

THE CENTRALITY OF MARRIAGE IN AFRICAN RELIGIO-CULTURE WITH
REFERENCE TO THE MAASAI OF KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

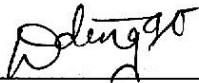
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UNIVERSITY

APRIL 2016

DECLARATION

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


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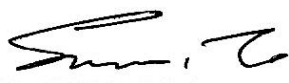
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DEDICATION

To great ancestors: our father, Raphael Francis Okiya, grandfather and a great model, Sylvester Rajula Okiya, a great educator, Rev. Alexius Mkayu Lipingu, IMC, who all instilled in me the value of education, both formal and through life experiences.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Age Set: a group of young males who are initiated into adulthood together through circumcision.

Ceremonies: events that mark stages in life.

Clans: ancestral divisions which are inherited paternally and do not change throughout one's lifetime.

Cultural Domains: cultural activities and events that are experienced as one's life unfolds.

Cultural Knowledge: those ideas that are gained from experience and oral tradition and stored in the brain (neo-cortex).

Cultural Themes: expression of the beliefs of African Spirituality, such as symbols, beliefs, ideas and lived values.

Culture: is a pattern of behavior and thinking that is created, shared and learnt in a community and distinguishes one human group from another.

Maasai culture: living patterns of Maasai people.

Marriage (African): is a bond between two adult individuals of the opposite sex who make a commitment to remain in a union as husband and wife/wives and is publicly sanctioned and supported by their communities with the primary purpose of raising a family.

Nominal Reincarnation: remembrance through naming.

Religio-cultural: formal expression of spirituality within a pattern of behaviour created, shared and learnt in a community.

Religion: is a people's formal expression of a spirituality that they hold in consciousness and which is their expression of the concern with the ultimate reality. It is an attempt to foster a relationship between the human and the extra-ordinary forces believed to control personal life and community life.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GoK	Government of Kenya
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
IMC	Consolata Missionaries
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
Kshs	Kenyan Shillings
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MHM	Mill Hill Missionaries
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PFC	Provisional Federal Constitution

ABSTRACT

The study explored Maasai religio-cultural beliefs, the place of marriage in Maasai cultural and religious beliefs, to what extent Maasai cultural and religious beliefs are related to and manifested in Maasai marriage and the changes affecting Maasai marriage with regard to the religio-cultural themes. This research was guided by a thematic approach to the study of African religio-cultural knowledge and specifically by analysing the topic through the matrix of fifteen religio-cultural themes. The fifteen religio-cultural themes articulate in a systematic manner the beliefs of African Religion which are entwined and embedded in African religio-cultural knowledge, giving that knowledge a special sacral and personal dimension. The aim of this work was to explore the central role played by marriage in African religio-culture with a focus on the Maasai of Kajiado County, Kenya. The study set out to investigate if marriage manifests culture and religion and if the Maasai have a rich, persistent cultural marriage heritage with many of the historical, cultural and religious practices still largely intact and influential despite the many challenges it faces in the contemporary world. The study was exploratory in nature and adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It was implemented through gathering data from members of the Maasai ethnic community in Kajiado District now Kajiado County. The sampling units considered were the number of households (96,621), the average population per division (58,000) and the total Kajiado Maasai population (464,883) as presented in the Kajiado District Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010. Primary data was collected through surveys while secondary data was collected through library research. Four sets of research instruments were used in gaining access to the primary data for the study. These were questionnaires, interview schedule, observation checklist and focus group discussion guide. The data was then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques within the purview of the research questions and fifteen African religio-cultural themes: God, Ancestors, Living Dead, Nominal Reincarnation, African Lineage, Leadership, Adulthood/Elderhood, Bridewealth, Marriage, Polygyny, Herbalist, Diviner, Witch, Witchcraft and Death. Quantitative data was summarized and presented using graphs, charts and frequency tables. This was done to exemplify main trends that were derived from certain concrete responses. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. This exercise involved classifying data into key themes, patterns and relationships. Propositions and conclusions were then made based on the apparent patterns of relationships within the data. The data of this study shows that Maasai marriage manifests and reflects Maasai religio-cultural themes. The main findings corroborated, in a large way Kirwen's theory of the fifteen themes of African Religio-Cultural Knowledge. The study recommends that in order to find sustainable solutions to challenges facing Maasai marriage, it is best to look carefully into Maasai marriage with regard to Maasai religio-cultural themes.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

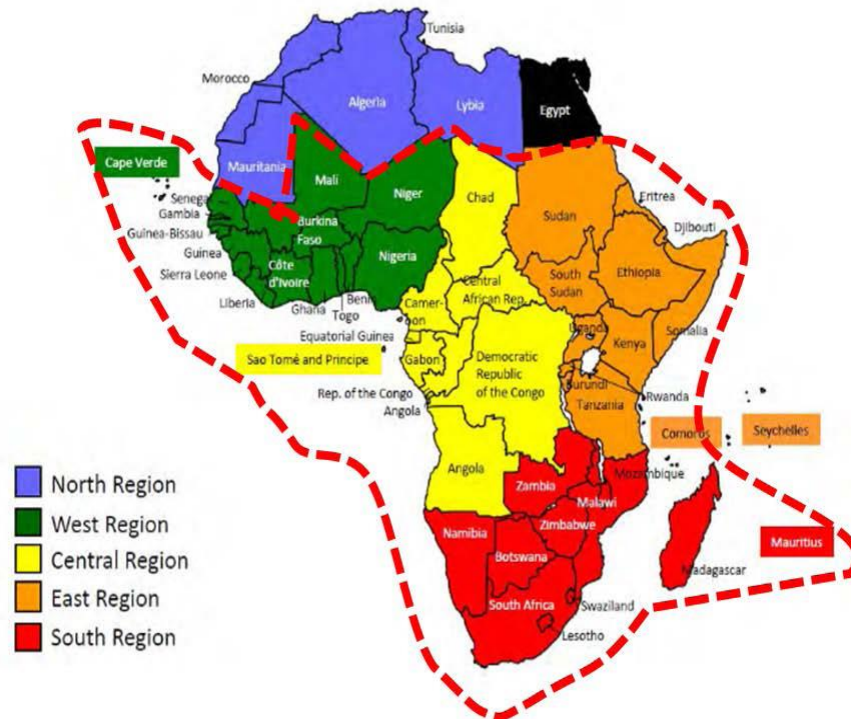
1.0 Background to the Study

Africa is composed of multi-cultural societies. Smithe (2002) estimates that in Africa, there are "... more than 3,000 distinct ethnic groups" speaking "over 1,000 separate languages" (p. 1; cf. Thomas 2005; Lawson 1985). The continent possesses a deep religious and cultural heritage that informs and governs the life and activities of its people (Olupona 2014; Chitando & Hadebe 2009; Lugira 2009). African Religion and culture, as Thorpe states, are "closely interwoven" (Thorpe 1994, 1) or interlaced. Thomas (2005) adds that: "Religion and culture are so intertwined that it is impossible to speak of one without the other" (p. 7). That is why African religion and culture can be described as "African religio-culture" (cf. Oduyoye 1995, 12 & 110).

In ethnographic circles, Africa has been divided into two regions, North and South, with the North being predominantly Arab (Lawson 1985; cf. Magesa 2013). The South has the largest number of people and the highest population, estimated to be 70 per cent of the population of the whole continent, with a variety of religio-cultural orientations (Smithe 2002, 2). This area lies South of the Sahara Desert. It is also referred to as sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Magesa 2014).

Sub-Saharan Africa has an area of 24.3 million square metres, comprising forty two countries and six island nations divided into four regions: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa (cf. Barnett 2000, 23-26). Map 1 below marks out Sub-Saharan Africa with the dotted line leaving out the North Region.

Map 1: Sub-Saharan Africa (adapted from the AFRICOM Posture Statement 2012)



Some scholars maintain that these four regions (West, Central, East and South) share a religious worldview except Somalia. For example, Kirwen (2011) argues that “it is this shared cultural knowledge that is the fundamental source of the cosmic and spiritual unity of more than half a billion African people” (p. ii). In the case of Somalia, according to the International Religious Freedom Report of 2013, “the Provisional Federal Constitution (PFC) enshrines Islam as the state religion, prohibits the propagation of any religion other than Islam, and stipulates all laws must comply with the general principles of sharia (Islamic law)” (p. 1).

However, in the other countries of the four regions, the expression of the religious worldview in terms of concrete rites and rituals varies from one region to the other, from country to country and from ethnic group to another. These religious

expressions are described by Thomas (2005) as 'religio-cultures' (p. 7). Thomas (2005) further argues that "all religion is in part culturally constructed" (p. 7) and serves as a manifestation of the "uniqueness of each culture" (p. 7-11). This uniqueness of each culture is emphasized by Geertz (1973) when he writes that "we are, in sum, incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture – and not through culture in general but, through highly particular forms of it (p. 49).

African Religion includes a set of beliefs and practices. The practices arise from beliefs that are held in consciousness by each African ethnic group. These beliefs and practices put together are summed up as African Religion. The beliefs and practices are imparted to each member of the community through a process of socialization.

The key role of religion in human life articulated by Lugira (2009) is that religion "shapes (a) people's lives and plays a key role in politics and culture. This makes it vital that we understand as much as we can about the world's religions" (p. 6). The role of African Religion is especially significant since it touches on all aspects of African life. It touches on family and community at large, health, the economy, leadership and the daily activities of the community.

Kenya, where this study took place is located in Eastern Africa. Kenya is comprises 42 major ethnic communities, the Maasai being one of them. Each of Kenya's ethnic groups has a cultural and religious tradition. It is within this context that this study set out to investigate Maasai marriage as a unique cultural and religious tradition. The

investigation began from a viewpoint as to whether Maasai marriage can serve a sacred role as a unifying force that integrates, preserves and disseminates salient religio-cultural values of Maasai people. Marriage, as the focal point of this study, was viewed as a religio-cultural experience.

1.1 The Place and Understanding of Marriage in African Religio-Cultures

This study investigates Maasai marriage and cultural knowledge from the viewpoint of the scholars who subscribe to the unity of African cultures in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. ter Haar 2009, 3; Ray 2000, x; Kirwen 2011). What has been said about African religio-cultures can be said about concepts and customs of marriage in Africa. This is because marriage is one of the key religio-cultural institutions in Africa. Marriage manifests the unity of African religio-cultures in its various expressions among African ethnic communities (cf. Bahemuka 1983, 88-100).

A people's religion is their formal expression of a spirituality that they hold in consciousness and which is their expression of the concern with the ultimate reality. This concern with the ultimate reality arises when human beings come to terms with their own limitations and the limitations of the environment in which they live. This realization propels the human being to seek to relate with this ultimate reality because human beings naturally seek harmony. Religion is an attempt to foster relationships between humans as well as with the extra-ordinary forces believed to control personal life and community life.

This concern with the relationship between the human and the extra-ordinary in African Religion begins concretely with the relationship between human beings themselves and human beings and the cosmos. African Religion views the world as one sacred reality where there is no division between sacred and secular (Gehman 2005, 55). The current research investigates one of these sacred realities, which is marriage as it manifests and relates to African Religion and cultural knowledge. Marriage is one among the major initiation rites that are fundamental to human growth and development both at the individual and the community levels. Oduyoye, while discussing African religion, stresses the importance of rituals. She places marriage among the key rituals and festivals. She states that:

African religion gives a major role to rites of passage. An individual's path through life is monitored, marked, and celebrated from even before birth to death and thereafter, and the events in the life of a community echo this same cycle. Throughout a person's life several rituals may be celebrated. (Oduyoye 2004, 79; cf. Cox 1998, xi)

There are major African initiation rites that have been handed down through generations of ancestors. These rites have a major function of linking the individual to the community and the community to the spiritual world. African communities do not take it for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults. They have to be socialised or initiated into the community.

The process of initiation involves undergoing a set of rites to begin a new phase of life in the community. It marks, in a fundamental way, passing from one phase in life to

the next more mature phase. It has a fundamental element of transforming the individual. The individual is not automatically transformed through the rites of passage. The rites of passage are a culmination of an intense period of socialization. The period of education is when the core values and new life roles are imparted on an individual. The individuals are expected to come out of this period aware of who they are, responsible members of the community and conscious of what kind of life is expected of them.

This thesis is based on the assumption that the fundamental elements of transforming an individual are still part and parcel of the African person South of the Sahara, whether educated or uneducated, urban or rural. And on the level of spirituality, African people continue to believe in and practice African Religion, a religion flowing from a profound and complex oral tradition. There is evidence of African spirituality in the practice of naming, initiation, death and healing. All these practices are part of the daily life of African peoples, whether in the city or in the village (Lugira 2009, 106).

Marriage is a major transforming ceremony in African Religion. It is viewed as a community activity that involves all members, those who are currently physically living in the community, the ancestors and those yet to be born. This point comes out clearly in Mbiti's explanation of the nature of marriage (Mbiti 1969, 133; cf. Bahemuka 1992, 119-120).

A variety of communities found in sub-Saharan Africa, with diverse cultural orientations, practice marriage as a significant rite of passage. Individuals who get involved in marriage become “socially adult” (van Gennep 1960, 144; Oduyoye 1992, 13). Marriage marks a significant transition from, “one social category to another, because for at least one of the spouses, it involves a change of family, clan, village, or tribe (ethnic group) and sometimes the newly married couple even establish residence in a new house” (van Gennep 1960, 116; Oduyoye 1992, 13). It is within marriage that individuals legally exercise their procreative rights (Magesa 1997, 115; Oduyoye 1992, 13; Bahemuka 1992, 119-120).

Oduyoye (1995) from a feminist viewpoint, states that in marriage, the woman is an indispensable part of the institution. According to her, for the African woman, marriage is “the transitional rite that establishes and solidifies relationships that enable her to function as a channel by which the ancestors can return to the community” (p. 132). She further argues that within a matrilineal set up, the birth of female children takes priority over the birth of males. This is because “without them, no blood can be transmitted and no ancestors can return to life, dooming the clan to perdition” (p. 132). This echoes the notion of life everlasting through naming or nominal reincarnation. Here, through naming, an individual lives on in the one named after him or her.

According to Magesa (1997) the centrality of marriage is emphasized by the fact that the “entire process of initiation is ... directed toward marriage and procreation” (p. 110). Through initiation, a person comes to be recognized as an adult and as a mature

member of the community to enter marriage. After the ritual of initiation, one is ready to accept responsibility for immediate and extended family.

Marriage is the focus of one's existence and the culmination of the ritual of initiation. It confirms one's ability to participate in the expansion of the lineage. Marriage renews and revitalizes human society and assures immortality. Oduyoye (2004) expresses this idea from the viewpoint of the participation and role of women in marriage. She states that "Rituals for women, whether positive or negative, are related to procreation. The survival of the human race is dependent on its female component. Most African religious traditions have placed procreation at the centre of the woman's universe; multitudes of taboos and rituals have evolved to direct her life and to keep her safe for procreation" (p. 83).

