

**THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE MAASAI
AND THE KURIA OF WESTERN KENYA, 1920-1963**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or any other award.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Priscilla Kwamboka, my loving wife Mary

Buyaki, our children, Derek Rabin and Happiness Kwamboka, my brothers,

Mason, George, Mobert, Tom and Sister Gladys, in gratitude for all their love,

encouragement and sacrifice for my education.

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ABSTRACT

It is a historical fact that most Kenyan communities are hounded by actual or potential ethnic conflicts. Kenya comprises of many ethnic communities that are religiously shaped by their cherished cultures which influence their behavior and conduct. This study analyses the contribution or role of culture in the frequent cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria communities from 1920 to 1963. The need to carry out this research arose due un-ending cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. Greed versus grievance theory was employed to examine the conflicts and was reinforced by structural functionalism theory in the analysis. A conceptual frame work was developed to illustrate the relationship between the variables. The assumption in this study was that culture was specifically a contributory factor to regional conflicts and therefore needed a local examination. The study is a descriptive survey research and the instruments for data collection were questionnaire, semi-structured interview methods and the interview schedule. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample. The target population was 122 people of various levels. The analysis of data was done using basic descriptive statistics. The study relied on secondary and primary data. The research was guided by the specific research questions and objectives. The study was confined to the role of culture in cross-border conflicts between 1920-1963. Sparse population and poor means of transport were some of the limitations encountered. Backgrounds of the Kuria and Maasai were studied to examine the progressive development of cross-border conflicts and the role of culture in these conflicts. Such cultures studied included circumcision, marriage, *Moranism/Abamuraism* and traditional religion. The findings of the study revealed that the rites of passage, *Moranism/Abamuraism* and religious beliefs contributed to cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. One of the recommendations included the development of infrastructure and training locals on the importance of peace and the engagement in more viable economic activities. Secondly, the pastoral communities should be involved in matters to do with development through the active participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from whom they would access some form of civic education which would propel many people to levels that are beyond cross-border fighting. Third, the county councils should do land survey to document major uses of land and boundaries. To further address cross-border conflicts, more research can be done on the arbitrary creation of boundaries by the colonial government of Tanganyika and Kenya and how this might contribute to cross-border conflicts.

Operational Definition of Terms

Age group A group of people having approximately the same age.

Age set A social category or social group, consisting of people of similar age, who have a common identity and maintain close ties over a prolonged period, and together pass through a series of age-related statuses.

Conflict A state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war.

Collaborator Someone who cooperates with an enemy in order to work together.

Resister To strive to fend off or offset the actions, efforts, or force off.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....ii

Dedication.....iii

Acknowledgements.....iv

Abstract.....vi

Operational Definition of Terms.....vii

Table of Contents.....viii

Glossary.....xiii

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....xv

List of Tables,xvii

List of Figures-----xviii

List of Maps-----xx

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....1

1.1 Background to the Study.....1

1.2 Statement of the Problem.....3

1.3 Objectives of the Study.....5

1.4 Research Questions.....5

1.5 Research Premises.....6

1.6 Justification of the Study.....6

1.7	Scope of the Study.....	9
1.8	Limitations of the Study.....	10
1.9	Review of Related Literature.....	11
1.9.1	Introduction.....	11
1.9.2	Literature Review.....	12
1.10	Theoretical Framework.....	23
1.11	Conceptual Framework.....	27
1.12	Research Methodology.....	28
1.12.1	Introduction.....	28
1.12.2	Research Design.....	29
1.12.3	Site of the Study.....	30
1.12.4	Sample Size and Sampling Procedures.....	32
1.12.5	Research Instruments.....	33
1.12.6	Data Collection Procedures.....	33
1.12.7	Data Analysis.....	34
1.13.8	Pilot Testing.....	34
1.13.9	Validity of Instruments.....	34
1.12.10	Reliability of the Study.....	35
1.12.11	Conclusions.....	35

2.0	CHAPTER TWO: IMPACTS OF INCORPORATION INTO COLONIALIST UPTO 1920.....	36
2.1	Introduction.....	36
2.2	Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Maasai.....	37
2.3	Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Kuria.....	46
2.4	The Establishment of Colonialism upto 1920.....	52
2.5	The Role of Laibon, Diviners and Medicine Men among the Maasai Before 1920.....	55
2.6	The Role of Abagambi Diviners, Medicine Men and Seers among the Kuria.....	62
2.7	Causes of Cross-Border Conflicts to 1920.....	68
2.8	Impacts of Cross-Border Conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai up to 1920.....	77
2.9	Summary.....	80
3.0	CHAPTER THREE: RITES OF PASSAGE AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT, 1920-1963...86	
3.1	Introduction.....	82
3.2	Birth as a Rite of Passage.....	83
3.3	Circumcision and Cross-Border Conflict among the Maasai.....	84
3.4	Circumcision and Cross-Border Conflict among the Kuria.....	88
3.5	Marriage and Cross-Border Conflict among the Maasai People.....	92
3.6	Marriage and Conflict among the Kuria People.....	94
3.7	Conclusion.....	96
4.0	CHAPTER FOUR: THE ROLE OF ABAMURA/MORANISM IN CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT.....	97
4.1	Introduction.....	97

4.2 Abamura and Cross-Border Conflicts.....98

4.3 Morans and Cross-Border Conflicts..... 102

4.4 Conclusion.....104

**5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
MAASAI AND THE KURIA.....105**

5.1 General Overview.....105

5.2 Religious Beliefs and Cross-Border Conflicts among the Kuria.....102

5.3 Religious Beliefs and Cross-Border Conflicts among the Maasai.....110

5.4 Effects of Christianity in Kuria and Maasai Communities.....112

5.5 Conclusion.....115

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS117

6.1 Introduction.....117

6.2 Summary and Findings.....117

6.3 Conclusions.....120

6.4 Recommendations.....121

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research.....123

References.....125

Primary Sources.....125

Secondary Sources.....129

Questionnaire.....	136
Interview Schedule.....	144

GLOSSARY

Abamura	Members of the warrior group of the Kuria people which comprise of the young unmarried circumcised males with the duty to defend the community against external attacks
Abakuria or Bakira	Kuria People
Abarooti	Dream prophets who prophesied future events among the Kuria people
Abagambi	People of good standing among the Kuria and were more often revered
Emanyatta	Maasai warrior camp usually inhabited by the young circumcised men
Enkai/Nkai	The Maasai God
Enkiama	Marriage among the Maasai people
Enokwi/Nyasae	Kuria Traditional God who controlled daily activities
Esaaro	Circumcision among the Kuria
Enkang	Circular fence used to shield the cattle against possible raiders among the Maasai
Inchaama	Kuria secret council of elder who are males charged with the ritual protection and well- being of the clan and its territory
Laibon	Maasai prophet capable of foretelling the future and had

great influence among the Maasai warriors/morans

Moran Member of the warrior group of the Maasai people of East Africa which comprises the younger unmarried males with the responsibility of defending the Maasai community

Manyatta Seclusion residence among the Maasai

(Abagambi) Omogambi Describes Kuria men (man) of high social standing whose influence in clan affairs flowed from their personal charisma, insight, and power to persuade others

Obosare A non-alcoholic millet drink used among the Kuria people served to individuals who had attained great achievements in the community

Omonabi Prophet among the Kuria people

Rites of Passage This is the process of transition from one state of life to another

Ritongo The Kuria traditional court

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATR African Traditional Religion

BPCM Border Peace Committee Member

C E Clan Elder

CDF Constituency Development Fund

CL Can Leaders

DO District Officer

DC District Commissioner

L P Local politician

L Laibon

M Moran

M M Medicine Men

NGO Non- Governmental Organization

OR Ordinary Residents

R L Religious leader

QASO Quality Assurance and Standards Officer

SW Social Worker

USA United States of America

U N United Nations Organization

UNDP United Nations Development Program.

LIST OT TABLES

TABLE:	PAGE
Table 1.1 Sample Size	32
Table 5.1 Influence of Religious beliefs on Conflict.....	112

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework.....	27

List of Maps

Map	Page
Map1.1 Maasai/ Kuria Boundary Map.....	31

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Norbu (1992) connotes that ethnic movements made their claims in the virtue of an alleged 'community of culture', in which the members were both united with each other by shared culture and differentiated from others by the possession of that culture. He defined conflict as an open clash between two opposing groups (or individuals) or a disagreement or argument about something important. It involved the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation – attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group. Culture is therefore defined as the tastes in art, values, knowledge and manners that were favored by a social group. These were attitudes and behaviors that were characteristic of a particular social group or organization. Ideally, these were the aspects which this study was set to investigate.

The Trans-Mara border conflicts which were manifested in various ways such as cattle rustling, ethnic tensions, and struggle over land and rivers can be traced back to the events of the 1880s when the colonial powers such as France, Britain, Germany, and Belgium met in Berlin and agreed to demarcate Africa into "spheres of influence". According to Touval (1961), the partitions that followed the Berlin conference of 1884/85 led to the creation of controversial borderlines that later threw the continent into border conflicts in the post-independence period. Many communities such as the Maasai, Luo, Luhya, and Kuria were suddenly placed in two different countries thereby making the whole process complicated. The declaration of the Kenya colony in 1820 saw the colonial government take advantage of those who collaborated against those that resisted. Those that collaborated were armed to assist the

colonial administrators control those that resisted. Colonial policies that were repressive to Africans were enacted leading to long term grievances. For example land ordinances which were put in place led to land alienations. In 1904, the Maasai were placed into reserves and their land including the land that belonged to other communities such as the Nandi and Kikuyu were alienated and given to white settlers. These policies not only led to conflicts between the government and the aggrieved ethnic groups but also led to conflicts between the various ethnic groups. The section of the Maasai from Trans-Mara Sub-County came face to face with the Abakuria of Kuria East and Tanzania on the Kenya-Tanzania border.

Abuso (1980) asserts that in 1910, the British colonial government placed restrictions on the Abakuria not to expand into Maasai land. The then District Commissioner of South Nyanza, C. M. Dobbs put a stop to the Kuria expansion eastwards. In 1912, a further order to restrict the Kuria expansion eastwards was given by the District Commissioner D. R. Campton. However, there was no physical borderline that was erected between the Maasai and Kuria communities to enforce this order. As a result, the Abakuria meanwhile ignored the government's policy on trespassing into Maasai land and therefore continued raiding for cattle in Maasai land. The raids were so fierce that the colonial government was alarmed. By 1950, the colonial government realized that there was need to physically mark the borderline and stop further expansion of other ethnic groups into Maasai land in the Trans-Mara region because this generated conflicts among these communities.

The Trans-Mara region was experiencing serious border conflicts between the Kuria and Luo, Maasai and Luo, Maasai and Kipsigis, Kuria and Maasai in the 1940s and 50s. Essentially therefore, the Maasai were the main target perhaps because they were known for their large herds of cattle, which generated envy from neighbors. The government directed the District Commissioner for South Nyanza to dig a

trench of 20 miles in length on the Maasai-Kuria boundaries. The boundary was proposed to have intermittent ditches linked with sisal fences. This period saw many cattle raids and ethnic confrontations that prompted the government to send Kenya police and home guards to patrol the border. Border councils and committees were also formed to promote peace and reconciliation among the various ethnic groups in Maasai land in the 1950s, (KNA/PC/NZA/4/5/33). These border struggles over what they culturally felt belonged to them such as land, water-points and grazing fields, had persisted for years leading to prolonged conflicts in the region up to date. The role of culture in these conflicts has not been studied by many scholars who have studied cross-border conflicts in various places in Africa and Kenya in particular. However, this study will concern itself mainly with the conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria and try to assess the extent to which culture contributed to this conflict.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cross border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria predate colonialism, (Lugum, (1976) Attempts to explain the causes of ethnic hatred and conflicts between the Maasai and Abakuria have been made by scholars such as Abuso (1980) and Kjerland (1995) but most emphasis has always been laid on the economic factors. The role of culture, which is the concern of this study, in the conflict has been down played. More so, the conflicts lead to disastrous effects such as the proliferation of small arms, retardation on education, poverty, dwindling economy and the spread of conflicts to other neighboring communities such as the Gusii, Luo, Maasai, Luo, and Kipsigis.

Although the Maasai-Kuria conflicts were always triggered by disputes over land, water-points, and cattle, all of which were resources, scholars and other interested parties alike have failed to link them to

the culture of both communities. What role for instance did religious practices and beliefs play or what role did the institution of age-sets play? In other words, the cultural values attached to both cattle and land need to be explored in order to understand why the Maasai and Kuria fought over these resources. Yet, so little has been done to give these resources and their role in the Trans-Mara ethnic conflicts a cultural interpretation. This research, attempts to find out how the religious practices and beliefs attached to both cattle and land between the Maasai and Kuria communities led to conflicts. The research demonstrates why victory in war was important to both the Maasai and the Kuria and also how it was a cultural concern to the community. To what extent did culture contribute to territorial expansion of both the Maasai and Abakuria? This study notes that for the story of the Maasai-Kuria conflicts to be told holistically, there is need for a critical analysis of cultural practices such as Moranism, medicine men, witch doctors, the age-set systems, the institution of the Laibon, Omogambi, sacrifices and rituals, heroic songs, dances, circumcision, marriage, rain making, hunting and gathering all of which are important cultural issues.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of culture in cross-border conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai in Trans-Mara and Kuria districts from 1920 to 1963. The specific objectives were:

1. To investigate the influence of the rites of passage on conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria between 1920 and 1963
2. To examine the contribution of Moranism and Abamura on the conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria in the period 1920 to 1963.
3. To examine the role of religious beliefs on Maasai and Kuria cross border conflicts from 1920 to 1963.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent did the rites of passage influence conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria from 1920 to 1963?
2. How did Morans and Abamura contribute to conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria between 1920 and 1963?
3. To what extent did religious beliefs of the Maasai and Kuria communities play a role in cross-border conflict from 1920 to 1963?

1.5 Research Premises.

1. That the rites of passage such as circumcision, marriage among others influenced the Maasai-Kuria cross-border conflicts to 1963.
2. That Moranism/Abamura engaged in cross-border activities that contributed to conflicts among the Maasai-Kuria since 1920.
3. That religious beliefs such as blessings for warriors before going for a raid played a role in the cross-border conflicts among the Kuria and Maasai communities up to 1963.

1.6 Justification of the Study

The research on conflicts between the two communities of Kuria and Maasai at Kegonga and Masurura sub-counties is important because there has been unending conflicts which have not been solved for many years. The study will unearth the link between cultural practices and conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria communities. Culture has not been taken seriously as a major cause of the Maasai-Kuria conflict. Scarcity of resources and politics had been fronted as the only causes while the role of cultural values or beliefs in the conflicts was downplayed, (Koyati2010). Most of the other inter-ethnic conflicts such as the Maasai-Nandi conflicts, Kikuyu-Maasai conflicts, and Kisii-Luo conflicts, have been studied by scholars such as Matson (1972), Muriuki (1969), and Waller (1977) but little had been researched on the

Maasai-Kuria conflicts. This research therefore documents the Maasai-Kuria ethnic conflicts with a view of laying the basis for a socio-cultural interpretation of the other inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

There are many cross-border conflicts in Kenya. The Maasai-Kuria conflicts became the most preferred for this study because the crisis between them was perpetual. The area of study was appropriate for the researcher because of the financial constraints and time factor.

The study over the Maasai and Kuria cultural interaction is important and worthy studying because the two communities have a very unique ground that perpetuate conflicts. This is because both the Maasai and Kuria have their cousins across the border of Kenya and Tanzania. Each community would raid for cattle and take them to their cousins in Tanzania for safe keeping and vice versa. Besides this, the two communities have a very strong attachment to their culture, more than many of the other Kenyan ethnic groups.

The study will also contribute to scholarly body of knowledge by providing an in-depth analysis of the role of culture in conflict between the Maasai and Kuria communities. It investigated the role of culture in conflicts thereby forming a basis for cultural or traditional ways of solving ethnic conflicts in Kenya. The research is therefore particularly resourceful to conflict researchers, government commissions, peace negotiators and peace missions. The study findings may also be used to address cases of conflicts between other communities such as Gusii-Luo, Gusii-Kipsigis, Kikuyu-Nandi in Rift Valley, and Pokot-Turkana. This then calls for the use of socio-cultural approaches in looking for a solution thereby pre-empting possible outbreak of conflicts.

The study begins in 1920, which is immediately after the First World War, and stretches to 1963, when Kenya attained her independence. 1920 became the most suitable starting point because this was the year when Kenya became officially the British colony. Otherwise earlier in 1885, Kenya was the East Africa Protectorate and thereafter, in 1894, Kenya was under the Imperial British East Africa Company until 1894 when Britain declared Uganda a protectorate. 1920 also became preferable because during this time there was pressure to settle the British soldiers who participated in First World War under the Soldier Settlement Scheme thus exerting more demand on the diminishing land for Kenyans, and more particularly the Maasai land. Apart from Kenya being declared Kenya Crown Colony in 1920, this period also became very significant because it was then when the growth of nationalism had begun with the establishment of political associations such as Young Kikuyu Association (YKA) by Harry Thuku in 1921 and Piny Owacho (Voice of the People) by Archdeacon Owen.

1963 also became the stopping point because this was the period when Kenya attained her independence and therefore things were to be looked at differently from the colonial way. The independent Kenya was to address the problems of Kenyans differently from the way the colonial government would have done. The span of the period is therefore very important in unraveling what caused conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria.

If the Maasai-Kuria conflicts are studied up to the year 1963 the researcher would have had a clear picture of the causes of the conflicts and make suggestions that may assist in finding better solutions. Furthermore, as recently as 1st September 2010, the Kuria elders visited their holy shrine, Nyamieri, in Tanzania to plead to their gods for help to resolve a protracted community feud revolving around cattle and which had become a main source of conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities, (Muchiri, 2010), something that is the concern of this study.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study stretched and covered the period between the year 1920 and 1963. By 1920, the European colonial authorities had fully institutionalized itself in Kenya. 1920 was the year when Kenya was officially declared a British colony. This was also the period within which Kenya had emerged from the First World War with a high influx of Europeans thus leading to the demand for land to accommodate them under the Soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919. According to the archival sources this resulted in more alienation of 5186 hectares of land from Africans thus putting more pressure on the available African land. This was the land that the Africans depended on for pasture. Consequently, this denied the Africans their cultural possession; land, (KNA/DC/HB/4/1/4, 1920).

More so, the first tea plantations were begun in Kenya in the early 1920s. Kenyans resisted and fought for liberation, land, cultural, religious, economic, and political independence. In the late 1940s, there were serious border clashes between the Maasai and the Abakuria. This led to the decision by the colonial government to erect physical partitions in the whole of Maasai Mara and Kuria regions. 1920 therefore became the ideal starting point of the study because this was the period when the Kenyan communities began to experience intensive foreign interaction though Kenya had begun to feel the British presence through the East Africa protectorate government from 1895. 1920 was when Kenya fully became a British colony having been the East Africa protectorate in 1888 and later under the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888. Within this period also foreign cultures began to be displayed amongst the Kenyan traditional communities. It also marked the time when the European colonial powers had fully institutionalized the arbitrary boundaries that were drawn in total disregard of the peoples' wishes and which had remained a major factor in inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

This study of the Kuria and Maasai ends in 1963, the period when Kenya had attained her independence. By 1963, Kenya was an independent country with self-government and therefore would put in place policies that would address problems Kenyans were facing within a framework that was culturally accommodative. Therefore, the study ends in 1963 because of the shift in governance and thus a shift in the way Kenyan cultural problems would be addressed.

While there are many issues that are of academic importance among the Maasai and Kuria, I picked cross-border conflicts due to time constraints. And even so, only the role of culture in cross-border is interrogated and other issues only mentioned in so far as they relate to the topic under study.

1.8 Limitations of the Study.

The cultural nature of the respondents whereby they do not easily reveal their cultural secrets to strangers, made it hard to get information. However much was obtained from interviews through research assistants, newspapers, the archives and the internet. This limitation was overcome because information was obtained from leaders, professionals, the locals, worriers, seers, religious leaders, agricultural officers and peace committee members.

Some of the respondents were hostile and reluctant to give information and they treated the researcher with suspicion. This problem was dealt with by using local research assistants who to them were trusted, to seek for information. The area of study was vast and sparsely populated. The region therefore was not accessed with ease by the researcher. This was the reason why the study was limited to administrators, head teachers, clan leaders, medicine men, peace committee members, religious leaders, agricultural officers, Morans who were easily accessed.

1.9 Review of Related Literature

1.9.1 Introduction

Conflicts occur within a state (intra-state) or between states (inter-state). Most inter-state conflicts arise from the artificial nature of African boundaries created during the period of the partition of Africa. Nugent (2007) argues that it is almost a cliché to suggest that boundaries were inherently artificial in the sense that they interpose barriers between peoples that did not exist by any fundamental law of human organization. People lived within the recognition of their cherished and respected cultures. But then, clichés according to Nugent sometimes had the advantage of reminding people of important truths that were obscured behind the more obvious truisms. In particular, the fact that boundaries were scarcely ever 'natural' tended to mean that there was generally a gap between the intentions of those whose

task was to police boundaries and the concerns of the rest of humanity who live with, subvert, destroy or simply ignore them. The interplay between official intention and popular perceptions between policy and the flow of everyday life, was part of what imparted a paradoxical quality to all boundaries (Nugent *ibid*). The idea of boundaries came with the infiltration of the Europeans into Kenya thus interfering with the cultural co-existence of the Kenyan communities.

1.9.2 Literature Review

Barth (2007) asserts that most of the cultural matters that at any time were associated with a human population were not constrained by the boundary. But these cultural matters varied from one community to the other, people learnt from each other, and exchanged ideas without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance of the ethnic group. So when one traces the history of an ethnic group through time, one also, traces the history of 'a culture': the elements of the present culture whereas the group had a continual organizational existence with boundaries that despite modifications had marked off a continuing unit.

