because at this place they could do business. Moreover, there was the expansion of the Meru hospital which made the Nubian people to be moved to Kibra Ndovu” (Mohamud, K.I.I, 30/08/2016).

This agrees with an archival source which notes due to the intention of the government to expand the Native civil Hospital which today is the Meru hospital, the Nubian village was moved and those occupying the plots were compensated for disturbances and they be allocated to Kibra Ndovu (LND.34/2/2/LV/7A). These also concurs with Kubai (1995) who asserts that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was the expansion of the Meru hospital and construction of a medical school wing that led to the displacement of the Nubians who occupied the area. These Nubians were settled in Kibra Ndovu, which was just a row of eleven houses just below the hospital. The scholar further notes that the hospital today occupies the greater part of Mjini slums with Salama and Kibra Ndovu being on either side, with a tall wing of hospital training school and flats towering menacingly over the
rusty tiny roofs are now the legacy of the one thriving Nubian settlement (Kubai, 1995).

3.3 Nubian Interaction with the Ameru during the Kenyatta regime

The focus of this study was to examine the Nubian-Ameru relations in Meru County. Accordingly, having discussed the Nubian culture it was important to look at how this community related with the Ameru who were the original inhabitants of Meru County in large numbers.

An oral interview revealed that the Nubians and the Ameru interacted both socially, economically and politically in the period 1963 to 1978. In this section, we discuss the various forms of interactions between these two communities as follows:

3.3.1 Changing female circumcision among the Nubians

During the Kenyatta era, female circumcision among the Nubians still took place due to the strong social pressure that was in Mjini slums. An oral source in Salama noted that in the 1970s some girls did not go through the cut when they were young but still had to undergo the cut before getting married. Furthermore, those who did not undergo the cut even after marriage, their state would be discovered when giving birth (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016). This concurs with Smedt (2011) who notes that girls who did not undergo the cut even after marriage would be discovered during birth and this would lead to the women being circumcised by force. This was because after marriage some men did not denounce their newly wedded wives for not being circumcised maybe because they did not realize it or even they did not care.
A focus group discussion in Salama village revealed that during this Kenyatta era, the severity of the female circumcision was changing because of Christianity and westernization which was gradually eroding the practice (Elderly Nubian men, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that the severity of the female circumcision procedure during this period was gradually changing to merely an incision of the tip of the clitoris. Furthermore, it was being carried out in clinics rather than at home. An oral interview in Salama revealed that the Nubian girls viewed circumcision as a rule and an uncircumcised girl could not be married (Abdi, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt, (2011) who notes that the main reason for not getting lead of Taaru among the Nubians was to reduce the girls’ sex drive, prevent them from becoming prostitutes and it was because it’s a religious command in the Islamic religion.

3.3.2 Intermarriage between the Nubians and the Ameru

Marriage is one of the most respectable traditional African institutions where a man and a woman join to live together in patriarchal societies. An oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu and a good number of studies revealed that it was the woman who left her home to join the husband thus the idea of patriarchal residence not only among the Nubians as previously discussed but also in the entire patriarchal societies (Ishmael, O.I., 29/08/2016). A focus group discussion at Mjini slums noted that the Ameru and Nubians have married each other in large numbers (Residents of Mjini slums, FGD, 6/09/2016). These remarks were also echoed by a key informant interviewee who works in Meru hospital who noted that the two communities
were more of in-laws since they have married each other in large numbers (Wanjiru, K.I.I., 3/09/2016).

However, given the fact that Nubians belong to the Islamic religion, cases of Islam Christian unions are witnessed in Mjini slums. Nevertheless, the decision to convert either to Islam or to Christianity depended on the two couples in love. An oral interview respondent with Nubian lady in Salama village noted that in many cases it was the Christians who convert to Islam (Haggai, O.I, 30/08/2016). This was in agreement by the remarks here by a lady at Kibra Ndovu who noted that

“If you fall in love with a Christian, kazi kwako you had to ensure that you have converted him to Islam for you to be allowed to marry him” (Amina, O.I, 28/08/2016).

A key interview with a clan elder at Mjini slums also revealed that it was the Ameru Christians who have changed to Islam due to marriage in large numbers (Abdishakur, K.I.I, 27/08/2016). This idea of converting a Christian to a Muslim before marrying them was rooted in the Islamic religion in Qur’an 2:221 and Al-Ma’ida verse 5 that prohibits marriage between a Muslim lady and a Christian, and although marriage between a Muslim man and Jewish girl was accepted (El Fadi, 2011). These same views are echoed by Saloom (2014) who notes that the holy Quran allows for the Muslim man to marry a woman from among the Jews or non-Muslims as long as the women was chastity. However, it was not right for the Muslim lady to marry from among the Christians since they believe in different prophets from those of Islam.
It was also noted that during this period, there were very many cases the Ameru ladies eloping from their Christian families to join their Nubian lovers were witnessed. This was because many Christian parents hate such unions. In a key informant interview with Ameru lady who married a Nubian man it was revealed that after marrying her Nubian husband, her parents’ disowned her for marrying a Muslim and even dowry was never been accepted (Kirote, K.I.I., 3/09/2016). In a focus group discussion with women from Presbyterian church of East Africa, the participants revealed that they cannot allow their daughters to marry Muslim men. One lady remarked that

“It is better for my daughter to marry a pagan than marrying a Muslim who preach contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ” (Wanjiru, K.I.I, 3/09/2016)

However, there were those who had no problem with their daughters marrying Muslims so long as the family was united in love and service of God.

The entire argument Christians marrying Muslims is rooted in the biblical scriptures in 2Corinthian 6:14-18 which considered Muslims non-believers who do not accept Jesus Christ as lord (Jenifer, 2016). Further, some Christian scholars have urged that as much as there is no specific scripture that talks about Muslims – Christian marriages in the Bible, the same bible prohibit Christians from marrying non-Christian since they have two different ideas about their prophets. For instance, Christians believe that Muslims are already condemned people since they have not believed and confessed that Jesus is lord as commanded by Apostle Paul (James, 2004).

In cases where such Christian-Muslim marriages have taken place, normally the children who were born in that marriage are named using Islam and the
Ameru names. A focus group discussion in Meru town revealed that child naming in such a marriage entailed both the Ameru and Swahili names. The Nubians dropped their Nubian names due to assimilation into the Ameru culture and discrimination during acquisition of national identification cards in Meru County (Ameru men, FGD, 6/09/2016). They adapted Ameru names to make the acquisition process much easier thus; it was difficult to make use of their cultural names. This agrees with Ruvaga (2015) who notes that during the 1980s going to acquire national IDs required one to have many documents that proved that one was a Kenyan citizen. The documents included birth certificates and national identification cards from great grandfathers.

In this way then, it was revealed that the naming of children was not based on the notion of equality in the family but to benefit the Nubians in their daily operation in the community and also in their acquisition of identity in the region. Accordingly, one can argue that the Nubians marrying Christians was not by choice but because it was necessary in order to have a sense of belonging in their new land for the both.

3.3.3 Cultural Exchange between the Nubians and the Ameru

Being residents of Meru, the Nubians also exchanged aspects of their culture with the Ameru and vice versa. These communities influenced each other in terms of dress code, dance and even language use. A key informant interview with a Sheikh in Kibra Ndovu village revealed that whenever the Ameru had cultural events like dances, the Nubians attended in large numbers (Mursal, K.I.I, 2/09/2016). Likewise, a focus group discussion at Salama village revealed that the Ameru attended the Nubian cultural dance in large numbers.
A participant in the discussion noted that if the Nubians had a wedding event they would invite their Ameru neighbors and vice versa to help them in preparation and cooking. This invitation and attendance was based on friendship (Nubian residents, FGD, 4/09/2016). This concurs with Kubai (1995) who articulates that in Meru, educated people had no problem in interacting with Nubians due to religious issues since religion is a personal issue between an individual and God. In this regard, an elderly lady in Mjini slum remarked:

“It is not good to cut relations with family and friends upon converting to Islam. This is because religious differences should not be used to hurt our neighbors” (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016)

However, Kubai (1995) notes that the older generation tended to stick and relate with their fellow Muslims or fellow Christians compared to the younger generation of 1990s who were not confined to religious boundaries.