Van Gennep (1960) states that, "maturity follows this stage (initiation) and is most clearly expressed in the founding of a family. Marriage constitutes the most important of the transitions from one social category to another ..." (p. 116). This underlines the idea that marriage is a community activity; it involves both a confirmation of maturity and a widening of mature relationships. Such mature relationships developing among the in-laws are relationships that come to their high point in procreation. Each marriage is expected to produce children (cf. Doumbia & Doumbia 2004, 139-140). This is why marriage is not a one-day *fait accompli*; it involves other processes that occur after the actual day of the wedding, for example, the bearing and rearing of children. Arnaldo (2001) writes: "Marriage is a difficult concept in African societies because it is a process rather than a discrete event and

involves rituals, negotiations and transactions that can stretch over years, making it difficult to say at what point a couple becomes married” (p. 146).

According to Gyekye, Hastings and Magesa, although marriage might seem to be between individuals, the marriage covenant is in fact between two families. Marriage is closely connected with the continuation of the lineage, an ideology that touches upon one of the very basic ideas of African family. The two married individuals have an obligation to accept the members of each other’s family as their own family. Traditional marriage rituals express an understanding of marriage not as a contract between individuals but as a joining of two lineages. The lineages in terms of naming and hence self-perpetuation extend to two clans – the husband’s and the wife’s (Magesa 1997, 110, 128; Gyekye 1996, 79 and Hastings 1973, 29)

Kirwen (1974) in his study of levirate unions brings out clearly the nature of African marriage as a lasting union that transcends death. In this way, he makes a connection with the world of the living dead and the ancestors and highlights the important role of the community in the success and continuation of any marriage in Africa. An idea that is prominent in Maasai idea of marriage where widows remain part of the family of the dead husband.

1.2 How Cultural Themes are Related to and Manifested in African Marriage

Bahemuka (1992) quoting Saxton, succinctly lays bare the essential relation and connection between cultural themes and marriage. They include “formation of

families, social organization and a socially paired relationship that is relatively permanent” (p. 119).

Phiri (2011) identifies five themes that, he argues, influence African “attitude to married and family life: Life, Community, Human Sexuality, Marriage, Death and Immortality” (p. 13). The themes Phiri outlines cover in an uncanny way, the fifteen cultural themes that act as the conceptual framework for this study, (cf. Figure 1). The fifteen themes paradigm is a schema in which cultural knowledge has been divided into fifteen distinct ideas in order to facilitate the study of culture and religion (cf. Kirwen 2011, ii; ter Haar 2009, 3).

In Phiri’s approach, presented above, the theme of life can be related to Kirwen’s themes on God, ancestors, living dead, nominal reincarnation, diviner and herbalist. This conclusion is based on the following: Phiri (2011) states that “Africans take God as the Source of Life and therefore, regard life as sacred and a gift” (p. 14). Phiri also relates the theme of Life to ancestors, living dead and nominal reincarnation by stating that: “life is hierarchically manifested in the universe as the visible and the invisible worlds” (p. 14). Phiri’s theme of Community includes Kirwen’s theme of lineage. Phiri’s theme of Human Sexuality can be translated into initiation and thus carry the theme of adulthood and elderhood. Then he outlines marriage and death. And finally, immortality can be seen to cover the themes on the living dead, ancestors and nominal reincarnation. The themes attempt to address some fundamental questions of life, including, where does life come from? How ought life be organised?

What happens when life seemingly ceases to be? What is beyond the physical life as we know it?

Initiation brings each individual into the maturity of adulthood. It thus ushers one into marriage, itself a rite of passage. Bridewealth as a “legitimation of children” is an essential component of marriage because it has a social and religious value. It is the foundation for which families are built and a communication channel with the ancestors. Magesa brings in the theme of polygyny when he discusses “the value behind different forms of marriage” (Magesa 1997, 128). He concludes his discussion of marriage in the context of kinship by discussing moral maturity in death. “Longevity is a prized aspect of life ... it is seen as a consequence and proof of having lived morally” (Magesa 1997, 144). In his discussion of marriage, he clearly illustrates how several themes are manifested in marriage (Magesa 1997, 128-148).

The role of the community includes the ancestors as the senior most members of the community, family or lineage. When a dead African individual is considered as an ancestor, he or she does not cease to be a member of the community, family or lineage of origin. And the role of the ancestors in marriage is underlined within the community, family or lineage of origin of the said individual. The central role of procreation in marriage further underlines the importance of the community because procreation facilitates the growth of the community.

There is a spiritual dimension of marriage relating to God the Creator, the living dead, the ancestors and nominal reincarnation. Oduyoye (2004) observes that one such

spiritual event is the “covenantal bonding of two families. The performance of the ritual, however, emphasizes the transfer of the woman from the spiritual power of the father to that of the husband. The Yoruba perform a ritual of crossing-over: washing of feet at the threshold of the husband’s house” (p. 81).

Marriage is also a foundation of the human community and seeks to preserve the human community (Ayisi 1992, 7; Phiri 2011, 13-17). In as far as it seeks to preserve life, marriage safeguards against any evil that would destroy the human community, for instance witchcraft and death. The community dimension of marriage takes into account African lineage, leadership, adulthood/elderhood, bridewealth, polygyny, herbalism and divination. These “ensure the continuation of the community” (Kirwen 2011, 134; cf. Phiri 2011, 14). Thus, marriage covers the major values and ideas that bring wholeness and coherence to human life.

Magesa (1997, 110-148; cf. Bujo 2009, 17) while discussing African marriage in the context of kinship widens the scope covered by the theme of lineage to include affinity. He places the discussion in the context of interpersonal and inter-community relations. Even though he uses the term “kinship”, he strongly alludes to lineage. For example, he quotes Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter (1997, 113) that “the family created by marriage is the ‘fundamental element’ and the ‘basic sphere of action’ in African relationships. The family is the person’s channel of integration into the clan and the wider society.” This approach to the understanding of family reveals the communal nature of marriage.

In Magesa's discussion of African marriage, he emphasises the mandate of propagation of life as enshrined within marriage. The propagation of life is seen as a sign and manifestation of the unity with the ancestors "who guard it (life) on behalf of God, wherein lies its origin, and for whom the ancestors are intermediaries" (Magesa 1997, 116; cf. Bujo 2009, 17). At a lower and physical level, the ancestors are represented by elders. Marriage crowns a person's adulthood through "the mystical union with the ancestors, a mystical union which is achieved only through the generation of children" (Magesa 1997, 121).

The foregoing ideas are at the core of this study. The study takes each theme highlighted above and sees whether and how it is manifested in the institution of marriage among the Maasai.

1.3 Changes Affecting African Marriage and How the Changes are Addressed

There are several changes or threats at the economic, social, cultural, religious and political level that impact on African marriage and continue to pose challenges and opportunities or new openings. It will suffice for purposes of this study to mention a few.

Bahemuka (1992) sees globalization as a change that has both positive and negative impact. She states that these changes, threats or challenges imply that "Africa and Africans adopt "modern" ways of thinking, acting, living, and consuming, ways that are mainly western and sometimes opposed to the values African Religion holds dear" (pp. 121-124; cf. Luke and Munshi 2006). The economic, political and socio-cultural

changes have affected some aspects of marriage. Such include bridewealth, preparation for marriage, rituals related to marriage, the purpose of marriage, marital unions, and the termination of the marriage covenant.

One of the impacts on marriage is improved health conditions which has occasioned changing patterns of fertility and mortality. African marriage has thus to adjust itself to new challenges such as greater numbers of people living to old age. This reality is exacerbated by changing social structures. Increasingly, people are forced to work away from home in various urban centers and, therefore, not able to pay attention to the aged (Ogunbodede 1997; cf. Sarat 2011, 4; Ezeh 1999). This situation has heavily impacted on family obligation of taking care of the aged in the homestead.

One way of coping with this situation is sending the aged to homes for the aged or leaving them in the rural homes under the care of designated care givers. As has been mentioned above, this system impacts on the community approach to married life where younger members of the community have the obligation to take care of the older members of the family at a personal level. Unmarried members of the community who have children and are not able to live with them in the urban centres leave the children in the care of their grandmothers while they try to eke out a living in the city.

Another impact, which is also as a result of high levels of fertility, is the high number of adolescents who need family attention and who, due to changing social and economic conditions are either taken to boarding schools or spend a lot of time at

school with teachers. The teachers are not able to give personal care to each of the adolescents. This gives rise to a large number of adolescents getting influenced by peers. The influence from peers has not always been positive. Indeed, it has been found to be responsible for the rising number of adolescents engaging in deviant behaviour. Such deviance includes homosexuality, lesbianism and drug addiction, among others. These kinds of vices boomerang resoundingly on marriage and family relations (cf. Njoroge, Onduso, and Thinguri 2014; Oriya, 2005).

Phiri (2011) states that “As Africa is being rapidly influenced by other world cultures, the concept of marriage, the mode of celebrating it, and the manner in which the same is lived are also greatly affected.” (p. 13). Shorter (1987) calls this process “acculturation” (p. 18). The process of “acculturation” acknowledges that cultures are not static since they develop and change through the mutual influence among cultures.

Another change in African marriage becomes evident when one looks at African marriage and family as a unit of production or a unit for creating and distributing wealth. The current economic systems have had great impact on African marriage systems, pushing many marriages into looking at themselves as nuclear units, many times unable to respond to the economic needs of the wider family or lineage. This has been necessitated by political and socio-economic circumstances characterised by poverty, bad governance and conflicts (Kilbride and Kilbride 1993).

Since the 1980s, HIV and AIDS have exerted enormous pressure on marriage and family life in Africa. The rise of cases of HIV and AIDS has created orphans who

have had to live mostly with grandparents or with other members of the family where both parents have died as a result of HIV and AIDS (Bujo 2009, 160-174; cf. Magesa 2010, 113; Kilbride, Suda and Njeru 2001, 29-30; Chitando & Hadebe 2009, 10; Green & Ruark 2011).

Globalization has had both positive and negative impact on marriage and family in Africa, providing new opportunities for social and economic growth. At the same time, it has posed challenges of interaction with other cultures through different media. For instance, print and electronic media which disseminate foreign values that require integration into the local African systems. Due to bad governance, mechanisms for integrating foreign values into existing local African systems have not been effectively set up in order to improve quality of life in Africa.

There has been a rising change in courtship patterns that emphasize individual choice, where the individual has more say in mate selection. The prevailing education system, the urban social set up (Kayongo-Male and Onyango 1984, 32-55; Lugira 2009, 130) and employment have given rise to new ways of setting up marriages. Young African couples tend to have fewer children than their parents as knowledge and use of modern contraceptives has expanded (Kilbride and Kilbride 1993; Lugira 2009, 130).

The changing role of women in society is another factor that is influencing marriage both negatively and positively. Women have gained more decisional latitude on what kind of family they would like to set up. This has given rise to an increasing number

of women deciding to stay single (cf. Bujo 2009; Sarat 2011, 4; Bingham 2011). Sarat (2011) is convinced that “by receiving a formal, complete education, women would not only have more opportunity to develop a career of their own, but they would become empowered to discuss family planning and contraception with their partners” (p. 4).

In a marriage set-up, the traditional role of women as members of the family who stay around the home has changed. Women are no longer staying at home to cater for the homestead or the house until other members of the family come back either from school or from other activities. This change is impacting positively on marriage because women can now use their talents and professions to contribute to the wealth creation and distribution in the family by taking up employment opportunities available (cf. Oduyoye 2004, 84-85).

The agitation for same-sex marriages has become a feature in debates in African countries. Even though there is a strong opposition to same-sex marriages, the debate is impacting on marriage and family in Africa (cf. Kyalo 2012, 211). The impact is evident in legislation defining marriage and family in many countries in Africa. For example in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria there is legislation outlawing same-sex marriages on the grounds that it is against African values on marriage and family. By contrast, in South Africa there is legislation friendly to same-sex marriage.

Kyalo (2012) identifies other challenges to marriage and family in Africa. Such include “single parenthood, divorce, separations, rape, homosexuality, lesbianism and

prostitution” (p. 211). He argues that the changes or challenges facing African marriage can be resolved. He states that “though marriage suffers handicaps in the society, there exists within African traditional marriage system resources available, which if discerned and learned properly can help checkmate or even stalemate some of the ills it suffers today” (p. 211).

1.4 Statement of the Problem

As noted above, marriage plays a central role as an expression of African culture and religion. It is a community practice within which the values of a community are shaped. However, in contemporary society, marriage is more and more viewed as an end in itself.

The interconnectedness of marriage with religio-cultural themes is not that distinct or realized. In contemporary society, for example, bridewealth as an essential element of marriage has been commercialized and the cultural and religious interconnectedness to marriage of such an important element has, apparently, lost significance or has been profoundly compromised.

The Maasai are faced with this challenge of the changing face of marriage. However, among the Maasai, a significant resilience (Appendix IX) has been manifested in the face of challenges in various spheres of culture and religion and especially in marriage. Taken from this perspective, they then become a case in point of how to cope with the mounting challenges while keeping true to the tenets of indigenous culture and religion.

This study examined marriage and investigated African religio-cultural themes which inform and influence the daily life of the Maasai as intimately connected to and reflected in marriage. These cultural and religious themes taken together can also be seen as a pattern of beliefs, behavior and thinking shared by a people, in this case the Maasai. These beliefs, behavior and thinking facilitate communication and community life among the people.

Marriage, like other cultural and religious themes, has attracted wide scholarship of diverse depths. Such studies have underlined, among others, the nature, forms, types and even the place of marriage in society. What, however, has not received adequate attention is the link between religio-cultural themes and marriage. It is with this in mind that this study focused on the Maasai proceeding and seeking to propose whether or not: First, if marriage can be presented as one of the central cultural and religious themes that inform, underpin, and serve as the dominant paradigm that directs the lives and activities of ordinary African people from birth to death. Secondly, if other African cultural themes are integrated and centralized in the theme of marriage among the Maasai.

These are amongst the core concerns of this study. The study sought to find out the valuable interconnectedness of the fifteen religio-cultural themes. And also to investigate if marriage is distinct from the other fourteen religio-cultural themes that make up the thematic approach to the study of African religio-culture.

1.5 Research Questions

The study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the Maasai religio-cultural worldview?
2. What is the place of marriage in Maasai religion and culture?
3. How are religio-cultural themes related and manifested in Maasai marriage?
4. What are the changes affecting Maasai marriage with regard to religio-cultural themes and how should they be responded to?

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the centrality of marriage in African Religio-culture with reference to the Maasai.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

This study set out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To highlight Maasai religio-cultural worldview.
2. To establish the place of marriage in Maasai religio-cultural worldview.
3. To investigate if and to what extent cultural themes are related to and manifested in Maasai marriage.
4. To determine if there are changes in Maasai marriage with regard to religio-cultural worldview; and how to respond to them.

1.8 Specific Premises

The researcher started off the study with the following specific premises:

1. That the Maasai have a religio-cultural worldview.

2. That marriage has a place in the Maasai culture and religion.
3. That marriage is related to and manifests Maasai culture and religion.
4. That there are changes affecting Maasai marriage with regard to religio-cultural themes; which need to be addressed.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The African cultural theme framework is proposed as a theoretical basis for understanding African religio-cultural knowledge. The framework is constructed from a combination of three approaches to the study of African culture and religion. The three approaches are the biological basis for culture, the epistemological and the cultural themes approach.