Norbu (1992) asserts that conflict manifested itself in the form of war, trade disputes, diplomatic quarrels and spats, travel bans among many others at the international level. The Indo-Pakistan conflict had persisted for many years over the disputed Jammu province and Kashmir. India was to be divided into two regions after independence in 1947. In Pakistan Muslims were the majority. Many riots ensued when a number of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs found themselves on the wrong side of the partition. The conflict went on until 1989 when armed conflict broke out. The bone of contention was the piece of land; Kashmir province.

Joshua (2005) argues that Iraq had long considered Kuwait to be part of it. This claim led to several confrontations. The bone of contention was the rich oil fields in Kuwait. The fallout from the First Persian Gulf war between Iraq and Iran strained relations between Baghdad and Kuwait. Amidst growing tension between the two Persian Gulf neighbors, Saddam Hussein, the then late president of Iraq, concluded that the USA and the rest of the world would not interfere to defend Kuwait. On August 2nd - 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait prompting the U.S. and U.N. member states to begin the devastating bombing of Iraq and her forces in Kuwait. Therefore, the war in the Persian Gulf in 1991 was caused by Iraq's attempt to control Kuwait in order to access oil and punish the Kuwait leaders who were pro-America without regard to Kuwait's culture. This was an indication of how cross-border conflicts are manifested internationally. This crisis throws light on how conflicts are prevalent and how they can devastate communities.

Markakis (1993) argues that ideology leads to international conflict. The cold war between America and Russia was based on ideology; capitalism versus socialism. Since the two super powers could not face off directly, their differences found outlets through conflict in many of African countries like Angola and other parts of the world. Terrorism which was a global phenomenon was an example of how religion was being used to indoctrinate the minds of their followers to fan conflict and violence around the world. The bombing by the Muslim extremist in the U.S.A., Kenya and Tanzania on 7th August 1998 was the clearest example on how religion was being used to fan conflict.

The history of humanity is one long succession of wars and conflicts. Bedjouni (1986) asserts that in over 3,400 years of documented human history, only 250 years had been years of peace. The rest had been years of war. According to him, war was a normal state of relations between people. In Africa the period since 1945 witnessed more intra-state wars than inter-state wars and the level of violence in intra-state conflicts had been worse than that of inter-state wars in several cases. The world over, conflicts have been part of life. For example, unequal power, authority and environmental factors lead to conflicts.

According to Adam (2004), strong emotions, misperceptions or stereotypes and miscommunication and different assessment procedures cause conflicts. Deep rooted suspicion between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda found an outlet following the shooting down of a plane in Kigali carrying the Burundi and Rwandese presidents in 1994. These conflicts however went deeper; separation of communities by the colonial boundaries, apparent power and wealth of the Tutsi caused the simmering hatred. Artificial borders created by the imperial Europe was a source of tension between many states particularly in Africa; wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea, tension between Somalia and Punt Land, were examples of negative European colonial legacies. Lack of information, different views of what was right and different interpretation of data also caused the dispute between Kenya and Uganda over Migingo and Ugingo Islands.

Joshua (2005) asserts that there had been certainly a decline in the number of inter-state armed conflicts in the recent years, but the scale, intensity, persistence and number of internal conflicts had increased tremendously. As new countries joined the international community as a result of the process of decolonization, the ruling class in post-colonial societies failed to establish legitimacy in ensuring economic and social justice to the people. In plural and multi-ethnic societies, it had caused polarization along religious, linguistic and ethnic lines. Regional and international factors contributed to the complexity of the situation. The level of internecine struggles had sometimes become so intense that they posed not only a threat to the unity and integrity of the state and society, but also threatened regional and even global peace and security. It was significant to understand the root causes and dynamics of these conflicts to envisage viable ways of solving them.

Several reasons have been fronted to explain the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya but culture has been given minimal or no attention at all. Kenneth (1981) argues that ethnic conflicts in Kenya were caused by boundary or land disputes, political issues, leadership disputes, cattle rustling, ethnic differences, personal attitudes and behavior, jealousy, problems over water, crime, and corruption, problems over personal property, inheritance, poor communication and misunderstanding. Joshua's ideas assisted the researcher to identify the various causes of ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

According to Saberwal (1970), among the Embu of central Kenya, raiding parties were organized in terms of age-sets. Once they joined an age-set, they only legitimized their new membership in this role through participation in raids on neighboring peoples. Raids were organized very well and successful raids were rewarded while poor raids ended up in punishment to the warriors concerned. Though Saberwal's ideas were useful to the researcher in the sense that they showed how the age-set system formed the basis for raiding and military action of the Embu people against their neighbors, it did not identify cultural practices and believes as a major cause of conflicts between the Embu and other ethnic communities surrounding them.

Goldstain (2005) agree on the role of religion or rituals in cross-border conflicts. He argued that before 1850 no priestly caste had arisen among the Nandi. According to him immigrant Uasin Gishu settlers possibly persuaded the Nandi that the Maasai power was dependent on the Laibon system and that it could be advantageous for the Nandi who had imitated their rivals in other fields to borrow this as well. Furthermore the long struggle with the Maasai had made the Nandi elders realize that some form of central control was necessary, in order to defeat the enemy, maintain ethnic solidarity and keep the warriors under control. The Laibon (Orkoiyot) practiced divination, omen interpretation, prophecy and provision of medicines and charms. The Orkoiyot lived in seclusion and gradually acquired a number of mystical attributes, which increased their influence over the Nandi, and the effectiveness of their power to curse any tribesmen daring to question their authority. Matson's ideas were important for this research as they enabled the researcher to investigate the role of cultural practices undertaken by medicine men, prophets, diviners, seers and other spiritual leaders in influencing inter-ethnic conflicts. Matson's work was informative in the analysis of culture as a cause of conflicts.

In the traditional African society, rituals and sacrifices played a big role in the day to day running of activities. Among the Embu for instance, before planning a raid, the war councilors went to the diviner. According to Saberwal (ibid) the diviner advised them about the time and any misfortunes that needed anticipation. Before leaving for the raid or war, if the diviner forecasted misfortune, the raiding party performed a ritual to purify their weapons in a field west of the Rupingazi stream, called Riamringa, on

the way to the Kikuyu and other fields when raiding other people. These were practices that were purely cultural in nature.

On his part, Muriuki (1969) introduced a different view of ethnic relations. He reveals that war between the Maasai and Kikuyu was considered a game or sport. He argued that the relations between the two communities were not as bad as most scholars would want to argue. He appreciates that war existed between the Maasai and Kikuyu in the form of ethnic clashes which was caused by cattle raiding and counter-raiding. He connotes that for the warriors this was sport. There was no bitterness or hatred. He argued, that “war with the Maasai was looked at as true war, and was carried out under strict rules or much for glory and the love of fighting was for the acquisition of cattle. It was played almost in the spirit of an adventurous game, the prize of each bout being cattle. There seem to have been little bitterness or hatred and only when one side broke some rule would the other retaliate by some similar deed. Rules that governed cross-border cattle raids did exist and before the warriors engaged in the venture; they were blessed and reminded of the same rules. Peace was made under oath and was unbreakable without mutual consent and due warning”. Thus, according to Muriuki, the popular stories about the hostility and depredations of the Maasai against their neighbors had been very much exaggerated. Muriuki’s ideas were invaluable to this study as they were used to assess the seriousness of the Maasai-Kuria conflicts. Were the Maasai-Kuria relations always hostile? At what point could one say that war was a sport and at what point did war become hostile between the two communities?

Bedjaoni (1986) went on to argue that the causes of conflicts were to be looked at through multi-directional approaches that are psychological, economic, cultural, ideological, political causes and international system. This research focuses on the Maasai-Kuria conflicts with a focus on cultural causes. In other words, though there were many causes of ethnic conflicts in Kenya, this study focuses on culture and conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria. In the past five decades, there have been many armed conflicts on the Maasai-Kuria border. While conflict theorists such as Karl Marx, Malinovsky (1994), would emphasize the role of economic factors or resources in the conflict and while scholars such as Kjerland and Abuso, Kjerland (1995) and Abuso (1980), discussed the issue of the Maasai and Kuria conflict, they failed to show that the relationship between culture and conflicts were important in unraveling a holistic understanding of the causes of the Maasai-Kuria conflict. This study sought to examine the role played by cultural beliefs and practices in the Maasai-Kuria conflicts. In this study cultural practices and beliefs refer to institutions such as age-set system, Moran hood, or warrior hood, the institution of the prophet, rainmakers, medicine men, diviners, council of elders, marriage, Laibon among the Maasai, Abagambi among the Kuria, and cultural practices and beliefs such as circumcision, religious practices related to rituals, sacrifices, riddles, stories, dances, songs, cattle raiding, pastoralism and agriculture among others. The above institutions were examined in view of their contributions to the Maasai-Kuria conflicts.

According to Bleeker (1963), the Maasai believed that cattle ownership was God-given to them and that their neighbors, whether crop farmers or cattle farmers or cattlemen like themselves, got their cattle from them. They believed that these neighbors either stole Maasai cattle or kept the strays that escaped from their herds. Could this explain why the Maasai always prepared to go to war to prevent cattle raiders from the Abakuria from taking away their cattle and in turn raid the Abakuria for cattle to recover the so-called stolen herds of cattle? Bleeker's ideas were important to this research because she discusses Maasai cultural practices and beliefs. Nevertheless, the researcher used Bleeker's ideas to identify some of the cultural practices and beliefs and their role in the Maasai-Kuria conflicts.

Cattle, sheep and goats served very important roles in the Maasai community. Spencer (1988) said that cattle were traditionally used to provide meat, hides (for clothing, seating mats and sleeping mats). Cattle were also used as payment for bride price, offering of sacrifices and rituals. The research therefore will seek to find out how the Maasai solely survived on livestock. However, Spencer did not discuss the role of culture in the Maasai-Kuria ethnic conflicts.

Joshua (2005) argued that the wealth of a person was measured in terms of how many heads of cattle one owned. A Moran earned great respect and outstanding social status in a village if he had more cattle than fellow Maasai herdsman while any man who owned a small herd of cattle or had none was disregarded and looked down upon because he was considered poor. This element of Maasai love for cattle and the central position that livestock held in their day to day life assisted the researcher to explain why the Maasai people were prepared to go to war in order to defend their stock. However, Joshua (2005) does not discuss the role of the Maasai culture in ethnic conflicts between the Maasai and their neighbors in particular the Abakuria. The researcher will seek to fill this gap by placing the Maasai cultural attachment for cattle at the core of the Maasai-Kuria conflicts.

According to Kjerland (1995), the Abakuria practiced livestock keeping and to a very small extent land tilling. She reveals that cattle-raiding was a cultural practice carried out by the Abakuria for decades. Therefore the research tried to find out whether cattle raiding fueled the Maasai-Kuria conflicts? Kjerland's ideas were useful for the research because they discussed the way of life of the Abakuria hence giving the researcher a basis for a cultural analysis of the community vis-à-vis other communities. However, Kjerland's study had a weakness in the fact that she regarded cattle raiding between the Maasai and Kuria as theft. She did not understand the cultural perception of raiding in both ethnic groups. The question that was answered here was whether or not the Maasai and Abakuria considered cattle raiding as theft. This helped the researcher to understand the various cultural justifications that

both the Maasai and the Abakuria advanced to explain why it was important to raid for cattle and why both communities considered it necessary to raid for cattle.

Markakis (1993) argues that age-sets provide the needed allies in societies with frequent warfare and local groups that changed in size and composition throughout the year. In such societies people needed age-groups because kinsmen were not always around to serve as allies. This research attempted to find out the level at which the age-set system in Maasai and Kuria communities provided the basis for military organization. Markakis' ideas were important for this research as they opened an opportunity for a critical analysis of the Maasai and Kuria age-set systems and their role in the ethnic conflicts between the two communities. Markakis did not discuss culture and ethnic conflicts fully and the current research sought to situate his arguments in the Maasai-Kuria conflicts.

Andanje (et al 2010) argues that the age-set system of the Maasai consisted essentially of age classes distinguished from one another in terms of seniority. These were children, junior warriors, senior warriors, junior elders and finally ancestors. Each age-set had its own name and passes through the above stages. Young boys underwent circumcision and were promoted to adulthood where they became young warriors charged with the responsibility of protecting the community, raiding for cattle and extending territorial boundaries of their community. Andanje's ideas assisted the researcher to find out why every Maasai man had to pass through the age-set system. The researcher also tried to find out whether the age set system was for the continuity of the Maasai generations or for military organization of the Maasai. However, Andanje's work does not concern itself with the Abakuria age-set system and therefore the researcher looked for this information through oral interviews.

Abuso (1980) asserted that the Abakuria do not have well defined military grades as the Maasai do but the age-set system was the nearest they could come to the Maasai system. He argued that each age-set in Kuria was a distinctive group within the community. The age sets were important both as military units and also as historical chronological records. As military units, they helped to organize efficient military training within the community. The researcher sought to establish whether this military preparedness meant that the Kuria always anticipated war with their neighbors. Abuso's ideas were useful for the research because he discussed the age- set system as an element of the Abakuria culture and shows how it (age-set system) formed the basis for military organization of the community. However, Abuso's work was not focused on the role of culture in the Maasai-Kuria conflicts. The researcher therefore discussed the institutions of the age-set systems in both the Maasai and Kuria communities in detail thereby highlighting its role in the Maasai-Kuria ethnic conflicts.

Among the Maasai and the Abakuria, religious practices and rituals were particularly applied in war making, law and order and reconciliation. In the Maasai traditional society, the institution of the prophet or Laibon was very important for the community. Joshua (2005) says that the Laibon was the spiritual leader of the Maasai. He acted as a prophet, medicine man, diviner, and as decision maker. He led the Maasai warriors in war, offered them special charms for victory and protection from the enemy, offered special prayers before cattle raids and war, and made decisions which were considered very important in the community. Joshua's ideas were very useful to this research because he revealed that prophets, medicine men and diviners had a very big influence over the Maasai especially during periods of conflict or crises. The research tries to find out the role of the Laibon in the Maasai unity and strength against their neighbors. This study therefore attempts to go beyond Joshua's by focusing on the Maasai-Kuria conflicts. It also focuses on the role of Omogambi who was the spiritual leader of the Abakuria in conflicts against their enemies.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on structural functionalism theory and greed versus grievance theory. The main proponents of greed versus grievance theory include Anke Hoeffler (2002) and Paul Collier (2004). Structural functionalism's main proponents include Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Talcott Parsons (1902-1979).

Structural functionalism was called in to explain the role played by the Maasai and Kuria social institutions in fueling cross-border conflicts. George and Thomas (1973) argued that structural-functionalism was a theory that focused on society as an entity in which all the components worked together cooperatively and cohesively for the betterment of the overall society. Structural functionalists such as Parsons (1902-1979) proposed that society was a system which comprised social structures, institutions, or roles. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) argued that society was like an organism and is made up of structures called social institutions. They (functionalists) emphasized the functions within the structure of the main parts of society and the contributions of each for the overall society's survival and growth. These institutions were specially structured so that they performed different functions on behalf of society. This theory attempted to provide an explanation on how human society was organized and what each of the various social institutions did in order for society to continue existing.

According to Mafeje (1991), the result of being interrelated and interdependent, one organ affected the others and ultimately the whole. The whole also affected one or all the social institutions. The strength of this theory was that it emphasized the necessity of components within society. All components of society had functions in order to survive for example, the age-set system among the Maasai had served for many years to ensure that there was always a standing army which protected the community during war, extended territorial boundaries, and carried out raids for more livestock among others. Religious

institutions also had a cultural function among both the Maasai and the Abakuria. For example, the institutions of the Laibon, Omogambi, the prophets, medicine men, council of elders, and diviners had cultural functions during periods of peace and periods of war. The Laibon was a unifying symbol and led the Maasai in war.

According to Hirshleifer (1995), greed and grievance theories' focus moved from the cohesion emphasis of structural functionalism and focused more on the inevitable conflict within society. This theory showed how conflict was manifested in activities that had greed orientation among the Kuria and Maasai communities. Consequences of greed are grievances which in most cases lead to misunderstandings. Greed forwards that the worriers in conflicts are motivated by a desire to better their situation and perform an informal cost-benefit analysis in examining if the rewards of joining the conflict are greater than not joining.

Hirshleifer (1995) further argues that grievance stands for the argument that people go into conflict over issues of identity such as ethnicity, religion, social and class, rather than over economies. In this theory, conflicts are caused by the worriers' desire for self-enrichment such as economic gain through the control of goods and resources or by increased power within a given community. Resources that can be raided are sources of conflicts. The principle assumption underlying this theory was that all members in society did not have the same values, interest or expectations. These varied according to one's position, privileges, ability, class and wealth. These would lead to the struggle over scarce but valuable resources and opportunities which result in divisions in communities and eventually manifest themselves in conflicts.

Greed versus grievance theory directly guides the cross-border conflicts of the Maasai and Kuria of Masurura and Kegonga sub-counties respectively. The theory forwards that the worriers are more motivated to control resources as with the case of the Maasai and Kuria, than by actual political differences with ethnic divisions.

Greed versus grievance theory gave the researcher an opportunity to assess the role played by greed for resources such as land, water points, cattle, salt and grazing fields in the Maasai and Kuria cross-border conflicts. Land is a major bone of contention in the Maasai-Kuria conflict as witnessed in the border disputes between the two communities. Being nomadic pastoralists, the Maasai always fought to extend their territorial boundaries so as to get enough land for pasture for their livestock. The Abakuria, who practiced a mixed economy also, had been encroaching on Maasai land looking for more land to cultivate crops and keep livestock. These struggles over land as a resource had in many cases brought conflict between the Maasai and the Abakuria. Livestock had also served as a source of conflict between

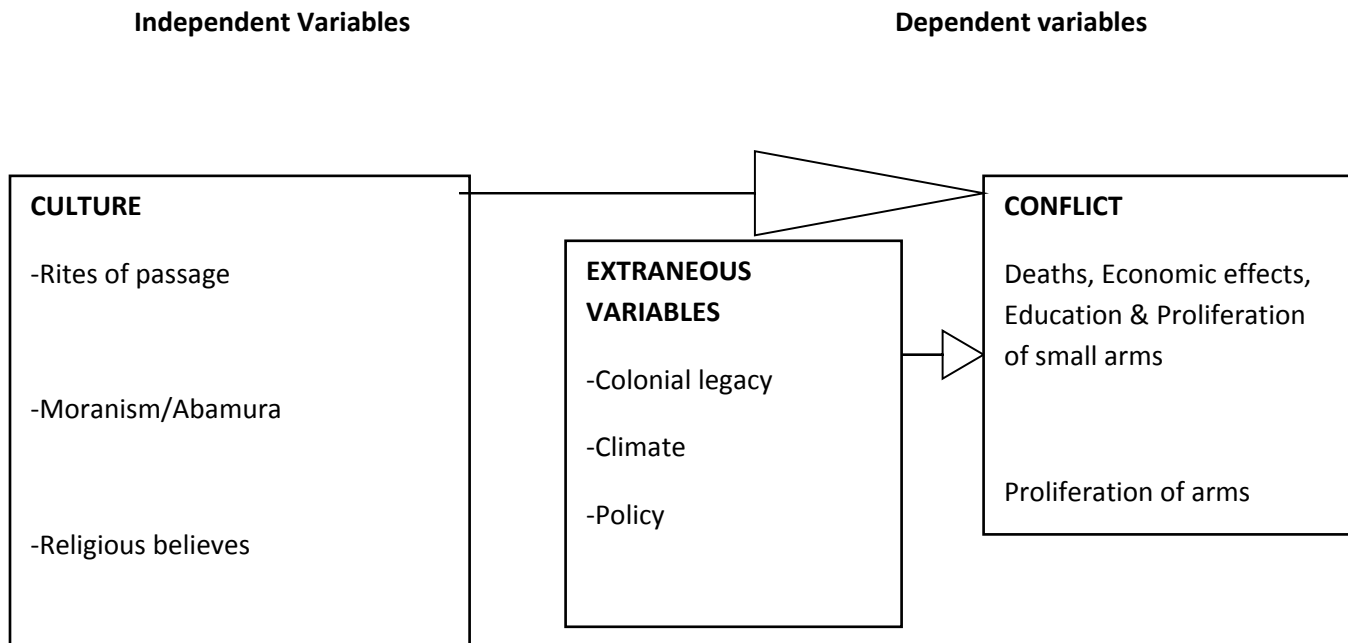
the Maasai and Abakuria. Cattle raiding was a cultural practice in both communities which served to increase stocks for the raiders but at the same time served to bring about conflict between the two communities. The research examined all resources in both Maasai land and Kuria land and applied the greed versus grievance theory to analyze the roles these resources had continuously played in the Maasai-Kuria ethnic conflicts.

Other social structures that were studied in relation to the Maasai-Kuria conflicts included socio-political system and socio-economic systems. Each cultural structure or component had its functions in the Maasai-Kuria conflicts because every cultural practice or belief was valued according to their contribution towards the survival of the community in times of peace and in times of danger or war. Of course as with all theories, structural functionalism had its weaknesses. The main weakness or criticism of this perspective was that it was very conservative by nature and in its conservatism seemed to justify problematic aspects of society such as poverty and social inequality as simply a way of life thus legitimizing the status quo. This is well illustrated in the conceptual framework in figure 1.1 which shows how the independent variables which were characterized by cultural inclinations, influenced conflict

1.11 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework highlighted relationship between variables in the study

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



1.12 Research Methodology

1.13 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the methodological approaches and research design selected for the study on the influence of culture on cross border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities. A detailed description of the research design included the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, variables of the study, research instruments, procedures for data collection and procedures for data analysis. This research made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Oral interviews and archival materials were employed as sources of primary data. The Kenya National Archives (KNA) was important in providing provincial annual reports, letters, handing over reports, and newspapers articles. Oral interviews were used to get information from people who would not read nor write. Collecting data using the interview method required the researcher to identify respondents and request them to answer questions.