A focus group discussion in Mjini slum, revealed that men were more open to friendship with both Nubians and non-Nubians due to their position in public sphere while women were confined into domestic sphere. Additionally, it was revealed that at times men prohibited their Nubian wives from attending cultural events of their non-Muslim Ameru friends (Residents of Mjini slums, FGD, 6/09/2016). This was based on the idea that the Christians could influence them in negative ways. This agrees with Kubai (1995) who notes that as far as interaction between the Ameru and the Nubian Muslims is concerned, the men were more into friendship with other people regardless of their religion and ethnic group. The author notes that in Meru, the Nubian men were not comfortable with their Muslim wives visiting Christian friends and
attending their events, especially at night. Accordingly, many prohibited their wives from attending such visits.

Interaction between these communities led to intensive borrowing from each other in various aspects like food, way of dressing, and songs. An oral source in Salama village revealed that such borrowing explained why the traditional Nubians dance is changing so much. She further noted that due to this interaction, the Ameru borrowed the Nubian dress code, meals and way of speaking (Haggai, O.I, 30/08/2016).

In regard to the cultural events, a clan elder at Mjini slums noted that the construction of Mjini social hall was driven by the desire for the two communities to interact with one another and live together in harmony (Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016). However, an oral interview with a Nubian lady at Mjini Slum revealed that in cases where Nubians wanted to have typical Nubian dances, they would go to Kibra or even Isiolo and join their Nubian brothers and sisters.

The participants revealed that such a move was because the dances needed a lot of finances to organize yet they were not all that financially stable to fund the events like their Nubian counterparts in places like Isiolo, Kibra and Uganda. This explains why Nubians could travel as far as Uganda in order to feel the real Nubian dance (Hadija, O.I, 30/08/2016). This concurs with Thomas (2015) who notes that Nubian communities in Kenya, Uganda and Sudan held annual festivals so that they would be able to be like real Nubians. For instance, in 2014, the festival was held in Kenya but more particularly in Kibra Primary School.
A sheikh in Mjini slums in an oral interview noted that if given a chance and supported financially, through economic empowerment of the community, the Nubians could be in a position to organize their dances and invite their friends in other regions to Meru. He remarked:

“Sasa hata tukiwaalika waje kwenye sherehe za kinubi, watalala wapi, watakula nini na tutachezea ngoma wapi maanake ukumbi wetu u mdogo? Translated to: Even if we invite them Nubian festivals, where will they sleep, what will they eat and what kind of food will they eat since our community hall is so small?” (Ishmael, O.I, 27/08/2016)

His remarks were an indication that the Nubian community in Meru could wish to host such Nubian dances but they were limited in terms of space, food and accommodation for their visitors. The fact that at times they would go outside Meru to attend Nubian dances, this is an indication that not all Nubian dances were attended by the Ameru. Accordingly, one can argue that the attendance of Nubian cultural dances by the Ameru was selective in nature. This agrees with the resilience theory, which holds one community adopts only some aspects of another community’s culture and not the entire culture (Ritter, 1985).

In terms of food, a focus group discussion in Meru town revealed that Meru residents really liked the Nubian foods especially, mandazi and bacha and pilau. They noted that the meals were very delicious and cooked in such a nice way. The participants further noted that the delicious nature of Nubian meals explains why the Ameru women embraced the cooking of pilau and Bhajia even for sale. On their part, it was revealed that Nubians also had a taste to the Ameru foods especially vegetables. Nubian ladies interview noted that the Ameru traditional vegetables are nice, especially when served with Ugali. They also noted that the vegetables were of nutritional value, especially
for their young children who cannot take *mandazi* and Bhajia (Residents in Meru town, FGD, 3/09/2016). With this, it was then vital to note that in terms of meals the Nubian meals were well liked by the Ameru too.

### 3.3.4 Trade between the Nubians and the Ameru

The main form of interaction among communities in Meru County was through trade. Since the arrival of the Nubians in Kenya and even after the gaining of the Kenyan independence, the Nubians did not have any other form of employment that could help them earn living. This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that without Nation identification cards the Nubian did not secure jobs or receive government services. In this state, a focus group discussion in Salama revealed that the Nubians in Meru were mainly traders. It is through this commerce of buying and selling that the two communities had immense associations and interaction. The same views were echoed by participants in a focus group discussion at Kibra Ndovu who noted that Nubians engaged in the Miraa business which was normally a hobby to them. In this regard it was also noted that most Nubian men liked chewing Miraa thus at times they were frequent customers in Meru shops selling Miraa (Residents of Kibra Ndovu, FGD, 5/09/2016).

It was also noted that Nubian ladies engaged in food selling business. Food that they sold included snacks like *vitumbua, viazi karai, Andazi, Bhajia* among others. These was accompanied with special type of pepper. An oral interview with Ameru man in Meru hospital noted that

“*We like the way the Nubians prepare their Bhajia, it is so sweet and I cannot afford to miss some a day*” (Mwongera, O.I, 31/08/2016).
The same remarks were echoed by a doctor at Meru Hospital who noted that the Nubian snacks were so sweet such that she had to at least buy them everyday. It is important to note that most of the Nubians food (snacks) were also sold in the evening with many traders attributing this to sleeping during the day. In relation to this, a clan elder at Mjini slums noted that police patrols in the region were stopped, since the residents claimed that their businesses were affected by such a patrol. The Mjini residents had to choose their own youths to offer the security.

Other Nubians settled with hotel business in Mjini slums. It was noted that the largest hotel in the area belonged to a Nubian. This hotel was a central place where most of the Ameru and Nubian men and youths (Male) normally met to have chats, and students from Meru KMTC go for lunch.

However, open society foundation (2010) notes that, Nubians do practice trade but they did not expand their businesses like other ethnic groups like the Ameru, and Indians who own large businesses. This was mainly because the Nubians were not given short loans to start businesses due to lack of collateral like title deeds, and identification cards, while their counterparts like the Indians were given owing to the fact that they had identification cards, and title deeds.

Again, although many noted the acquisition of trade licenses as a problem in Mjini slums, a clan elder in Salama noted that it was not a problem. It was only that many people do not want to follow the legal procedures in opening business (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016). These remarks were opposed by the views of a Nubian roadside vegetable seller who alleged that the police were ever
chasing them out of business simply because they were Nubians. In this regard, a focus group discussion in Salama noted that the police chased anybody without a business permit regardless of the ethnic group. This then rendered the Nubian discrimination in business as just an allegation without any foundation. Ibrahim Gitonga a hotel operator agreed to this by noting that it only took a short period for him to get a business license and that he never experienced a problem during the process of obtaining the license (Nubian residents, FGD, 4/09/2016).

Groceries were other areas where those two communities interacted as well as in shop keeping. A Nubian lady who had a shop behind the Meru Hospital remarked that most of the many faithful and frequent customers were Ameru. These remarks were also echoed by a lady business seller who noted that her frequent vegetable buyers were Ameru.

In relation to this, it was revealed that economically in farming, the Nubians kept the same crops and livestock as the Ameru. Such crops include; sweet potatoes, traditional vegetables, maize, and animals like cattle, cats, sheep, goats etc. However, an oral source revealed that majority of Nubians did not engage in farming activities because of limited farming land. With scarce land, some Nubians were forced to hire land from the locals; Ameru, for some time to practice agriculture. The sheikh in Mjini slum noted that, his family had hired a land at Tigania where they grew maize, Miraa, sweet potatoes, and macadamia. In their small kitchen gardens, the Nubians grew vegetables (Ishmael, O.I, 27/08/2016).
However, cases of Nubians growing Miraa was not revealed. A focus group discussion in Kibra Ndovu attributed this to the fact that Miraa is more of a cash crop and the Nubians had less land to grow Miraa thus they opted to farm food crops. The researcher’s observations revealed that the Nubians grew vegetables like terere, black night, spider flowers among others in their small kitchen gardens (Residents in Kibra Ndovu, FGD, 5/09/2016).

Thriving gin making business was also revealed as another haven for the two communities’ interaction, whereby Nubian women engaged in large numbers, and were the main controllers of the business. Smedt (2011) acknowledges that since time in memorial Nubians were known for the perfect brewing of gin/Changaa, which other communities enjoyed taking arguing that it was made out of perfection and high skills making it unique from other forms of local liquor, and very sweet and tasty. In this regard an oral source with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu revealed that, both Nubian men and Ameru men found themselves in the same ground sharing a common meal and chang’aa (Abdi, O.I, 27/08/2016). This concurs with Smedt (2011) who notes that from 1960s, Nubians benefited from the huge market of alcohol called the Nubian gin that they illicitly distilled. Through this business, they were able to maintain a relatively high standard of living, and interact with almost every community in Kenya through this trade.