The biological basis for culture is explained by Wiredu (1996) and Bonner (1979) as will be presented below in Section 1.10.0 and 1.10.1. The epistemological and cultural themes approach is presented by Kirwen (2011). However, Kirwen states that:

The delineation of culture into universal themes is not unique to the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS). Universals have been part of the conceptual framework of anthropology for many years. Brown (1991) in the third chapter of his book *Human Universals*, discusses the contribution of scholars such as E. B. Tylor (1891), L. Kroeber (1917), Clark Wissler (1923), Franz Boas (1963), and George Stocking (1968), all of whom wrote extensively on the status, role and function of universals, ranging from extreme cultural relativism to monolithic cultural unity. (Kirwen 2011, ii)

This study has adopted the religio-cultural themes approach as the main guiding approach to this study. The other two approaches, the biological basis for culture and the epistemological approach, are related to the religio-cultural themes approach. They are related in the sense that the religio-cultural themes approach to the study of culture sees culture as a knowledge system stored in the neo-cortex through a socialization process in a living community. The fact of situating cultural knowledge in the neo-cortex acknowledges a biological basis of culture.

The choice of a theme approach to culture lies in the recognition that first of all, human life begins and develops within a biological nurturing community. What separates humans from other primates is the ability through a process of socialization to communicate within a complex communication system - a body of knowledge, which is referred to as culture. What this present work does is to approach this body of knowledge in a thematic manner and to establish that the theme of marriage embraces all the foundational elements of a culture and can, therefore, be seen as the basis for understanding cultural activity.

1.9.0 Biological basis for culture

As has been discussed in 1.9 above, Wiredu (1996) and Bonner (1979) explain the biological basis for culture. Wiredu (1996) argues that human beings distinguish themselves from other animals because they are able to transcend the level of instinct and move to the level of engaging other beings socially. This is made possible by language, which he identifies as a cultural universal. The basis of his argument is the

ability of the mind to receive and make sense out of sensory stimulation. Sensory stimulation is translated into a shared “conceptual scheme, however, minimal its dimensions ... This scheme of concepts is a universal for, at least, the given participants in the communication” (p. 21).

Culture distinguishes a human person from other beings. The individual is born as a potential mind ready for wiring through sensory stimulation. Wiredu cites two types of sensory stimulation: physical sensory stimulation and social sensory stimulation.

Physical sensory stimulation provides the person with the instinct to respond to the environment in a certain way, for example, through community interaction. Social sensory stimulation is attained by interacting with a living community of human beings, for example, through marriage. This is what gives a person a universal cultural outlook, what Wiredu calls cultural universals. This enables intra-cultural and cross-cultural communication. Social sensory stimulation enables the acquisition and practice of cultural themes. Bonner argues that:

For many years there has been a strongly held view by some social scientists that culture is an entirely human phenomenon which arose in the beginning of our own prehistory. I would like to present the contrary argument that the roots of our culture may be found in early, primitive organisms, and that there has been a gradual evolution leading ultimately to the kind of culture that we associate with human beings. One could, of course, define culture in such a way that it applied only to *Homo*, but this would obscure the interesting fact

that there are certain phenomena that can be followed as a continuum from non-human social animals to [hu]man[s]. (Bonner 1979, 219)

Bonner's definition of culture includes the elements of accumulated behavior, knowledge and tradition that is transmitted through teaching and learning from an individual to another. He expresses the fact that culture can change either through innovation or by accident. In this way, it occasions a cultural evolution resulting in a new form of culture. He makes a distinction between a genetic evolution and the transmission of culture through teaching and learning.

His conclusion is that the human nervous system and the brain have developed better over the centuries and the growth of the brain has enabled the human person to have a greater "ability to learn and remember" and finally the "ability to teach. Teaching has been greatly enhanced by the development of a more elaborate and effective system of communication, that is, a language. It was at this point that early [hu]man[s] began to show his exceptional qualities, all of which were associated with a particularly remarkable increase in brain size" (Bonner 1979, 221).

1.9.1 Epistemological Meaning of Culture

Within the parameters of epistemological meaning, culture is viewed as a system or body of knowledge held in consciousness by a particular group. It focuses on culture as ideology where beliefs, values and ideas take centre stage. Here is where each society is unique in the way that members organize and express their beliefs, values and ideas. While this approach considers how knowledge is created, used and shared,

our study investigates how this knowledge is organized and how this organization of culture and religion is manifested in marriage.

1.9.2 Cultural Themes as a Method of Studying African Religio-culture

Figure 1 presents the fifteen religio-cultural themes and illustrates how marriage interacts with the other fourteen themes. These other fourteen themes are areas or themes of Maasai religio-culture. They represent Maasai religio-cultural worldview. The religio-cultural themes are used to examine the aspects of culture that are identifiable in marriage and how marriage nourishes and manifests these areas of culture. This has been done in order to examine their meaning and interrelationship to one another.

The cultural themes approach adopted for this study, as has been mentioned earlier, has its roots in the work of Kirwen (2011). He has described the themes as having an “inner connection ... that creates and sustains the themes” and comprising “the basic structure of African cultural knowledge” (p. iv).

His studies in African culture and religion has enabled him to put together what Oyugi in a prologue describes as:

a pedagogical facilitation of a serious and, if you like, a realistic engagement of the colourful tapestry of African cultures. In seeking and actually succeeding in plumbing the sub-structural depths of the cultural life of the African societies, it brings to the surface a sharp and bewildering outline of the foundational substance, spiritual underpinnings and commonalities of the

African cultural experience and practices. It is a masterpiece of archaeology of cultural phenomenon that ends up producing a grammar of culture. It achieves this by exploring, with extraordinary insight, the mystifying superstructures of the African cultural life and by articulating a theoretical narrative that enjoys a near-universal application across ethnic, racial and social delimitations. (Kirwen 2011, p. i)

These themes deal with the totality of human experience: the transcendent, the cosmos, human life and relations as expressed in human ideas, values and symbols. They are the underlying pattern that inform and serve as the dominant paradigm directing the lives of humans, and for the purposes of this research of the Maasai, enabling them to interpret their experiences and create their artifacts. The themes are the unifying principles of Maasai religio-culture.

This study, particularly explores the link between these themes, as well as how these themes are manifested in and influence the community through marriage. It explores how marriage interfaces with every other institution in the Maasai cultural belief system.

In line with the religio-cultural themes approach, Morris (1994), in support of the argument advanced by Tempels, Mbiti and others, states "... that there is a corpus of beliefs and practices that are common throughout Africa, and that they form an essential, if unconscious unity, although specific aspects may not be shared by all African peoples" (p. 122; cf. Opoku, 1978, 8-13; Thorpe 1994, viii; Thomas 2005, 24; Mbiti 1969; Tempels 1959).

By contrast, Hountodji (1983) asserts that this unity is a myth. His argument is that there is no such worldview common to all Africans. Morris (1994) summarizes Hountodji's view, "he questions the view that every culture rests on a specific, permanent substratum, and suggests that the unanimity of philosophical thought that is said to underlie all African cultures is fiction, an imaginary construct of European scholars like Tempels, as well as of African ethnophiles like Mbiti, Kagame and Senghor" (p. 122).

Houtondji argues from a philosophical viewpoint that overemphasizes a very individualistic viewpoint. In his view, the uniqueness of each individual overrides the contribution of society to individual thought. However, this study, while acknowledging the role of individuals, investigates marriage as an institution, which enhances the role of the individual in building the community through marriage. It also looks at marriage as an institution that brings the community together and helps to shape individual talent and responsibility within the community.

The unifying themes in African thought, link God to the human community through the ancestors, the living dead and nominal reincarnation. All life is from the Creator God and the human community has access to this life through the ancestors, the living dead and nominal reincarnation. This means that the "the supreme being, interacts with, or communicates life to, human beings through mediators" (Shorter 1998, 45; Thomas 2005, 36-42). This is at the spiritual invisible level of reality (cf. Shorter 1998, 45-46; Paris 1995, 51-52; Dickson 1984, 47-73; Phiri 2011, 19-20). To attain this level, one must have had a good life before "dying" or changing the form of

existence. Living a good life entails successfully undergoing the major initiation rites including marriage within a living community and passing on through death and the rituals related to death.

At the visible level, there are different degrees of interaction with the world of the ancestors, with the diviner having a special and significant level of interaction. The theme of diviner can be grouped together with the theme of African lineage, adulthood/elderhood and leadership. These are themes that are fundamental to the building of community life (Paris 1995, 101).

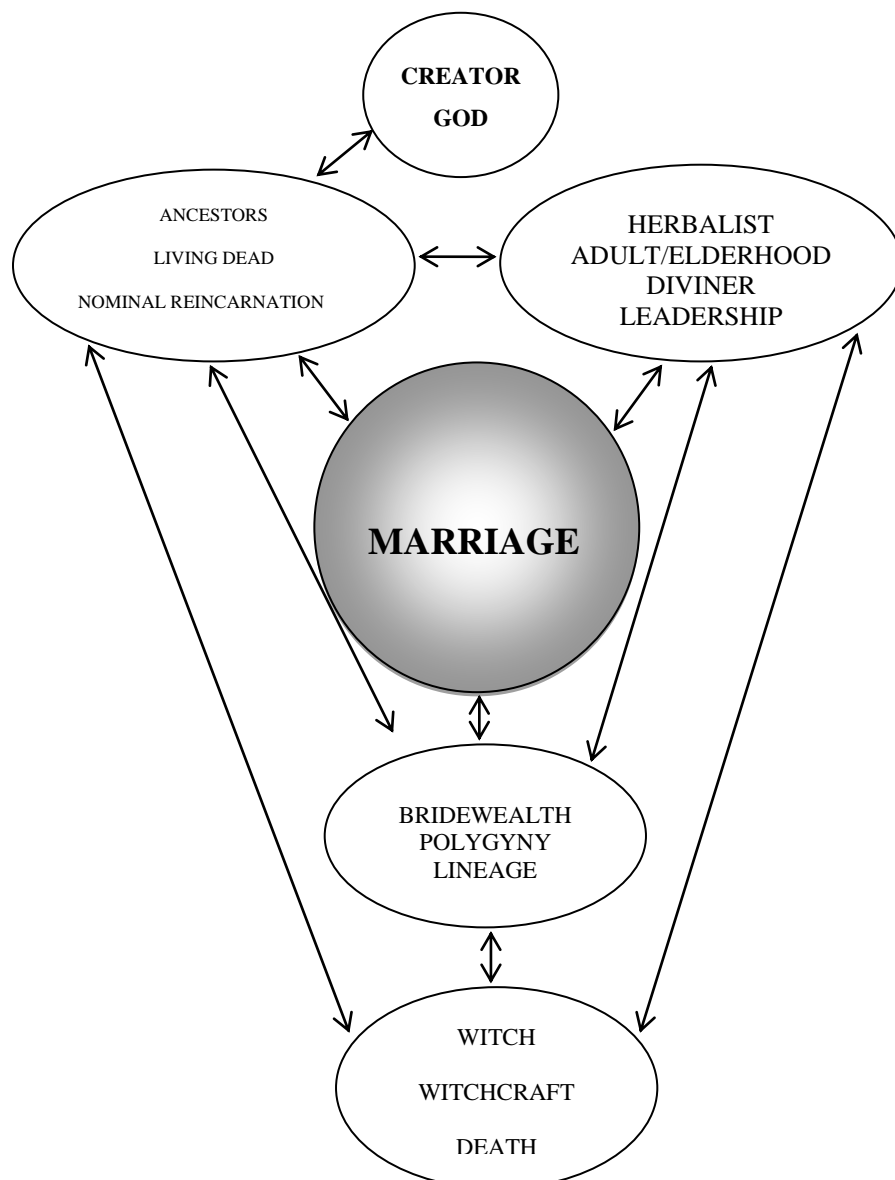
Four of the themes deal with personalities that build the community or lineage: Herbalists, Adults/Elders, Diviners and Leaders. The lineage itself is at the centre of operation for the personalities. The lineage provides them with the norms and rules of operation. They are expected to build the lineage because they are at the core of the organization of the community. They define the structure of life within a lineage.

Marriage is at the center of this interaction where bridewealth and polygyny are close to each other. However, bridewealth seals a marriage while polygyny is a form of marriage. Marriage life emanates from the centre and keeps the memory of the ancestors and the living dead through nominal reincarnation.

On the other hand, the enemies of life, the witch, witchcraft and death attack life (marriage). But marriage is protected by the ancestors, the living dead, nominal reincarnation, herbalists, adults/elders, diviners and leadership.

Death is in a special category because it also serves as a rite of passage into the world of the living dead and the ancestors. Death is seen as a tragedy and as a blessing. It is seen as a tragedy if the kind of death is viewed as bad. Such include dying young or committing suicide. A good death is a rite of passage. One such death occurs when a person has fulfilled all the rites of passage and has died at peace with the family and the community. Attaining a mature old age is a sign of blessing. It is the doorway to life as the living dead and then to ancestorhood.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Author's impression of how the themes are interrelated



1.9.3 The Study of African Religio-cultural Knowledge

The study of culture has been done by several disciplines including sociology and anthropology. Cultural knowledge is a body of knowledge that is gained from the experiences of a community through everyday life. It crystallizes into deep-seated values that inform the actions of individuals within a community as well as the community's view of life. This body of knowledge is held in consciousness by members of a community in an unreflected manner. However, it is a body of knowledge that has an underpinning system which can be systematically studied.

Ray (1976, 7-8), for example, surveys approaches to the study of African culture which touch on the trends in Europe and America. He classifies anthropological approaches to African culture as: British School and the French School. He puts this development within the framework of the decline of the Evolutionary Theory of culture (cf. Ellwood, C. A., 1918) which then paved the way for systematic study of African culture.

In the British school, Ray (1976) credits Malinowski for the fieldwork approach to the study of cultural knowledge and Radcliffe-Brown with the Social Functionalist Theory. He contends that the "British anthropologists concentrated on the sociological aspects of African cultures, that is, upon kinship systems and political organization" (p. 7-8).

The French School on the other hand took another approach which was not based upon the social order. They "... focused upon the symbolic-philosophical order,

regarding this as the determinant of the social structure” (Ray 1976, 8). This study does not take a symbolic-philosophical approach. Rather, it deals more with the categories people have of culture and how they manifest them in daily life.

Another approach to cultural study is the structural-functionalist model that tries to identify social structures and institutions that exist in society and examine how these structures relate to the rest of society (Brinkerhoff, Weitz, & Ortega 2005, 12). Functionalists view society as a system comprising interrelated parts, all interacting on the basis of a common value system or consensus about the basic values and common goals.

Kraus (1990, 128-132) emphasizes the structuralist approach to culture and emphasizes “that common social phenomena like beliefs, institutions, customs, rituals, myths, totems and taboos can be explained by the working of underlying ‘deep’ or ‘hidden’ structures such as collective dreams and unconscious wishes.” He further argues that, “functionalism is to an extent interwoven with structuralism, insofar as it attempts to explain the functions of countless social phenomena and their structures, though not necessarily following Malinowski or Levi-Strauss.”

The approach that is adopted in this work is close to the approach developed by Evans-Pritchard of the British School. Ray (1976) quoting Evans-Pritchard states that: “We have to account for religious facts in terms of the totality of the culture and society in which they are found. They must be seen as a relation of parts to one another within a coherent system” (p. 8).