The researcher and the two research assistants noted down the answers given and / or recorded the responses. Primary sources of data were complimented by secondary sources of data. These secondary sources of data included information from published books and articles, journals, periodicals, newspapers and internet materials.

Purposive sampling was used to identify individuals who were seen to be having the required and useful information for the study. Purposive sampling was therefore used to identify the research population. The importance of purposive sampling was based on selecting information from rich cases for the in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied.

A total of 73 copies of questionnaires were issued to respondents from the communities under study. The target group included the administrators, religious leaders, chiefs, assistant chiefs, head teachers, clan elders, traditional healers, agriculture officers, medicine men, Border Peace Committee members and the warriors themselves. Out of the 73 copies of questionnaire distributed, five were not returned and two were disqualified due to incompleteness in response to questionnaire items. The 66 valid copies of questionnaire used in the study represented 90% returns. This return rate was above 75% minimum advocated for by Turkman (1972). A further 35 affected locals from the strata above were subjected to interview schedule to determine their roles in cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities. The high return rate was achieved due to the researcher's familiarity with the study area and the respondents' positive cooperation.

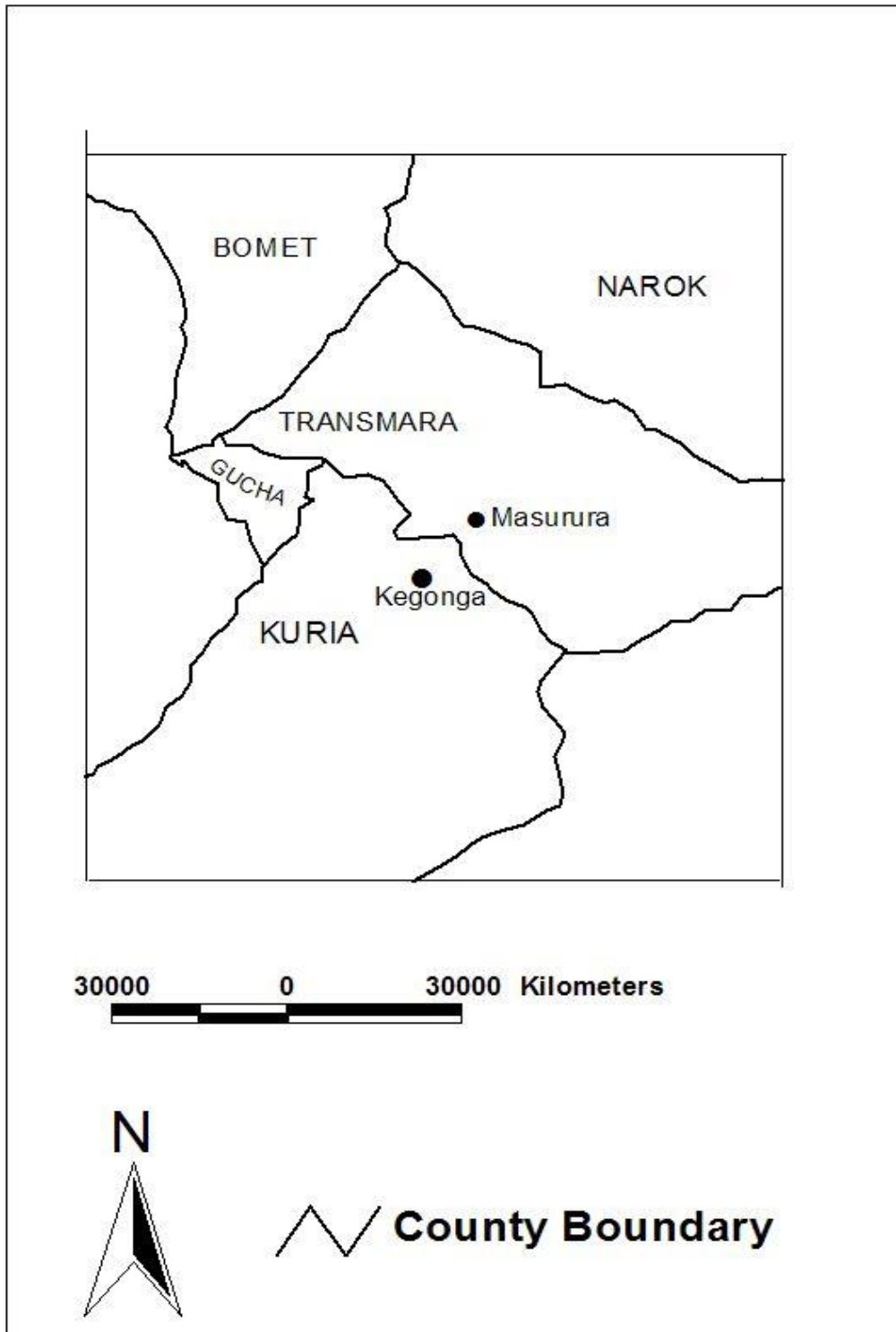
1.13.1 Research Design

This was a descriptive study on the influence of culture on cross-border conflict in Trans-Mara and Kuria districts. Descriptive research is a process of collecting data in order to obtain precise information concerning current status of subject in the study, determined and reported the way things were (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The descriptive method was preferred because there was need to describe the circumstances that made the cross-border conflicts continuous. Narrative data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. The above design was preferred since it enabled the researcher to interact with the affected groups of people and thus get deeper insights of the conflicts.

1.13.2 Site of the Study

This study was based in Kegonga Division of Kuria East District in Migori County and Masurura Division of Trans-Mara District in Narok County. This was because these two Divisions shared a common border, which had been the battlefield for many years. The two communities, who share a common border, also share common interests and values. They are both pastoralist communities and have very strong cultural inclination to their Traditional Religion. All these made it the most appropriate location for the study. Map 1.1 in page 31 clearly illustrates the location of the area under study.

Map 1.1 Maasai-Kuria Map



Source: United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Annual Report, (2006)

1.13.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The desired sample size was sixty percent of the population. The population was one hundred and twenty two and the sample size was seventy three. A total of seventy three copies of questionnaire were issued to respondents from the communities involved in conflicts in Kuria and Trans-Mara where district administrators, religious leaders, peace committee members, chiefs, assistant chiefs, teachers, clan leaders, Morans/Abamura, ordinary citizens and traditional healers were targeted. A further thirty five affected locals from the strata above were subjected to an interview to determine their understanding concerning cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities as shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1

	TARGET GROUP	POPULATION	%
1	District commissioners	2	1.63
2	District Officers	2	1.63
2	Head teachers of primary and secondary schools	14	12.29
3	Ordinary residents/natives	30	24.59
4	Administrators- chiefs and sub-chiefs	16	13.11
5	Morans and Abamura	24	16.39
6	Medicine men	8	6.55
7	Clan leaders	4	6.63
8	Church leaders (Pastors and Bishops)	4	3.27
9	Peace committee members	18	16.21
	Total	122	100%

Table 1.0 above shows the strata within the population.

1.13.4 Research Instruments

Primary data was collected using semi-structured interview methods and questionnaire. Interview schedule obtained data on the contribution of culture in cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities.

1.13.5 Data Collection Procedures

During the field research, respondents were carefully selected, and measures were put in place to ensure that they were willing participants and questions were answered with minimum degree of bias. A letter of transmittal was given to respondents after an explanation on the nature of the study and purpose for which data was sought. The questionnaire were issued to two District Commissioners, six administrators (Chiefs and Assistant-Chiefs), eight heads of secondary and primary schools, three church leaders, six medicine men, three clan elders, twenty ordinary residents, ten peace committee members, ten Morans and Abamura. The selection of respondents was done using purposive sampling procedure and this was done by issuing the questionnaire to the above mentioned people and an interview schedule was administered on clan leaders, medicine men, Morans and Abamura. The questionnaires were collected after one day. Important aspects of responses were recorded in a code book, while new information was recorded for further coding and analysis. Interview was conducted in English, Kiswahili and local languages through research assistants.

1.13.6 Data Analysis

The data collected was checked for serious flaws and responses were tallied for further analysis. Data was analyzed based on qualitative analysis. Frequencies and percentages were used in drawing comparison between the various variables in the study and how they influenced cross border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria. The focus was on cultural information on such aspects of the study that affected them such as circumcision, marriage, Abamura/Moranism, religion and rites of passage

1.13.7 Pilot Testing

Validation of questionnaire and interview schedule was done through piloting and guidance by my supervisors and other experts at Kenyatta University. Piloting was done by administering the instruments to five chiefs, five sub-chiefs and two District Officers in the neighboring communities. This enabled the researcher to check for logical flaws and contradictions. Questions which elicited contradictory responses were either rephrased or eliminated. Ambiguous questions were also changed to be in line with appropriate responses expected from respondents.

1.13.8 Validity of Instruments

According to Saunders (2000), a research is valid only if it actually studied what it set out to study and if findings are verifiable. Orodho (2009) further focuses on the degree to which results obtained from analysis of data actually represented the phenomenon under investigation. Content validity was hence attained by developing instruments that covered all aspects of the study. The affected people who could

not write nor read were subjected to an interview schedule to determine their contribution to the conflicts in the region. Criterion validity was obtained by comparing responses on influence of culture on armed conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai communities.

1.13.9 Reliability

A study is reliable only if another research, using the same procedure and studying the same phenomenon, arrives at similar or comparable findings (Sekaran, 2003). To test reliability of the instruments before actual field research the researcher gave questionnaire to respondents and then responses were analyzed to check for consistency; and questionnaire items which had contradictions were eliminated or changed. The test-retest method was used to assess the reliability of the research instruments.

1.13.10 Conclusions

This chapter extensively detailed the study's explanation of the statement of the problem, its objectives, the research questions, justification of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, conceptual frame work and research methodology

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 IMPACTS OF INCORPORATION INTO COLONIALISM UPTO 1920

2.1 Introduction

The two communities of Kuria and Maasai share River Migori which cuts along their common border. River Surura is another resourceful river among the Maasai and it empties its waters into River Migori. The two rivers are very useful to the two communities in that they provide water for their animals. Kuria East comprises of two clans, namely Banyabasi and Bairege. As Muniko (1998) observes, the area topographically, has undulating hills with river valleys that run from the south towards the north

interspaced with few stretches of flat areas. The Maasai land is forested from River Migori further inside mainly perhaps to avoid surprise attacks from the Kuria. However, the Kuria side is inhabited right from River Migori into the interior because of the high population density and sedentary economic lifestyle. Poor means of transport make matters worse. Roads are in pathetic conditions and are further worsened by the hilly topography of the area.

The area is sparsely populated with homes built together in specific areas and thus settlements are wide apart. Much of the community conflicts which involved marriage, water and land conflicts were solved by the council of elders known to the Kuria people as *Inchama* and the *Laibon* among the Maasai people. The communities are submerged in high levels of poverty. The indicators of poverty were housing, clothing, mode of transport, lack of schools and hospitals, lack of safe water supplies, poor modes of farming, and very limited economic opportunities for both the Maasai and the Kuria. The Maasai and Kuria experience persistent conflicts amongst themselves which have culturally related causes. The researcher examined cattle raiding as the main cultural engagement that caused cross-border conflicts in the earlier decades of the 19th century.

2.2 Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Maasai up to 1920

The Maasai are an ethnic group of semi-nomadic people located in Kenya and northern Tanzania. According to Koyati (OI, 2010) the Maasai are among the best known of African ethnic groups, due to their distinctive customs and dress and residence near the many game parks of East Africa. They speak Maa, and are also educated in the official languages of Kenya: Kiswahili and English. The Maasai population has been reported as numbering 453,000 in Kenya in the 2009 census, compared to 377,000 in 1989 and 400,000 in 2000, (UNDP Report, 2009). The Kenyan government instituted programs to encourage the Maasai to abandon their traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle, but the people have continued their age-old customs. The lifestyle of the Maasai should be embraced as a response to climate change because of their ability to farm in deserts and scrublands, Oxfam, 1963. Many Maasai groups throughout Kenya welcome visitors to their village to experience their culture, traditions, and lifestyle.

For the Maasai, cattle are everything: food, material, culture, ritual. Cattle is life. "I hope your cattle are well", they say in greeting. More than any other Kenyan people, the pastoralist Maasai are cattle-herders par excellence. Cattle provide almost everything they need for survival, and much more. They are a symbol of wealth and a source of pride, and a person's entire life revolves around the herds: the need to access pasture and care for them, the need to protect them, and the need to move with them in search for pasture and water. The paramount importance of cattle - the more the better - has also marked the aggressive nature of Maasai relations with their neighbors. Warfare was inevitably fought over land and grazing rights, and cattle raids were essential in guaranteeing a family's prosperity, as well

as to massage the warrior's ego and enable him to get married (for which he needed cattle), (Bleeker1963).

Since the Maasai traditionally eat neither fruit nor grain, milk, either fresh or curdled, is the basic food, and is often drunk mixed with blood (the mixture is called *nailang'a*) in the dry season, when milk yields are low, (Nkasiogi2000). It is generally stored and carried in long, decorated gourds which are washed with cattle urine (despite our western preconceptions, urine could perhaps be sterile when fresh, and thus act as a mild remedy for bacterial infection). Milk itself - the gift of *Enkai's* cattle - is symbolized on ceremonial occasions by the application of a mixture of white chalk and water to the bodies of participants.

Once a month, blood is also taken from living animals, usually to be mixed with milk. This is done as follows: a noose is tightened around a cow's neck, causing the jugular vein to swell. A short blunt arrow with a 1cm tip and shaft bound with twine is then fired at close range from a loosely-strung bow to puncture the vein. The blood which spurts out is collected in a gourd. The wound is not fatal and is stopped afterwards with a wad of mud and dung to stop the bleeding. The Maasai believe the blood makes them very strong. Curdled blood is called *osaroi*. The living animals also provide dung, which is used as fuel and to plaster houses. The urine from the cattle has some medicinal and cleansing value, and is also used in building their traditional houses. Cattle are rarely slaughtered, and mainly during times of famine, rituals (such as by warriors seeking strength before a raid), or when the animal becomes too old or lame to be of much use. Meat is mainly obtained from the large herds of sheep and goats (around 150-200 per family) which the Maasai also keep. Game meat is taboo, although eland and buffalo meat is allowed, as these are considered 'wild cattle'. If a cow or bull is slaughtered, the hide serves many purposes: it can be used for sleeping, making sandals and mats, sandals, slings, clothes and weapon sheaths. Leather is kept supple by rubbing in goat fat, (Tiblitt 2006).

According to the Maasai oral history, they originated from the lower Nile valley north of Lake Turkana (Northwest Kenya) and begun migrating south around the 15th century, arriving in a long truck of land between the 17th and late 18th centuries. Many ethnic groups that had already formed settlements in the region were forcibly displaced by the incoming Maasai, while others, mainly Southern Cushitic groups, were assimilated into Maasai society, (Nathan, 2004). The Maasai territory reached its largest size in the mid-19th century, and covered almost all the Great Rift Valley and adjacent lands from Mount Marsabit in the north. At this time the Maasai raided cattle as far East in Tanzania. Raiders used spears and shields, but were most feared for throwing clubs (*orinka*) which could be accurately thrown from up to (approximately 100 meters). Because of this migration, the Maasai are the Southernmost Nilotic speakers. The period of expansion was followed by the Maasai "*Emutai*" (Maasai form of epidemic of 1883-1902), KNA/PC/NKR/8/3/2 (1918). This period was marked by epidemics of contagious bovine pneumonia, rinderpest and smallpox. The estimate first put forward by a Provincial Commissioner in Rift Valley, was that 90 percent of cattle and half of wild animals perished from rinderpest. British doctors in the same area claimed that many of the Maasai had a pock-marked face as the result of smallpox. This period coincided with drought and rains failed completely between 1897 and 1898.

According to Nkasiogi (2002), the Maasai speak the Nilo-Saharan language and came to East Africa through Southern section of Sudan along the Nile Valley. Most Nilotic speakers in East Africa, including the Samburu, Maasai and Kalenjin are mainly pastoralists and are famous for their fearlessness as warriors and cattle rustlers. As with the Bantu, the Maasai adopted many customs and practices from the neighboring groups of the Cushitic orientation, which includes the age set system, circumcision and vocabulary terms. It is believed that the Maasai ancestors came from north Africa and migrated southwards along the Nile valley and arrived in Kenya in the middle of the 15th century, (Nathan, 2004). Later, they extended southwards, conquering all of the other ethnic groups in their path, through the Rift Valley and arriving in Kenya at the end of the 15th century.

Bleeker, (1963) argues that with the Maasai treaty of 1904 with the Europeans, followed with the second treaty of 1911, the Maasai's land was reduced by about 60 percent when the British evicted them to make room for settler ranches, subsequently confining them to the present-day Kajiado and Narok counties. More land was taken to create wildlife reserves and national parks. Amboseli, Nairobi, Maasai Mara, Lake Nakuru and Savo national parks. The Maasai were pastoralists and had resisted the urging by the Kenyan government to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle, (Bentsen, 1989). They demanded grazing rights to many of the national parks. Essentially, there are twenty four branches that constitute the group, each one having its own customs, appearance, leadership and dialects, (Vossen 1988). These subdivisions are known as the *Kkeekonyokie Damat, Purko, Wuasinkishu, Siria Laitaiyok, Loitai, Matapato, Dalalekutuk, Loodokolani and Kapintiei*.

It is documented that an Austrian explorer Oscar Baumann travelled in Maasai lands in 1891-1893, and described the old Maasai settlement thus: "There were women wasted to skeletons from whose eyes the madness of starvation glared warriors scarcely able to crawl on all fours, and apathetic, languishing elders. Swarms of vultures followed them from high, awaiting their certain victims" [Http://en.findertides.com](http://en.findertides.com). By his estimate, two-thirds of the Maasai died during this period. All this was as a result of the rinderpest and smallpox epidemic

Nkasiogi (2000) argues that the Maasai society is strongly patriarchal in nature, with elderly men, sometimes joined by retired elders, deciding most major matters for each Maasai group. A full body of oral law covers many aspects of behavior. Formal execution is unknown, and normally payment in cattle will settle matters. An out of court process is also practiced called '*amitu*', 'to make peace', or '*arop*', which involves a substantial apology. The Maasai are monotheistic, worshipping a single deity called *Enkai* (also known as *Engai*). The central human figure in the Maasai religious system is the Laibon who may be involved in: religious healing, divination and prophecy, and ensuring success in war or adequate

rainfall. Whatever power an individual Laibon had was a function of personality rather than position. The Maasai are also known for their intricate jewelry.

Spencer (2006) connotes that the traditional Maasai lifestyle centers on their cattle which constitute their primary source of food. The measure of a man's wealth is in terms of cattle and children. A herd of 50 cattle is respectable, and the more children the better. A man who has plenty of one but not the other is considered to be poor. A Maasai religious belief relates that God gave them all the cattle on earth, leading to the belief that rustling cattle from other ethnic communities is a matter of taking back what is rightfully theirs.

Being historically nomadic and semi-nomadic people, the Maasai have traditionally relied on local, readily available materials and indigenous technology to construct their housing. The traditional Maasai house was in the first instance designed for people on the move and was thus less permanent in nature, Nkasiogi (2000). The *Inkajjik* (houses) are either star-shaped or circular, and are constructed by able-bodied women. The structural framework was formed of timber poles fixed directly into the ground and interwoven with a pattern of smaller branches, which was then plastered with a mix of mud, sticks, grass, cow dung, and ash. The cow dung ensures that the roof is water-proof. Villages were enclosed in a circular fence (an *enkang*) built by the men, usually of thorned acacia, a native tree. At night, all cows, goats, and sheep were placed in an enclosure in the centre, safe from wild animals and any other unwarranted and evil intruder.

Bentsen (1989) argues that the central unit of Maasai society is the age-set. Young boys are sent out with the calves and lambs as soon as they are able, but childhood for boys is mostly playtime, with the exception of ritual beatings to test courage and endurance. Girls are responsible for chores such as cooking and milking, skills which they learn from their mothers at an early age. Every 15 years or so, a new and individually named generation of Morans or *Il-murran* (warriors) will be initiated. This involves most boys between 12 and 25, who have reached puberty and are not part of the previous age-set. One rite of passage from boyhood to the status of junior warrior is the painful circumcision ceremony, which is performed without anesthetic. This ritual is typically performed by the elders, who use sharpened knives. The *Maa* word for circumcision is *emorata*, Anderson (1986). The boy must endure the operation since expressions of pain bring dishonor. Any flinch can cause a mistake in the delicate and tedious process, which could result in lifelong scarring, dysfunction, and pain of the genital organ.

The healing process will take 3–4 months, during which urination is painful and nearly impossible at times, and initiates must remain in black clothes for a period of 4–8 months. During this period, the newly circumcised young men will live in a "*manyatta*", a "village" built by their mothers. The *manyatta* has no encircling barricade for protection, emphasizing the warrior role of protecting the community. Further rites of passage are required before achieving the status of senior warrior, culminating in the *eunoto* ceremony, (warrior shaving ceremony), Bentsen, (1989). When a new generation of warriors is initiated, the existing Morans will graduate to become junior elders, who are responsible for political decisions until they in turn become senior elders. This graduation from warrior to junior elder takes place during a large gathering known as *Eunoto*. The long hair of the former warriors is shaved off since elders were expected to cut their hair short. Warriors are not allowed to have sexual relations with circumcised women, though they may take girlfriends from among the uncircumcised girls. At *Eunoto*, the warriors who managed to abide by this rule are specially recognized. The warriors spend most of their time from then on traversing throughout Maasai lands, beyond the confines of their sectional boundaries. They were also much more involved in cattle raiding than before, developing and improving basic cattle raid skills.

Tepilit (2006) indicates that the Maasai are traditionally polygamous; this is thought to be a long standing and practical adaptation to high infant and warrior mortality rates. Polyandry is also practiced. A woman marries not just her husband, but the entire age group. Men are expected to give up their bed to a visiting age-mate guest. The woman decides strictly on her own if she will join the visiting male. Any child who may result from this encounter is the husband's child and his descendant in the patrilineal order of Maasai society. "*Kitala*", a kind of divorce or refuge, is possible usually for gross mistreatment of the wife. Payment of the bride price and custody of children is mutually agreed upon.