Parsons (1997) notes that, in Kenya the Nubians referred to themselves as Sudanese in the colonial era to emphasize their claim to non-native status and military patronage, in which they had the roots of gin brewing. Smedt (2011) further notes that through the Nubian activity of selling gin, they were able to
support their idea of being different and better than other Africans in Kenya. The British also thought the Nubians were ‘a better class Africans’ and even other Africans who interacted with them agreed that Nubians were like ‘wazungu’ (white people) or even better than them. This was because before the 1960s, a Nubian business lady who traded on gin was able to drive a car something which even a wife of a white man had not done. This agrees with a clan elder in Kibra Ndovu who noted that the initial Nubians who entered Kenya regarded themselves as superior. They looked down upon other Africans and they harassed them. However, more importantly is that what made them more superior especially women was their skills and knowledge in gin distillation (Mohammed, O.I, 29/08/2016).

Another form of interaction between the Ameru women and Nubian women was through the women chamas normally known as merry go round. An oral source revealed that these women groups in Mjini slums helped them to buy household items and empower them financially (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Kubai (1995) who notes that interaction through merry go round was used by Nubian women and other locals in their regions in order to get an alternative source of help in buying basic household goods and boosting their business.

For instance in 1984, there was a group of women known as tabligh women group in Mjini slums that not only enabled the Nubian women to come with the Ameru women but also whose agenda was to convert the Ameru non-Muslims into Islam. The author further notes that these women group interacted with women in Igembe in a mission to convert those Christian
women to be Muslims. The main reason that drove this conversion was that the Christian women lacked support and encouragement from their husbands as they could get when they were in the Muslim community.

The Ameru Nubian interaction also took place within the transport system. A taxi driver in Meru town noted that;

“My customers are both Nubians and Ameru. However at times the Nubians are mean in giving out money. They lament a lot about the fare” (Githinji, O.I, 31/08/2016)

Although the remarks ‘were’ more of biased, one thing stands out that the Nubians were part of the Ameru taxi customers and they did interact with the other ethnic groups through transportation systems.

3.5 Nubian participation in Meru County politics

Although the study mainly focused on economic and social relations, as a historian, it is difficult to discuss the two without looking at the political aspect of the relation. This is because in Africa, political power defines, social stratification and economic power and vice versa. In a way, social, economic and political aspects of communities are intertwined. Scholars have noted that at many time, especially in Africa, one cannot separate political relations from social and economic aspects of the society (Bienen and Herbst, 1996). From the ground level, the Nubians had a council of elders and Nubian Rights Forum (NRF), which worked on all aspects of Nubian rights like the issue of rights of land in Kenya. The reason for this was because after independence, the government declared Nubians to be foreigners and it reclaimed all the land that the colonial master had given to them as a reward for their services in the military (Achuka, 2013).
In an FGD with Nubian traders, it was revealed that the political sphere of the Nubians was not bright during this time even though the Nubian community had produced a counselor in Mjini slums. This is because he was not able to secure the Nubian goals on the issues of land (Nubian traders, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that the Nubians did not have a special position in Kenya and they had no leverage with the Kenyan government. Moreover, the Nubian inability to be involved in the patrimonial network that benefited other Kenyans served as an avenue to position the community on the margin of economic opportunities and politics. The author further notes that the repercussion of this problem like many other economic and political dynamic fostered under Kenyatta era became more significant later on and this era only laid the foundation for the Nubian later severe marginalization.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we sought to discuss how the Nubians interacted with Ameru of Meru county 1964-1978. This was the period that Kenya was under the Kenyatta regime. It was also noted that the Nubian residence in Meru County led to cultural exchange between the two communities. Their forms of interaction between the two comminutes include marriage, trade, cultural events like dances, and music, schooling was also noted as a media through which the Ameru and the Nubian interact. The Nubian children attended same primary schools with the Ameru children when the Nubians children were attending the Madrasa. Politically it was noted that even though the Nubians
had not taken political positions in Meru County, they had been part and parcel of the electorate, voting and campaigning for their candidates of choice.

One important aspect emerged through the discussion. At many cases, the Nubian-Ameru relation in the social sphere was biennial for the Nubians as far as getting identity in the region was concerned. However, the economic relations seemed to be symbiotic with each community benefiting from the others. On the political relations, it was established that the Ameru local people used the Nubians as a bridge to garner, political power, hence the discriminatory and more of piecemeal interaction in favor of the Ameru.

It was therefore instructive to note that the Nubians and the Ameru have been the nodes of a larger social network in Meru County that are joined by strands like trade, intermarriage and politics among others. Their existence in the county was not in isolation. It was and still is a vibrant society full of relations, interactions, intra and extra relations. In this regards the social network theory finds its application here where no community can exist in a vacuum. The next chapter provides an overview of the changing relations between the Ameru and the Nubians during President Moi era.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 MOI AND THE CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NUBIANS AND THE AMERU; 1979-2002

4.1 Introduction
Having discussed Nubian entry to Meru, it is of significance to interrogate the changing relations between the Nubians and the Ameru. The researcher therefore pose the following question: what are the factors that informed the changing relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County? This question was discussed according to the social, economic and political factors, and whether their relations was affected during the structural adjustment programs experienced during this era.

4.2 The Moi Regime Political Context (1979-2002)
Upon the death of President Kenyatta in 1978, Daniel arap Moi took over power. At this time, the economy was slow because the benefits of the coffee boom and the support that the government received from the land settlement schemes in the country were running out. Furthermore, the population of Kenya was increasing and also the interest of money borrowed to help the economy to grow were also on the rise (Hornsby, 2013). During this period, President Moi took the centralization of power further than Kenyatta did and he also strengthened the office of the president even further by moving important government functions and ministries like land, defense and settlement into his own office (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015). A key informant interview with an Ameru man noted that:
“Moi became president after Kenyatta died and it was during this period that corruption and negative ethnicity was witnessed at a very high scale leading to Kenyans facing very many difficulties due to the decline in the economy (Mugambi, K.I.I 1/09/2016).

This agrees with Hornsby (2013) who asserts that throughout the rule of Moi, he engaged in establishing new patrimonial networks that would replace these, which Kenyatta had established in order to have a higher advantage as a new leader. In the 1980s, president Moi’s rule was characterized by corruption and prebendalism particularly after the 1982 coup leading to very many Kenyans facing many difficulties due to the authoritarianism and economic despair. For the Nubians, this was not the case because they held a low profile but it was the case in the 1990s during the return of multiparty that was the most difficult period for the Nubians in Kenya since they faced intensive political discrimination (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015). There were several ways through which the life of the Nubians changed due to their relations with the Ameru in the period 1978-2002. In this section, we discuss the various changing socio-economic relations between the two communities.

4.3 Changing Social and Economic Life of the Nubians

The Nubian lives changed due to many factors. They were surrounded by outsiders and having contact with them was unavoidable. Their traditions was changing such as their upbringing of the Nubian girls became less restrictive. In an oral interview with a Nubian woman in Mjni slums, it was revealed that Nubians were slowly abandoning their language which is Kinubi and they have replaced it with Kiswahili (Fatma, O.I 27/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that during this time there was gradual decrease in the importance of the use of kinubi language, which was gradually being
changed through the incorporation of Swahili words. To the younger generation, kinubi language was fully replaced by Swahili language because they could easily interact with the other people of different ethnic groups. Furthermore, people had become more urbanized and there was less interest in farming because of lack of enough space for farming (Smedt, 2011). A clan elder in Salama remarked that:

“Tunegependwa Sana kushiriki katika kilimo angalau tupate chakula lakini mahali pa kulima hatuna” translated to: We would like so much to do farming but we don’t have big farm lands to do that,” (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016).

These remarks agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that most farmland was being replaced by houses that were for renting and also there was no space anymore for keeping livestock. This was as a result of the influx flow of outsiders leading to lack of enough space to do the following economic activities.

4.4 Declining Nubian Gin Production in Meru County (1978-2002)

The Nubian Gin production during this time had almost completely ceased to be produced. This was because of the lack of space to carry out the business. Another reason for the decline was that there was increased competition from other kinds of beverages in the County whose consumption rate was on the rise (Smedt, 2009). In this regard, an oral interview with, a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu, revealed that he had heard on the radio that the government had declared the gin selling business as illegal, and this made him to decide that his wife would no longer produce gin because he feared being arrested by the police over the gin production (Ishmael, O.I 29/08/2016). This concurs with Smedt (2011) who notes that in 1979, President Moi suddenly announced
publicly that he opposed the gin production business and he even called for the ban on informal production and sale of beer and distilled alcohol that was not approved by the government. This made *chang’aa* business to be illegal in Kenya making many Nubi women to stop the production of Nubian gin.