Shorter (1998) lists seven approaches to the study of culture, these include 1) holistic, 2) enumerative, 3) hypothesis of unity, 4) categorical, 5) thematic, 6) historical, and 7) limited comparative approach. He states that in the thematic approach “themes are studied in several systems to discover differences in application and operation, for example, God ancestor/Creation; social treatment of widows” (p. 27-28). He attributes this approach to Michael Kirwen and Harry Sawyer. This present work has adopted the thematic approach of Kirwen as its conceptual framework.

In choosing an approach that emphasizes meaning, we are not rejecting other approaches. Rather, we would like to focus on an approach that is closest to the objectives that this study wants to address, in order to understand underlying cultural and religious structures as they are manifested in marriage. Culture is a complex whole, but breaking it down to its categories seeks to simplify it for easy study while at the same time not losing sight of the relation of the parts to the whole. The study identifies how each of the parts, that is, themes is reflected in marriage.

1.10 Justification and Significance of the Study

This study probes the degree to which marriage generally reflects Maasai cosmology. The conclusions arrived at are of interest to those who wish to engage in a systematic and integrated study of African religio-culture. The study is a point of reference on the central role that marriage plays in African religio-culture. In particular how marriage enables individuals to express their individual and collective identities. The study awakens people to acknowledge the concept of marriage as the hub for culture and religion.

The recommendations of this study will help scholars to reaffirm the place of marriage within society as the bedrock of culture and religion and as a fundamental building block of society. The ideal of raising children by a mother and a father of the opposite sex who are married is still widely accepted and seen as the most effective way of raising a family. Also, given that there is a lot of commonality among the African peoples, the findings and proposed recommendations will inevitably be useful in the study of other communities.

It is also hoped that the findings will play a role in influencing families, religious institutions, national and local governments to see marriage as the beginning of the formation of social systems that embody beliefs and values that build a good society. This would lead to formulation of policies that support the formation of good marriages and families amidst contemporary diverse and unprecedented challenges confronting this very vital institution. An example of the challenges is the upsurge of foreign moral and religious values propagated by the media and seen by many as better than African moral and value systems.

African societies face major challenges in keeping African culture and religion intact. The African moral and value system has been challenged by colonialism, globalization and education that propagate foreign value systems as the ideal. These challenges, if addressed, will help African societies develop home-based approaches in tackling the myriad of challenges confronting Africa. This situation has been necessitated by colonial and neo-colonial influence that come, for example, with education systems (Drinkwater 2010; Coles 2008) that inculcate western ideas

through alien language media such as English, French and Portuguese. These factors ignore the fact that in Africa alone, there are about 2080 cultural expressions as reflected in language groups which have not had a chance to articulate their cultural ideals in their own languages (<http://africanlanguages.com/>). For any group to develop its ideas, a language that captures the concepts of the particular locality is necessary. In this way, the group is able to develop concepts and ideas that are akin and friendly to their environment. This is where religion and culture play an important role. Waliggo, in the Foreword to Magesa's book rightly articulates this idea when he writes:

One of the root causes of the anti-life forces, systems, and problems in Black Africa has been our failure to embark on the movement of re-awakening our own moral and religious values and to construct the future on them. No sane society chooses to build its future on foreign cultures, values, or systems. Every society is obliged to search deep in its own history, culture, religion, and morality in order to discover the values upon which its development and liberation, its civilization, and its identity should be based. To do otherwise is nothing less than communal suicide (Magesa 1997, 9; cf. Thomas 2005, 8-9).

1.11 Scope and Limitations

As in any research undertaking, issues of data validity and reliability arose in this study. First, the researcher does not speak nor understand the local language of the Maasai. He relied on interviews with Maasai people who speak English or Kiswahili. However, this handicap was countered by the use of different methods of data collection for validation and triangulation. It was also countered by the fact that

among the research assistants, there were two Maasai and another assistant who was not a Maasai but was fully conversant with *Maa*, the language of the Maasai.

This study is limited to marriage as of central significance among the Maasai and as it manifests and relates to the other cultural and religious themes. It explores how marriage among the Maasai reflects the cultural themes. This in turn demonstrates the unity of the cultural themes as an expression of culture and religion. The area that was covered was Kajiado District in Rift Valley Province currently known as Kajiado County (Appendix X).

Kajiado District has an area of 19600 km² (CBS), 1981). It is roughly triangular, and is bordered by the Nairobi-Mombasa railway to the north-east, the border with Tanzania to the south, and the western wall of the Rift Valley to the west. The eastern boundary is formed by the Chyulu Range and western limit of Tsavo National Park. The indigenous peoples of the area are the Maasai but there is an increasing influx of peoples from other tribal groups.

(www.enable.nu/publication/Kenya_health.pdf)

The findings presented in this study cannot be purported to represent the views of all Maasai. The study has indeed identified some trends and perceptions in changes related to Maasai cultural practices and religion concerning marriage in such a way that it can be used to understand those trends.

Even though most of the respondents were literate, there were some poorly filled-out questionnaires. Some of these had a few missing responses and some, inadequate

responses. However, these gaps were filled with information from individual interviews, FGDs and observation.

The original plan was to do a fifty to fifty ratio of male and female, but this was not achieved because it was difficult to get a large number of women who were willing either to be interviewed or to fill out questionnaires. This is because, first, fewer women have received formal education among the Maasai. This is confirmed by Maasai Association website which states that 60% of children in rural Maasailand do not go to school. Among those who go to school, only 8% of girls had a chance to go to secondary school. The low school attendance is associated to early marriage (cf. Appendix IX).

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the background of the study, situating the study in Africa, South of the Sahara and specifically in Kajiado, Kenya among the Maasai. The chapter outlined the different rituals and their function in African communities and their culmination in marriage. It has stated that the peoples in sub-Saharan Africa, though diverse, have some common features that unite them as a people, both culturally and religiously. The complexity of culture makes culture have several definitions. The rituals performed in many African cultures have a basis on what the cultures hold in consciousness. An emphasis is on how in Africa, culture and religion are intertwined.

The chapter has also dealt with the place of marriage in African Religion and culture, noting that marriage takes a central role and all members of the community are not

only expected to marry but also to take part in marriage ceremonies of other members of the community. African Religio-cultural themes meet in marriage and spring out from marriage. For instance, the propagation of life as a central reason for marriage is related to the theme of creator God because life is believed to come from God to the community. When procreation is realised in marriage, then life is shared within a lineage. Leadership in marriage serves as a precursor to leadership in the community. Bridewealth legitimises children in a marriage relationship. There are changes occurring in African marriage due to a number of factors. These changes have necessitated a change in how marriage life is lived.

This chapter has also looked at the statement of the problem as a uniting factor for marriage, culture and religion. It has also looked at the research questions, objectives, purpose and specific premises dealing with African and Maasai cultural and religious worldview, the place of marriage in this worldview and the changes impacting on this worldview. It has outlined the conceptual framework, cultural themes framework of study and the biological basis of culture. It has been noted in this chapter that an individual is born as a potential mind ready for wiring through at least two types of sensory stimulation: physical and social. And culture has been seen as a knowledge system acquired in a community through a learning process. It is a knowledge system that can be studied systematically through fifteen Religio-cultural themes.

CHAPTER II

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This study is located within a religio-cultural matrix and specifically deals with marriage within this religio-cultural context and specifically Maasai marriage. The literature review is drawn from four broad areas that inform and enrich the study. These are, first, Maasai cultural and religious worldview; second, the place of marriage in Maasai culture and religion; third, the relationship and manifestation of cultural themes in Maasai marriage and fourth, the changes affecting marriage among the Maasai with regard to the cultural themes.

The first area of literature review dealing with Maasai religio-cultural worldview investigates and presents an overview of the notion of religio-culture within a Maasai context. The review of this literature is relevant and crucial for this study since it introduces salient areas of Maasai religio-culture that find their seedbed or root in Maasai marriage. The second area dealing with the place of marriage in Maasai culture and religion is relevant for this study since it basically investigates the relevance of marriage within Maasai religio-culture. Thirdly, the area dealing with the relationship and manifestation of religio-cultural themes in Maasai marriage, makes relevant the investigation of Maasai culture as the seedbed for Maasai religio-culture. This approach is unique to this study. However, the authors reviewed, unconsciously allude to the manifestation of religio-cultural themes in Maasai marriage. And finally, the changes affecting marriage among the Maasai with regard

to the religio-cultural themes is relevant to this study since it situates Maasai marriage in contemporary perspective.

The bibliographical survey included in this chapter places the study in the historical background of the works that attempt to unravel the complex cultural and religious beliefs of the Maasai. Unfortunately, most of the writings are authored by foreigners and exhibit a certain amount of bias as well as prejudice. One of the manifestations of biases and prejudice is what Ayisi (1992) refers to as the treatment of African religion as “a bizarre museum item entirely different from other religious phenomenon found in Western culture” (p. 71; cf. Olupona 2014, xix-xx; Turaki 2006, 11; Thomas 2005, 6; Shorter 1998, 39). However, a good number of works cited are a result of field work done by the authors among the Maasai. Some of the writings are also not current and are trying to capture a situation that is rapidly changing and taking on forms that try to respond to the contemporary situation of the Maasai. Nevertheless, these works, still capture the overview of Maasai cultural and religious worldview and when put together with field data support each other in unravelling the issues at hand. The current study attempts to capture an indigenous African approach and avoids as much as possible bias and prejudice by bringing in Maasai voices from the field.

2.2 Maasai Cultural and Religious Worldview

The present study examines what the Maasai understand, value, believe and hold as ideals in the institution of marriage and seeks to investigate how this understanding reflects Maasai cultural and religious worldview. This approach is what has been referred to earlier as ideological culture (Bodley 2005, 6).

Speakers of *Maa* dialect are called Maasai. The Maasai form an ethnic group that strides the border of Kenya and northern Tanzania in East Africa (Hughes 2006, 13; Fedders & Salvadori 1980, 79; Sharman 1979). They are predominantly pastoralist although in certain areas of Kenya and Tanzania, particular Maasai groups have embraced cultivation (Spear and Waller 1993, 120-136). According to a Kenya Television Network (KTN) Documentary shown on Sunday, February 15, 2009, the Maasai of Transmara in Kenya have embraced farming. They grow sugar-cane and maize (cf. Ombuor 2014; Bingham 2011, 31; Kamenderi, Kibua & Migot-Adhola 2010, 17; Hughes 2006, 13-14 and Gilbert 2003, 29). The works cited also document other farming activities and a general changing lifestyle such as: subdivision and selling of land to outsiders, owning of shops and houses, fences being built around land as personal property. The foregoing information is relevant in view of the objective of this study that investigates the changes that are affecting Maasai religion and culture.

The Maasai started as agro-pastoralists, according to Spear and Waller (1993, 1; cf. Tarayia 2004, 184; Brown 1989, 55). It is believed that they moved into Kenya and Tanzania through the Rift Valley from Southern Sudan in the first millennium AD (Hughes 2006, 4). The Maasai originally engaged both in cultivating sorghum and millet before they settled on pastoralism which was more suitable to life in the plains. However, the exact origin of the Maasai has not been established. There are authors who have written that the Maasai migrated from Northern Africa or even from the Arabian Peninsula about two centuries ago displacing several groups on their way

downwards. The worst affected group was the Kikuyu (Laganelli [no date] 48; cf. Brown 1989, 55; Tarayia 2004, 184; Davies 2010, 12).

The 2009 Kenya Census shows that there were 841, 622 Maasai in Kenya organized in sixteen federal tribal sections, which are referred to as *Iloshon* (cf. Davies 2010, 12; Coles 2008, 16; Hughes 2006, 13; Mol 1996, III; Spencer 1988, 2). The sections are defined by Coles (2008) as “a group of neighbourhoods in the same area” (p. 16). The most well-known among the tribal sections are the Purko and Kisonko. According to Fedders and Salvadori (1980), Maasailand “is part of the plateau complex of East Africa. It is divided by the Great Rift Valley into two regions which are characterized by the varieties of vegetation. The larger of these regions is the *Ilkisongo* of Tanzania and the smaller is the *Ilpurko* of Kenya” (p. 79). The focus of this study is on the Maasai living in Kajiado, Kenya. Therefore, according to the division set out above, the *Ilpurko* who despite having a smaller territory have a larger population (cf. Spencer 2003).

The religious experience of the Maasai has not been written down in any Holy Book like other religious experiences such as Christianity. Hillman (1991b) states that “it is contained in the memory of the people, and it is repeatedly expressed through their traditional symbols, myths, rituals, attitudes and practices. These amount to a living religion, a dynamic symbol system of communication, permeating their whole cultural world” (p. 3). One of the ways of expressing their religion is through prayer to the unique, universal, powerful and transcendent God (*Enkai*).

Regardless of clan and sub-clan distribution, the Maasai believe in one God and a Messiah, *Kidong'oi*, whom other authors refer to as *laibon* (cf. Gilbert 2003, 27). Authors read for this study when writing about Maasai religion or culture begin with the Maasai concept of God. Hillman (1991a) and Gilbert (2003, 27) for example, begin by asserting that the Maasai call God, *Enkai* which means originator. God is seen as unique and universal, immanent and transcendent, powerful and righteous, neither male nor female and master of the universe. Yet it has also been observed that God is more often addressed in feminine terms and the term *enkai* is itself feminine despite the Maasai being a patriarchal society (Fraser, Brown, Wright & Kiruswa 2012; cf. Ray 2000, 66). However, Hughes (2006, 14) notes that the idea that the Maasai and other pastoralist societies are patriarchal is being challenged by some anthropologists. They argue that, women, in the pastoralist societies, play a significant role in decision making.

God is called *Enkai* and the sky (Hillman 1991b, 8) too is called *Enkai* because everywhere you go, there is sky and so God is big to the extent that everywhere you go there is God. The sky determines the season, rain, drought and the time. By counting the moon and looking at the shape of the moon, the Maasai are able to count the days and know whether there will be rain or not. In case of a calamity such as drought, the *laiguanani*, the elder of all the group leads the community into the sacrifice.

While acknowledging the transcendence of God, the Maasai perceive God as personal and helpful in relation to humankind. Coast (2001), for example, quoting Spencer,

suggests that “there is a general belief that, at times of childbirth, life is especially precious and God is especially close” (p. 131). Coast emphasizes the theme of procreation adding that:

by having a womb, women embody life and continuity, recurrent themes in Maasai prayers and communication with the divine. In order to lead a full life as a Maasai it is imperative to marry and beget children, and those who have been blessed by old age and high fertility in children and animals symbolize the image of the good life. (Coast 2001, 131).

And as such, not being able to bear children, a condition referred to as *olopi* among the Maasai or having miscarriages is viewed with mistrust. Tarayia gives, as examples, two prayers by a female and male Maasai indicating how important it is for a Maasai, to seek the intervention of God so that they get a family. The prayers are made not only to have a family, but also to procure fertility for human beings and animals.

ENKAI Aomon Entomono (Lord, I pray for maternity).

– feminine Maasai prayer.

ENKAI Naai nhooki enkima (Lord, I pray for a fireplace).