Traditionally, the Maasai diet consisted of raw meat, raw milk, and raw blood from cattle. During the summer of 1919 the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner visited the Maasai and reported that according to Dr. Anderson Tuesday from the local government hospital, most communities were disease-free. Many had not a single tooth attacked by neither dental caries nor a single malformed dental arch. KNA/PC/NKR/3/6/22 (1916-1920). In particular the Maasai had very low tooth caries. He attributed that to their diet consisting of raw milk, raw blood, and raw meat. He noted that when available every growing child and every pregnant or lactating woman would receive a daily ration of raw blood.

Saitoti Borrok (OI, 2010), a clan elder, asserts that head shaving is common during many rites of passage, representing the fresh start that will be made as one passes from one to another of life's chapters. Warriors are the only members of the Maasai community who wear long hair, which they weave in thinly braided strands. As males have their heads shaved at the passage of one stage to

another, a bride to be will have her head shaved, and two rams will be slaughtered in honor of the occasion. Picture 2.3 below, illustrates clearly how Morans braided their hair.

The practice of cattle rustling has evolved over the years. Understood in the traditional sense, cattle's rustling was considered to be a deeply entrenched cultural practice where young men, known as "Morans" would raid for livestock as a means of restocking or acquiring more heads of cattle for various purposes, which included the payment of pride price, or a means of wealth enhancement, (Tepilit, 2006). Traditional cultural songs and dances carried from one generation to another highlight the existence of cattle raiding before the coming of the Europeans to East Africa. The taboo regulated traditional nature of cattle raids, which shunned the killing of members of the rival community, (Nathan 2004). The traditional practice of cattle rustling was fundamentally altered with the advent of colonialism in the late 1800s.

Nkasiogi (2000) argues that culturally, the Maasai people are pastoralists who cherished large herds of cattle and therefore the need for a big grazing ground. A fundamental characteristic of the Maasai economy was its concept of land use. The patterns of ownership and use reflect a variety of social, political and economic characteristic of their society and its interaction with the environment. This was the reason why the Maasai occupy the vast land they do. Land was a very important aspect among the Maasai people because of the nature of their occupation. The Maasai identity was rooted in a sense of place, however mobile and extensive that might be the land, its use and control, was a permanent feature throughout the Maasai history.

2.3 Origins, Migration and Settlement of the Kuria

The Kuria are a Bantu ethnic and linguistic group living in the western and eastern sub-districts of Migori County in southwest Kenya. In 2006 the Kuria population was estimated to number 174,000 in Kenya, (2009 Census). The Kuria people are mainly pastoralists and also practice very little land tilling. The Kuria are closely related to the Kisii people of Kenya both in language and physique. According to Marwa (2002) the Kuria and the Gusii are said to have been one people until a vicious attack by the Maasai in the early 19th century scattered them into different directions. This separation led to the formation of distinct dialects which are clearly understood by both peoples.

The Kuria people are divided into many "sub groups" or clans, such as: Nyabasi, Bakira, Bairege, Bagumbe (who reside in both Kenyan and Tanzanian districts), Batimbaru, Banyamongo, Bakenye, Baikoma and Bamerani. The Kuria West district is divided into two administrative divisions namely Kegonga, and Ntimaru. It is further sub-divided into ten locations and twenty-two sub-locations. Muniko

(1998) indicates that cattle raiding is mainly conducted by the Nyabasi and the Bairege against the Maasai in order to increase their cattle holding.

Before the start of the sixteenth century, it seems that Bukuria - the South-Western corner of Kenya which now constitutes Kuria sub-county - was inhabited by a number of numerically small Bantu-speaking peoples, who had probably been among the first Bantu to settle in Kenya, sometime between 200AD and 1000AD, Omuga (2010). It is not unlikely, however, that the Kuria could have arrived in Kenya from Uganda via the Mount Elgon region to the north. Until the turn of the sixteenth century, the first Nilotic-speakers, such as the Luo ancestor, arrived in Kenya; the Maasai were coming down the Rift Valley. Numerically much stronger than any of the Bantu people, and with an aggressive expansion attitude, the various Bantu groups living on the shores of Lake Victoria had little choice but to forcefully move, Muniko (1998). Over time, these Bantu peoples came together for protection, and eventually by around 1900 three new 'super group' identities had been created, namely the Kuria to the southeast and south of the lake, the Gusii to the east, and the Luhya to the north. Oral sources indicate that the 'Kurua' people came originally from central Africa. Some versions of the theory even go so far as to claim particular geographical areas as their starting point, such as Katanga in Congo or western Cameroon, (Nkasiogi 2000).

According to Kjerland (1995), the Kuria have an oral history which says that they passed through Mount Elgon on their migratory route. It seems certain that over the period 1650-1750, substantial immigration of settlers into Bukuria occurred. The majority of the new arrivals were related by origin to the Gusii, with whom the Kuria remain close both in terms of language and common descent. These Kuria-Gusii entered Bukuria from two directions: some crossing the lake from the north, others by land from the north or northeast, through the Kano Plains.

In the century that followed these initial influxes, the Luo advanced further south and eventually came into direct contact with the Kuria-Gusii, who had originally fled from them. At the same time, another Nilotic people - the Maasai - were also expanding southwards and well into Tanzania, though from a more eastern direction, and pushed a number of peoples westwards towards Lake Victoria, (Nkasiogi 2000). At this time, the Kuria-Gusii were still primarily pastoralists, but the mosquito and tsetse fly-ridden shores of Lake Victoria made this mode of life difficult. It was made almost impossible by the combined Luo and Maasai advances. The effect of their movement, was disastrous for herding, for at the same time that the lakeshore Kuria-Gusii were being pushed south and east into the hills by the Luo, other herders were being pushed into the same hills by the Maasai to the east. The result was both population fragmentation and consolidation, as small scattered groups of people tried to find a haven from the Nilotes.

A large part of these Bantu people headed south into present-day Tanzania, where the majority of Kuria still reside. Others stayed in the hills between the Luo and Maasai, which provided them with a haven from Luo and Maasai attacks as their dense forests were most unsuitable for cattle. The latter half of the nineteenth century was a much calmer period for the Kuria, thanks mainly to the Maasai civil war, which neutralized their threat to the Bantu people, (Binagi, 1976). Although there was a third influx of displaced Bantu, the small and fragmented Kuria communities gradually began to coalesce and resettle in South Nyanza region, and various sub-groups began to emerge within the new identity of 'Kuria'. Some of them, like the Bakira, kept both the form and names that they had had before the Nilotic invasions, whilst others were completely new groupings.

Muniko (1998) indicates that the Kuria were known for being notorious cattle raiders, even more than their neighbors, the Maasai. The way of life shaped the architecture of their homes, which were fashioned on the lines of a fortress. The housing compounds were made up of huts of many units for members of the same family. The huts were built in a circular manner so that the cattle den was in the middle. This was meant to easily protect and defend their cattle from raiders.

Archival sources show that the Kuria were intelligent but highly emotional. They craved for excitement finding life tedious without it, if they would not alley their restlessness by making war on their neighbors, or raiding for cattle, they had to find some outlet for their energies, (KNA/PC/NZA/2/3/2 1920). This desire for excitement therefore became a practice that perpetuated cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria peoples.

Norbu (1992) argues that it is true that most Kenyan communities were haunted by potential ethnic conflicts. This is due to the fact that different communities continue to rely on their culture to perpetuate dominance over others due to the culturally held land, cattle, and water points. That is why this study aimed to generate pertinent information on what extent culture contributed to cross-border conflicts among the Kuria and the Maasai communities from 1920 to 1963. These conflicts were characterized by cattle raids, conflicts over land, and water points. However, the cross-border conflicts were further fueled by the infiltration of the British into the Kenyan territory.

The other neighbors of the Kuria and the Maasai are the Gusii, Luo, Suba and the Luhya who practiced crop cultivation and livestock keeping. Production was primarily for collective subsistence rather than individual accumulation. Inter-ethnic interactions were characterized by trade, intermarriages and intermittent warfare among the communities.

Frieberg, (1987) asserts that in the 1920s, a notable feature of the Kuria society was the lack of tribal unity. This was a dominant feature and fact of life in pre-colonial times. Not only were clans hostile

amongst themselves but there were also instances where clans ganged up together with outsiders, the Maasai, to fight against the Kuria of another clan. But with the infiltration of the Europeans into Kenya, the Kuria began to know that they were an ethnic group who also needed recognition within their society. They therefore began to jostle with the rest of the other Kenyan ethnic groups through various ways of contact such as through the engagement in cross-border attacks.

Muniko (1998) reveals that cattle raiding was the norm and a cultural activity in the pre-colonial times. The informants indicated that stock raiding was practically a common feature during the colonial period. (Samuel Chacha, OI,2011), an elderly informant in Kegonga division maintained that even as late in 1920, the number of *Abachuchuuri* (thieves) in the whole of Kuria would be counted on the fingers of a single hand. The elders argue that what did exist were organized cattle raids and not cattle theft. The cultural practice of cattle raiding became more elaborate with the coming of the Europeans who introduced new ideas and culture which pushed the Kuria culture to the periphery, thus encouraging cattle raids across the Kuria-Maasai border. The new cultural aspects that were introduced included poll-tax, hut tax, formal education, Christianity and the concept of cattle reduction. Aspects like poll-tax and hut tax pushed the Kuria to engage in cross-border cattle raid to meet the new demands of taxes.

In the period between 1913 and 1917, the Maasai knew no peace as the conflict escalated to very high limits. Starting as common inter-community cattle rustling, it degenerated and took the dimension of revenge and counter revenge. Archival sources showed that as early as 1918, the Kuria regarded schooling as alien, KNA/DC/NYZ/3/29/8 (1918). They regarded schooling as a process through which foreign ideologies were to be generated to them which eventually would lead to rubbishing their culture. Christian missions in Kuria were resisted during this time because the missionaries did not participate in many of the Kuria traditional practices such as marriage. Consequently, the Kuria and the Maasai were comfortable to be left the way they were in order to continue with their cultural practices which included cattle raiding. However, the Maasai were a bit relaxed with the Europeans' arrival because initially, the Europeans were not interested in their cattle which was mainly their source of livelihood.

The colonial government added more insult to the souring situation in Kuria land by developing unending appetite for the Kuria land which had been identified as being rich soils suitable for tobacco cultivation in 1948. The demand for Kuria land by Europeans added more pressure on the already diminishing pasture regions. Consequently, this added more frustration to the Kuria leading to further conflicts over grazing areas and watering points, Binagi (1976). With the interest in the Kuria land by the colonial government, the presence of more security officers in Kuria was more apparent leading to continued conflicts against them.

Lebaron (2003) argues that culture is an essential part of conflict and conflicts resolution. According to him when differences surface in families, organizations, or communities, culture is always present in shaping perceptions, attitudes, behavior and outcomes. His view is that for any conflict that touches us where it matters, where we made meaning and held our identities, there, was always a cultural component. This study attempts to show how various cultural beliefs and practices of the Maasai and Kuria communities contributed to the conflict between them. It is against this background that structural-functionalism theory is called upon to offer solutions to such conflicts because society is an entity where all components work together cooperatively and when peace is interfered with, the society's peace and harmony is disrupted.

2.4 The Establishment of Colonialism up to 1920.

The first European settlers arrived in Kenya in 1902. Kenya was a protectorate in 1805 and later in 1918 under the Imperial British East Africa Company. In 1920, Kenya was declared a British colony. In 1915, the Crown Land ordinance recognized "native rights" in lands reserved for the Kenyans. In 1926, this was further defined by the creation of "African Reserves" for each of Kenya's ethnic groups, leaving the white Highlands for the Europeans. The white highlands consisted of large parts land in the Rift Valley. These developments marked the shift in the economic livelihood of the Maasai and Kuria communities, (Nathan, 2004)

Marwa (2002) argues that for the Kuria, cattle raiding was a meritorious and glorious undertaking. To be killed "in the cows" in Kuria parlance, is to be killed in the act of fighting for cattle. The very phrase evokes the courage displayed in combat, whether in the cause of defending the cattle of one's own clan against enemy raiders or of striving valiantly to enlarge the clan's cattle holdings by executing daring raids against the Maasai. Therefore it was the duty of every Kuria warrior to defend the Kuria land, protect the Kuria cattle and increase the Kuria cattle holding. To increase their cattle holding meant increase in cross-border cattle raids in order to collect all the purported stray herds of cattle. The attitude and demand was characteristic of the Maasai desire for cattle. The whole aspect of cross-border conflict therefore was greatly influenced by cultural inclinations.

Marwa (Ibid) says that the origin of cattle rustling as a form of resource conflict among the Maasai and the Kuria, date back to the colonial period where pastoral communities such as the Maasai, were pushed out of their land through unfair treaties and or by the might of the gun, making way for the "White Highlands". The Europeans turned the fertile land previously owned by the pastoralists into large scale ranches for farming while relegating the pastoral communities to the unproductive regions. With the establishment of colonial rule in 1895, the government adopted several policies that favored the white settlers' plantation economy to the detriment of the local pastoralist communities. This mounted

pressure on the Maasai community's resources leading to cross-border raids to replenish their already depleted herds of cattle.

It is observed that before the establishment of the colonial government in Kenya, cattle raids were solely for purposes of obtaining cattle to be used as pride price, as a show of heroism, social power and prestige. Cross-border conflicts were practiced as a form of cultural satisfaction. For the Maasai, cattle raids were not seen as something criminal but an exercise aimed at recovering their cows which had been either stolen from them or strayed out of their stock because for them all cows were God given to them. The Maasai also practiced cattle raids as a way of crowning the graduation of the Morans after circumcision, www.culturalsurvival.org/publication.

The Kuria on the other hand, enjoyed cattle raid as a game aimed at imparting courage, agility and strength to the *Abamura*. It was also a means through which they increased their cattle numbers which were used in payment of pride price, sacrifices among other several functions. Generally therefore, cross-border conflicts that afflicted the Kuria and the Maasai were highly cultural rather than criminal. The same was closely monitored by elders so that no excesses were permitted. The raids used to be conducted within well accepted rules of engagement, and the practice was acceptable to the participating communities. Retaliatory attacks also followed the said acceptable rules, (Frieberg, 1987). However, there were intermittent cross-border conflicts around cattle. They enjoyed the exercise rather than being painful to the two parties involved. But this changed later upon the coming of the colonial administrators. The colonial economy criminalized the cultural undertakings of the two communities of Kuria and Maasai communities

It is indicated that for the Maasai and Kuria people, maintaining a traditional pastoral lifestyle became increasingly difficult due to outside influences that came with colonialism, (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/maasai-kuria). Due to an increase in Maasai and Kuria population, loss of cattle populations to diseases, lack of available rangelands due to alienation, the Maasai and Kuria were forced to develop new ways of sustaining themselves. Matters were worsened by the colonial government's establishment of Maasai wildlife sanctuary in 1918 with 520 square kilometers which was extended later in 1948 to cover 1,821km² of land that was initially open to the Maasai use. This exerted a lot of pressure on the Maasai land thus forcing many to revise their ways of life. The Maasai begun to cultivate maize and other crops while the Kuria also engaged themselves with tobacco farming. To both the Maasai and the Kuria, such shift in lifestyle was culturally a practice viewed negatively.

2.5 The Role of the Laibon, Diviners and Medicine Men among the Maasai before 1920

Bentsen (1989) notes that before colonialism, the Maasai believed in one God, whom they called *Nkai*. *Nkai* was neither male nor female. There were two main manifestations of *Nkai*: *NkaiNarok* which is good and benevolent and is black; and *Nkai Na-nyokie*, which is angry and red. *Nkai* is the creator of everything. In the beginning, *Nkai* (which also means sky) was one with the earth, and owned all the cattle that lived on it. But one day the earth and sky separated, so that *Nkai* was no longer among men. The cattle, though, needed the material sustenance of grass from the earth, so to prevent them from dying *Nkai* sent down the cattle to the Maasai by means of the aerial roots of the sacred wild fig tree, and told them to look after them. This they do to this day, quite literally taking the story as an excuse to relieve neighboring communities of their own livestock.

Any pursuit other than a pastoral one was considered insulting to *Nkai* and demeaning to them. No Maasai was willing to break the ground, even to bury the dead within it, for soil was sacred on account of its producing grass which fed the cattle which belonged to God. Equally, grass acquired a semi-sacred distinctive atmosphere, and was held in the fist as a sign of peace, and similarly grass was used for blessings during rituals, a sheaf of grass being shaken at the people or animals for blessings, Saitoti (1980). Cattle today continue to play an important role in ritual occasions, such as initiation, marriage, and the passage of one age-set to the next.

Spencer (2006) avers that the *Laibon* (also spelled as *loiboni*, *oloibon*) are the ritual and spiritual leaders of Maasai society, whose authority is based on their mystical as well as medicinal/healing powers. Before 1900 they were aided in their tasks by age-group leaders called *Olaiguenani*, who are chosen before circumcision to lead their age-group until old age. There is usually only one *Laibon* per clan. Their role is multiple: to officiate and direct ceremonies and sacrifices, to heal people of physical and/or mental or spiritual ailments, and to provide advice to elders on the spiritual aspects of community matters. They are also prophets, shamans and seers, and are the ones with help from the elders, who name the successive age-sets, and open and close the various ceremonies of age-set transitions. The post of *Laibon* is confined to only one family in each clan and is inherited. They have no political power, although in the 1900, the British installed a number of them as quasi-paramount chiefs during the colonial period, whose rivalries ensured that the British would always remain in control. A *Laibon* also command a lot of power depending on his personality and, of course, efficacy. This was the case with Mbatiany, who managed to command many Maasai sections at the time of the British colonization.

Spencer (Ibid) maintains that the main function of the *Laiboni*, like those of sacrifices, is essentially to bridge the gap between man and God (or "the other world"), though a *Laibon's* influence is generally limited to 'reading' the mind or the intentions of God through divination. The *Laibon* in this capacity are especially consulted whenever misfortune arises, be it the failure of rains, disease epidemics or military losses. They are also healers, deeply experienced in the medicinal properties of the plants which grow in their environment, and whose leaves, roots or bark can be used to treat a wide variety of ailments. According to popular myth, it was the folk of the forest who taught the Maasai the medicinal uses of various plants - whose descendants might well be the Ndorobo and other surviving groups of hunter-gatherers today. The conditions treated in this way range from headaches, stomach worms and other

stomach ailments, to colds, venereal diseases, barrenness, chest complaints, malaria, cuts and bruises, eye diseases, and many other conditions. This was mainly the burden of the Maasai medicine men that were entrusted with the confidence of identifying medicinal leaves and roots.

Whenever one was afflicted by any ailment, it was the responsibility of the medicine men among the Maasai to prescribe medicines appropriately. Even today, the role of the Laibons is still very important, being so deeply entrenched in the social life of the people to the extent that physical ailments that cannot be treated by a traditional physician are taken to the diviner, (Anderson 1986). As a people known for not having forgotten the past, the Maasai Laibon have in recent years also earned a reputation as being the best healers in dispensing herbal remedies to treat physical ailments, and ritual treatments to absolve social and moral transgressions

Kjerland (1995) observes that diviners had a special role to play among the Maasai peoples. The Maasai were so prone to raiding their neighboring communities for either pasture and water points or cattle and therefore the role of the diviner was also very vital in the sense that he could foretell the success or failure of a raid and advice accordingly. Before warriors would go for a raid, the diviner was consulted to bless them and warn them on specific impending or foreseen dangers. Diviners were therefore respected members of the Maasai community and thus always revered. They supplemented and assisted the Laibon as well in offering of sacrifices. Saitoti (1980) shows that the basic Maasai political and social structure before the British colonialism is their rigid system of age-sets (or age grades; strictly-speaking, an age-grade is a stage within the age-set). These apply primarily to men; women automatically become members of the age-set of their husbands. Under this system, groups of the same age (give or take five years or so) are initiated into adult life during the same period. The age-set thus formed is a permanent grouping, and lasts throughout the life of its members. They move up through a hierarchy of grades, each lasting approximately 15 years, including those of junior warriors, senior warriors, junior elders and senior elders, who are the ones who make decisions affecting the Maasai community.

Marriage was traditionally a process rather than an event for Maasai; the representation of marriage as a process rather than single event has long been the practice. The Maasai have a strong division of responsibilities, roles and labor between age groups and sexes and there are regional variations in both the nature of the life stages and the rituals or customs associated with them. This description will be limited to an overview of the major phases and will not refer to the well-documented rituals associated with them any consideration of Maasai male social roles must place at its core the age set system. This is composed of a group of contemporaries, united by their communal circumcision, which takes place between the ages roughly of 15 and 20 years. Circumcised young men are warriors (Moran) and are unable to occupy the same house as their fathers. Historically, men who were still Moran could not marry, as this was seen as the prerogative of elders. Ideally, a man should marry once he has become an elder. In practical terms, a man can only marry when he is economically secure in order that he can establish an independent household. Economic security is normally defined in terms of livestock. Perhaps the strictest rule relating to marriage partners is that the

husband may not be of the same age-set as the wife's father, making the "ideal wife" the daughter of a man who is two age sets older than the prospective husband.

Anderson (1986) argues that a Moran, with his age-mates were traditionally the physical guardians of Maasai society. Their function was to protect their people and cattle from predators and other tribes, to take and guard cattle when grazing, search for new pasture, and raid cattle from neighboring communities. And at all this, they were extremely effective: the tight discipline and training ensured it. Nonetheless, the institution of warriorhood has survived, not least because of its crucial significance in Maasai social life and structures, although the length of time during which the young men remain warriors has gradually been reduced over the years.