Another factor that led to the decline in the Gin production and sell was religion and education (Smedt, 2009). In the 1980s and the 1990s, the Nubians became more influenced by higher levels of education and literacy due to Nubians embracing education. In this regard, in an oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu, it was revealed that money received from Gin was referred to as *haram* according to the Muslim culture because one was not allowed to sell alcohol or even drink it according to the Muslim law. This agrees with Smedt (2009) who notes that money got from the Gin production was considered as *haram* and the conscience of the Nubians could now be put to rest with the start of rental rooms business.

Another factor for the decline in gin production was that alcoholism was slowly worrying the Nubian community where there was the growth of young people drinking, infidelity and adultery leading to near collapse of the community. This led to the increased importance of religion. Smedt (2009) further notes that the importance of getting income from the rental business increased because this business had no risks and it required less labor. Many Nubian women stopped gin production and they moved to rental business even if it never brought in money that alcohol had, it was their only option.
4.5 Intensified War against Female Circumcision

Among the Nubians, female circumcision in the 1980s and mid 1990s had appeared to stop in Meru County since most of the informants mentioned they only heard about it in the 1970s. This was an indication that the significance of the cutting procedure and ceremony had ended because of the negative effects of westernization.

In an oral interview with a Nubian woman in Mjini slums, she notes that Nubian girls who went to school interacted with other girls in school from other ethnic groups like the Ameru and this influenced their new experiences about non-circumcision (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that when girls started going to school, female circumcision disappeared among the Nubians of Kenya. This shows that people had the knowledge about the impact of female circumcision on a woman’s health. However, education could not be the only reason for the disappearance of circumcision in this community.

Another factor that contributed to the disappearance was the government enforcement to the reduction of female circumcision in Kenya. Namaswa (2015) notes that the colonial government tried to stop female circumcision and since the Nubians were loyal, this might have influenced their attitude towards female circumcision. Smedt (2011) further notes that the Kenyatta government did nothing about the issue but the Moi government with the help of non-governmental organizations became more active against the circumcision.
Another factor is the intermarriage increase with the Ameru in Meru town (Kanake, 2007). Furthermore, Nubians being located in Mjini slums in Meru town led to the decreased traditional social control and peer pressure from the new environment, which was against female circumcision.


Interradegies with the non-Nubians were increasing dramatically where more than 90% of marriages in the Nubian community were with other ethnic groups. Scholars note that in the 1970s, for the Non-Nubian women married in this community, they were expected to ‘become Nubi’ meaning becoming a Muslim, learn kinubi and change their name to a Nubian name. Even though women were the one who mainly got married to the Nubians, there were also cases where the men also ‘became Nubi.’ (Smedt, 2011; Parsons, 1997).

A focus group discussion in Mjini slums revealed that Nubian girls did not mostly marry outside the community because they were prohibited by their fathers not to attend cultural events held by other ethnic groups. Furthermore, the Nubian community were polygamous thus there is a shortage of girls to marry in this society (Residents of Mjini slums, FGD, 6/09/2016). This agrees with Kanake (2007) who notes that Nubian girls at this time did not marry outside the community because there was shortage of Nubi girls since the community was polygamous. Another reason was that dowry (bride price) was too expensive, and these girls were too difficult to maintain since they were used to high standards of living compared to the rest of the Kenyans.

However, this changed in the 1990s. Nubians were becoming more flexible with marriages. However, they were still strict on matters concerning the
religion where one had to be a Muslim. An interview with an Ameru lady in Mjini slum, who married a Nubian in the late 1990s, revealed that she married the Nubian man simply because she fell in love and she knew she had the right to choose whomever she wanted to marry. She remarked that

“There is no way my parents could stop me from getting married to a Muslim man and converting to Islam. The Kenya law is clear, that each individual has a right of worship and freedom of expression and conscience. With all my education nobody could limit my freedom simply because of what I believe in parents authority over me ends where my rights begin” (Mwende, O.I, 27/08/2016)

Her remarks agrees with Daily Nation (2010) which reports that Section 78 of the Kenyan Constitution 2010 states that unless a person consents, he cannot be hindered from the enjoyment of his freedom of conscience. This includes freedom of thought and religion, freedom to changing one’s religion or belief and the freedom, either alone or in conjunction with others, to manifest and propagate one’s religion through worship, teaching practice and observance.

Further, her comments was an indication that for the Ameru marrying Nubians many ladies who went through this understood their rights and thus could not allow their parent to come in between their union. Thus, a closer look at these marriages reveals some forms of inequality in the union where the Nubians mainly did it for their own benefit while the Christians did it out of love. This also agrees with Smedt (2011) who articulates that a woman marrying in the community really depended on the family if they would accept the woman without necessarily making effort of ‘becoming a Nubi’. The only factor that was emphasized was if one was a Muslim. This shows that many Nubians in Kenya were losing their culture, they no longer spoke
kinubi and practiced *dholuka* dances and wearing of *gurubaba* during weddings. All this were being replaced by coastal *taarab* (Smedt, 2011). This was really creating doubts about the future of the Nubian culture.

### 4.7 Unemployment among the Nubians

Another challenge that Nubians were facing is unemployment, which was on the rise especially among the young people in the community. An oral interview with a Nubian woman in Mjini slums remarked that:

“In the 21st Century, us Nubians are really being discriminated by the Meru county government especially in allocation of jobs. The other day, there were communal jobs of cleaning Meru town and repairing roads that were allocated to the youth of the county. However, none of our youth was given these jobs and this shows a high level of discrimination towards our youths” (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016).

These remarks concur with Balaton-Chrimes (2015) who notes that it was very difficult to get a job during this period unless someone ‘knew someone’ of the same ethnic group in the job and this reduced chances to get jobs for this minority group. This resulted into many Nubian youths getting involved in crime and also be involved in drug abuse. The scholar further asserts that there was also a certain degree of discrimination against the Nubians especially in getting IDs and this made them get difficulties in looking for jobs. This discrimination was as a result of their minority status and also their lack of involvement in the politics (Balaton-Chrimes, 2015).

### 4.8 Nubian Access to Education

Meru County has very many schools like Meru primary school, Meru Muslim primary school, Kinoru Day secondary school, Meru secondary school and Central secondary school. The Nubian community did not embrace education
like the other communities in the region. A key informant interviewee with a chief in Mjini slums revealed that:

“There are so many primary schools and secondary school in Meru County and even some are so close to Mjini and Kibra Ndovu slums. However, the Nubians community does not embrace the formal education fully. This is something that has kept them backward in the Ameru society” (Kelly, K.I.I 27/08/2016).

These remarks agree with Hinamundi (2013) who notes that this was the same case with the Nubians in Uganda. The Nubians did not embracing education and this created illiteracy problem among the Nubians. Therefore, the governments should do something on the matter so as to reduce the illiteracy level in Kenya and Uganda.

4.9 Political Participation of the Nubians

During this era, scholars note that politics in Kenya was ethnicized and that ethnic groups were used as a bridge by the elites to gunner political power (Anassi, 2004). Nyongo (1992) asserts that during the 1990 to 2002 period, the world was worried about Africa, especially Kenya since it was apparent that no politician wanted to think beyond the ethnic boundary or group. Maybe this explains why there was rampant corruption in the government offices with even tea girls emanating from a specific ethnic group in pretense that the previous regime had overlooked upon it (Anassi, 2004). Given this background, it was significant to examine the place and relation of Nubian in Kenya’s political arena with special reference to Ameru politics.

Through the KANU regime in Kenya, scholars have noted that Nubians complain about political discrimination in Kenya political area. These include
works of Kubai (2014), Smedt (2011) and Tomia (2014), Amone (2013) and Ochieng (2006). Throughout their writing, these scholars have tried to demonstrate that the Nubian community in Kenya not only lack representation in the Kenyan government but also cannot take part in political participation due to discrimination the provision of national ID cards that were essential in voter registration exercise. However, it should be noted that not all Nubians were unable to take part in Kenya’s political processes and Nubians cannot be treated as one monolithic group.

A focus group discussion with Nubian clan elders in Kibra Ndovu village revealed that politically although Meru County has had a foreign MP only one Nubian Sheikh succeeded into political leadership. This was long time ago during the Kenyatta regime, then for the first time the Nubian community produced a counsellor. Since then, no Nubian was ever been elected into a political position (Nubian clan elders, FGD, 3/09/2016).