– masculine prayer, asking God to provide for a household. (Tarayia 2004, 193)

According to Hollis (2003), Hodgson (2005a) and Ole Saitoti (1980), the Maasai speak of a white God (*Eng’ai Naibor*), a black God (*Eng’ai Narok*) and a red God (*Eng’ai Nanyokie or nayokie*). The expression red God according to Hodgson

(2005a) is used “when the actions of *Eng'ai* were seen as harmful and vengeful” (p. 34). On the other hand, when God’s actions are seen as “being helpful, kind and compassionate” (p. 34) the reference was to *Eng'ai Narok*. Thus *Eng'ai* is sometimes referred to as *Parmuain*, “Multicolored God” (p. 34). This God is the master of creation and is able to grant rain and prosperity through Maasai prayer.

Hauff writes that:

Cattle are undoubtedly the most important aspect of Maasai culture. They are involved in rituals and ceremonies, they maintain relationships within families and between different clans, and they produce food. In essence, they are the Maasai’s livelihood. Cattle are the structural backbone behind many important stages in life. For instance, they determine the age at which males marry. Men need to be independent and own a good size herd before they are able to establish their own domestic group. (Hauff 2003, 6-7)

Coles (2008) adds, quoting Rukwaro and Mukono, “the central location of the kraal expressed architecturally the importance both physical and symbolic of cattle in their life. Cattle were the quintessential expression of a man's wealth” (p. 24). However, as much as this is changing in terms of actual physical ownership of cattle, the mindset is still intact and what Hastings (1973) stated years ago is still relevant today: “The Maasai entire livelihood revolves around cattle: cattle shape the physical and mental characteristics of the pastoral belief” (p. 420). These sentiments are echoed by other authors such as Salvadori (1974, 9; Voshaar 1979, 74; Gilbert 2003, 25; Tarayia 2004 and Hodgson 2011). According to Hughes (2006, 13), the Maasai see cattle as of high value as a “form of wealth, medium of exchange and marriage, source of food,

symbol of relationships, and for their sacred significance.” Ray (2000) notes that, “Maasai religion and culture are so closely tied to cattle herding, which is now threatened by the dispossession of many Maasai from their land, that some fear traditional Maasai culture will soon die out” (p. 65-66). However, our field research shows that the religious nature of the Maasai is still very alive. The literature cited here on Maasai religion as it relates to cattle is relevant to this study as it brings out the religious relevance of cattle in Maasai life.

Maasai cultural and religious worldview is intrinsically connected to nature (Goldman, Roque De Pinho & Perry 2010) and includes how individual Maasai people view life and the universe and how they express this view of life in their daily life. Nature is viewed through their livestock, especially cattle, and the Maasai knowledge of the environment. A newspaper article (see Appendix IV) illustrates the value Maasai people attach to their livestock in a typical case of human wildlife conflict. This conflict with the lion is also conflict with the law. Kenyan law does not allow killing of lions but in this case the Maasai *morans* kill lions which attack their livestock regardless of what the law states (cf. Tarayia 2004). Tarayia (2004) observes that before game parks were set up in order to stop commercial hunting, “the Maasai ... hunted for socio-cultural or security reasons, commercial hunters were driven by aesthetics and pure prestige” (p. 189). Tarayia adds that:

Among the Maasai pastoralists, natural resources did not need official protection. Rather, wildlife, river systems, and forests, whether tropical or savannah, were taken care of through traditional checks and balances. Various taboos and beliefs were inculcated and entrenched in human behavior to

enhance environmental and natural resource protection. Tales of trees that “bleed milk” or forests that would “eternally swallow adults” (the forest of the lost child), among others, are testimony of a conservation ethic in the Maasai culture. In times of prolonged and severe drought, spiritual rituals were, and still are, organized by both men and women. Delegations (*ilamala*) of men and women of high moral standing, criss-crossed Maasai land to make known the intention to offer sacrifices to God (*Enkai* – “the One in the sky”). This cooperative ritual illustrates Maasai understanding of the forces of nature and the limitations of human ability in controlling them. Divine interventions helped balance the needs provided through natural resources (Tarayia 2004, 188).

The foregoing quotation from Tarayia suggests that there is a unique way in which there is no separation between the secular and the sacred. Maasai cosmic order includes all institutions set up for harmonious living within the community. These institutions are both social and political and are seen as part of the cosmic order that is communal.

Maasai spirituality and its expression dictate or direct how social systems are set up. Maasai social institutions reflect a worldview that is unique and holistic, which as has been stated above, takes a communal perspective. A perspective that is relational between community and nature. The relationship is maintained through rituals and cultural practices. These rituals and cultural practices make up Maasai cultural and religious worldview. Many rituals, cultural and religious practices indicate in a

special way a passing of stages of life as steps towards old age and, metaphorically, as steps towards God. Rituals are performed for birth, circumcision, marriage, passing into an age set, and death.

2.3 Marriage in Maasai Cultural and Religious Worldview

Marriage, among the Maasai, is viewed as a rite of passage that is sacred and involves the entire lineal family. Mol (1978, 102) uses the term *enkiyama* for marriage in Maa (Maasai language). Coast (2007) quoting Mitzlaff adds that “marriage is not seen as a matter between two individuals” (p. 402).

According to Sharman (1979, 19-20), Amin, Willets & Eames (1987, 14-15) and Finke (2003), marriage among the Maasai is intrinsically connected to initiation. Both the man and the woman must have undergone initiation in order to marry. For the man, there are rituals that promote him to the status of senior warrior (sometimes called junior elder). These rituals are called *eunoto* (cf. Beckwith & Fisher 2002, 73-85). The woman undergoes female circumcision also known as clitoridectomy (cf. Ray 2000, 66-70; Beckwith & Fisher 2002, 50-58; Mwangi 2011). The *eunoto* ceremony, according to Donovan (2003, 15-16; cf. Coles 2008, 26), ushers the *murrān* into the stage of elderhood. Henceforth, he has to live a more settled life symbolized by the building of a house called *osinkira*, which is itself, a symbol of a wife, and his owning cattle. Important, too, is that marriage takes place at the consent of the community through the blessing of the elders. The consent of both parties is sought, with bridewealth sealing the marriage as being evidence of the initial

agreement. After circumcision males and females adorn coled brass ornaments – *isurutia* as a head dress. This is a sign of eligibility for marriage (www.laleyio.com).

Gilbert contends that the essential elements of Maasai marriage are that:

- 1) Most of them are arranged,
- 2) Bridewealth must be paid,
- 3) The parents of the girl must participate in the arrangement of the wedding,
- 4) The bride and the bride groom must have been circumcised,
- 5) The bride must leave her father's home on the wedding day and go to her father-in-law's home,
- 6) A wedding is the final ceremony that ushers a woman into adulthood and
- 7) On arrival at her father-in-law's home, she is welcomed by gifts of livestock. (Gilbert 2003, 143)

Those men who are legible to start preparing for marriage according to Ole Saitoti (1980) must have reached the level of junior elders. At this level, the first stage of preparation for marriage is, “to pay great attention to his prospective father-in-law” (p. 181) He is expected to show great respect to senior elders who are his supervisors; he makes frequent visits to the homestead (*enkang* see Appendix III) of his prospective father-in-law with gifts and shows eagerness to get married. Great care is taken to confirm signs that show that the prospective husband is able to take care of a

wife. Some of the signs of a good prospective husband are ability to keep promises, courage as a warrior and ability to take care of cattle.

According to Ole Sankan (1971, 41-48; cf. Coast 2006), Maasai marriage is a process that begins when a young man gives a chain to a lady whom he wants to get married to. This chain acts as a sign of his intention to marry. This process is described by a respondent as the first level of engagement before negotiations for marriage take place. According to the respondent, the chain (*ortisiai*), is either given to the girl or to her mother. This gesture is quickly known among the relatives of the girl who wait for a formal declaration to the parents. The declaration of intent is made by the women from the bridegroom's family through a presentation of honey and milk to the family of the bride. According to Ole Sankan (1971), "Honey acts as a declaration of intent to marry and is known as *esiret e nkoshoke*" (p. 44). A respondent explained *esiret e nkoshoke* (calabash filled with honey as a sign of declaration of intention to marry) as the second level of engagement before marriage negotiations take place. This honey is either consumed raw by the female relatives of the bride or part of it is given to elders to make indigenous brew. The prospective bride is not allowed to see or partake of the honey. If the intention or declaration to marry is accepted by the family of the prospective bride, a larger quantity of honey and milk is then presented to the bride's family. The honey is used to brew indigenous beer. This beer is drunk at a formal meeting of elders where the intention of the bridegroom is presented and discussed. If the intention finds favour with the elders, more gifts are presented to the bride's family by the bridegroom's family as a sign that the elders have accepted to enter into a life-long friendship with the family of the bridegroom.

The foregoing description of the process of marriage also brings out the different roles that community members play during the process of marriage. Coast (2006; cf. Gilbert 2007, 171) describes these roles as follows: “The Maasai have a strong division of responsibilities, roles and labour 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” (p. 401).

Ole Sankan (1971) highlights the role of gifts in marriage beginning with the presentation of honey in the initial stages of marriage. He also emphasizes the role of both the community of the bride and that of the bridegroom in vetting those who wish to get married. He observes that when due process is adhered to, then divorce is ruled out. Accordingly, one of the qualities under scrutiny is the number of cattle a man has. Despite the fact that most marriages are arranged (Fraser et al. 2012, 30), the prospective father-in-law can change his mind and dissolve the arrangement if he finds a more suitable son-in-law.

Ole Sankan (1971, xi, 45-49) also deals with the issue of mixed marriages among the Maasai. He gives as examples, marriages between the Maasai and the Agikuyu, Akamba and Ameru. Since the Maasai are patrilineal, they ensure that the children belong to the lineage of the father. The Maasai, traditionally, only married from ethnic groups that circumcised women. They also did not accept that their women be married to ethnic groups who did not practice circumcision (cf. Coast 2006, 402).

Coast (2006) presents a comparative study of marriage among the Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania. The author explores the nature, type and point of entry into marriage among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania. Several themes can be singled out from this work that are relevant to the current study, for example, polygyny and lineage. Coast emphasizes the universal nature of marriage among the Maasai because her findings show that only a small percentage of her sample reported that they were never married at the age of 70. She also reports “very low levels of marriage instability” and attributes this factor to “the influence of polygyny” (p. 402).

This study is grounded on the conviction that there is a body of religious knowledge rooted in indigenous Maasai marriage. Maasai marriage as the seedbed of indigenous Maasai religious knowledge informs the overall Maasai religio-culture. The foregoing literature is relevant to this study since it reveals the rootedness in marriage of this indigenous Maasai religio-culture albeit indirectly. The current study investigates how this indigenous knowledge is directly rooted in marriage.

2.4 The Relationship and Manifestation of Cultural Themes in Maasai Marriage

In the works reviewed so far, five cultural elements or themes are manifested and highlighted by various authors: God, adulthood/elderhood, lineage, bridewealth and polygyny. These elements are dealt with in these works by different authors in different stages of their work. They emphasise initiation to adulthood as an essential stage immediately before any Maasai marriage takes place. The current study investigates how these cultural and religious elements or themes are manifested and interrelated in marriage.

Coast in her study of marriage among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania highlights some themes that are relevant to this work, for example, adulthood, elderhood, polygyny and lineage. She links marriage to several themes when she states that:

Marriage is a social institution, associated with socio-economic, cultural, and demographic variables at a variety of levels. Issues of kinship, lineage, property ownership and transfer, residence, social and political power, together with social and biological reproduction, are all closely bound up with marriage. (Coast 2006, 402).

She emphasizes economic leadership as an important element in deciding whether or not an adult is eligible for marriage. Leadership is thus an important theme in marriage because whoever is given the go-ahead by Maasai elders to enter into marriage is considered to be capable of running their affairs as well as the affairs of other people starting with children as an essential component of Maasai marriage (cf. Nicholson 2005; Spencer 2003). Archambault states, citing Lienhardt, Talle and von Mitzlaf and Spencer:

Like cattle, children are spoken of as gifts from God for the Maasai, ‘not made and “owned”, but given into human care’. Each is a ‘child of the people’. It follows that all adults are obliged to share in the responsibilities of raising and providing for children. It is common to see unrelated elders educating and disciplining young children. (Archambault 2010, 232)

Tarayia (2004) directly links Maasai junior elderhood to marriage when she states that after the *eunoto* ceremony that turns warriors into junior elders: “They are also

absorbed into the decision-making structures of the society, sitting in conflict resolution fora and articulating customary norms in marriage according to traditional legal mechanisms”(p. 187).

Bingham (2011), Sarat (2011) and Wiszowaty (2011), writing about the Maasai and highlighting the place of women in Maasai culture, emphasize the themes of adulthood/elderhood, polygyny, bridewealth, leadership and lineage. Bingham (2011) in particular, emphasises the rights of the girl-child and decries clitoridectomy and early and arranged marriages as a step to adulthood. She supports organizations that set up rescue centres for girls who escape clitoridectomy and early marriages in order to give them an opportunity to go to school. Sarat (2011) brings out the example of a girl child who was able to negotiate with the elders to allow her delay marriage in order to complete her studies. This contrasts with Bingham (2011) who asserts that the girl child is overly submissive to the elders and can hardly negotiate. Sarat (2011) adds in agreement with Wiszowaty (2011) that change among the Maasai can only come from within the community. Sarat contends that:

This raises the question, whose responsibility is it to lead the shift towards educational opportunities for Maasai women? For progress to take place, Maasai thought must shift from *within* Maasai communities. According to Wiszowaty, “An aggressive approach wouldn’t prevent women from circumcising their daughters, and it wouldn’t create healthy dialogue between cultures. It seemed to me that, to have an impact, development workers would need to understand communities at an intimate, personal level before introducing any solutions. (Sarat 2011, 9)

In the foregoing paragraph, the place of clitoridectomy as an initiation rite in preparation for marriage for girls is what is under scrutiny. Need arises to highlight how important the stage is in preparation for marriage among the Maasai.

The review above informed this study how religio-cultural themes are related to and manifested in Maasai marriage. This is because the way the Maasai express, embody and apportion meaning to events related to marriage are intrinsically related to their religio-cultural context.

2.5 Changes in Maasai Marriage in Regard to Cultural Themes

Regarding change, Fischer, in the preface to Cronk (2004) states that: “the one great rule of culture is that it is always changing” (p. 3). In the face of this reality, an issue regarding the Maasai religio-culture vis-à-vis change arises: Will the Maasai survive or perish? This is a question that has been asked while looking at the cultural challenges facing the Maasai together with the implications of these challenges. However, the resilience of Maasai cultural and religious worldview manifested in marriage has been tested over the decades. It has been established that the changes that have affected Maasai marriage and by extension cultural and religious worldview did not begin in the recent past. Maasai marriage has undergone changes for centuries through contacts the Maasai have had with their neighbours at different stages in their movement to their present location and through the migration of other communities who now live side by side with the Maasai (Drinkwater 2010; cf. Coles 2008). Awiti notes that:

Surrounded by a quickly modernising world, the Maasai have to reckon with the inevitability of change especially in the area of education. More and more Maasai children, for example, are attending school and acquiring knowledge that exposes them to modern ways of life. To this effect, Martinez and Waldron (2006) reflect the need for the Maasai to negotiate their cultural identity in the face of globalisation. (Awiti 2011, 128)

Hodgson (2001) discussing the Maasai of Tanzania, argues that “as increased land alienation, declining livestock populations, forced settlements and political resources within the state make such “traditional” pursuits untenable, the dominant Maasai masculinity is being reforged to uneasily embrace both the “traditional” and the “modern”” (p. 250-251).