For uncircumcised Maasai boys (*laiyok*), the passage into manhood and warrior hood is a long yearned-for event, and occurs roughly at the age of fourteen or fifteen, though sometimes as late as eighteen. (Sainbull and Carr 1981). The exact age and date is determined by elders, who decide when they need a new group of warriors. This occurs every six to ten years on average, and the circumcision ceremonies that mark the initiation (*Emorata*) may be spread out over a couple of years. Once chosen as a candidate for initiation, the candidate dons long black greasy robes. On the day of circumcision itself, the initiates' heads are shaved to show their new status, and over the following months they will make and wear head dresses of birds' feathers (ostrich plumes and eagle feathers are the most highly prized, and are reserved for those boys who did not flinch during circumcision). During this time, the newly circumcised boys "*sipolio*" roam around the countryside encouraging, in the form of teasing, the younger boys to go through the operation without flinching. The Maasai refer to flinching as "*aipirri* or *akwet*", which means 'to run away'. It is a disgrace to the family for a boy to flinch.

During the months following their circumcision, the *sipolio* go through a period of instruction in the arts of warfare and tactics, which is called "*EngKipaata*". During this time, they are not permitted to drink milk in their parents' huts or to eat meat in the *manyatta*. Meat is provided for the warriors by killing oxen away from the settlements. Only after this stage are they officially admitted into the class of junior warriors "*OIMurraniBarnot*", or simply "*ilbarnot*", (Ntanai Joseph OI, 2010). The junior warriors live together in a circle of huts called a *manyatta* (or *emanyatta*; plural *i-manyat* or *manyat*), until they have passed on to senior warrior status and are allowed to start families. This period generally last between 5-7 years, although 8-12 years is not uncommon. Effectively a military garrison, in the *manyatta* they learn the arts of survival, cattle raiding and warfare.

Eventually, when the elders deem that the junior warrior age-set has completed its service; its members are graduated to senior warrior status "*OIMurraniBator*" in a ceremony called *Eunototo* be replaced by a new generation of junior warriors. The senior warriors were a sort of home guard, and were permitted to go home, marry and raise a family. This period of service would last about fifteen years, until he became an elder, (Tiblit 2006)

Warfare was always a spiritual affair, especially wherever land, pasture, or cattle were involved, for it was (and still is) the Maasai belief that God originally gave all cattle to the Maasai as custodians. Yet for all that, there was a somewhat gentlemanly touch in the fact that the Maasai would sometimes send word beforehand to the enemy they were intending to attack. Decisions on whom and when to attack or raid were made by a *laibon* (ritual leader), who would bless a handful of cattle dung and grass from the enemy's land before giving the go-ahead. The warriors would be blessed by elders, who would spray a special liquid onto them, (Tiblit, 2006).

Among the Maasai, peace talks were accompanied by the drinking of beer, made from honey and water; the fermentation was catalyzed by dipping in the root of a plant called *osuguroi*. Peace itself was oathed with a drink of blood and sour milk (the mixture is supposed to have healing powers), and the formal declaration was sealed with a sacrificial dark bull, whose meat could only be roasted - for the aroma to reach *Ekai*, (Nyamangur OI, 2010).

Bentsen (1989) indicates that the end of the period of senior warriorhood, in which a man is already married and has a family, is called *Oi Ngesher*. Some of the age-set names include: *ilpayiani*, *iltasator* or *ilmoruak*. There is no centralized, cohesive authority, as the Maasai have neither headmen nor chiefs, although ritual leaders (*laiboni*) are consulted for advice. Decisions are taken by consensus, and are rarely challenged. These transformations took long to evolve because by 1920, the Maasai still conservatively stuck to their cultural inclinations which obviously followed very strict community rules and guidelines on various undertakings.

2.6 The Role of Abagambi, Diviners, Medicine men and Seers among the Kuria

The secrets of the Kuria community were fully preserved by the diviners and seers. All undertakings were done with their consent and guidance. In pre-colonial times 'seers', *abarooti*, played an important role in the political and especially in the military organization of Kuria, harassed as they were by neighboring Maasai and other Kuria. Seers foretold and in effect planned cattle raids undertaken by warriors, but they also acted more generally to warn of impending events and thus to influence the course of political action. They were distinguished by their more public role from diviners but theirs was not a formal office and it drew upon personal qualities, individual success and local renown. Their predictive ability was identified as 'dreaming' (*okorota*) but the term is used freely in a metaphorical as well as literal sense.

Seers varied considerably in their status and field of influence. The introduced term *omonaabi*, 'prophet', was in use by the 1920s to describe the more outstanding seers of the past, and they were credited with foretelling many of the circumstances that Kuria were later to experience. But by then it was only their prophecies and themselves, or their role that had survived. They would foretell the future and advice accordingly. When the Abamura were planning for cattle raids, they would always do it in

consultation with the diviners and seers of the community. Diviners and seers were older members of the Kuria community with undoubted experience on matters to do with their field of operation. They were people who had very wide knowledge in determining the future. They always worked alongside the medicine men and ritual experts in the community, (Ruel 1991).

Binagi (1976) connotes that settlement patterns differ between the Kenyan and Tanzanian Kuria, as a result of defensive requirements (the Kenyan Kuria were always at greater risk from Luo and Maasai than the Tanzanian Kuria). Thus, the typical homesteads of the Kuria were characterized both by their settled and defensive characteristics. The basic pattern consisted of closely clustered houses constructed around a central livestock enclosure. Between each homestead were (indeed still are) the family's fields and pastures. The homesteads were generally densely distributed each under an elder, *Omogambi*, whether in the savannah or in the hills.

The houses themselves were round, with walls of mud-plastered upright poles and roofs made of thickly thatched grass. Although livestock were kept within the central enclosures at night, the granaries remained outside the stockades. This may appear strange at first, until one considers that their primary enemies - the Maasai, and historically the Luo - were extremely disdainful of agricultural foods, much preferring livestock. As with many of Kenya's Bantu-speaking people, circumcision for boys and clitoridectomy for girls is practiced to mark a child's initiation into adulthood, and thus full membership into the community, together with all the benefits and responsibilities this entails. Unusually, the ceremonies for both boys and girls took place almost simultaneously. The one for the girls was held four days after the boys, (Muniko 1998).

As a rite of passage Circumcision is a central institution in the lives of Kuria people as well as other people, which constitutes the transition from childhood to adulthood, marking the changed status of an individual and his or her family, with the concomitant changes in roles, responsibilities, control, and power. Unlike other ethnic groups, the elders of the secret council must judge a number of physical and metaphysical factors to be successful, after which hundreds of early adolescent boys and girls undergo a series of culturally prescribed rituals, including circumcision. This is essentially the work of the medicine men among the Kuria people. The Kuria have a unique marriage custom where two women can be married, so that a woman who cannot have her own children can still have a family, Fukui and Turton (1979). Polygamy was common, the only barrier being a man's wealth.

The medicine men were also on standby to offer medical services to the injured warriors whenever they were out on a raid. They were experts in herbs and would handle any ailment. Circumcision and child birth were some of the undertakings the medicine men would engage themselves in whenever they occurred. They were respected so much among the Kuria community and therefore would always be consulted whenever a catastrophe befall the Kuria people, (Kusiro 2000)

The political government of Kuria society was originally based on a combination of territorial division by clan, and a system of age-sets in which the social and ritual conduct of each individual was ruled by the age-grade of his or her age-set and these were the men who guided the Kuria and who went by the name "*Abagambi*". Each age-set comprised of all the people of a similar age, and usually changed every eight or ten years with the creation of a new age-set, when the already existing age-sets moved up one grade. So, the creation of a new age-set automatically created a new age-set of warriors; the former warrior age-set would join the senior warrior age-set, and the senior warriors would in their turn become elders, who were the highest grade, (Corry 1945).The initiation into elder hood was called *Isubo*, but was by no means automatic. To achieve this rank, a man needed to have children and grandchildren. Laws were made and enforced by such elders,(*Abagambi*), sometimes with the aid of curses or witchcraft.

Territorial exclusivity is reinforced by a predominant pattern of marriage within the section. Within the *ikiaro*, clansmen, this creates a dense network of kinship linkages. Generation, circumcision, and age sets form an important axis of identification for men that continues throughout their lives and places them in a distinct hierarchical relationship with others. Kuria cattle raiding are embedded within this structure. In the agro-pastoralist scenario, raiders have a dual role, as both defenders and attackers, reflecting a system which is based on reciprocal raiding between groups. This undertaking was supervised by the *Abagambi* among the Kuria people (Tobisson, 1986).

Celebrated in songs and dances, one captures the cattle of the neighborhood in order to marry a wife, (Kjerland 1995) and the same raiders are there to defend one's own cattle against the depredations of the enemy. Yet the raiders' role is never simple. They operate in a particular political structure that, as indicated, among the Kuria is predicated on the opposition of Kuria sections against each other. This aspect makes raiders into heroes and defenders.

However, in the circumstances of Kuria life, it also makes them deeply suspect. Cattle raiding, for as many years as anyone remembers, has been prompted by plainly pecuniary motives as much as by honorable bravado on the part of the young warriors. And, it is clearly in the thieves' interests to engage in the kind of raiding that outrages public opinion, upping the stakes and driving a cycle of vengeance raids into a situation of open war, with its inflammation of public opinion and general mobilization for defense during the day as well as at night, serves to sanction and to mask their activities, (Lugum 1976).

The seers who had the ability to see the future were also always consulted by the Kuria in order to be sure of the future before they undertake on anything. Seers were of importance mainly during planting periods and during times of going for a raid against a neighboring community. From seers, just like it was from the diviners, the Kuria would be able to know what befall them in the near future. Likewise, they would foretell seasons fit for planting of crops and those that are unfit for planting and therefore advice the farmers accordingly, (Kusiro 2000). Even on individual level, the Kuria people would visit the seer to determine their future. This therefore indicates how highly the seers were regarded in the Kuria society.

The escalation into war became a constant threat after 1920 with the influx of small arms, both industrial and homemade guns. Guns profoundly changed the nature of raiding, shifting the balance decisively in favor of the raiders. Before this, raiders came with care and were vulnerable to the poisoned arrows of the homestead's defenders which were prepared by special medicine men. With guns, raiders came brazenly, often openly challenging the homestead and even when this was not the case, fear of guns made the defenders less ready to risk defense. From the 1960s onwards, raiding has been just a matter of cattle rustling, (Heald, 2000).

Conflict between families and individuals would not be avoided in the Kuria community. In such instances, the Kuria had various means through which such conflicts would be solved. The Kuria had the institution of the *Abagambi* who had the responsibility of maintenance of law and order in society. *Abagambi* were people of good standing in the Kuria society and they were always revered. They would solve land, family and boundary conflicts. More elaborate and complex cases were set for a higher hearing at *Ritongo* (Kuria traditional court assembly). *Ritongo* comprised of respected old men of the Kuria community, *Inchama*, (men of seventy years and above) who were well versed with the traditional rules and guidelines of the society. Their court was final in decision making, (Starfield, 2004).

The cattle-keeping Kuria marry off female children some of whom are as young as 12 years old. Today, many remain adamant that the tradition is good and is there to stay. It is unfortunate that while other communities are discarding traditions that drag down their socio-economic development, the Kuria community still embrace the custom of marrying off their children under the guidance and dependence

of Abagambi. What makes teenage marriages especially appalling is that it burdens the young girls with responsibilities that they are ill prepared for.

2.7 Causes of the Kuria-Maasai Cross-Border Conflict up to 1920

Kenya was declared a British protectorate in 1895 thus facilitating a fast inflow of foreigners. By 1920, the Kenyan communities and more specifically the Maasai and Kuria were witnessing an influx of Europeans who were characterized with cultures that were alien to them. More so, they alienated their land by force and consequently caused disharmony among the Kenyan ethnic groups, (Saitoti 1980).

Frieberg (1987) notes that upon European settlement in Kenya, the relationship that existed between Maasai and Kuria communities was reversed and made worse by the consequent introduction of new aspects of change like formal education and Christianity which disrupted their traditional cultural co-existence. In 1920, the British colonial government did away with the authority of the councils of elders and appointed their own hand-picked chiefs to be Kuria and Maasai leaders. By so doing the British imposed a form of administration that was alien to both the Kuria and Maasai people. The imposed leaders conspired among themselves and participated in one way or the other in cattle raiding practice which more often worsened the cross-border relations.

The British had earlier in 1905 imposed heavy taxes on Kenyan community and both the Maasai and Kuria were no exception. In the event that those taxes were not paid the colonial government through her agents confiscated the Maasai and Kuria cattle without question and without compensation. The two communities that were traditionally pastoralists were in a way being played with. Since the Maasai would not stay without cattle simply because their cattle had been confiscated by the colonial government, they had to engage the neighboring communities for the replacement of the confiscated herds of cattle, (Nathan 2004).

Moreover, the colonial government imposed colonial boundaries which in many cases cut off the pastoralists from their traditional drought reserve areas. This led to the death of the peoples' herds thus hastening the need to engage in cattle raiding to replace the cattle that had been either taken by the colonial administrators or died due to drought. It therefore came to be acceptable than before, for a man who felt that his cattle had been wrongfully taken from him to seek to recover his property by taking cattle from the chief or by extension from any other member of the chiefs' clan segment because the chief was the one who took safe custody of the cattle that were raided from the Kuria and Maasai by the Europeans for non-payment of taxes, (Munene 2009)

One of the causes of the Maasai/Kuria cross-border conflict was the influx of Europeans with alien arrangement against the Maasai and the Kuria communities in Western Kenya.

According to Bleeker (1963), upon the institutionalization of the colonial administration in 1895, poll taxes and hut taxes were introduced to Kenyans and more so forced the Maasai to sell their livestock which by this time were increasing rapidly. This was intended to reduce the Maasai's demand for more land for pasture for their big herds of cattle. But the prices they offered were too low and the Maasai quickly questioned why no other group was being made to pay poll tax and hut tax. This mainly affected the Maasai because they were the ones with large herds of cattle. They refused to comply and so the question remained until the outbreak of the First World War. This provided the colonial administration with the excuse to legitimately reduce the number of Maasai cattle. A quota of 2000 cattle a month was imposed to be sold in order to meet the colony's contribution to the food reserve for the military. The quota had the effect of cutting Maasai livestock by 70% between 1917-1919. These undertakings forced the Maasai to look for alternatives in the event that their land and cattle were taken and confiscated. The only alternative to them was to push the Kuria for pasture land and for the acquisition of cattle to replenish the confiscated ones, ([Htt:www.kenyarep-jp.com/Kenya/history-e.l](http://www.kenyarep-jp.com/Kenya/history-e.l)).

Land alienation had a big contribution to the Maasai/Kuria cross-border conflicts.

Archival sources indicates that, in view of the fact that the Maasai were a decaying and decadent race when the British administration was established and that the protection given to them in all probability, saved them from disaster, it seems clear that they had been treated in an unduly generous manner as regards land, (KNA/GN/NRB/4/1/21 (1920). This argument was meant to justify the idea of land alienation in Maasai land and therefore further the land squabbles between the Maasai, Europeans and other neighboring communities. However, the Maasai were not only a cohesive nation, but a formidable fighting force, whose relentless land expansion was necessitated by the need to feed their ever-increasing cattle herds, which were and remain central to Maasai life and culture.

According to Onkuro Marwa Stephen (OI, 2011), traditional clan elders, called "*Nchama*", in Kuria played a big role in precipitating the conflict between the two feuding ethnic groups. These were elders well versed with the traditions of the Kuria people. They were highly respected and revered among the Kuria and whatever they said was followed without question. These elders would give *Abamura* "medicine" and blessings so that when they went on cattle raiding missions they would come out successful. The *Abamura* were indoctrinated to the extent that they went for a raid with a perception that they would not be injured or be killed in the process. They then engaged in the raid with rage and new energy and vigor. In the process of raiding missions, they killed people, abducted women and stole their animals. Onkuro (OI 2011) asserts therefore that for as long as the traditional clan elders continue to draw the kind of respect and recognition they enjoy, cross-border conflict will continue to exist.

According to Boke (2009), the two communities yearned for similar resources which therefore lead to conflicts. These resources were strongly cultural claims to both the Maasai and Kuria communities. For instance, the Maasai believe that land was God given to them to pasture their equally God given herds of cattle. The Maasai and the Kuria cherish large herds of cattle and this demands large tracks of land to provide pasture and many water points for these animals. This demand will always lead to conflict because each community will continuously push for the same resources.

The colonial arbitrary boundaries between the Maasai of Kenya and those of Tanzania and the Kuria of Kenya and those of Tanzania provided a loophole that promoted cross-border conflicts. Animals stolen from one community were easily taken across the border to their kinsmen in Tanzania for hiding or safe keeping owing to the slackened security in the area. A community would raid for cattle against another and deliver the raided cattle to their kinsmen across the border until such a time when the heat would have subsided. This was a loophole that benefitted both the Kuria and the Maasai. The haven found across the arbitrary boundaries for safe keeping the raided herds of cattle encouraged conflicts resulting from raids on cattle from the neighboring communities, (Kusiro, 2000).

Lack of security among the two communities of Kuria and Maasai also contributed to the conflicts between them. Ineffective administration arose because of the remoteness of Kuria and Maasai regions from the British administration posts at Kisii and Narok. Local administration was left in the hands of the chiefs with only occasional brief visits from the British administrative personnel. Many of the chiefs were heavily involved in cattle raiding themselves. It is indicated that in 1919, cattle raiding mushroomed to become the major administrative problem for the British colonial administration because the hand-picked chiefs were so much involved directly or indirectly in cattle rustling, KNA/PC/NRB/2/6/1 (1920). This made conflicts to be continuous despite the presence of the colonial government in place.

According to Muniko (1998), the 1920 drought brought in acute food shortage to the Kuria who were mixed farmers and the Maasai who were mainly cattle keepers. In the event the Kuria did not get their cereals, they engaged in what they knew best would be the immediate remedy to food shortage; cattle raiding. 1920 became the worst year as far as cattle raiding was concerned across the border between the Maasai and the Kuria because the practice became more extensive than before to counter the effects of the drought menace. However, the cultural aspect of seeing cattle as the only source of wealth for both the Kuria and the Maasai contributed greatly to cross-border conflicts between them.

Poor policies by the colonial government also greatly contributed to cross-border conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria. Some of the causes of intensive and extensive socio-economic problems among the Maasai community can be traced to the disruptive and inimical policies of the colonial government

in their attempt to control them. Archive sources evidently show that the Maasai in their response to these policies built up a strong armed resistance and continued to defy colonial orders. (KNA/PC/NKR/8/3/1/2, 1918). By 1917, the Maasai had already evolved effective systems for the mobilization of young men into well-drilled corporate units with initiations greatly linked to raiding activities, as the new initiates wanted to prove their prowess and bravery. To counteract British raids on them, the Maasai raided their neighbors in order for them to restock their herds which were confiscated from them by the Europeans.

Colonial interference in the traditional social affairs of the communities also had a role to play in the cross-border conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria. The growth in number of livestock among the Maasai and Kuria was a menace in the region as per the Europeans' understanding. It is indicated that in 1919, the colonial government authorities occasionally resorted to poisoning the Kuria herds with the excuse of vaccinations (KNA/PC/NZA/2/3/2, 1920). When several animals died, and since the vaccinations were mandatory, the Kuria planned to bribe chiefs to let their animals go free from vaccination. When all other means of reducing herd sizes failed, the colonial government took more drastic measures by forcing through their chiefs to make the Kuria sell a certain number of cattle annually but they resisted. This led to the drawing of the boundary between the Maasai and Kuria in 1920. This was an idea suggested by the Nyanza provincial administration to contain the unauthorized movement of people and livestock. By poisoning the Kuria cattle purportedly to force the reduction of cattle numbers, the Kuria and Maasai pastoral communities engaged in more community cattle raids to replenish the killed ones thus increasing the conflicts.

The introduction of colonial economy in the two communities disrupted traditional ways of livelihood thus frustrating the communities' peaceful efforts. The Kuria for instance would be forced to reduce their cattle against their wish, not knowing that the lack of herds of cattle would make them engage the neighboring community for more cattle. This perpetuated cross-border conflicts between the Kuria and the Maasai. The historical change, or transformation, in the nature, conduct, character, and, ultimately, even the cultural-ecological impacts of cattle raiding among the Kuria occurred as a consequence of the penetration and evolution of the colonial economy and constituted a response by the Kuria to the implementation of colonial policies designed to facilitate the imposition and growth of the economy in Kuria, Corry (1945). Therefore, cattle raiding were transformed to imply hate against the neighbors rather than the traditional practice which at the end did not perpetuate hatred between them. A colonial report revealed that cattle raiding were practically confined to the Kuria, as excitable, violent but extremely in possession of the qualities that a man was traditionally expected of, (KNA/PC/NZA/3/2/32 (1917). Much of the working time of the colonial administration was taken up by cases associated with cattle raids. Evidently, cattle raiding became worse during the colonial period.

Lack of better forms of communication also greatly contributed to cross-border conflicts. There were no roads and therefore whenever a raid was conducted by either party, the colonial government security agents would take too long to reach the affected area. This was made worse by the lack of proper means of communication during the colonial period. Whenever an incident took place, the information would only be delivered by an individual who took long to run a cross forests in order to deliver the message and more often, it reached the security agents too late, (Nathan 2004).

The pressure for land for pasturing large herds of cattle among the Maasai was so intense following the land alienation by the colonial government. Conflicts with neighboring communities would always be to acquire land, perhaps to replace the alienated land. According to Koinet and Kapaley (2008) the establishment of the National animal park in Trans-Mara space greatly contributed to land pressure on the part of the Maasai thus forcing them to change their lifestyle. In the late 1920s, the Maasai had started adopting a settled form of pastoralism where only animals were moved in search of pasture and water while their families settled in given locations. This resulted in the development of hostilities among the various groups over grazing grounds. All these were as a result of colonial attitudes which regarded pastoralism as a primitive mode of production and efforts were made to discourage it. The Kuria were a settled lot though with much love for cattle as the Maasai. They would not move families to look for pasture but move their herds of cattle to far places in search of water and pasture. They also practiced cattle raiding as culture demanded just like the Maasai.