A focus group discussion in Mjini slum attributed this to the fact that no Nubian again stood to run for a political post. Another respondent noted that the fact that no Nubian stood to vie is because they not only faced hostility from the government in national identification registration aspects but also they were very few in number yet politics is a games of number (Residents of Mjini slums, FGD, 6/09/2016). The idea of politics being a game of numbers agrees with Simptoms (2015) who asserts that whether the world likes it or not politics is a game of numbers and only those with large followers take it all.
On her part, the sub-chief in Salama village noted that since the Nubians had adopted Ameru names it was difficult to generalize that they did not vie in political post (Carol, O.I, 30/08/2016). However, from the county IEBC information Centre, it was clearly noted that the Nubian were registered voters and that they were full participants in the electoral processes in Meru County before even the introduction of County Governments in 2010. Other participants confessed to have been chief campaigners of various parties and candidates in the region. A clan elder at Salama village noted that

“We have been part and parcels of the electoral processes in Meru County. Those of us who have IDs and voters cards have always chosen leaders in Meru County since Kenya got independence. Nevertheless, since the Nubian sheikh was nominated to the position of counsellor in the Kenyatta regime, we have never again been nominated for any other political position in the government and endorse us into political positions” (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016)

In a key informant interview with a Nubian trader, the participant remarked that

“I have been a member of many political parties in this region for a long time and I have always endorsed my party members for political positions. However, despite my long stay in the parties I have never been supported by anybody on grounds that I come from a minority group. It is such fruitless efforts I decided to distance myself from Kenyan politics, I only take part in voting nothing more!” (Adan, K.I.I, 27/09/2016)

The above therefore implies that although the Nubians were not active in taking political positions in Meru County they have always voted in the leaders from the county to govern them. However, with intense discrimination on this community, many decided to distance themselves from Kenyan politics. This agrees with Rubaga (2015) who notes that Nubians alienated themselves from governance because politicians used to use them as a bridge during election campaigns during the Moi era to secure leadership
whereas while in governance they failed to consider their grievances and they later considered them as aliens and not Kenyan citizens. These remarks were also echoed by a Nubian man in Mjini slum who noted that

“I have no business to vote in people who cannot stand to support us. They only come and promise us land title deeds and full identity in Kenya during campaigns. However, once we vote them in they just forget and make laws that are discriminatory towards us. I have no business with people who uses my hopeless state to enrich themselves” (Abdi, O.I, 27/08/2016)

This was an indication that the fact that politicians in the region used the Nubian problem to garner votes without helping them, The community lost trust in politics thus did not even want to vote.

An oral source in Kibra Ndovu also revealed that poor political participation by the Nubians in Meru County was due to their poor education background coupled with lack of identity cards and Kenyan passport, which were essential in the electoral process (Ishmael, O.I, 29/08/2016). This agrees with the open society foundation (2010) which reports that in areas with minority groups such as Nubians, educational facilities were few therefore majority of these groups did not manage to complete primary schools education. This makes them unfit for political positions since the competition involved educated people who have good educational backgrounds and opportunities.

4.9 Conclusion
In this chapter, we sought to discuss the changing relations during the Moi era between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1979-2002. This period was still under the KANU regime. It was noted that due to the relations between the two communities, life had changed fundamentally in many ways such that Nubians were losing their culture such as their language
was slowly being replaced by the Swahili language. This shows that the Nubian identity was being slowly lost through this interaction. Furthermore, the Nubians became more modernized and there was less interest in farming and they became more interested in rental businesses.

Further, there was declining Nubian gin production in Meru County. This was mainly because of competition from other beverages like the Kenya Breweries products; another factor was that, the Nubians were now embracing education in their community. Another reason was that alcoholism was troubling in the Nubian community leading to infidelities, young people drinking and almost leading to the collapse of the community. In addition, it also led to the Nubians to stop gin production and move to rental business since it had fewer risks and also because it required less labor.

It was also noted that circumcision especially the female circumcision which was a part of the Nubian culture was now fading away and eventually the stop of the practice in the mid-1990s. This was because of the fight of FGM by the government. Furthermore, the Nubians were now adapting Ameru names to hide their identity and being able to get identity cards. It is therefore important to note that the culture of the Nubians was now fading and being replaced by some aspects of the Ameru culture.

In politics, the Nubians complained about their political discrimination during the KANU regime. This was mainly attributed to their lack of representation in the Kenyan government but also because they could not take part in political participation due to discrimination in the provision of the national identification cards, which was a necessity in the electoral process. Another
factor for their lack of representation was their poor education background, which was as a result of lack of embracing education fully leading to high illiteracy level in the area.

The next chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the relationship between the Nubians and the Ameru especially after the post KANU period in Kenya.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 AMERU-NUBIAN RELATIONS IN THE KIBAKI ERA; 2003-2014

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the changing relations between the Nubians and the Ameru in the period 1979-2002. In this chapter, we seek to examine the impacts of the relationship between the Ameru and the Nubians especially after the post KANU period in Kenya 2003-2014. It is significant to note that the relations between the two communities has had both positive and negative implications on each of them. These impacts will be discussed in terms of social, economic and to some extent political.

5.2 The Kibaki Regime Political Context (2003-2014)

A key informant interviewee noted that a close look at the history of Nubians in Meru, they came as visitors then became residents, but later on the community would be declared a foreign community. In this way, the Nubian life in Meru County was seen to undergo some major changes mainly due to the interaction with the non-Nubians who resided in the areas majority being the Ameru.

An oral interview with a Nubian man in Kibra Ndovu noted that:

“When Kibaki came to power we had very high hopes about a better future which would have economic growth and no corruption but this was never the case” (Ishmael, O.I, 29/08/2016).

These remarks concur with Hornsby (2013) who notes that the Kibaki era awoke new hope among the Kenyans, furthermore, expectations were high and the NARC government had received a lot of good will both internationally and domestically. During this era, major pro-democracy civil
society figures like Maina Kiai and Makau Mutua were chosen to deal with matters concerning human rights and corruption in Kenya (Osborn, 2012).

There was also development of commissions like Ndung’u commission, which was responsible for investigating land injustices in Kenya. According to Hornby (2013) it was revealed that the country experienced economic growth which made the GDP to go up by 7% in 2007 from 2.9% in 2003. Other successes were also witnessed in education, the judiciary, parastatal reforms, land, health and transport.

Osborn (2012) notes that despite all the positive aspects witnessed during the Kibaki era, other aspects like resurgence of ethnic leadership disputes combined with unremitting debate over constitutional reforms were experienced that left the government fighting very many battles. A key informant interviewee in Mjini slums revealed that the Kibaki era started as an era with great expectations but it ended up being just like other presidential eras which the common man did not benefit from (Adan, K.I.I 2/09/2016).

The following remarks concur with Hornby (2013) who notes that the government increasingly behaved as its predecessors had done in matters pertaining to corruption, intolerance and ethnic chauvinism. This led to the growth of dissatisfaction of the political system among many intellectuals, underclass and various communities in Kenya (Hornsby, 2013).

During this time, the Nubians were experiencing the same dissatisfaction that other Kenyans were receiving from the government. This section looks at ways in the implications of the Nubian Ameru relations in Meru County.
5.3 Spread of Islam among the Ameru

The long contact between the two comminutes led to cultural exchange that rendered total assimilation of some cultural aspects of each of the communities. For instance, although the Nubians had been successful in being faithful to their Islam religion, intermarriages led to mixed families (Christians and Muslims) where once the children were born, they were left to choose on the religion to adhere to (Haggai, O.I,30/08/2016). This agrees with Alfadi (2016) who notes that in case a Christian married a Muslim, children begot in that union were free to choose the religion to adhere to since spirituality is a personal thing.

Additionally, intermarriage between the two communities led to widespread Islamic religion in the region with Christian Ameru marrying Muslims, denouncing Christianity and being converted to Islam. A focus group discussion with residents of Kibra Ndovu village revealed that the spread of Islam in the region was so alarming with the Ameru youth converting from Christianity due to peer influence as well as getting married to Muslim families (Residents of Kibra Ndovu, FGD, 5/09/2016). The researcher’s observation affirmed this in the existence of four mosques Mjini slums with only one church.