This observation can easily be applied across the border to Maasai of Kajiado who have had such influences much earlier than the Maasai of Tanzania (cf. Hughes 2006, 5-6). Eisemon in the foreword to Holland (1996) notes that “schooling as well as ... participation in the wage salary economy” are “two of the most powerful factors transforming Maasai society” (p. i). Coles (2008) in relation to formal education notes that: “the Maasai are capable of creating a hybrid society; one combining modernity with cultural traditions, in a movement towards self-preservation and growth” (p. 1). Awiti adds that:

Whereas Maasai identity has been linked to respect for family, others and cooperation, schools on the other hand are seen as reinforcing hierarchy and competition. In the conclusion to their study, Martinez and Waldron (2006)

recommend that traditional culture and modern identity should co-exist so that there is an integration of Maasai cultural traditions and modern ways of life. An example of this in their opinion would be the merging of the Christian culture and the Maasai culture in the area of religion and to integrate Maasai ways in the school curriculum. (Awiti 2011, 128)

The socio-economic context in Kenya, which has been changing rapidly since colonialism, the beginning of missionary activity in Kenya and political independence have dramatically changed the socio-cultural and religious life of the Maasai. Many Maasai have converted to Christianity and are striving to live the Christian life patterned after missionaries. This new life marks the rise of fundamental changes in the cultural practices and religion among the Maasai (Fraser et al.; cf. Coles 2008).

Coast contends that:

Traditional views of the Maasai as a purely pastoralist subsistence population, with low levels of integration in regional and national economies have increasingly been revised. In recent decades Maasai have been influenced, amongst other factors, by national governments, formal education provision, occupation diversification and integration within the monetised economy. Levels of education (both male and female) and participation in paid employment are significantly higher in Kenya relative to Tanzania. Reliance upon livestock as the source of subsistence production is much lower in Kenya, and these socioeconomic differences are reflected in material proxies of wealth, such as possession of a modern (metal-roofed) dwelling. By comparing nuptiality between Kenya and Tanzanian Maasai, this study

highlights change and continuity in marriage among the Maasai in particular and rural sub-Saharan African populations undergoing socio-economic change in general. (Coast 2006, 400)

One of the changes observed by Coast (2006) is that “Historically, men who were still *murrān* could not marry, as this was seen as the prerogative of elders. In contemporary Kenyan Maasailand, however, this chronological ability to marry appears to be reducing in importance” (p. 400). This study has also come across cases of *murrān* who are married (Chapter IV).

The ideal of having many livestock is changing, partly because there is no more large grazing land (Appendix XI: Picture 17; cf. Ray 2000, 65-66); having many wives and children is also beginning to change. This change is attributed to education and the lower economic status due to lack of large herds of cattle to pay as bridewelath. Coast (2006) observed that “Men with at least some education were significantly more likely to be in monogamous relationships” (p. 410). The change is also evidenced in the changing style of dressing seen with many of the Maasai who now wear suits and other clothes not traditionally worn by the Maasai, the type of housing, the scramble for formal education, the search for alternative forms of employment and engagement in other forms of economic activities (cf. Archambault 2013b; Phillips 2008; May & Ole Ikayo 2007; May & McCabe 2002). A wave of individualism is moving among the Maasai, hence affecting the communal approach to living (Hodgson 2001, 257).

The money economy has seen a number of Maasai moving to eke out a living in urban centres with many of the Maasai warriors (*moran*) working as day and night guards away from their villages. Policies of the national government that favour a more sedentary life are fast affecting the lifestyle of the Maasai (Hodgson 2001, 257). However, Eisemon, thinks that formal employment and policies favouring sedentary lifestyle do not necessarily change pastoralism. In the foreword to Holland (1996), he argues, in support of Holland, challenging “many assumptions made about the relationship between education, employment and social change.” (p. i). He argues, “for instance, that participation in formal education and employment often strengthens pastoralism, as it provides the resources other family members require to continue a more “traditional”existence” (p. i).

The advent of HIV and AIDS is another factor impacting on the life of the Maasai. The Maasai call HIV and AIDS, *bitya* or *biitia*. According to Coast (2007) it “literally” means to shrink. For non-Swahili speaking Maasai, however, the word *biitia* can refer to many illnesses and diseases that involve weight loss and is not necessarily the sole preserve of HIV and AIDS” (p. 393). The spread of HIV and AIDS among the Maasai has been attributed to various cultural issues, such as polygyny, female circumcision, early arranged marriages and poor education (Fraser et al., p. 22). These mainly affect women and girls who often lack the social and economic power and the negotiating skills to refuse sex or to demand condom use. Adolescent girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation, which increases their risk of being infected or affected by HIV and AIDS and exposes them to additional risks.

Among the Maasai, elders had a strong and much respected role of teaching society's mores and cultural values. This role is slowly and steadily weakening due to new social and economic situations. A large number of Maasai are no longer living in *enkangs* as a social unit. Others have embraced economic activities that do not keep them close to family units. These conditions have eroded the grip that the elders had on families. Mainly due education, people do not listen to elders as much as they once did. And the ultimate authority and respect (*enkanyit*) accorded to elders no longer holds.

This change can be attributed, as has been observed earlier, to changing social and economic conditions. Hodgson notes that:

the experience, attitude, and practices of being an age-set member have changed. In these Maasai communities, as in many others, few young men had time to spend in the numerous activities which build solidarity within their age-set: the liminal period after circumcision has been dramatically shortened as most boys return to school, *emanyatta* (warrior-villages) are a rare occurrence, and *illmurran* have infrequent opportunities to congregate with each other as they pursue farming, education, waged work, and other opportunities to make money. (Hodgson 2001, 256)

Fraser et al. in their study of "the lived experience and development perspectives of Maasai women" (p. 20) contend that: "In recent decades the Maasai of East Africa have undergone substantive cultural change in response to national development efforts" (p. 20). They further remark that "Maasai women have a keen sense of the

potential benefits and pitfalls of the social changes they are experiencing, particularly with regard to marriage relationships, gender norms, and education” (p. 20).

Archambault adds that:

Like elsewhere in Maasailand, there appears to be increased family nuclearization with homestead sizes, rates of polygyny and household sizes steadily diminishing (Archambault, 2007; Coast, 2001; Grandin, 1991; Pratt, 2003; Talle, 1988). Several factors may be contributing to this trend. First, since the early 1990s, *Enkop* has been undergoing land privatization, in which individual male family heads are allocated their own private parcel of land from what was once a communal group ranch. This, coupled with the insecurity individuals have in the process of subdivision itself, provides strong incentives for Maasai to break off from previous homesteads and move to their new parcels to secure their status as owners. Second, members of *Enkop* have been increasingly exposed to Euro-American ideals of nuclear family life and biological parenthood through various institutional channels. (Archambault 2010, 7)

Even though Gilbert (2003) argues that “in reality their (the Maasai) traditional life was disappearing because education and the demands of a modern economy were forcing the Maasai to abandon their traditions, and by the end of the 1990s it seemed that their old customs would not survive another decade” (p. 34), the contrary is the case as has been found by this study. Maasai culture and religion are steadfast. One will see Maasai herds moving from one place to the other, one will see many Maasai selling herbal medicine in urban centres clad in Maasai traditional garb.

2.6 Summary of Literature

The literature that has been examined and interpreted in this chapter reveals a level of unity in the complex religio-cultural reality of the Maasai, taking into account the many clans and sections in Maasailand that straddle two countries, Kenya and Tanzania. The complex religio-cultural reality of the Maasai includes what they understand, value, believe and hold as ideals in the institution of marriage. It is an unwritten living religion and culture expressed through traditional symbols, myths, rituals, attitudes and practices.

Marriage among the Maasai has been presented as a basic human institution that enhances life mainly through procreation but also through family, clan and community relationships. These relationships are created through the various stages of life, known as initiation, which prepare the Maasai for marriage and which also enhance their lives as married people.

The literature reviewed reveals that the cultural themes explored in this study are custodians of the major values and ideas that bring wholeness and coherence to Maasai culture and religion and are manifested in Maasai marriage. The themes explain the nature of life, nature of creation and the nature of evil in Maasai culture and religion. However, it has been noted that no systematic presentation of these themes, as proposed by this study vis-à-vis marriage has been attempted by the authors in a thorough qualitative or quantitative contextual research approach.

This chapter has also revealed the resilience of Maasai culture and religion as manifested and entrenched in marriage. The resilience is in the context of the contemporary world faced with challenges such as land alienation (Adhi 2009, Coles 2008, 1; Appendix IX & XI Photo 17), declining livestock, HIV and AIDS, globalization and urbanization.

CHAPTER III

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study is an exploratory research, relying heavily on qualitative methods but adopting quantitative approaches where applicable. This chapter delineates the research design, data collection techniques, data processing, presentation and analysis, biases and limitations of the study, questionnaire return rate, demographic data of the respondents, sampling technique and sample size, problems encountered in the research and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The design adopted allowed for direct interaction with the group in the study in order to collect detailed data from where the respondents were and within their own local situation. The aim of this approach was to gain in-depth insight into their own understanding of their situation from their own context. The design facilitated the collection of data using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, observation (O) and focus group discussions (FGDs). This wide range of data collection techniques was employed in order to strengthen the findings and conclusions of the research. In this way, a larger sample was reached, enabling a more credible generalization.

The use of qualitative methods for this study facilitated the gathering of narratives and lived experiences related to culture and the religious system of the Maasai, and more so, with regard to and as manifested in marriage.

The research design was mainly a descriptive survey that involved a systematic collection of narratives and experiences concerning the values, meaning, attitudes and opinions of the Maasai and their cultural and religious outlook about marriage. The questions asked were aimed at testing the main premise that Maasai culture and religion is manifested in marriage while keeping in focus the purpose, objectives and the research questions relating to this study.

A quantitative approach helped in establishing the number of people who share certain attitudes, opinions or beliefs about marriage. These findings have been used to make a generalized view about the Maasai population in Kajiado County as presented in Chapter IV. The samples used helped to establish the necessary percentages used in data analysis. The percentages have been laid out in such a way that they are representative of the population studied.

Personal interviews were used to obtain information on the knowledge of the people about the themes as they relate to and are manifested in Maasai marriage. A structured interview schedule with closed and open-ended questions was used. Unstructured interviews were conducted with key informants using an interview guide (Appendix II B). These were mostly community leaders, religious leaders, local administrators and Maasai elders.

3.3 Site of the Study

The Maasai, who are the focus of this study, live in both Kenya and Tanzania as shown in Map II below:

Map II: Maasai Location in Kenya and Tanzania



Source: Maasai Association: <http://www.maasaiassociation.org/ceremonies.html>

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

This study is based both on fieldwork, mainly respondent interviews and bibliographic material. The secondary material was mainly from libraries where records and other studies related to this research were examined in light of field data. There are a large number of books and articles written about marriage among the Maasai and about the Maasai in general. These were found in the libraries and the internet. Some of the libraries that were visited around Nairobi are: Kenyatta University Post Modern Library, Catholic University of Eastern Africa Library, Jomo Kenyatta Library at the University of Nairobi, Tangaza University College Library, Hekima University College Library, United States International University Library, Marist International University College Library and Consolata Institute of Philosophy Library. Other resource centres included, Kenya National Archives and Oltepesi

Cultural Institute, Narok where a collection of materials on the Maasai way of life is stored.

This is an empirical study which surveyed both historical and contemporary attitudes, values, institutions and practices among the Maasai of Kenya on if and how they relate to marriage. It looked through data on the Maasai belief system, and especially marriage and how that data on marriage manifests Maasai culture and religion.

The principal methodology used here was a questionnaire, supported whenever appropriate by a survey of extant ethnographic evidence and observation (O). A systematic collection of data was done between August 2009 and May 2010. However, the process of data collection continued until the study was presented for examination.

3.5 Target Population

The target population is the Maasai, a community that was chosen because it is generally reputed to have retained most of its indigenous traditions. According to Maasai Education Discovery 2006, “the Maasai people serve as Kenya's international cultural symbol: the Maasai community have the most recognizable cultural identity in and outside Kenya.” Archambault (2013a) adds that “Maasai have maintained a strong ethnic identity associated with pastoralism as a livelihood and central marker of identity” (p. 3666).

Purposive sampling was used to select three out of the seven divisions of Kajiado District. The seven divisions in Kajiado are Isinya, Central, Loitokitok, Magadi, Mashuru, Namanga and Ngong. The three divisions selected for the study were Ngong, Mashuru and Namanga. The interviews were conducted in three divisions to enhance objectivity and for the generalization of the findings to the entire district now called Kajiado County. Ngong Division is in Kajiado North and has three main urban centres of Kiserian, Kisames and Ngong Town. It is cosmopolitan in nature and is a test for the resilience of Maasai culture and religion. It also has many migrants from other communities, especially the Agikuyu, who have settled there and intermarried with the Maasai. The Agikuyu are neighbours of the Maasai in Ngong area because it borders Kiambu County which is predominantly Gikuyu area. This has helped to identify some of the changes that are affecting Maasai marriage, culture and religion. Coast (2006) states, quoting Goodkind, that “changes in marriage are a “ready barometer” of change in society” (p. 399).

Mashuru was sampled because it is characteristically an area that has rural and slightly urban population. Mashuru also lies in the border with Ukambani where the ethnic group is the Akamba. Namanga was selected because it is a largely rural setting and a border post between Kenya and Tanzania. The Maasai who live in this area are in the border and interact with Maasai in Tanzania.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Four sets of research instruments were used in gaining access to the primary data for the study. These were questionnaires, interview schedule, observation checklist (Appendix II C) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

3.6.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire used in this research took into account the ability of respondents to read and write. This approach helped to bridge the problem of distance and the difficulty of meeting each respondent in a face-to-face interview. The questionnaires targeted adults in households, key informants, religious leaders, community leaders and teachers. Both the researcher and the field assistants administered the questionnaires which had both closed and open-ended questions. In order to facilitate easy distribution and collection of questionnaires in the three research areas, field assistants who had good knowledge of the areas were identified and trained. There were two field assistants collecting and distributing questionnaires in Ngong and two in Mashuru. The researcher and one field assistant distributed and collected questionnaires in Namanga.

3.6.2 Interviews

The interview format in the fieldwork process consisted of oral administrations of questions from the researcher's interview guide (Appendix II B). The interview protocol was directed either to individual respondents or to FGDs. The interview guide for both the individual and the group interviews were not rigidly followed. Some degree of flexibility was exercised in pursuing further questions called for from the earlier ones raised or from the manner of response given to a question by a given respondent.

3.6.3 Observation

The researcher used observation (Gray 2009, 396-423) as a method of collecting data. Conscious and planned observation, guided by an observation checklist (Appendix II

C), was used to collect data by observing Maasai in their day to day life in *manyattas*, burial ceremonies, grazing habits and marriage ceremonies. Formal observation sessions were planned with contact persons who were, in one way or another, part of the ceremony or occasion being observed (Gray 2009, 411-412). The researcher observed and recorded activities and behaviour related to the study. The observations were systematically recorded following an observation checklist and research questions where applicable.