According to Okoth (2005), the pastoral systems were by and large products of climate and environmental factors. Due to the prevalence of harsh climates in these regions, the livelihoods of pastoralists were oftentimes seriously threatened by famine, drought and diseases. In the event their cattle had been reduced by droughts or diseases, the Maasai and Kuria would spy on each other for purposes of raiding for cattle in order to replenish their reduced herds of cattle. The pastoralist communities continued to follow their traditions and cultural way of life over many centuries. The Maasai refused to embrace the Western lifestyles and hence continued to rely on pastoralism as their sole source of livelihood and continued to lead nomadic lifestyles, (Nathan, 2004).

To the Maasai and Kuria, cattle was seen as a valuable asset, a wealth reserve and a sacrificial gift and a pastoralist can do all it takes to protect their cattle and seek for more from the neighboring communities. Traditionally, having large herds of livestock was seen as a source of livelihood base and a sign of prestige. A very high premium was placed on the ownership of cattle, which was an integral part of the Maasai and Kuria culture. High pressure was therefore placed on the Maasai and Kuria communities as culture demanded that a successful member of community was one who had the biggest herd of cattle and whenever catastrophe struck, such as rinderpest and other diseases, they looked at each other in readiness for attacks to replace the cattle that had died and this always caused cross-border conflicts.

The vestiges of the Maasai and Kuria traditional perceptions and practices of cattle rustling continued to play a big role in the incidents of livestock-related cross-border conflicts between the two communities. Markakis (1993) revealed that the role of culture in fueling cross-border conflicts through women who openly ridiculed their men through songs if they did not raid their neighboring communities to provide for their needs was evident. This was prevalent among the Kuria and Maasai communities. Women saw that by raiding for cattle, then their men were strong enough and caring. This encouraged cross-border conflicts further.

2.8 Impacts of Cross-Border Conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai up to 1920

The spread of small arms among the warring communities of Kuria and Maasai was as a result of the continued cross-border conflicts. Lugum (1976) indicates that the influx of modern weapons (small arms) completely transformed the Maasai-Kuria conflict from 1920. The traditional rules that governed raiding activities between the Maasai and the Kuria had been ignored and were partially replaced by more random raids. Traditional raiding and warfare required long training and special skills. Some of these skills were no longer needed when modern weapons were put into use. Those who were expected to defend their livestock under traditional rulers would not do so with modern weapons at play. Cattle raiding which initially targeted people from outside their communities, begun to be aimed at the community instead. The same community became target thus criminalizing the cultural undertaking, (Munene, 2009). The proliferation of small arms led to even very petty crimes that were not known of previously.

Boke, (2009) avers that cross-border conflict between the Maasai and Kuria worsened the condition of an already impoverished people. The numbers of people impoverished by cattle raids were growing large and continued to grow as time went by. Evidence of this would be seen in settlements near towns, trading centers and mission posts. Residential homes were not fit for human habitation because the houses were badly dilapidated. Farms were poorly taken care of and children idled around without going to school. These were consequences of poverty and overindulgence in social cultural activities which included pasturing of cattle, acquiring warrior skills and cross-border cattle raids. By 1920, many villages had been incapacitated to the level that they were totally unable to provide for their families.

Boke (Ibid) confirms that the most serious consequence of cattle raids between the Maasai and the Kuria was the rate at which the community resented western education. Young school going children would not be allowed to join mission schools because they had a duty to take care of their cattle and offer security against raiders. Boys of school going age would not go to mission schools but only engaged

in what was seen as appropriate shortcut to riches since for the two communities, riches were only enshrined in cattle ownership which obviously was obtained through cross-border raids. Even young girls were also forced to be married off to these young men who had acquired herds of cattle through cross-border raids and therefore had the ability to pay the required dowry.

According to Oxfarm (1963), even after the Second World War, the Kuria disliked the idea of taking children to school due to the frequent engagement in cross-border conflicts in the community's efforts to enhance cattle holding. Or if not engaging the neighborhood in cattle raids, they feared of being raided and therefore remained at home to ensure security for their cattle rather than going to school. Consequently therefore many young people of school going age were out of school because of the continuously expected attack from their neighboring community which added up to a very serious consequence of the cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria communities.

Frieberg (1987) observes that legitimate trade was shunned by the community mainly because the benefits trickled down to the affected in a very slow manner. Even the would be investors in the area feared for their security and that of their investment. Therefore, because of these, the two communities of Maasai and Kuria constantly lagged behind in development. Unlike other areas, Europeans did not easily penetrate Kuria land to develop the area until 1949 when they attempted to grow tobacco in the region.

According to the District Commissioner, Kehancha district, Motindika Ncheru, (OI, 2011), many young people were crippled because of the frequent cross-border conflicts. Many had their hands cut off, legs broken, spinal injuries, impaired eyes or even psychological disorders emanating from the frequent cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria. Alongside causing a lot of disabilities amongst the young able people, many lost lives through cattle raiding across the neighborhood.

Lawrence Marwa (OI,2010), asserts that poverty was permanently experienced in the region because the young and energetic men were pre-occupied with the cross-border crisis rather than being engaged in more economically productive activities in the two communities involved. Marwa asserts that many people in the two areas of Kuria and Maasai lived very miserable lives because they lacked more economic generating activities in their areas apart from cross-border cattle raiding activities.

2.9 Summary

The Kuria and Maasai conflict has been in existence for many centuries. The whole problem was enshrined in the cultures of the two communities of Maasai and Kuria who share a common border. Both communities greatly cherish the idea of cattle possession regardless of how they acquire them. The

morans among the Maasai and *Abamura* among the Kuria they would do everything possible to increase their cattle holding in the community.

The establishment of colonialism in Kenya hastened the antagonism and friction between the Kuria and Maasai communities. Colonialism added fuel to the conflict and thus perpetuated the cross-border conflict between the two communities. These antagonisms were brought forth by quite a number of causes to the conflicts which gave birth to several

consequences.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RITES OF PASSAGE AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT-1920-1963

3.1 Introduction

Rites of passage involved transitional activities which included circumcision, hair shaving, marriage and setting up of age sets which went with ceremonies at puberty and which promoted the affected individuals from one stage in life to another. Such rites were undertaken at birth, circumcision, marriage and death. These were segments among both the Maasai and Kuria. The rites of passage for the two communities of Kuria and Maasai carried very major aspects that contributed to conflict. Each community's groups of men and women of certain ages undertook specific cultural activities which were believed to enable them move to the next level of life. These undertakings had a profound connection to cross-border conflict between the Maasai and Kuria. These rites were undertaken to empower a person to fit and fully settle in society with confidence and sense of responsibility. Such elevations to various stages in life were very important to the respective communities such that without them, one would be considered as incomplete in society.

There were many initiations that concerned especially males among the Maasai and the Kuria communities. Initiation in Maasai culture was much complicated than anything else. Although there were many ceremonies in the Maasai society, including *Emurata* (circumcision), *Enkiama* (marriage), *Eunoto* (warrior ceremony) *Enkangoo-ukiri* (meat-eating ceremony), and *Orngesher* (junior elder ceremony). Throughout these ceremonies, boys were encouraged to master and know how to care for and manage livestock. Among the Kuria on the other hand, circumcision and marriage were the major initiations that graduated individuals from one stage of life to another. Essentially therefore, these were cultural practices within the two communities which had to work and operate systematically for the orderly functioning of society.

3.2 Birth as a Rite

Omuga (2010) opines that among the Kuria community, women were believed to be innately dependent on men and are constricted in their abilities, and above all, responsible for bringing forth life. Child bearing was viewed with a lot of sacredness because it was through this that the society was assured of continuity. Every married couple of good health was expected to bear children in order to ensure continuity of the community. Once a child was born among the Kuria community, celebrations accompanied it, whereby, animals were slaughtered. People ate and drank during this time with lots of dance and ululations. The animals slaughtered were obtained from raids conducted across the

neighboring communities. This practice made cross-border cattle raids to be more rampant in order to maintain constant supply of the required cattle for such ceremonies.

Parasayip ole Koyati (OI, 2010) asserts that in all matters associated with birth and infancy; there was an element of providence expressed as the prerogative of God. This observation, it was interesting to note, extended to all living things because it was felt that all things on earth were determined by God. Pregnancy was a closely regulated period with a sequence of minor ceremonies among the Maasai. Cows were slaughtered for the pregnant woman to eat and drink blood in order to build the unborn infant and give the infant the taste of legitimacy of cattle holding in society and also build up the mother's strength over a period of about six weeks in readiness for child bearing. On this occasion, her food was rigidly prescribed in order for the infant to build the characters expected by the society. This was the process of constructing a real Maasai woman or man. Such anticipations together with the other later in life preparations were springboards upon which cross-border conflicts emanated because upon birth, a child will grow and mature with confidence.

According to Saitoti Borrok (OI, 2010), during the months that followed the childbirth, the mother and infant depended on rituals. These rituals included the avoidance of washing with water. Their hair was to be *Olmās* (Ritual hair that must not be cut). Mother and baby were also virtually confined to their village; others were dangerous. The child and mother underwent various rituals in order to enable the newly born baby to be fully associated to the community culturally. The rituals were undertaken with the characteristic slaughtering of cows and goats to crown the ceremony. The animals that were slaughtered during these periods belonged to the community and in case there was lack of such animals; they were expected to be obtained from the neighboring communities through cattle raids. Consequently, cross-border cattle raids were intensified with the cultural undertakings with regard to births among the Maasai community.

3.3 Circumcision and Conflicts among the Maasai.

The young men among the Maasai were grouped into 'age-sets' as culture demanded while undergoing their rites of passage. Circumcision was the most vital kind of initiation rite of passage in Maasai culture. Young men were eager to go through it; because it meant that they had taken the first step in becoming warriors. They took responsibilities for the security of their territory and were to go out and conduct cattle raids from the neighboring communities, (Nathan 2004). The Maasai practiced circumcision as a rite of passage from one stage of life to another. The experience in circumcision was that which involved emotional and physical pain and required a boy to pass the test of manhood; to show courage, endurance, and the ability to control one's emotions. Circumcision elevated an individual from childhood to adulthood. In order for the boy to be initiated, it was a must that he proved himself by showing courage and bravery through being ready for the cultural cut. Once circumcised, the Maasai

considered one a man, a warrior, and a protector of his community. The community value bravery in their warriors and circumcision was a boy's first way to prove his courage even in the face of severe pain.

According to Payerr ole Ntutu (OI,2010), the circumcised young men had to show signs of grown up men, by carrying heavy spears, herding large herds of livestock and undertaking daring cross-border raids for cattle. For the Maasai, this ceremony was attended to by the entire village. Once circumcised, the young men became members of a warrior class-Moran and lived away from their village with other cohorts of warriors. During seclusion, the boys live in *Emanyatta*. After ten years, the young Maasai men take part in the *eunoto* ceremony which marked the transition from junior warrior to senior warrior and graduate into marriage. This practice was conducted with joy, celebrations and pride. From 1928 onwards cultural circumcision among the Maasai took a different direction because the Europeans saw the rite that accompanied the cherished cultural practices to be primitive and un-Godly, Bentsen (1989).

Internet sources indicated that the expectations that came with circumcision had a bearing on how conflict erupted between the Maasai and Kuria communities, ([Http://crawjurd.dk/Africa/Kenya-timeline.htm/Maasai](http://crawjurd.dk/Africa/Kenya-timeline.htm/Maasai)). A young Maasai man, who was of circumcision age, had to exhibit certain abilities in order to qualify for the rite. The young men had to conduct successful cattle raids against the neighboring communities.

Nkasiogi (2000) avers that after circumcision among the Maasai, the young men had to stay far away from the rest of the villagers in *a manyatta* for a period of three months to heal. This was the period of seclusion and during this time the initiates were subjected to some cultural education. The initiates were taught the community values, norms, traditions, and expectations. The initiates were expected to be brave, courageous, show endurance and exhibit warrior skills that befitted their new status. During seclusion, the initiates were also taught about traditional approaches in the treatment of animals, traditional approaches in the treatment of humans, herbal knowledge for motivating psyche and courage, traditional ethics, general animal care among many others. The Maasai warriors were taught warrior skills, how to demonstrate heroism, and all that went with Moranism among the Maasai. They were taught about the qualities most praised in them, such as courage, loyalty to age mates, defense to elders and cleanliness. The courage praised was the courage that was displayed during cattle raids. This was an undertaking that was conducted openly and proudly in the 1920s, (Bentsen 1989). Cattle raiding was more serious during seclusion period because every circumcised young man had a duty to conduct successful cross-border raids in order to show that he was man enough and capable of protecting and defending the community apart from enhancing the community cattle holding.

According to archival sources, the D. C. Narok and D. C. Nyanza consulted the Trans-Mara and Kuria elders regarding the constant cattle raiding across their shared border (KNA/PC/NKR/11/2/5/7, 1952). This showed how cross-border raids had become a menace. And as a response by the District Commissioner, Narok dated 20th November 1952 to the D. C., Nyanza concerning the widespread cattle rustling between the Maasai and Kuria during seclusion periods, it was indicated that he had spoken with Maasai elders concerned but anticipated the full details from the Maasai and Kuria council meeting. This was testimony enough to show that cattle rustling had worsened more especially at seclusion periods. An unknown number of cows had been stolen from the Kuria purportedly by the Maasai. This was corroborated by the letter written by the District Commissioner of Narok to his counterpart in Nyanza concerning the worsening cross-border conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria, (KNA/DC/NRK/3/2/2, 1952).

Church mission stations had been established in Maasai land by the 1930s. The catholic mission in particular, had established mission stations in Maasai land at Kilgoris and another one at Orlogessaille, (KNA/DC/NRK/6/2/3 1929). The two mission stations attempted to convert people to Christianity by preaching the gospel to them and teaching them the advantages of education. These efforts to some extent assisted in shifting the cultural thinking of the Maasai though initially very difficult to convert. Christianity begun to grow from this humble beginning and by 1963, Kilgoris mission had 402 Christian converts. Regardless of these efforts by the Christian missionaries, many of the Maasai people stuck to their cultural undertakings though not as rigorous as it was before the coming of the Christian missionaries.

The traditional culture was now a mixed up culture: the culture that would not be fully understood by its initial custodians. Indicators of such confusion were seen in situations where those who embraced Christianity accepted circumcision of only boys as taught by the missionaries. They also accommodated circumcision in hospitals thus going against the societal expectations. The young and the ones converted to Christianity begun to accommodate western education and culture. With colonialism, the community was made up of mixed adherents, those who followed traditional religion and those converted to Christianity, (Ruel 1991).

3.4 Circumcision and Cross-Border Conflicts among the Kuria

Kabisai Manu (OI, 2010), indicates that for the Kuria, circumcision was a central institution in the lives of the people. As a rite of passage, it constituted the transition from childhood to adulthood, marking the changed status of an individual and his family, with the concomitant changes in roles, responsibilities, control and power. It marked the identity of an individual within the Kuria community and defined a person in relation to the extended family, lineage, descent group and ethnic group. However, women did not have many initiations apart from clittorectomy and marriage. But women were recognized by

the initiations of their husbands. The practice was conducted also with joy, pride and with lots of ululations. However the joy and celebrations that accompanied such ceremonies were short lived with the advent of the Europeans in Kenya. From 1920 onwards, the cultural events took a different direction because the colonial government advocated for the circumcision of only males and the exercise was to be done by qualified medical personnel, (KNA/PC/NZA/2/5/21, 1920-22). The shift in the cultural undertaking affected their way of performing cultural activities. Kabisai Manu (OI, 2010) avers that by the 1930s, the events that preceded circumcision were now illegal and those who conducted them were seen as criminals. However, the activities that surrounded the event or circumcision activities called for control first before taming cattle raids. Cross-border raids were now conducted without the cultural rules that were otherwise used whenever a raid was undertaken.

Circumcision for both boys and girls was the most important kind of initiation in any of the rituals of passage in Kuria culture. The uncircumcised boys longed for the exercise because it meant that they would now marry, qualify for property ownership and be entrusted with the community security and they were to go out and conduct cattle raids from the neighboring communities. The experience in circumcision was a painful experience because there was no anesthesia. The pain was meant to test manhood; to show courage, endurance, and the ability to control one's emotions. Circumcision elevated an individual from childhood to adulthood. In order for the boy to be initiated, he had to prove himself by showing courage and bravery through being ready for the cultural cut. The community valued bravery in their *Abamura* and circumcision was a boy's first way to prove his courage, no matter how painful the cut was, (Sylvester Mwita OI, 2010)

According to Juma Madundo (OI, 2010), the circumcised young men had to show that they were grown men by herding big herds of livestock and engage in daring cross-border raids for cattle. Once circumcised, the young men became members' of *Abamura* (warriors). However the traditional form of circumcision had to change owing to the coming of colonialism with its Christian missionaries after 1920, (Munene 2009). The Kuria begun to embrace the new culture of circumcising boys only and slowly taking their children to school as from 1954 though reluctantly. However, this did not deter the Kuria from engaging in their age old cultural activities that went with circumcision such as raiding for cattle before and after initiation.

Among the Kuria, circumcision was a community affair and therefore a big ceremony went with it. During the occasion, bulls were slaughtered to mark and crown the change of status in life of the young men. The ceremony therefore, demanded that many animals be slaughtered during the occasion. To meet this demand, the young men had to engage the neighboring communities for the required cows for the ceremony. Besides this, the circumcised were expected to replace the bulls that were slaughtered during their big day of initiation. This would only be done through cross-border cattle raids,

(Bleeker, 1963). It was a cultural undertaking that was practiced from time immemorial and still spilled over to the periods after 1920. Such expectations perpetuated cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities.

Frieaber, (1987) reveals that among the Kuria, cattle raiding was an activity best experienced at the time boys were going through the healing process after circumcision. The practice was more prestigious when the young and circumcised would go out and conduct successful cross-border raids. This crowned the perception that the circumcised were full protectors of the community. These beliefs and expectations by the community, perpetuated cross-border conflicts among the Kuria and Maasai.

Incidents of young men of circumcision age refusing to be circumcised were non-existent. It was a taboo for a boy who had attained the circumcision age to refuse to undergo the cut. More so, the importance attached to the exercise did not give room for any negotiation other than negotiating on how the whole ceremony would be undertaken, (Kabisai Manu OI, 2010)

From 1935, a time when the colonial government began to assert its authority in Kuria land, the Kuria community began to experience new culture that had come with colonization and the infiltration of the Christian missionaries into their land. This was so because for quite a long time, the Kuria resisted the infiltration of the missionaries and colonial authority into their land until after 1935 when the colonial authorities began to make more their presence felt in Kuria land. The Christian Missionaries were not readily welcome until after the 1959 and in a very slow pace, ([Http://www.crawjurd.dk/Africa/kenya/kr/Christianity](http://www.crawjurd.dk/Africa/kenya/kr/Christianity)). As many people converted into Christianity, much of the culture was also being done away with slowly by slowly. By 1942, 82 young and old people had been converted to Christianity in Kebaroti Catholic Mission station, (Heald 2000).

However, the converted people emanated from regions where the Christian missionaries set mission stations in Kuria such as in Komotobo mission near Kehancha by the Maranatha missionaries, Kebaroti Catholic Mission, Getongoroma Catholic Mission near Kegonga and Kegonga Catholic mission. From 1935 onwards, Christianity continued thriving in Kuria land more especially because adherents of Christianity were seen to be enjoying the goodies that came with it such as employment. The people, who had embraced school, were employed as clerks in government offices and therefore would be seen to be living in a relatively good life. However, those who were serious followers of their traditional cultural thinking strictly stuck to their cultural ideals and this brought conflicts between those who accommodated Christianity with those who did not and the result was a mixed culture, (Ruel 1991).

3.5 Marriage and Cross-Border Conflicts among the Maasai.

Marriage was traditionally a process rather than an event for the Maasai. The representation of marriage as a process rather than single event had long been recognized in studies of nuptiality in Africa. The Maasai had a strong division of responsibilities, roles and labor between age groups and sexes and there were regional variations in both the nature of the life stages and the rituals or customs associated with them. This was composed of a group of contemporaries, united by their communal circumcision, which took place between the ages roughly of 15 and 20 years. Circumcised young men were warriors and were unable to occupy the same house with their fathers, (Wale, 1977). Historically, men who were still Morans could not marry, as this was seen as the prerogative of elders. Men ceased to be Morans when the subsequent age set was created, and become junior elders.

Marriage was a very important institution among the Maasai community. The marriage ceremonies were conducted with pomp and joy. Every adult man at the age of marriage was expected to raise the expected bride price through raiding the neighboring communities together with his contemporaries and this was conducted as a cultural undertaking with a lot of cultural rules that guided it. This was a stage in life that was viewed with a lot of respect. Once a young man had raided the neighboring community successfully and acquired enough cattle for dowry payment, he was held with respect and recognition in the community, Frieberg(1987).

Infiltration of foreigners into Maasai land interfered with a culture that was practiced with honor and recognition into a criminal activity. Cattle raids henceforth cattle raiding for pride price was done with rage and even involved the killing of people of the affected community. Initially, killing was not allowed. Communities now viewed each other with hate and with the urge to revenge, not as a cultural undertaking but an activity undertaken to avenge with anger and rage. This change of attitude was as a result of new demands from the colonial administration. This was so because the Europeans had come with a new culture that negatively impacted on the Maasai community. The Europeans had come with new understanding of what marriage was. They brought Christianity which demanded that one was to only marry one wife and no more. This was alien to them and thus an interference to their culture, (Morr OI, 2002).

The importance attached to pride price payment among the Maasai perpetuated cross-border conflict, (Payerr Ole Ntutu OI, 2010). Pride price was not an issue subject to negotiation. For a man to marry, it was his duty to look for enough cattle to pay as bride price when was of marriage age. However, if a man would not be able to raise enough cattle for bride price, his father was expected to lend a hand by giving off some cattle to the son for that purpose. Other age mates would also give the much they could but this attracted scorn and disrespect to the victim in the Maasai community. The Maasai were described as the masters of daytime and night time raiding. Glamour and prestige lay in daytime raiding,

(Ndagala, 1992). Beliefs, customs and culture in general greatly contributed to the conflict that existed along the Kuria-Maasai border for many years. The culture always demanded for proper military training in order to provide security to the community and assist in the enlargement of society cattle holding.