5.4 Syncretization of Nubian Child Naming

In addition, the naming of children also changed. Children born in such mixed families ended up having a Swahili name and Ameru name. A focus group discussion with Ameru men in Meru town noted that such kind of naming that was given to the child Ameru name made it easier for them to get birth
certificates and later on in adulthood the national ID cards (Ameru men, FGD, 6/09/2016). A clan elder at Kibra Ndovu agreed to this and noted that to enable the child to get a birth certificate and an ID when he or she grew up one had to give the child Ameru name (Mohammed, O.I, 29/08/2016). In a way, the naming system was used as a tool to hide their identity and justify their stay in Meru town. This was due to the fact that the government did not regard the Nubians as Kenyan citizens but as foreigners.

They thus have to go through a vetting process in order to get identification cards. The vetting process was such a long and difficult exercise where one was even asked to produce birth certificates for his grandparents to confirm that indeed he or she was born in Meru County and that he was of Kenyan citizenship by birth and origin. This agrees with Open Society Foundation (2010) which notes that Nubians were considered aliens and not Kenyan citizens thus when applying for identity cards they had to go through a vetting process where they had to give copies of documents like birth certificates and national identity cards of their grandparents. The same views are echoed by relief web, (2010) which notes that the government insisted that vetting process was carried out due to security measures to keep the country from being infiltrated.

In addition, respondents insisted that the vetting process was a sign of discrimination on religious grounds and lacked transparency because at times corruption came into play. Reinforcing the above assertions, CRIN (2016) notes that lack of status led to the Nubians to face restrictions on access of
public services. For instance, access to health care. In an oral interview, a Nubian man noted:

“It is difficult to acquire services without identification documents, and when our documents get lost they take long before they are replaced. In hospitals, enrolment in education, and looking for employment becomes a very difficult task” (Ishmael, O.I, 29/08/2016)

Adam & Wanyoike, (2014) note that Nubian children in Kenya faced challenges right from birth, due to difficulties in getting birth certificates leading them to suffer in future. These views agrees with Nubian women respondents in a focus group discussion in Salama who revealed that due to difficulties in acquiring the birth certificates, the Nubian children used to be given Ameru names at birth leading to an extinction of the traditional Nubian names (Nubian women, FGD, 4/09/2016). This agrees with Tomia (2014) who note that Nubian traditional names like Marjana, Tabarao, Muru, Deka and Dinka were fading away with time since they gave Nubians a hard time especially when looking for employment and identification cards. An oral source revealed that the naming of the children was not only employing Ameru names but also Swahili names mainly because of the Islam religion (Ishmael, O.I, 29/08/2016). It therefore becomes difficult even to know who Ameru is and who is a Nubian unless one told you that he or she comes from which ethnic group either Ameru or Nubian.

5.5 Changes in the initiation rites among the Nubians and the Ameru

Through interaction, the two comminutes have borrowed cultural aspects like male circumcision. For the Nubians their boys were circumcised at the age of 7 months, while the Ameru circumcised their boys at adolescent stage which was a translation from childhood to manhood. Accordingly, they carried out
the initiation ceremony once the boy was able to understand the significance of the ceremony. However, some Ameru started circumcising their male children at the age of 1-3 months as the Nubians did. One Ameru lady in a focus group discussion with elderly women in Kibra Ndovu respondents observed:

“We had no option but to circumcise our son at the age of seven months. Three months. I felt he could begin feeling lost while playing with already circumcised boys” (Elderly women, FGD, 6/09/2016)

This was in agreement with a hotel operator who noted that he was forced to circumcise his son at the age of three years since the boy was as inquisitive as to why others had been cut and not him.

On the part of female circumcision, An oral interview with a Nubian woman in Mjini slums notes that through the interaction of the two communities, female circumcision was not being practiced in among the Nubians in Meru County (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with Smedt (2011) who notes that the Nubian younger generation did not even know if there is something known as taaru in the community.

5.6 Nubian-Ameru Diet Exchange

In terms of meals, the two communities have borrowed from each other immensely. In this regard, the Ameru were seen adopting the Nubians snack like they have adopted the cooking of pilau from the Nubians. Also on their part, the Nubians adopted, vegetables like black night, spider flower among other vegetables grown by the Ameru in their diet. This was evident in the crops grown in the small gardens of these residents. The Nubians and Ameru gardens had similar vegetables like terere, kales, onions, tomatoes, spinach, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. This was an indication that the Nubians had
completely adopted the use of vegetables used by the Ameru (Smedt, 2009). In this regard, the social network theory that guided this study confirmed that the interaction between the Nubians and the Amer has led to a long lasting network that has seen the extinction of some cultures. With regard to this, the Nubian leaders requested the Meru County Government to include in the cultural festivals of the county so that they can exhibit their traditional foods.

5.7 Nubian Dress code: The Ameru Assimilated?

It was also noted that the Ameru had adopted the Nubians dress code. With many having the long Nubians dresses and body decoration. This was evident in one Ameru lady whom many respondents attributed to be a Nubian only she to reveal later that she was of Ameru origin. Her language and dress code was more of Nubian than Ameru. Substantial measure of evidence from the field revealed that the local people in Mjini slum including the Ameru regard the Nubian dress code as full of decency. One Ameru man in Meru town noted that:

“In terms of dress code, I would prefer my wife and daughter to dress just like our Nubian sisters and mothers. They do not expose their bodies. Their dresses are full of decency as it is recommended in the traditional African society” (Mwongera, O.I, 31/08/2016).

On their part, the Ameru ladies who had embraced Nubian dress code attributed it to the fact that the Nubian women traders would sell them at cheap prices. At the same time, those married by Nubians had no option other than to embrace such dress code. In any case, these ladies revealed that they were comfortable and gratified in such dress code. This concurs with Njagi (2013) who notes that the government had recognized the Nubian culture by appointing two cultural ambassadors to promote the Nubian culture both
globally and locally. This is so that to expound the Nubian fashion, cuisine, art and their tradition.

The Ameru ladies in the 21st century were seen to practice nose piercing as it is done in the Nubian community. In this regard, cases of Ameru ladies piercing their noses were witnessed. When interrogated about the same, they attributed it to fashion.

5.8 Discrimination against the Nubian
5.8.1 Limited Job opportunities

Despite these assimilations and cultural exchange, it was revealed that Nubians-Ameru relation were not mutual. Cases of discrimination against the Nubians by the Ameru have been experienced, for instance, although they attended same schools and performed well in academics the Nubian youths faced job security challenges in Meru county. A clan elder in Mjini slum noted that when it comes to granting jobs only the Ameru were given priority. He further noted that he knew a Nubians youth who was fired from the county simply because the county officials needed one of his own (Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016). Another Nubian youth observed:

“The Ameru – Nubian relationship is like that of a feudal lord and serfs where the Nubians are treated as serfs. We are not regarded as residents in the region but as foreigners who should not take part in any activity. The Ameru regards themselves as superior” (Marjan, O.I, 30/08/2016)

This has impacted negatively on the livelihood of the Nubians with most of them living in poverty and other choosing criminality to earn their daily income.
The above sentiments agrees with Kohli (2014) who notes that from time immemorial Nubians have been discriminated in matters concerning education. For instance because they are Muslims, they were ignored by missionaries thus a few of them went to schools and this has affected them since very few qualified for civil service positions thus they lag behind in the modern civilization.

According to society foundation (2011), the report notes that discriminations led to poverty among Nubians leading to unemployment, high dependency ratio since almost seventy percent are unemployed. As result, they turned to human right organizations for help like the United Nations leading to their recognition as an ethnic group in Kenya (relief web, 2010). Other scholars have noted that since the Nubians had been outmuscled in political presentation the only people left out to air their grievances are human right groups. For instance, the Nubian human rights forum whose advocate is called Shaffi Ali Hussein.

The forum played a key role in fighting for the Nubians to be recognized as an ethnic group in Kenya (Ruvaga 2015; Namaswa, 2015). In addition, Nubians are discriminated in everything ranging from education, political, and social amenities. World Peace Foundation (2011) notes that Nubians were deprived of social amenities, infrastructural development, proper drainage system, electricity. In an oral interview with a woman in Kibra Ndovu, she noted that the Nubian village was left behind in almost every aspect including electrification. She noted that only two or three people had electricity in their houses in the village (Gatwiri, O.I, 29/08/2016). These remarks were
confirmed by the researchers’ observation, which reveals that only a sheikh in Kibra Ndovu who have poor connected electricity in his house.

From the observation, it was revealed that the electrification was not professionally done as the wires were dangerously hanging in the house. In terms of education, the Nubians interviewed noted that the feeling of ethnic superiority by the Ameru over the Nubians explained why the Nubians did not get bursaries for education. Only two to three Nubians children benefited from the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) yet they were meant for everybody who was in need in the area. This also led to many Nubian children dropping out of school due to lack of additional fees that the parents were supposed to cater for.