3.6.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Questions that were used in facilitating the FGDs were drawn from the interview guide (Appendix II B) prepared for the study. Two principal aims of these discussions included, first, the need to gain further validation and depth to the interpretations given to some of the ritual items and symbols that were mentioned in the questionnaire and that were observed during the ceremonies that were attended. The second aim was to explore the possibility of arriving at multiple perspectives on the significance of some of the ritual items and symbols encountered during the observation.

Respondents comprising community elders, male and female adults in households, teachers and Christian leaders were selected purposively with the help of community leaders, religious leaders, local administrators and field assistants. The researcher relied on their experience of working with the people who would be participating in the FGDs. They were requested that, as much as possible, they should ensure that they purposively selected participants in each group who would have something to say about the topic and would also feel comfortable saying it in a group.

Six FGDs were carried out in Ngong, Mashuru and Namanga, two in each division. The groups were as homogenous as possible in terms of sex, age and marital status. In each division, two FGD sessions were held with the following groups: married male/female adults, elders, and religious leaders. This method of controlling “the group composition to match carefully chosen categories of participants is known as segmentation”. Segmented samples are closely tied to the emphasis on homogeneity in the composition of focus groups. This homogeneity that not only allows for more free-flowing conversations among participants within groups but also facilitates analyses that examine differences in perspective among groups (Morgan 2013, 7; cf. NOAA 2009, 3-4).

It was easier in a rural set-up, to form a group of seven to ten people to participate in a discussion. FGDs dealt with the following themes: God, Ancestors, Living Dead, Nominal Reincarnation, Lineage, Leadership, Adulthood/Elderhood, Bridewealth, Polygyny, Herbalist, Diviner, Witch Witchcraft and Death. The discussions focused on 1) how the group understands the themes and 2) how the themes are reflected in the institution of marriage. The groups were selected while keeping in mind minimization of sample bias rather than achieving generalizability. Therefore, samples were purposively selected from members of the Maasai community who were able to discuss particular themes in English.

3.7 Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

Data that accrued from the study were both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The data comprised beliefs, attitudes to marriage in general, God, living dead, ancestors, nominal reincarnation, diviners, herbalists, witches, witchcraft, leadership, marriage, bridewealth, lineage, adulthood/elderhood and polygyny.

However, this is mainly a qualitative research as the composition of our respondents and design research instruments show (Appendix II). The semi-structured questionnaires and discussion guides generated varied data. In this regard, qualitative skills of data processing, presentation and analysis were applied. This involved classification, and synthesis of data. The main steps followed are:

Field notes and questionnaires were summarized.

Some concrete responses in the questionnaires were subjected to descriptive statistics and tables and graphs were generated. The tables, graphs and charts have enhanced the illustration of some cross cutting issues in responses given by different categories of informants.

The data from primary and secondary sources was synthesized and arranged thematically according to the objectives and cultural themes. Primary data collected from a cross-section of people from the Maasai community in Kajiado District (now Kajiado County) concerning beliefs and attitudes to marriage as it relates to cultural themes and religion. This data has been thematically organized into four, according to the research objectives and questions. However, the four areas generally cover: the spiritual aspects of marriage, marriage as a basic foundation of human community in African cosmology and marriage as the primary institution that enhances life within the African community.

Prior to the end of the field research, attempts were made to relate the objectives of the study with the data so far collected. This move enabled the researcher to identify and fill the gaps which were forgotten, overlooked or oversubscribed.

The analysis of findings was guided by the following four research premises:

1. That the Maasai, like other African communities have a religio-cultural worldview.
2. That marriage has a place in the Maasai culture and religion.
3. That marriage is related to and manifests Maasai culture and religion.
4. That there are changes affecting Maasai marriage with regard to religio-cultural themes; which need to be addressed.

3.8 Questionnaire Return Rate

Out of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 163 (81.5%) were returned. This is an impressively adequate and acceptable return rate.

3.9 Demographic Data of the Respondents

3.9.0 Sampling Frame

Before embarking on the main field data collection exercise, ten questionnaires were distributed to members of the Maasai community in Namanga Division, Kajiado District for the purpose of carrying out a pre-test. Seven questionnaires were returned and those who responded to the questionnaires included a junior elder, a senior elder, a community health worker, a community elder and two teachers. There were five men and two women, all of them Christians. Among the seven respondents, five were married. This proportion of five to two already gave an indication of how important

marriage is among the Maasai. This data was a pointer to how the main data collection exercise should be executed.

The study originally set out to interview one hundred and fifty people. This figure was arrived at with the help of Taro Yamane's table of sample sizes as presented by Israel 2009 (see Appendix V). The table states that for a population of 20,000 to over 100,000, a sample size of 100 is recommended. For purposes of this research 100 respondents were added to enhance reliability and validity. The sampling units considered were the number of households (96,621), the average population per division (58,000) and the total Kajiado Maasai population (464,883) as presented in the Kajiado District Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010.

The composition of the interviewees was to be as follows: thirty community elders, sixty eight male and female adults in households, twenty community leaders, sixteen teachers and sixteen Christian leaders within Kajiado District now Kajiado County. These were to come from Mashuru, Namanga and Ngong, which were purposively sampled out of the seven divisions of Kajiado. Purposive sampling is applicable to this research because the research is mainly qualitative.

The actual research was informed by the findings of the pretest. This is mainly because the earlier sample of ten indicated that it would be difficult to get female respondents in the ratio proposed. Further, it would generally be difficult to get respondents who would be able to respond to questions satisfactorily. It was decided that two hundred questionnaires instead of one hundred and fifty as earlier planned be

distributed. The number of FGDs and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) was retained. Even though there was no number of IDIs proposed, six were carried out. The results from the field presented are from one hundred and sixty three questionnaires returned, six FGDs, six IDIs and Observation sessions. Some of the findings are summarized in tables, bar charts, and pie charts.

3.10 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The data that was gathered was on marriage: attitudes, values, institutions and practices. Twenty four community elders were interviewed and they provided indigenous knowledge on marriage. Thirteen teachers were interviewed for an analytical input while fourteen community leaders provided popular and official data on marriage. The eleven Christian leaders, from two mainline churches: Catholic and Anglican, provided information from their experience as pastors and priests who preside over marriages, they had insight into attitudes, values and practice of marriage from their pastoral experiences. They also act as marriage counselors.

While adults in households were interviewed mainly through questionnaires, the other groups of respondents, such as elders, Christian leaders, teachers and community leaders were interviewed and also given questionnaires where applicable. Since these people are few and have wide social networks, snowball sampling technique was employed in order to identify them.

Table 1: Summary of Sampled and Proposed Informants

	Categories	Summary of Sampled Informants				Proposed Sample			
		Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%
1	Male and Female Adults	60	36	94	60.2	34	34	68	45.3
2	Community Elders	24	0	24	15.4	15	15	30	20.0
3	Christian Leaders	11	0	11	7.1	8	8	16	10.7
4	Teachers	8	5	13	8.3	8	8	16	10.7
5	Community Leaders	10	4	14	9	10	10	20	13.3
	TOTAL	118	45	163	100	75	75	150	100

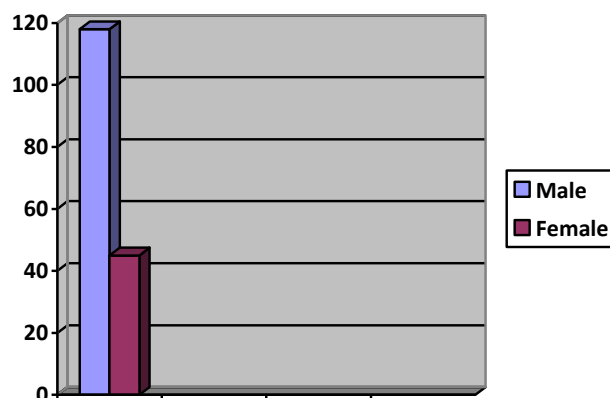
3.11 Gender

There were one hundred and sixty-three respondents, out of which 118 were male and 45 were female as indicated in (Chart 1 below). The number of women is emphasized because the study set out to interview men and women on a fifty-fifty ratio, an undertaking which was not achieved.

The difference in the ratio of male to female is attributed to two factors. First, female members of the Maasai community were reluctant to respond to questions and to fill out questionnaires. This reluctance has been mentioned in Section 3.7 as being due to male authority in a patrilineal ethnic group. Second, there were more male members of the Maasai community who had some form of formal education than the females. This factor of education has also been expressed in Section 3.7, where it was seen that “fewer women have received formal education” among the Maasai.

However, the results of the study show that there was no significant disparity in the responses of the male members and those of the female members of the Maasai community. This difference does not significantly alter the results and was therefore not given a separate presentation.

Chart 1: Gender Distribution



3.12 Age

The research was carried out among Maasai men and women of a wide range of age and background. The age range is between 15 and 70 years. The inclusion of all these age categories right from 15 years of age to 70 has given a rich heterogeneous mix. This heterogeneity has produced a cross-sectional outlook that runs from the youth to the elders. This has played a great role in determining and revealing the cultural knowledge of the young as well as the old in a Maasai society with increasing influence from the Western culture and Christianity.

This age representation has also helped to illustrate what changes are being experienced in the Maasai cultural and religious worldview vis-à-vis Maasai marriage. However, the responses have deliberately not been grouped according to age distribution because the findings show that there is no significant distinction between the knowledge of culture and religion of young and old Maasai.

It has been observed that many Maasai *morans* tend to live together even in urban centres. They live together while working either as night guards or selling herbal medicine. It is while living in these situations that they keep their religion and culture alive (Ole Kaunga 2003).

Table 2: Age of Respondents (N=163)

Age	Frequency		Total
	Male	Female	
Blank	1		1
15-20	8	3	11
21-24	15	9	24
25-28	21	9	30
29-32	12	5	17
33-36	18	9	27
37-40	10	4	14
41-44	11	0	11
45-50	13	4	17
58-70	9	2	11
	118	45	163

3.13 Marital Status

The data of this study shows that 59% of the respondents, more than half, were married. This figure can be interpreted as an indication of the centrality of marriage in Maasai culture and religion. This is a positive indication in the sense that the majority who responded were sharing experiences and values they had lived as married people. There were also 32% single, 3% separated and 4% widows. Those who did not respond constituted 2%.

The varied representation of status gives diverse views which enrich this study. On the other hand, the minimal number of the separated couples 3% can be interpreted as an indication towards the importance, sacredness and stability of marriage in Maasai culture and religion.

Those who were single (32%) were mainly in the stage of moranhood, a period when one is not supposed to be married. All the women in the sample were married.

However, it needs to be noted that three of the respondents indicated that they were *moran* but married. This figure, however insignificant, is an indication of some of the changes taking place among the Maasai as far as marriage is concerned. This observation is made with the background that, culturally, among the Maasai, *morans* are not expected to marry until they complete the stage of moranhood. Coast observes that:

Historically, men who were still *murrans* could not marry, as this was seen as the prerogative of elders. In contemporary Kenyan Maasailand, however, this chronological ability to marry appears to be reducing in importance. For example, the author was present at two wedding ceremonies where the groom was a *murrans*. Men cease to be *murrans* when the subsequent age set is created, and become junior elders. (Coast 2006, 399)

Table 3 below shows the marital status of the respondents:

Table 3: Marital Status (N=163)

Status	No.	Percentage
Married	97	59%
Single	52	32%
Widow	6	4%
Separated	3	3%
No Response	5	2%
Total	163	100%

3.14 Religious Affiliation

The findings on religious affiliation show that Christian activity in Kajiado District, now Kajiado County, among the Maasai is evident. Indeed, 85.3% or 139/163 respondents indicated that they were Christians, with only one respondent indicating affiliation to African Traditional Religion. Twenty three of the respondents did not indicate affiliation to any religious tradition. There were forty six respondents who indicated affiliation to Christianity and a specific faith tradition. They belonged to the following faith traditions: Eleven Roman Catholics, Sixteen Pentecostals belonging to Dominion Chapel, Redeemed Gospel Church and Gospel Revival Church. There were nineteen belonging to Protestant churches and specifically to African Inland Church, Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church and Lutheran Church. The rest only indicated that they were Christians. However, religious affiliation was not a significant factor in influencing the responses to the questions.

This finding appears to confirm Bowen, who states that most of the evangelization work done by the Spiritan Missionaries among the Maasai was done through schools:

where many of the young people were catechized and baptized before they left the school. In most cases, however, once they returned to their villages, the only evidence of their exposure to Christianity was the Christian names they had received at their baptism. In the eyes of some Maasai, this made Christianity a children's religion – fine for young people, but to be left behind once they entered "real life". (Bowen 2008, 1)

3.15 Clan (*injomiei*), Sub-Clan and Group Affiliation

The essence of reflecting on the Maasai clans, sub-clans and sections in this study is in order to find out if there could be any differences in beliefs from clan to clan, sub-clan to sub-clan or section to section. The findings have shown that there is uniformity in beliefs and practices among the Maasai. This study can therefore adopt a statement by Coast that:

Whilst acknowledgement is made here of subtle differences between clans and sub-clans, such discussion is beyond the scope of this study. There are, for example, ceremonial decorative and clothing variations between the different clans. However, in terms of broader social organizations and major demographic behaviour, the similarities are greater than the sum of the detailed differences. (Coast 2007, 390)

Moringe in the foreword to ole Saibul and Carr (1981), supports this idea by noting that: “It is these social traditions and customary practices which unite the Maasai as a people despite their diversity in geographical location, and their clan and sub-clan distribution” (p. 7).

Authors writing about the Maasai clans do not concur on how many clans were present originally or even at present. Even among the Maasai interviewed, there was no consensus about the number of clans. Some writers present four clans while others present five, six or even seven.

There is a legend about a Maasai founding father called Maasinta or Leeyo or Naiteru-kop, the beginner of the earth. He is believed to have had two wives, *Orok*

Kiteng and *Odo Mongi*. The first wife had three sons *Il-makesen*, *Il-molelian* and *Il-taarozero* and the second wife two sons *Lukum* and *Naiser*. The first wife had red cattle and the second wife had black cattle. At that time, it is the women who owned cattle but lost them due to carelessness. It is believed that the Maasai clans, which are patrilineal, have their origin from the children of the sons of Maasinta (Ole Masharen 2009, 16-17).

The two Maasai moieties are also believed to originate from the names of the cattle of the two wives *enk-aji na-do i-lasho*, or *Odomong'i* the house of the red calves and *enk-aji na-rok i-lasho*, or *Orok-kiteng'* the house of the black calves. There is also a tale of the God of two colours: red used to refer to the aspect of God that shows anger and evil while black is benevolent and good (Ole Masharen 2009, 16-17; Ole Sankan 1971, xiii, 1-7; www.masaikenya.org; cf. Hillman 1991b, 7).