3.6 Marriage and Cross-Border Conflicts among the Kuria

The institution of marriage among the Kuria community was a much respected activity before colonialism, (Ruel, 1991). Just like the Maasai, the Kuria young men ready for marriage were expected to raise the expected bride price through raiding the neighboring community. This was conducted as a cultural undertaking with a lot of cultural rules that guided it. This rite of passage was viewed with a lot of recognition and a vital obligation by all young men who had attained the age of marriage and more especially after circumcision. After successful cattle raids, one was held with respect and recognition in the community. The woman that the man was to marry would view him with respect and confidence since he was expected to offer unquestionable protection and security to his family, (Frieaberg, 1987).

Infiltration of foreigners into Kuria land changed a culture that was initially conducted with pride into a criminal activity. Henceforth cattle raiding for pride price was done with hostility and even involved the killing of the affected. The Kuria viewed their neighbors as enemies and not their normal and traditional neighbors who they culturally interacted with, through so many ways among them through cattle raids, but which was done according to strict traditional rules, (Marwa, OI, 2002). This was so because from 1949, Europeans had come and introduced new culture that negatively impacted on the Kuria community. The Europeans had come with new understanding of what marriage was. They advocated monogamy, circumcision of only boys and disregarded the traditional religious leaders. This was foreign to the local people and thus interfered with their culture.

Bride price among the Kuria was a rigid cultural issue which was a community's obligation. It was this rigidity that perpetuated cross-border conflict. Gilbert Botase, (OI, 2010), asserts that among the Kuria, girls were more comfortable to be married by a man who had raided cattle to pay her pride price. In the 1920s, there existed the custom among the Kuria, which required that a warrior-youth who wished to marry but lacked cattle was to present a bow or spear to his father-in-law as a sign of the cattle which he later hoped to raid and capture and then pay. With this pledge the marriage proceeded. When the youth had then been successful in a raid, the pledge was redeemed with cattle proudly brought to his father-in-law. This cultural aspect was so clear and openly evident among the Kuria. Raids were conducted with pride by even alerting their victims in advance of an impending raid. In this case the Kuria were seen as experts at night time raiding. However, this conduct was disrupted owing to the coming of Christian missionaries in Kuria land, (Bentsen, 1989). Beliefs, customs and culture in general greatly contributed to the conflict that existed along the Kuria-Maasai border for many years.

3.7 Conclusions

The transitional rites of passage among the Kuria and Maasai communities were very important and instrumental in every undertaking. Birth was sacred and was therefore accompanied by several ceremonies in order to welcome the new born. Several rites were undertaken to fully institute the new born into the Kuria and Maasai culture. Circumcision was the most important cultural rite of passage among the two communities. It was a painful undertaking but boys had to persevere in order to exhibit attributes such as courage, endurance, bravery and control of emotions. Later after ten years, the boys were elevated into senior warriors and hence ready for marriage. Bride price in marriage was paid from the cattle acquired through cross-border raids. Marriage was very essential among the two communities of Kuria and Maasai and polygamy was allowed. This ensured continuity of the communities. The coming of the Europeans brought a new understanding of birth, circumcision and marriage. Christianity brought the concept of one wife thus bringing forth a contradiction in the Kuria and Maasai culture. These are components of society with each component having its own importance and function for the community's survival and thus justifying the application of structural functionalism to understand the consequences that followed when such institutions like marriage were interfered with.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 ROLE OF ABAMURA/MORANS IN CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS 1920-1963

4.1 Introduction

By 1920, the Maasai newly initiated warriors were culturally forced to demonstrate that they possessed the courage and discipline to protect and defend the community. To accomplish this they needed to kill enemies, capture enemies, seize the enemy's weapons, and drive off the enemy's cattle. To validate their worth as warriors, they had to attack in the open. This was the pride with which the Maasai conducted cattle raids from their neighbors. However, there emerged a cultural shift when European colonial government was established in Kenya. New trends in life were introduced mainly on land entitlement and cultural interference.

Onkuro (OI, 2010) notes that among the Kuria, when successful raiders returned home, they were greeted by joyous ululating women bearing baskets of *obukima* (ugali) and *obosare* (a non-alcoholic millet drink). Even after the establishment of the British colonial government, the Kuria intensified cross-border cattle raids more especially after the 1920s. The cultural aspect such as dowry payment using stolen cows was too difficult to phase out from among the Kuria because it was still evident in the early 1960s.

It was against the conflict background between the Kuria and Maasai communities that the colonial governments moved swiftly in 1950 to physically survey the border line and erect beacons. Each beacon was assigned to a local person for its security and survival. Archival sources reveal the extent to which cross-border conflict had reached. More controversy was brewing between the Kuria and Maasai over a mission school that was built at Ikerege in 1949 (Ikerege Mission School) and Komotobo mission near Kehancha which were at the borderline. In August 1949 a fierce cross-border conflict erupted between the Maasai and the Kuria which lasted six months and claimed several lives and destroyed property. (KNA/DC/NKU/3/1/20 (1949). According to (Kusiro, 2000) each community laid claim to the school thus prompting the colonial government to initiate physical land demarcation by erecting beacons to ease the tensions between the two communities. This was among the many efforts by the colonial government to solve cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria.

4.2 Abamura and Cross-Border Conflicts

Abamura were a set of young men among the Kuria community who had gone through the rite of circumcision and therefore qualified into a given age set. They were the young men that society entrusted with security and general protection against external aggression to the community. Once

admitted into an age set, they stayed in it until death. Admission into this cadre of *Abamura* group would start from about 18 years onwards and that was to be after circumcision. At this age, the *Abamura* would marry and rise up a family. It was from this *Abamura* that *Abagambi* (leaders) emerged. The *Abamura* were a dreaded group of young men whom nobody would dare ridicule, (Daniel Masero, OI, 2010). *Abamura* (warriors) qualified as young men and warriors after being circumcised, and therefore a new age set developed. Over a period of time, all the boys who had reached puberty were circumcised and incorporated into the newest age set. Circumcised young boys became junior warriors, a traditional period that was associated with the establishment of *Manyattas*, for the purpose of protecting the community and increase community cattle holding.

Courage in fighting was one of the most admired qualities and a test of manhood among *Abamura* of the Kuria. Apart from its glory, war also brought booty in the form of cattle to the Kuria peoples. *Abamura* were often called upon at times of need. Livestock raiding continued to be a prudent activity in Masurura Division before colonialism and even after colonialism. Characteristics of *Abamura* were very important in making cross-border cattle raids successful. The Kuria society expected the *Abamura* to display courage and warrior hood through cross-border cattle raids. Alongside this, matters of security among the Kuria and the Maasai were left to the Morans and *Abamura*. All young men (*Abamura*) were expected to be of potency in defense and security of the borders as well as cross-border cattle raids to increase cattle holdings of the community. Consequently therefore, the Morans and *Abamura* were expected to constantly increase their expertise in cross-border raids in order to increase their cattle holdings, (Marwa2002). The young men therefore took it upon themselves as an obligation to raid in order to meet the community expectations.

At the same time, the *Abamura* of the Kuria also underwent rigorous warrior training during seclusion after circumcision. The *Abamura* did not stay long in seclusion like the Maasai but the period took eight weeks within which the *Abagambi* (*Abakuria* men of charisma, insight and power to persuade others) presided over the education offered during that period. Traditions and norms of the community were given to the initiates. The *Abamura* were given education that was a reflection of what the society expected of them after seclusion. It included ability to defend the community, increase cattle holdings amongst them in readiness for marriage and even, display exemplary courage, (Mujuma, OI, 2010). This form of education that was designed for only the *Abamura* was intended to impart courage and a tradition through which cross-border raiding would be viewed positively at all times. After the seclusion training, *Abamura* were expected to display practically what they had been trained on and this was done through engagement in daring cross-border cattle raids, something that perpetuated inter-ethnic conflicts for many years. It is also an idea that is fully depicted in the greed verses grievance theory

Daniel Masero(OI, 2010), and Nkanai ole Saole(OI, 2010), agreed that the legitimacy with which cattle was raided from the neighboring communities and the accepted perception that it was only through

cross-border cattle raiding that young Morans and Abamura would increase their cattle possession to meet future expectations, increased and allowed this cultural tendency to continue. Whenever there were cross-border cattle raiding, the raiders would equally share the proceeds with the aged and the community leaders. The herds of cattle raided would be shared equally without bias amongst the *Abamura* together with the old and retired warriors. The support that was given to the warriors alongside the blessings by the elders motivated the warriors to continuously engage in cross-border cattle raids.

KNA/PC/NZA/3/15/2 (1952-1954), confirmed that after the Second World War, home-made guns had been a menace as far as cross-border conflicts were concerned. The ease, with which these guns were obtained from the neighboring country of Tanzania and the manufacture of the home made guns among the Kuria community, complicated the peacemaking efforts thus perpetuating the conflicts further. The guns gave the Kuria the courage and confidence with which they raided the neighboring communities for cattle. Archival sources show that the ease, with which guns and other home-made weapons were accessed, worsened the cross-border conflicts.

Archival sources indicate that the love the Kuria had for cattle made them to ignore their personal hygiene in that they both shared cattle dens with animals,(KNA/PC/NZA/3/24/2/61930).It was upon this disregard of hygiene that made the Kuria suffer typhoid in 1928. Lack of proper sanitation among the Kuria led to chronic diseases that warranted the August 1928 mass treatment. It was concluded that the poor housing, poor latrine habits, the eating of raw meat, lack of enough food (malnutrition) and clean water largely contributed to the outbreak of typhoid. The Maasai took advantage of the situation and swiftly raided the Kuria and took a large herd of cattle. The Kuria had been very weakened by the loss of the Abamura to typhoid and malaria upon which the Maasai took advantage.

As late as 1951, the Kuria easily accessed guns which they commonly employed in raiding of cattle. Some of the guns would be acquired from colonial soldiers by ambushing them and confiscating arms mainly by the Kuria. The proliferation of firearms in the region meant that conflicts had become much more deadly and complicated. Home-made guns that were much more affordable than the manufactured guns made weapons even more accessible,(KNA/PC/NZA/3/15/21952-54). And this was the main reason why the Kuria were always perceived to be the aggressors over the atrocities that afflicted the Maasai as concerned cattle theft in the 1950s. The Maasai engaged in cattle raids at night while the Kuria raided during the day because of the courage obtained from the possession of very powerful weapons against the Maasai's traditional weapons consisting of spears, arrows and machetes. However, they were also very good in night time raids. These were the trainings that the Abamura underwent during seclusion period in order for them to master the usage of the weapons and use them in times of need more especially during stock raids. Therefore this was part of the graduation for the Abamura into the next stage of life.

4.3 Morans and Cross-Border Conflicts

Morans were the young men who had attained the age of circumcision at age of about 17 years. After circumcision, the young men were isolated into a “*manyatta*”, a Maasai healing residence for young circumcised men, in which they were taught and given the community values, rules and expectations. They went through rigorous training on community traditions and norms. Cultural education was offered by the elderly and mainly the *Laibon*. The importance of cattle in the Maasai community was emphasized during this time and while in the *manyatta*. After seclusion period, the Morans joined an age grade which comprised of warriors who were, like the Kuria, entrusted with the security of the community apart from the ability to increase their cattle, (Erickson Maiyo, OI, 2010).

Erickson Maiyo (OI, 2010) indicates that it was during seclusion after circumcision that the Morans were also trained on matters of cattle raiding, the discipline during the raids, respect of the other cadres of age groups, disciplined use of traditional weapons, roles of every leader in Maasai land, how to use their traditional weapons, the meaning and importance of cattle in their midst. The Morans were also prepared on their expectation in society which included their role in defending the community and enlarge their cattle holding.

According to (Sunkuli KiyapiOI, 2010), cross-border raids were conducted with pride and confidence because they were seen to have the community’s blessings and whoever failed to take part in the exercise was viewed with scorn and disregard by the rest of the community members. Therefore, it was the responsibility of every young circumcised Moran to take part in the cultural cross-border cattle raids because this was their maiden responsibility in Moranhood and thereafter.

The long period that the Maasai initiates took in the *manyatta* in order to heal and the nature of education that was given to them during that time enhanced cross-border conflicts. The Maasai Morans received a special form of education which prepared them for what was expected of them in the future. This form of education was offered by respected elders in the Maasai community who were popularly known as the *Laibons*. They were rich in experience and knowledge of societal norms and values, (Koyati, OI, 2010). Some of the teachings given during seclusion were courage, preparations for marriage, and the Moran’s role in increasing cattle holding, security matters, man hood, societal expectations, and the concept that all cows were God given to the Maasai.

Nkanarr ole Keiwa, (OI 2010), argues that one would do anything no matter how dangerous it would be provided the end result was to increase cattle possession among the communities. The assertion was

also supported by Muniko Marubo (OI, 2010). The data collected showed that many of the Maasai and Kuria lives highly depended on matters related to cattle possession.

4.4 Conclusions

The institution of the *Abamura* and Morans among the Kuria and Maasai, made cross-border peace unattainable. Cultural inclinations greatly hampered peace along the border between Maasai and Kuria. The pride with which cross-border cattle raids were conducted by both the Kuria and Maasai, and the kind of welcome the successful raiders received back home by women made them to conduct yet another cross-border raid in order to perpetuate the honor and respect given to them by fellow villagers. The concept that wealth was a qualification for Moranism and *Abamura* encouraged greed which fueled the continued cross-border raids in order to replenish their herds of cattle. This conveniently called for the greed versus grievance theory to justify and move away from the structural-functionalism and show how conflict was inevitable in society. More so, all that was gotten from the conflicts benefited all in society because human society is a collection of competing interest groups and individuals and each with their own motives and expectations, (Heald, 2000).

The fact that the main source of livelihood for the Kuria and Maasai was pastoralism, cattle raiding was not something that was to end very fast. Compounded with the proliferation of small arms, cross-border conflicts became even more complicated. This brings forth the greed and grievance theory which emphasizes tensions and divisions which result from the unequally distributed resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS FROM 1920

5.1 Introduction

The Kuria and the Maasai were known to be very arrogant and strictly against the introduction of Christianity in their communities. The Kuria are said to have arrogantly refused to be involved in Christian issues in the 1940s with the excuse that Christianity would introduce foreign culture that would corrupt the good morals of their girls and women. Consequently, they vehemently opposed Christianity in favor of their traditional religion. The Maasai on the other hand seriously opposed the introduction of any foreign religion in the name of Christianity because that would disrupt their traditional set-up and eventually do away with the Maasai culture. The Maasai and the Kuria held their traditional religion with very high esteem to the extent that they did not want any interference from any quarter no matter how beneficial the interference would have been to them. They would not imagine going against their gods to whom they had paid a lot of allegiance throughout their lives. Generally

therefore, traditional religion was very pivotal to the Maasai and Kuria peoples' livelihood and also determined their day to day activities, (Bleeker 1963).

5.2 Religious Beliefs and Conflicts among the Kuria

The Kuria were strong believers in the traditional religion which was widely fused with specific community cultural issues. There was strong belief in the traditional Supreme Being (*Enokwi*), who controlled daily activities in the Kuria community. The Kuria paid total allegiance to their cultural religion. If one was said to have gone against the traditional religion he or she could be subjected to certain forms of punishment as designed by the "*Ritongo*", (Kuria traditional court). The Kuria had the *Abarooti* (Seers), who were the custodians of the community culture. The seers would be consulted on almost all matters to be undertaken in the community.

In the 1920s, the seers (*Abarooti*) played an important role in the political field and more especially in the military organization of the Kuria just as the Laibon did among the Maasai peoples. Mbiti (1975) indicated that seers had natural power by means of which they foresaw events before they took place among many African communities. The seers were often people with sharp capacity for both foresight and insight into things. The seers had the ability to predict future events. They in effect planned cattle raids which were undertaken by warriors, but they also acted more generally to warn of impending dangers and thus influenced the course of political and military action. If a venture was foreseen to carry more casualties than success, it was to be postponed until when it was foreseen to be favorable. This was the exact perception among the Kuria.

Mbiti (1975) further argues that upon the establishment of the European colonial government, traditional African Religion among the Kenyan communities was accused of being ancestor worship and therefore had nothing to do with the living. Traditional religion was also called superstition and magic. This was the assertion rigidly held by the Christian missionaries in Kenya. With these perceptions, the colonial government, with the instigation of the Christian missionaries, condemned the African religion among the Kuria, (Ruel1991).Therefore, in the eyes of the colonial government, the African religion was a serious display of how the Kuria were primitive and backward with no trace of any civilization.

What followed the condemnation of the Kuria traditional religion was the introduction of Christianity as from 1949 among the Kuria. The Kuria Christian converts henceforth begun denouncing their traditional religion in the strongest terms possible. Consequently therefore, the rituals that went with certain activities among the Kuria were criminalized and banned. Religious activities that accompanied the preparation for cross-border cattle raids were also condemned. Initiation rites were also greatly

hampered because they were viewed as a perpetration of primitive ways of life. The most affected was the illegalization of female circumcision among the Kuria, something that many non-Christian Kuria saw as a form of disregard of their religion and culture. On the other hand, the colonial government was pleased with the Christian development in Kuria land following the change of heart by many of the Christian converts as regards cultural indulgence of the community, (KNA/PC/NZA/3/4/9/2, 1950).

The ceremonies that accompanied marriages also infuriated the colonial government. The ceremonies were seen by the colonial government as backward and therefore needed to be done away with. Marriage as a form of transition from childhood to adulthood among the Kuria was culturally done and celebrated in the traditional manner. Cattle for the payment of bride price were obtained from cross-border cattle raids which were done with pride and prestige because the exercise was well sanctioned by the elders of the Kuria community.

Archival sources show how cultural inclinations attached to traditional Kuria religion as regards marriages intensified cross-border cattle raids especially during times when individual *Abamura intended* to marry, (KNA/PC/NRV/3/1/20, 1959). It was the duty and responsibility of missionaries to convert and sensitize the Kuria against these cultural activities and convert them into Christianity which was perceived to be the religion of civility. The traditional religion therefore, begun to be phased out from particular regions albeit with a lot of resistance. As a result, European missionaries begun to penetrate Kuria land mainly after the Second World War and establish mission stations, (Heald2000). By 1963, Christian missionaries had been established in Kegonga and Komotobo in West Kuria. Informants who were subjected to oral interview gave information that culminated in the following computation in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

The influence of Religious Beliefs on Cross-Border Conflict

Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Total	
ATR was the	15	14	37	66
Recognized	23%	21%	56%	100%
religion				
Warriors were blessed	9	12	45	66
before going to war	14%	18%	68%	100%

Total 29 29 82 140

The data and statistics above summarized the role of traditional religion in the conflict that was a common phenomenon among the Kuria between the 1920 and 1963. African Traditional Religion which was the most predominant among the Kuria community played a big role in the conflict that afflicted the two communities for a long time. This conclusion was reached after 57% of the respondents agreed that African Traditional Religion was highly recognized among them. The high percentage of the respondents who agreed with the argument comprised of people who had stayed amongst the Kuria for a long time and were aged above 25 years and therefore had good grip of traditional and cultural issues of the people of the areas under study. However 23% of the respondents disagreed with the argument. These people's response was dictated by their shift from their Traditional Religion to Christianity and therefore the argument appeared ridiculing if they positively and actively participated in justifying traditional religion and hence opted to look at the assertion differently. But at the same time, 21% of the respondents were not sure whether reliance in Traditional African Religion contributed to cross-border conflict. This was mainly because the respondents were government officers who had just been posted to the region and hence did not have full information of what afflicted the people of the region as concerned the frequent cross-border conflicts.

In the same line, 68% of the respondents agreed that whenever warriors went to war, they had to get blessings from elders and religious leaders by undergoing rigorous cultural rites that were characterized by traditional religious ceremonies. The respondents argued that the blessings given increased the warriors' ego, courage and desire to engage the neighboring community for cattle raids. Blessings had a bearing on the extent of success the warriors enjoyed. The blessings targeted groups of warriors who were identified to undertake a raid. These findings were possible because many of the respondents were warriors and therefore knew and understood what went along with stock raids and subsequently cross-border conflict. This argument strongly threw light to the conclusion that religion and more so Traditional Religion had a strong bearing on cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria. The data collected also indicated that 23% of the respondents disagreed with the argument because some had already converted to Christianity and therefore would not like to be dragged back to what they were fighting to bury and forget. 18% of the respondents were not sure whether warriors received blessings whenever the two communities engaged each other in cross-border conflict. This was mainly because these respondents were young and therefore would not fully comprehend the role of traditional religion in such interactions between the two communities.

5.3 Religious Beliefs and Conflicts among the Maasai

Among the Maasai, there was a belief in *Enkai* (god) who was the source of successes and failures. Sacrifices were offered to appease *Enkai* in order for him to guide them in their undertakings and thus emerge successful whenever they indulged in cross-border cattle raids. In the event *Enkai* was annoyed, the venture would be ruined and hence make them suffer big casualties. It was *Enkai* who enabled

systematic graduation of individuals from one stage in life to another through specific cultural activities that were assumed to have been sanctioned by Him. There also existed some form of protocol on how to reach *Enkai*. An individual would not directly communicate to the community god. These communications were always done through intermediaries such as diviners, mediums, seers, prophets, and other well-known religious experts from the Maasai community. Among the Maasai there were the Laibon, (seer) who was consulted on matters that affected the community. These religious leaders were always consulted to examine any event to be undertaken in order to find whether it was possible or not depending on the dangers foreseen, (Sainbull and Carr 1981). Therefore, *Nkai* generally controlled every bit of life among the Maasai.