This agrees with open society foundation (2010) who note that Nubians receive very limited resources. For instance, school building were not properly made compared to those allocated outside the Nubian society. The above scenario led to low School enrollment levels and majority of the Nubians youths did not go beyond primary level. An oral source revealed that due to idleness and lack of jobs the Nubian youths in Meru, insecurity is on the rise. In addition, the Nubian are experiencing poor sanitation which lead to spread of diseases (Osman, O.I, 30/08/2016).

5.8.2 Land allocation

Lopsided relationship was also manifested in land allocation and acquisition of land title deeds. This was because the Nubians were regarded as a minority ethnic group in the country and Kenya as a whole. Accordingly, unlike the Ameru, Nubians were forced to pay land rates to the government on a year
basis. The land rates were increasing now and then. However, a clan elder in Kibra Ndovu noted that since the introduction of allotment letters, the land rate one paid to the government depended on the size of land one had (Mohammed, O.I, 30/08/2016). Although some residents note that the land rates were high for a poor, unemployed Nubians, and raising 3500 per year was difficult. Another focus group discussion at Salama noted that it was better even to have allotment letters instead of land title deeds. This was because if one sold the land later on, the largest percentage would go the government (Nubian residents, FGD, 4/09/2016).

The above data concerning land issues and lack of title deed agrees with Adam (2009) who notes that Nubians lived in temporary structures. Most of these settlements did not have title deed and were only occupied in a temporary occupation license (TOL) thus the present generation were merely squatters.

Some of the Ameru taxi drivers interviewed noted that they would never want to have Nubian friends. They noted that Nubians were lazy, mean and anti-social (Githinji, O.I, 31/08/2016). This stereotyping was done to the fact that most of the Nubian villages in Mjini slums were very poor. However, the Nubians on the inside noted that they were friendly to everyone, hardworking and social. It was only that some of the Ameru had ethnic pride. An oral source in Salama village noted that just saying that all Nubians were lazy was a false allegation that had no practical evidence since throughout his stay in the village, he always saw Nubians in business and working every day to earn a living(Haggai, O.I, 30/08/2016).
From the opinion and remarks above it was therefore evident that ethnic stereotyping has emerged between the Nubian and Ameru. The once highly valued and feared Nubians had become third class citizens in Meru County. Smedt (2011) notes that when the Nubian soldiers came to Kenya they were taken as better Africans than any other African community. The white people referred to them as native officers who were better than the other Africans. This concurs with Parsons (1997) who notes that Nubians in the colonial era referred to themselves as Sudanese so as to emphasize their claim of non-native status and superiority. However, an oral source revealed that the Nubians were now a third class citizens in Meru and were treated as inferior subjects by the locals.

5.9 The future of the Nubians in Meru County

The relation between the Nubian and the Ameru posed another threat on the future of the Nubian community in the region. By the time this study was done it was evident that it was the 3rd and 4th generations of Nubians who lived in Meru county. These findings concurs with relief web (2010) which notes that, the Nubians that were in existent in the 21st century were of the fourth generation.

A focus group discussion revealed that due to cultural extinction of the older generation, cultural aspects of the Nubians in the 21st century were slowly diminishing. A participant remarked:

“Preservation of our cultures raises the concern on the future of the Nubians in this region, because there are no means to preserve our cultures since even the museum was converted into a church. Where will our siblings learn about their cultures? It is our hope that the government will do something to revive the Ameru museum so that we
can preserve our culture as we used to” (Residents of Mjini slums, FGD, 6/09/2016).

In addition, a clan elder in the focus group discussion noted that in the near future the Nubian community in Meru would be extinct. This was, evident in the way in which the respondents demonstrated the assimilation of Nubians by the Ameru mainly in naming and economy. Report by Sudan tribune (2006) notes that the Nubian youth used hip-hop music to preserve their culture where they gather around in Nairobi to perform traditional music through combining it with the music of the younger generation. However, an oral source revealed that the combination of Nubian culture with western dance was playing a key role in further extinction of the original Nubian culture. Thus such a mixture of dance and music did more harm than good to the Nubian community (Mukhtar, O.I, 27/08/2016).

A woman respondent in Mjini slums noted that with continued intermarriages, and migrations to other areas, the Nubians of Meru would cease to exist and instead leading to a special mixture of Ameru and Nubian (Fatma, O.I, 27/08/2016). This agrees with a clan elder who noted that due to imbalanced relation between Nubians and Ameru, some Nubians have moved out, bought their own pieces of land and settled. This has played a key role in reducing the number of Nubians in Salama village, Kibra Ndovu and Mjini Slums (Mohammed, O.I, 29/08/2016).

In a way the Nubian –Ameru relationship was full of marginalization against the Nubians and in favor of the Ameru. This led to assimilation and emigration of the Nubian community to other places like Kibra and Isiolo thus rendering the Nubian culture almost extinct in the area.
5.10 Conclusion
In this chapter, we sought to discuss the implication of Nubians, Ameru relationship in Meru County. It was noted that, this period was the Kibaki era where Kenyans witnessed positive aspects like in the education sectors, the judiciary, land and health. It was noted that Nubians came as visitors, then became residents but in the period 2003-2014, the Nubians were treated as a foreigners and a marginalized community in Meru County.

The relationship between the two communities affected them both positively and negatively. Through their interaction with the Ameru, the Nubians got assimilated with majority taking up Ameru names and the usage of Ameru foods. Use of Ameru names was also because the Nubians were facing challenges like getting birth certificates, which would make them suffer in the future. Therefore, this interaction led to traditional Nubian names like Marjana and Muru to fade away with time.

Further, there was the spread of Islam among the Ameru due to intermarriages and cultural exchange between the two communities. It was also established that as the Ameru ethnic superiority escalated and the marginalization of the Nubians also increased as it was evident in jobs securing, granting, educational parcels. This unbalanced relation was noted to amplify the insecurity and poverty in Mjini slums.

It was noted that, there were changes in the initiation rites among the Nubians and the Ameru. To the Ameru, they started circumcising their male children at the age of 1-3 months just like the Nubians. To the Nubians, due to interaction with the Nubians, they stopped practicing the female circumcision.
It was also established that political discrimination of the Nubians led to their continued discrimination even in the social and economic sphere. Nubian villages in Meru lack basic entitlements and in cases where these services were, they were of poor quality. Due to these discrimination, some Nubians have migrated to other regions leading to almost total extinctions of Nubians culture in Meru County. Of course, the term Nubian village will remain but the, typical Nubians and their cultural practices are almost vanishing completely.

The next chapter provides a summary of the research findings, conclusion and recommendation.
CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Introduction
This chapter deals with the summary of the key findings of the research, the conclusion of the research and lastly the recommendation of the study. The summary, gives an outline of the previous chapters, the conclusions given are in relation to the premises of the study and lastly, the recommendation shows areas that need further research.

6.2 Summary and Conclusion
It was the aim of this study to examine the relations between the Nubians and the Ameru of Meru County in the period 1925-2014. Accordingly, the study looked at the settlement of Nubians in Meru County, their integrations with the Ameru and the impacts of these interactions on each of the two communities.

Meru Town was chosen since this is the town with the Nubian villages in the county. The research was based on key informant interviews, oral interviews, observation and focus group discussion.

Chapter one of this study examined the background of the study and this section revealed that studies on Nubians relationship with the Ameru are limited. In the same chapter the study objectives, questions and premises were plainly outlined.

In the limitation section, the researcher provided the challenges of the study, the solutions pursued to delimit the literature review, the theoretical framework
of the study was provided and finally a clear highlight of the research methodology closed the chapter.

In chapter two, the Nubians entry to Meru County was discussed. It was established that the Nubians in Meru came from Uganda, Somalia and South Sudan as soldiers, tradesmen and as refugees only to settle in Meru. It was noted that once in Meru, majority settled behind the Meru hospital where there was free government land. However, their settlement was not such an easy one since soon, the hospital was expanded and the Nubians were relocated to Kibra Ndovu and Salama slums of Mjini slums. It was from this resettlement that they started experiencing challenges in Meru.

It was noted that during this time the Nubians were more of visitors that the government regarded as a passing crowd. However, as years passed the Nubians were never to move thus establishment of Nubians villages where their interaction with the Ameru began. This proved the first premise as correct.

In chapter three, the interaction between the Nubians and Ameru during Kenyatta era was discussed. It was revealed that the Nubians and Ameru are of node of the same network joined by various strands. It was established that throughout history the two communities have had varied forms of interaction such forms include marriage, trade, dances, food, schooling, politics, and merry go-rounds by women.

In the social realm, the Nubians and Ameru interacted to a large extent. In marriage, the two communities were seen to inter-marry a lot, with the Nubians being seen to marry Ameru ladies compared to the number of
Nubians married to Ameru men. All in all, in marriage the Christian parties had to convert to Christianity. In addition, the two communities interacted socially through dances by appreciating each other’s traditional dances, and in most cases attending them.

Further, in the rites of passage, some of the Ameru have borrowed some aspects in circumcision of boys such as circumcision of boys at the age of seven months. In dressing, the Ameru appreciate the Nubian ways of dressing, this was revealed by the dressing of Ameru women, and one would not even differentiate whether they were Nubians or Ameru by just looking. It was also revealed that, the two communities appreciated each other’s dishes, with the Nubians adopting eating of Ameru food more especially due to financial constraints that could not allow them to enjoy their delicacies such as the pilau. In addition, the Ameru and Nubian children interacted through playing together, and in some cases schooling together.

It was also noted that economically the Nubians interact with the Ameru through trade, and agriculture. The Nubians sold meals like snack while others on their apart the Ameru bought the snacks and sold Miraa to the Nubians. However, on the part of Nubians, difficulties were encountered in getting trading spaces, and licenses. In agriculture, the Nubians grew Nubian vegetables in their small kitchen gardens, and in some cases, they rented land where they grew crops such as maize, bananas, sweet potatoes among others.

Politically, it was noted that Nubians formed part of the voting electorate in Meru County although there has not been a Nubian vying since 1973 when sheikh Abdi was nominated as a counselor. It was established that the
Nubians are marginalized in politics due to financial constraints, lack of identification documents, the view that they are a minority group thus cannot present the majority, and lack of quality education. This proves the second premise as factual.

In chapter four, changing relations between the two communities during Moi era were discussed. It was noted that now Nubians were surrounded by outsiders like the Ameru and having contact with them was unavoidable. Kinubi language was also fully replaced by the Swahili language among the younger generation since they interacted with other people easily. Furthermore, the production of the Nubian gin, which had made the Nubian community very rich in the 1970s, ceased to be produced and this was replaced by the rental business, which had fewer risks and it required less labor.

Interrmarriages also increased dramatically by 90% with other ethnic groups in Meru County. Despite the positive aspects of these relations, the Nubian community also experienced unemployment as a challenge among the young people. This was because of their minority status and lack of involvement in politics leading to their discrimination in the job market.

In the political sphere, the Nubians had again not stood to run for a political post during this era. This made them face a lot of discrimination from the government in national identification registration. This has made the Nubians to start adopting the Ameru names so as to get the identification cards and this in turn has led to the decline in use of the Nubian names like Marjan. This proves the third premise as true.
In chapter five, it was noted that the Nubian-Ameru relations has impacted both positively and negatively on the two communities. Economically, due to discrimination, poverty levels were noted to be high with about 70% Nubians being unemployed, and living in poor conditions that had poor drainage systems. It was noted that the relationship had led to the assimilation of cultures by both communities, but the Nubian culture seemed to be slowly becoming extinct due to lack of ways to preserve it, and a younger generation that was adopting the western cultures such as songs. There was also marginalization in various sectors such as education whereby some did not even manage to complete primary school education due to lack of schools in the slums, and low quality education. Some Nubians have decided to migrate and settle in other region further threatening the future existence of the Nubians in Meru County. This proves the fourth premise as factual.

Chapter six therefore concluded that the interaction between the two communities led to the assimilation of the Nubians and the marginalization of the Nubians and this threatened the future existence of the Nubians in Meru county. The use of social network theory and resilience theory proved effective in this work because it enabled to interpret relations between the two communities under study.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

From the findings, I recommend that the government should look for a way of tapping the manpower of Nubians in the social, economic and political development in Kenya. Additionally, there is need for establishment of a cultural center so as to preserve the rich and beautiful Nubian culture to avoid
the extinction of the culture. Further, it is the high time that the plight of the Nubians in Kenya to be defined whether they are a foreign community or an assimilated community in Kenya.

The researcher felt that the field of Nubians relations with other communities in Kenya has not been fully exhausted. The research therefore suggested further research in such areas like, the future of the Nubian youth in Kenya and international nexus between the Nubians in East Africa.
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KNA: LND. 21/7/109 Eastern Provincial Commissioner Letter on 15 Jan 1946

b) Land complaint letters obtained in the National archives

A letter dated 22/10/1955 to the Meru African District Council.

A letter dated 2/11/1954 to the Meru African District Officer Council

c) Oral Materials

The materials include key informant interviews, focus discussion groups and individual narratives. They have been organized according to the individuals providing the information. However, the names used here are pseudonyms for confidentiality of the respondents.

I) Oral Interview
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<td>Amina Zainab</td>
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<td>Carol Mohammed</td>
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<td>Waweru Kamau</td>
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**ii) Key informant interview**

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### Focus Group Discussions

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (INTERVIEW GUIDE)

SECTION A: QUESTIONS TO THE NUBIANS IN MERU COUNTY

TICK APPROPRIATELY

Gender   male ( )   female ( )

Indicate your age (    )

Where is your original homeland?

What factors informed your migration and settlement in Kenya?

What necessitated your dispersal and settlement in Meru County?

How have you been interacting with the Ameru?

What are the impacts of your interaction with the Ameru?

Comment on the economic and social status of the Nubians in Meru County?

Comment on your social economic and political inclusion in the Meru Government?

SECTION B: QUESTIONS TO THE AMERU

In your understanding, where did the Nubians come from?

What is your overview of Mjini slums in Meru County?

In what ways have you been interacting with the Nubians?
What are the effects of your interaction with the Nubians in Meru County?

Comment on the Nubians social economic and political inclusion in the Meru Government?

SECTION C: QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEFS IN MJINI SLUMS

Provide the history of the Nubians in Meru County

To what extent have the Nubians been participating in the Government?

What are your future plans about the status of Nubians in Meru County?

Do you think it is right for the Nubians to be regarded as stateless in Meru?
APPENDIX 2: MAP OF THE RESEARCH SITE AT MERU COUNTY

SOURCE: IEBC 2009
APPENDIX 3: PLATE ONE

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher at Kibra Ndovu on 6/09/2016.
APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MISS. ESTHER MUTHONI NJOGU
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 327-20318 N.
KINANGOP, has been permitted to
conduct research in Meru County
on the topic: SOCIAL-ECONOMIC
RELATIONS BETWEEN NUBIANS AND THE
AMERU OF MERU COUNTY; 1925-2014

for the period ending:
26th August, 2017

Applicant's Signature

By
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation
GLOSSARY

Derira: It is a decoration of cloves and claws of a wild animal.

Doluka/Dholuka: it is a traditional Nubian dance.

Enguli: it’s a Ugandan alcoholic drink made from bananas. It is also referred to as Waragi.

Gurubaba: It is a large colorful cloth worn as a dress in doluka or even in weddings.

Haram: It is an Islamic word that means forbidden.

Jihadiya: they were black slaves that made the Egyptian army.

Kanzu: It is a long Muslim dress worn by men.

Kigoma: It is a Nubian drum.

Kinubi: language spoken by the Nubians

Lest Enasheta Umile: means evil eyes.

Madrassa: It is an Arabic word for any type of educational institution whether religious or secular.

Mandazi: is a small cake made of fried dough.

Miraa: It is an evergreen shrub native to tropical East Africa and Arabia, having dark green opposite leaves that contain cotinine and other stimulants.

Mugwe: Name given to Ameru prophet
**Nikah**: It is a Nubian wedding.

**Omda**: District head in the Nubian social organization

**Sambusa**: A fried or baked pastry with savory filling such as spiced potatoes, onions, peas, lentils or minced meat (lamb, beef or chicken).

**Taarab**: A music genre popular in Kenya and Tanzania.

**Taaru**: It is the name given to female circumcision among the Nubians.

**Ugali**: It is food made of a mixture of maize flour and water.

**Viazi karai**: It is a Swahili dish made of fried potatoes mixed with flour.

**Vitumbua**: It is a Swahili dish made of rice and coconut.

**Zaribas**: they are military camps surrounded by thorn fences in Sudan.