What followed the condemnation of the Maasai traditional religion was the introduction of Christianity from 1890, (Nathan 2004). Consequently, the Maasai Christian converts resisted the traditional cultural undertakings which to them went against Christian teachings. This understanding went along with the colonial government policies and anticipations thus making it criminalize such activities as cross-border interactions which were through cattle raiding. Whenever a raid was planned, several religious activities were undertaken in order to make the raid successful. However, with the introduction of Christianity in Maasai land, such activities were seen as un-Godly and therefore condemned. Circumcision of females was banned and as a result this ban went against society expectations. Alongside this, marriage of more than one wife was condemned by the church doctrines. All these interfered with the Maasai Traditional Religion and therefore many of those who were not converted to Christianity continued with cross-border cattle raids regardless of what the colonial government did to avert such activities among the Maasai community. Cross-border cattle raids were also perpetuated as a form of retaliation to the colonial government because of their interference in matters of the Maasai traditional culture, (Bentsen, 1989).

Archival sources show that cultural marriage undertakings perpetuated cross-border conflict,(KNA/PC/NZA/3/1/20, 1959). It therefore became the responsibility of missionaries to ‘civilize’ the Maasai and convert many of them into Christianity which was seen as the religion of the civilized. The traditional religion therefore, was interfered within those regions that embraced it. As a result of this, many more European missionaries began to trickle into Maasailand mostly after the Second World War. But they entered Maasai land and established missions because of the large tracts of land in Maasailand and their lack of interest in cattle and thereby not competitors to the Maasai cattle. By 1963, Christian missionaries had been established in Kilgoris.

5.4 Effects of Christianity in Kuria and Maasailand.

The settlement of Christian missionaries in Kuria and Maasai land impacted both positively and negatively on the cultures and their Traditional Religion. The customs that accompanied traditional

marriages decreased tremendously. Girls who initially were proud to be married by men who had stolen cattle included in their bride price, began to change their perception and readily accepted to be married by young men who had embraced Christianity, (Binagi, 1976). Consequently, the importance that was attached to raided cattle as the most legitimate herd for bride price began to fade off by the close of the 1950s.

Circumcision which was conducted with pomp comprising of several ceremonies began to crumble down slowly. By 1940, circumcision among the Maasai and Kuria was conducted with some level of modesty by doing it in better medical facilities though the Maasai continued with the *manyatta* system. Cattle raids which were common during times of circumcision reduced greatly because among the circumcised were the already converted Christians. (Bentson 1989) opines that by the 1950s circumcision of girls among the two communities was reduced by encouraging young girls to go to school. However, the circumcision of girls continued on marginal levels among the two communities though secretly. The cultural activities that accompanied circumcision were also greatly reduced and Christianity more eagerly accepted by few people among the two communities of Kuria and Maasai. All these were the product of the acceptance of Christianity to the two communities.

Many of the Maasai people, who initially cherished their Traditional African religion, got converted to Christianity and thereby developed a feeling of disregard and dislike for their old traditional ways, (Saitoti, 1980). In place of their traditional activities, the Kuria young men and women began to embrace Christianity, such that by the time of independence in Kenya in 1963, many Kuria young people were assisting the missionaries in spreading Christianity, (Marwa, 2002). This, to some extent, reduced cross-border conflict though it was not the end to problems of cattle raiding. Those who abandoned their traditional religion greatly assisted the European missionaries in establishing more mission stations both in Kuria and Maasailand.

The advent of Christianity brought in western education to the two communities of Kuria and Maasai. Those who embraced Christianity, accepted western education and preached ideals that were against their traditional culture and religion which had accommodated and fully supported cross-border cattle raids. This to some extent reduced cross-border conflict between the Maasai and Kuria, (Tepilit, 2006). Many of the people who embraced Christianity encouraged their children to go to school and learn western education and thus a shift from informal ways of education to formal ways.

Bleeker (1963) argues that the period that ushered in the much awaited independence in 1963, saw the colonial government introduce policies that focused on the preservation of the national parks and reserves, without due recognition of the culturally rich Maasai ethnic group, thus making the traditional

Maasai way of life increasingly difficult to maintain and preserve for the coming generation to experience and learn from it. The independent Kenyan government championed the implementation of the same project in Kuria and Trans-Mara, to help Maasai ethnic leaders find a way to preserve their traditional way of life while also trying to balance the educational needs of the Maasai and Kuria children. The independent Kenyan government also introduced tobacco farming in Kuria thus exposing the Kuria to the aspect of mixed farming, (Omuga, 2009).

Because of the lucrative opportunities associated with tobacco farming, many Kuria young people, decided to venture into it thus bringing forth another group of people who embraced tobacco farming, others who cherished cattle rearing and another group who practiced both tobacco farming and cattle rearing. The infiltration of visitors mostly missionaries to Kuria and Maasailand, brought in new ways of livelihood, (Kusiro 2000). The Kuria, for example, were introduced to tobacco farming, something that was alien to them. However, tobacco farming did not pick up well until after independence. This form of livelihood changed the economic activities of the Kuria a great deal. Many of the young warriors (*Abamura*), shifted from their cultural cross-border cattle raiding to tobacco farming. However, tobacco farming did not fully eradicate cross-border conflicts because cattle raiding continued among the two communities.

5.5 Conclusions

The Kuria and Maasai traditional beliefs were the foundation through which cross-border conflicts were based. The two communities strongly believed in the guidance given by the seers on matters to do with the cross-border cattle raids. *Nkai* among the Maasai and *Enokwi* among the Kuria, were the supreme beings with mystical powers in life. The supreme beings had so much influence on military organization among the two communities. Warriors would always receive blessings before engaging in any cross-border contact. The blessings were undertaken through oaths, sprinkling and drinking of some herbal concoctions, sacrifices and prayers to the supreme beings. However, the African Traditional Religion was rendered weak by the colonial government and more so by the missionaries. This led to the missionary's aggressive movement to evangelize the two communities of Kuria and Maasai communities. Consequently, Christianity was introduced thus undermining the Traditional African Religion among the Kuria and the Maasai communities. The ceremonies that accompanied traditional activities like marriage were a nuisance to the British colonial government and the Missionaries who had established mission stations across Kuria and Maasailand by 1960. These missionaries fought aggressively to convert as many Africans as possible to Christianity and this had several effects to the societies which distracted them from their cultural adherence and opted to embrace western civilization.

The objective that was discussed in this chapter was whether Religious Beliefs contributed to cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria. Structural Functionalism theory was used to give

guidance since the Traditional religion's involvement in the cross-border conflicts was directed by social structures in the two communities who were responsible of blessings to warriors, foretelling either a raid was to succeed or fail and the medicine men who were to take care of the injured during the raid.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The major concern of this study was to establish the influence of culture on cross-border conflict between the Maasai of Masurura division and the Kuria of Kegonga division. To unravel this, an investigation was carried out on the independent variables, the influence of rites of passage, *Moranism/Obomuraism* and religious beliefs on conflicts between the said communities. The indicators for the role of culture in conflicts were the pride with which the two communities engaged in conflicts. These indicators were characterized by cultural activities like circumcision, education during seclusion and pride price payment. Structural-Functionalism and greed verses Grievance theories were employed to understand cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. This chapter gives a summary of the findings in the thesis. It also draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the study findings.

6.2 Summary of the Findings

The study was guided by three main objectives; the first objective was to establish the extent to which the rites of passage influenced conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria, the second objective entailed an examination of the role of Abamura and Moranism in the conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai, and the last objective sought to examine the role of religious beliefs on Maasai and Kuria cross-border conflicts.

The study revealed that the rites of passage had a great role to play on cross-border conflict. Expectations that came with circumcision, marriage and age set system encouraged the peoples'

engagement in cross-border cattle raids in order to achieve and meet these expectations. For instance, when a Maasai was of marriage age, he was expected to have a big herd of cattle from which he was to pay bride price. Therefore, this compelled the Morans to go for war and in the process raided for cattle for this purpose. When of circumcision age the Morans among the Maasai and *Abamura* of the Kuria had to show courage and heroism through successful raids against each other. Age-set systems comprised of young men who had exhibited some form of heroism through conducting warrior activities like successful raids for cattle against their ethnic neighbors. These cultural inclinations perpetuated conflict between the Maasai and Kuria of western Kenya. However, these undertakings had to undergo some shift due to the incoming Christian missionaries.

The second objective was to establish the role of Moranism and *Abamura* in cross-border conflicts. The study revealed that the Maasai and Kuria communities expected the *Abamura* and the Morans to ensure that there was security for their separate communities. Because of these expectations, *Abamura* and the Morans had to undergo rigorous military training in order for them to measure to expectation. Such training entailed conducting successful raids for cattle against the neighbors. The study also revealed that the Morans and the *Abamura* were required to secure and jealously protect the community values. This entailed protection and acquisition of all the cattle from everywhere for the Maasai because all cattle were meant for them according to the Maasai cultural belief. These anticipations however, continued to tremendously change following the infiltration of the European missionaries who came with Christianity and the formal education.

The third objective was to find out the role of religious beliefs of the two communities on conflict. Beliefs on witchcraft were still prevalent and adhered to between 1920 and 1963. These beliefs made the young warriors gain false confidence whenever they went to war. Traditional priests and the Laibon blessed the warriors before going to war. This gave warriors confidence and the rage to attack thus perpetuating cross-border conflict. The confidence generated from the cultural activities of seers and diviners in the two communities manipulated the minds of the warriors with strong beliefs of always coming out of the raid successfully. And whenever they came out of the war successfully, their dependence on these seers and diviners became even stronger. All in all, the Laibon among the Maasai and *Omogambi* among the Kuria played a great role on cross-border conflicts.

Culture was a very pronounced community asset which everybody had a duty to abide by. One who went against the community's culture was to be subjected to various forms of sacrifices by which they were pressed to ask for forgiveness and subsequent acceptance in the community. Therefore the strong adherence to culture in the two communities was a must for every member, something that had a strong bearing on the cross-border conflict that afflicted the affected communities for a very long time.

6.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study generally sought to establish the extent to which culture influenced conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. The study went out to find the extent to which cultural rites of passage influenced cross-border conflicts between the Kuria and the Maasai. Secondly, the study endeavored to explore the extent to which Moranism and *Obomuraism* contributed to conflict between the Maasai and Kuria and lastly, to examine the role of religious beliefs on the conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai of western Kenya.

The study findings validated the above objective; the influence of culture on cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. Findings showed that the strong inclination to cultural activities greatly contributed to cross-border conflicts between the Kuria and Maasai. The expectations that went with marriage, circumcision, Moranism or *Obomuraism*, had a big bearing on cross-border conflicts.

Needless to say, the study did not cover all areas of the role of culture in cross-border conflict. However, that did not detract the researcher from the value of the research and, in fact it unearthed much concerning the role of culture in cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. It had added to the value of the study insofar as it enabled the researcher to devote greater time, effort and space to the exploration and investigation of the influence of culture on cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria. By limiting the scope of research to the involvement of culture on cross-border conflicts, the researcher was able to more thoroughly focus on the proposed research questions and satisfactorily respond to them.

6.4 Recommendations

The recommendations to be made are confined to the cultural influence on conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria of western Kenya. Administrators, politicians, government and all stake holders may develop strategies for controlling cross-border conflicts in society.

The government policy makers may address aspects that will divert the people's attention from the engagement in cattle raids to more viable economic activities between the two communities. Such aspects may involve infrastructural development and training locals of Kuria and Maasai on the importance of peace and the engagement in more viable economic activities. After independence, in 1963, such rigid traditional inclinations were supposed to have been fused with some form of modern aspects of civilization like schooling and legitimate forms of trade as a way of preparing them for better

living and also this would have shifted their attention to more reasonable development activities than cross-border cattle raids. This argument is based on the revelation that cross-border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria still persists to the present day.

The two communities of Kuria and Maasai should also be actively involved in matters to do with development through the participation of Non-Governmental Organizations. Through these organizations, the communities' members would access some form of civic education which will propel many to levels that are beyond cross-border fighting. Through the non-governmental organizations, people will be educated on the importance of school so that they are encouraged to take their children to school for formal education. The main recommendation here is to employ active participation of the NGOs in these communities to assist and help people out of their unchanging culture to more acceptable lifestyles in society.

Early warning systems should also be instituted and in some cases modified so that appropriate measures can be taken to protect victims of cattle raiding; and intervention decisions can be made, based on the level of violence, culture and other contextual considerations, for circumstances in which abuse is identified. This would also be of assistance in setting guidelines for the use of mediation and other types of intervention. The development of programs and capacities to manage and respond to disruptions particularly those relevant to efforts aimed at preventing cattle rustling which is held by these communities as a cultural right.

To avoid land use conflicts between neighboring pastoral communities, county governments should carry out extensive land survey that would document the major uses of land, the users and seasonal or temporary and subsidiary users of land in the districts. This calls for the involvement of different land users in order to make them feel part of the land survey process. Through this system, communities will understand and respect the drawn boundaries.

The Maasai like any other pastoral group move around their vast land because of certain reasons that largely centre along their livelihoods. Therefore because of this, the county planners should address this issue carefully as they also have rights to enjoy the natural resources. Purposeful investment in technology and managerial improvements in animal husbandry is crucial.

The government should support the cattle loving communities with initiatives in extension delivery system, veterinary services, marketing and market information, and traditional medicine others. The Non-governmental Organizations operating in the pastoral areas in collaboration with local governments

must take the lead in order to make the venture a success. This will give them alternative occupation rather than the engagement in cross-border cattle raids.

The government should also initiate programs to develop the mediation and conflict prevention capacities of local authorities, and of the local communities themselves who in most instances lack the skill and gist of conflict resolution. This involves strategic investment in awareness, training and local peace-building resources including potentially undervalued resources within each community such as women's networks. It is also a priority to develop appropriate communications and partnerships between national and regional or indigenous leaders within communities; and an emerging civil society,

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

To be able to develop accurate conclusions from the study, it is imperative for further research to be conducted on the following areas. A similar study should be conducted focusing on the contribution of corruption among government officials on conflict. Another study may be conducted on the colonial creation of boundaries that subjected the Maasai and Kuria to belong to two countries of Kenya and Tanzania. Focus should be on what can be done to instill the sense of brotherhood between them even though they belong to two regions. A study may also be done to establish the relationship between early marriages and underdevelopment in the region and how this influences cross-border conflict. Another study on the role of culture on cross-border conflicts can be done beginning from 1963 to the present because conflicts still exist between the two communities. This study will unearth cultures that have been perpetuated from time immemorial and which have greatly contributed to cross-border conflicts.

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KNA/PC/NZA/2/5/21 (1920-1922) Circumcision

KNA/PC/NZA/3/24/2/6 (1930) Stock Affaires

KNA/GN/NRB/4/1/21 (1920) Maasai Land

KNA/PC/NZA/3/15/2 (1952-1954) Small Arms

KNA/PC/NRV/3/1/20 (1959) Traditions in Kuria

KNA/PC/NZA/3/4/9/2, (1950), Religious Affairs

KNA/GN/NRB/6/4/13, (1924) European Settlement in Kenya

KNA/PC/NZA/3/1/20, (1959) Cattle and Land in Kuria

LIST OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	LOCATION	LENGTH OF RESIDENCE
1	Benjamin Kekore	78	C.L.	Kuria	57
2	Benson Oirao	71	O.	Kuria	71
3	Bishop Linus Okoth	76	RL	Kuria	56
4	Daniel Masero	81	MM	Kuria	81
5	Daniel Muniku	68	OR	Kuria	60
6	Daniel Wansako	77	M.M.	Kuria	72
7	David Nkaina Joseph	82	OR	Maasai	82
8	Dorcas Rioba	79	M.M.	Kuria	79
9	Erickson Maiyo	79	OR	Maasai	70
10	Eunice Robby	67	C.L.	Kuria	67
11	Gaisuro Muniko	69	OR	Kuria	69
12	Gisiruri Ogange Muniko	25	M	Kuria	25
13	Golbert Botase	66	OR	Kuria	66
14	Hellen Kusiro	72	BPCM	Kuria	66
15	Jacob William Okabwa	78	BPCM	Kuria	72

16	James Nyambago	61	O.R.	Kuria	61
17	JoannesChachaMarwa	48	LP	Kuria	42
18	John Bongei	79	MM	Maasai	79
19	John Madundo	68	C.E.	Kuria	68
20	John Mujuma	72	C.E.	Kuria	72
21	John Obiri	34	SW	Kuria	12
22	Joseph Maroa	28	M	Kuria	28
23	Julius Monir	74	MM	Kuria	74
24	JumaMadundo	70	CE	Maasai	61
25	Justin Korrir	72	OR	Kuria	72
26	Kabisai Manu	81	O.R.	Kuria	77
27	Kennedy Ntutu	59	CL	Maasai	48
28	MaisoriOmae	22	M	Kuria	22
29	ManikoMarubo	74	BPCM	Kuria	74
30	Mathew Mwita	25	M	Kuria	25
31	Moi ole Ntaker	27	M	Maasai	27
32	Morr Joel	83	OR	Maasai	79
33	Nkenei ole Ntamai	71	BPCM	Maasai	71
34	Ntanai Joseph	26	M	Maasai	26
35	NyamangurNkanae	68	BPCM	Maasai	68
36	OnkuroMarwaStephene	77	BPCM	Kuria	77

37	Parasayip ole Koyati	58	L	Maasai	58
38	PayariStephene	58	OR	Maasai	58
39	Payerr ole Ntutu	69	BPCM	Maasai	69
40	SaitotiBorrok	58	CE	Maasai	50
41	Samson Ayerr	62	MM	Maasai	56
42	Samuel Maboega	74	M.M.	Kuria	70
43	Samuel Nyamohanga	24	M	Kuria	24
44	SamwelChacha	78	BPCM	Kuria	78
45	SunkuliKiyapi	58	OR	Maasai	52
46	SylvesterMwita	59	C.E.	Kuria	59
47	TruphenaMaiyo	70	BPCM	Maasai	65

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Questionnaire for the Influence of Culture on Cross-Border Conflicts

All questions should have one answer unless otherwise stated. Do not indicate your name.

Section A: Contextual and personal Data.

1) Which is your leadership position in the region?

a) Clan leader/traditional leader

b) Administrator

c) Religious leader

d) D.C

e) Heads of schools

2) Which district do you come from?

a) Kuria East

b) Kuria West

c) Trans-Mara

d) Other

3) How long have you resided in this region?

- a) ≤ 15 years
- b) 16-31 years
- c) 32-47 years
- d) ≥ 48 years

4) Which is the main source of livelihood in your community?

- a) Subsistence farming
- b) Livestock keeping
- d) Pastoralism
- e) Plantation farming

5) Which is your religion?

- a) Christianity
- b) Islam
- c) African Traditional Religion
- d) Others

6) Are you aware of the Maasai-Kuria cross border conflicts?

Yes..... No.....

If yes, explain

.....

.....

7) When did the last conflict that you know between the Maasai and Kuria occur?

- a) Within the year 2011
- b) Between 0-15years ago
- c) Between 31-46 years ago
- d) Over 47

SECTION B.

PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE MAASAI AND THE KURIA

9) Identify any three factors that contributed to conflicts between the Maasai and the Kuria

a).....

b).....

c).....

10). Did circumcision as a rite of passage from youth to adulthood influence cross- border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria?

Yes.....

No.....

Explain

.....

.....

11). How did the proceeds from war benefit the warriors in your community?

.....

.....

12). Did the source of livelihood fuel cross border conflicts?

Yes..... No.....

If yes, explain

.....
.....
.....

13) Which were the common weapons used by Morans and Abamura?

- a) Arrows
- b) Spears
- c) Guns
- d) Machetes
- e) Others

14) Which were the indicators of a wealthy person?

- a) Large herd of cattle
- b) Number of wives
- c) Number of children
- d) Others

15) Which was the common method of acquiring wealth in your community?

- a) Farming
- b) Trading
- c) Raiding

d) Others

16) Before warriors went to war, did they receive any blessings from the religious leaders?

Yes..... No.....

If yes, explain.

.....
.....
.....

17) Did religious rituals influence conflict between the Maasai and the Kuria communities?

Yes..... No.....

If yes, explain.

.....
.....
.....

19). which age group was greatly affected by the cross border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria?

Between:

10-15

16-20

21-25

26-30

Over 30

SECTION C

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement on influence of culture on cross border conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement on culture and

Conflict on a five point Likert scale of 1-5 where;

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

S.N

STATEMENT

	Rites of Passage	1	2	3	4	5
A	Dowry payment was a personal obligation					
B	The expectations that went along with circumcision caused conflict					
C	The kind of education the youth were given during seclusion after circumcision inculcated the desire for victory in war.					
D	To qualify for marriage, one had to amass enough wealth					
	Moranism and Abamura	1	2	3	4	5
A	One of the qualities for one to qualify into full Moranism was how much wealth he amassed.					
B	Proceeds from war benefited the warriors and the community.					
C	Weapons used during the times of conflict were the traditional ones, e.g. spears, arrows, machetes etc.					
	Religious Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5

A	African Traditional Religion was the main religion in your community					
B	Before warriors went to war, they were given blessings from religious leaders.					
Effects of Cross-Border Conflict		1	2	3	4	5
A	Cross-border conflict greatly contributed to loss of lives					
B	The border conflict resulted in physical disabilities among the population					
C	Cross border conflict greatly affected the economic growth of the region.					
D	The main economic effect of cross border conflict was the loss of livestock and property destruction					
E	Cross border conflict led to the proliferation of small arms in the community.					
F	The conflict across the border led to high drop-out rate from school.					
G	Cross border conflict made many investors to shy off from the region					

12 Did dowry payment compel one to engage in cattle raids? Yes () No ()

13 At what age was one expected to marry and start a family? -----

14 Did the war proceeds benefit both warriors and the community in general? Yes () No ()

If yes explain-----

15 Which were the types of weapons used during cross-border conflicts? -----

16 Which was the age bracket of those entrusted with community security? -----

17 Which was the main source of livelihood for the community? Land () Cattle () Trade () Raids ()

18 Did the desire for sources of livelihood cause conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria communities? Yes () No ()

Explain-----