The clans are sub-divided into sub-clans (*ilpaasheta*) or sections distinguished by their cattle brands. The major subgroups as listed by Ole Ndaskoi (2006) and which effectively function as politically independent *iloshon* or locations, include *Ilpurko*, *Ilmatapato*, *Ilkeek-onyokie*, *Ildalat-le-kutuk* (*Ilkankere*), *Ildamat*, *Iloodo-kilani*, *Ilkisongo*, *Iloitokitoki*, *Iloitai*, *Isikirari*, *Isiria*, *Senenget*, *Ilmoitanik*, *Ilwuasin-gishu* (*Uasin-Gishu*), and *Ilkaputiei*. Ole Ndaskoi (2006) also lists the following *Ilarusa*, *ilaitaiyiok* and *ildalalekutuk*. He adds that there are many others, some of which have been wiped out in tribal conflicts. He gives as examples *Ildikiri*, *Ilkoli*, *Iloogol-ala*, *Ilaikiptiak* and *Ilosekelai*. According to Ole Ndaskoi:

Sub-clans in *Oodo Mong'i* clan are *Ilmolelian*, *Ilmakesen* and *Iltaroseero* while *Ilaiser* and *Ilukumai* are the sub-clans in *Orok Kiteng* clan. It is noteworthy that members of the same clan respected one another in a brotherly way. A man could not for example marry a woman of his clan because the community considered her his sister - a great abomination in the eyes of the Maasai. (Ole Ndaskoi 2006, 29; cf. Hughes 2006, 13)

Tarayia (2004, 186) notes that the *Ilkisonko* and *Ipurko* are the largest sections, followed by the *Ilkaputiei* and *Ilkeekonyoike*, respectively. *Ilarusa*, *Ilparakuo* and a section of *Ilkisonko*, constitute the Tanzanian Maasai situated in the Mt. Kilimanjaro area of northern Tanzania (cf. Spencer 2003).

However, Ole Masharen (2009) writes that the early Maasai that settled in Kerio Valley did not have “internal divisions such as clanism, sectionalism and age set antagonisms” (p. 6) because they did not have any divisions now referred to as *Olosho* to mean a tribal section, nation, country or plateau. He reckons, “Today the internal schism is remarkably conspicuous to an extent that the tribe [ethnic group] can be said to be a conglomeration of independent units with peculiarities of language, dress, beadwork, weapons, shelter, tribal administrations, ceremonies, military arrangements and many socio-political and economic aspects” (p. 6).

Ole Sankan (1971, x) makes a distinction between Narok and Kajiado District and lists *Iloitai*, *Ildamat*, *Ipurko*, *Isiria*, *Ilwuasin-Kishu* and *Ilmoitanik* as belonging to Narok while *Ilkaputiei*, *Iloodo-Kilani*, *Ilkankere (Ildala-le-Kutuk)* and *Ilmatapato* to

Kajiado. He further states that *Ilkeek-Onokie* are both in Narok and Kajiado and a small proportion of *Ilpurko* in Kajiado.

Regarding the listing of Maasai groups on the questionnaire, one Maasai elder noted that *Kisonko*, *Serenket*, *Parakuyu* and *Ilbaraguyo (Iloikop)* were Maasai groups in Tanzania. He insisted that the proper list for Maasai groups in Kenya is as follows:

Table 4: Maasai Groups according to an Elder

IlPurko	Iloitai	Isalei	Ilmolo	Iparakuyio
Ildomat	Iloitokitok	Isirinketi	Iluasinkishu	Ilaikipiak
Ilkaputiei	Iloodokilani	Ildalalokutuk	Ilmoitanik	Iltiamus
Ilkeekonyokie	Ilmatapato	Ilatayiok Lolmunishoi	Isiria	Ilmoitanik

The following list (Table 5) shows the collated results from the question that asked the respondents to indicate his or her clan. The list indicates that the largest number of respondents for this study came from the *Ilmolelian*. They were followed by *Ilkumae* and *Odomongi*, though by a big margin. Others who were represented by 4 to 7 respondents are: *Keekonyokie*, *Ilmakesen*, *Irmolelian*, *Molenlian* and *Purko*. Note that the spelling and any indication of duplicates has been kept the way it was written on the questionnaire.

Only twelve of the respondents out of the one hundred and sixty three did not indicate which clan they belong to. This small number of those who did not respond is an indication that many Maasai are aware of their clan affiliation. This is regardless of their age, education, gender or religious affiliation.

Table 5: Maasai Clans Listed by Respondents (N=163)

Ilmolelian	20	Ikumae	10	Odomongi	9	Ilaiser	8	Keekonyokie	6
Ilmakesen	6	Irmolelian	5	Molelian	7	Orokiteng	3	Purko	4
Ilmekesen	2	Iloodokishu	3	Ilaitayiok	3	Ildamat	2	Ilkaputie	2
Laiser	2	Isiria	2	Mokesen	2	Ilkeekonyokie	2	Ilmokesen	2
Ermakesen	1	Dalalekutuk	1	Orokikiteng	1	Shampuri	1	lukumae-aiser	1
Ilaiserr	1	Ilmongi	1	Orkaputiye	1	Siria	1	Okodokilai	1
Ilaiserri	1	Ilmusakara	1	Totangit	1	Olaiserri	1	Ilkaraat	1
Ilaiserser	1	Iloitayiok	1	Morarian	1	Orikitung	1	Kaputiei	1
Ilaitayor	1	Ilpasimaro	1	Naidongi	1	Imolelian	1	Laitaiyo	1
Ilatayok	1	Iltaiyiok	1	Ilkarinkishu	1	Inkidongi	2	Laitayiok	1
Ilekaiki	1	Iltatoseo	1	Ilmatapato	1	Laitayo	1	Odomowai	1
Ilemuya	1	Iltayiok	1	Iluasinkisu	1	Lugumaye	1	Limoinge	1
Leisir	1	Imakesen	1	Kakanyokie	1	Latayok	1	Longidongi	1
Lookumae	1	Loodokilani	1	long'eli	1	Matapato	1		
						Responses	151		
						No Response	12		
						TOTAL	163		

The respondents were also asked to list the sub-clan they belong to (Table 6) below.

Table 6: Sub-clans Listed by Respondents (N=163)

Ilaiser	3	Emotasio	1	Ilenititi	1	Intuka	1	Imolelian	1	Ilpasitei	1
Ilaitayiok	2	Endomati	1	Ilentit	1	Iparkineti	1	Imososhongo	1	Iltaarro-sero	1
Ilmakesen	3	Enkaissery	1	Ileparsagaa	1	Irkart	1	Imotosio	1	Iltaatasero	1
Ilmokesen	2	Illaserer	1	Ilimongi	1	Irmolelian	1	Impirda	1	Kerinkishu	1
Ilmolelian	4	Ilmaatasita	1	Ilkaputie	1	Irpakeneti	1	Impirida	1	Laiser	1
Iloodokilani	6	Ilmamasita	1	Ilkerinkishu	1	Irpasimaro	1	Leshoe	1	Laitaiyo	1
Iltasero	2	Ilmeponi	1	Ilkitui	1	Irrinder	1	Loodokisho	1	Laitayiok	1
Ilukumae	4	Ilming'ara	1	Ilkumai	1	Isimanga	1	Makesent	1	Okodokilai	1
Inkidongi	2	Ilmoingi	1	Ilmoshoro	1	Molelyan	1	Naiguik	1	Olaiserri	1
Isiria	3	Ilmoinko	1	Ilmusararu	1	Mosiany	1	Ngong	1	Olkaputieni	1
Odomongi	2	Iloigerr	1	Ilodekwa	1	Mpirida	1	Ngushu	1	Olkeekonyokie	1
Shakai	2	Iloong'ani	1	ilparsutie	1	Odokitong	1	Ntarosero	1	Oluasinkisu	1
Purko	3	Ilparkenket	1	Ilpasekero	1	Odomoki	1	Ntuka	1	Ornomokesen	1
Sakuda	3	Ilparsai	1	Ilpasekerot	1	Orok-kiteng	1	Soita	1	Parsoi	1
Matapato	3	Orookiteng	1	Parsekero	1	Terrosei	1	Sonnge	1	Seker	1
Dalalekutuk	1	Koitokitok	1								
								Responses	121		
								No response	42		
								TOTAL	163		

the Maasai culture and community. However, this trend is now changing and Maasai parents are now slowly embracing the western education and its importance in modern society.

Tarayia states that:

The Maasai lag behind in education. The few who have made it through secondary education had to acquire bursaries through the government and other organizations that at times are not able to continue sponsoring the students as they reach university or college level. This results in dropouts and equips traditionalists with reasons not to allow the girl-child to go on with her education programs. Financial support for education for the Maasai community should be given priority and the quarter system should be strengthened to enable them access provincial and national schools. (Tarayia 2004, 218)

Bingham adds, quoting Maasai Association:

The Maasai Association (2009) website stated that upto 60% of the Maasai children in rural areas do not attend formal schools, and “only 8% of all girls in rural areas of Maasailand have had a chance to complete Secondary School education. (Bingham 2011, 3)

Ole Masharen (2001, ii) writes that the first set of Maasai to see the doors of modern formal education are the ones belonging to the *Ilterito* age-set who reigned between 1926 and 1948. (Table 8) below shows the level of education of the respondents sampled for this study.

Table 8: Level of Education (N=163)

Level of Education	Frequency
Std 1-4	4
Std 6-8	12
Form 2-4	51
College	44
University	19
No Response	33
Total	163

3.17 Problems Encountered in the Field

A number of hindrances confronted the researcher in the course of conducting the present study. Major among them were, participation of women, the influence of Christianity and the level of education among the Maasai in Kajiado District (now Kajiado County). The level of education, more especially among women, has been identified as one of the problems that influenced the participation of Maasai women in this study. Fraser et al. use the term subaltern to describe “a community that lives at “the margin of the margins,” (p. 22) placed at the “very bottom of society that remains hidden from discursive articulations of that society. Predominantly illiterate, Maasai women do not have access to formal education or knowledge outside of male control” (p. 22). Fraser et al., therefore, argue that “knowledge may be hidden from outsiders as a form of resistance to threats of domination” (p. 22).

Not being a Maasai speaker, the researcher, had to rely on English and Kiswahili as a medium of communication. On the other hand, the Maasai are not readily willing to talk to outsiders about their cultural and religious worldview. Also, most members of the Maasai community, are a popular tourist target. Giving of information was thus often seen as an income generating activity. On several occasions a fee was

demanded before an interview could be granted. My Maasai field assistants reported that those who agreed to fill out questionnaires demanded a fee. I had to part ways with my first Maasai field assistant because it was becoming very expensive to deal with him because for every questionnaire filled out he was charging Kshs 500/=. This was in great contrast to the non-Maasai field assistants who were easily able to get around the demands for money.

One of the ways of overcoming the problems encountered was the increase in the number of questionnaires distributed from 150 to 200. This helped to address the challenge of level of education and low number of women. On the other hand, the challenge reluctance to talk to foreigners about their culture was overcome by retaining one Maasai field assistant and working with four field assistants who were neighbours to the Maasai but were well known among them. This also helped to sort out the problem of language and the demand for cash handouts.

3.18 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the beginning of the research, there was an approval letter from Kenyatta University which enabled the researcher to be granted a Research Authorization Letter (Appendix VII) and a Research Clearance Permit (Appendix VIII) from the National Council for Science and Technology. The letter of authorised the researcher to carry out research in Kajiado District, now Kajiado County. In addition to the authorization letter, the respondents and the field assistants participating in this study were contacted beforehand and the purpose of the study explained to them in advance. In this way, their consent to participate in the research was sought. They were

assured that their rights, interests, privacy and sensitivities would be safeguarded. The consent of participants in interviews and FGDs group discussions was sought before the interviews took place.

3.19 Conclusion

This chapter reflects on the majorly qualitative research design that was chosen to gather the data. However, it acknowledges the realised need of incorporating some quantitative approaches in order to be able to handle some of the material that required a quantitative approach. It basically discusses the techniques that were employed to acquire the data. The techniques were questionnaires, FGDs and individual interviews and observation which provided data from a selected Maasai population. The population included both male and female whose age, level of education, marital status, religious affiliation, clan and section were supposed to be declared by each respondent. It further explains the way in which the sample was selected from the three Maasai areas, and describes the manner in which the data was collected and analyzed. The results and the conclusions based on the data analysis are discussed in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER IV

CENTRALITY OF MARRIAGE IN MAASAI RELIGIO-CULTURE

4.0 Introduction

The foregoing three chapters provided the background to the study, introduced and provided an overview of how this study has been carried out and the number of people sampled together with their demographic information. The three chapters also delved into some of the literature that provided insights into this study as well as presenting the conceptual framework and methodology employed in this study.

Chapter IV presents, analyzes and interprets in a thematic format, the findings that have been arrived at through field research, blending and incorporating where deemed necessary, some of the secondary sources relevant to this study. The presentation, analysis and interpretation are guided by the objectives and research questions of the study.

The questions posed to the respondents for the results presented in this chapter sought to find out Maasai cultural and religious worldview. However, the questions also sought to investigate: 1) the place of marriage in Maasai culture and religion 2) cultural themes related to and manifested in Maasai marriage and 3) changes affecting Maasai marriage with regard to the cultural themes.

It has to be re-emphasised, however, that the broad objective of the field research and the whole study is to investigate the centrality of marriage in African religio-culture with reference to the Maasai. This chapter presents the themes that manifest the

values, attitudes, beliefs and ideas of the Maasai as they are related to and manifested in Maasai marriage.

The principal themes examined in this chapter include God (*Enk-ai*), ancestors (*ol-akui*), living dead, nominal reincarnation, lineage, marriage, bridewealth, leadership, adulthood/elderhood, polygyny, herbalist, diviner, witch (*ol-asakutani*), witchcraft (*e-setan*) and death (*en-keeya*).

4.1 Marriage (*Enkiama*)

This section presents, analyzes and interprets data related to the theme of marriage among the Maasai. Specifically, it deals with what marriage is, the main steps to marriage, why Maasai people marry, main marriage activities and their significance. The section further discusses the length of preparation for marriage, items used during marriage and their significance. Finally, it explains the symbolism of food and drinks consumed at marriage ceremonies and their meaning.

4.1.0 Meaning and Purpose of Marriage Among the Maasai

Marriage was generally viewed by 108/163 (66%) respondents as a union between a ritually mature man and woman or women in order to have children for the continuation of family. Some respondents 29/163 (18%) considered marriage to be a situation where two or more mature adults of opposite sex get together for the purpose of bearing children. The two responses cited above are significant. They emphasize important elements of marriage, that is, maturity, the goal of having children and marriage as heterosexual. Other meanings of marriage as presented in Table 9 below

include a covenant between two parties, a rite of passage, a union of companionship to kill boredom, God's command, the starting point of one's life, to have one's own home and family and an institution. Twelve people did not respond to this question.

The responses in Table 9 below bring out several religio-cultural overtones associated with marriage among the Maasai. They include ritual maturity as a requirement for marriage, marriage as a covenant, procreation as a component of marriage, marriage as a rite of passage and as a divine command.

Table 9: Meaning of Marriage (R=163)

		%
Union between ritually mature man and woman to have children for continuation of family	108	67
Two or more opposite sex mature adults getting together for the purpose of bearing children	29	18
A covenant between two parties	4	2
Rite of passage	5	3
Union of companionship to kill boredom	1	0.6
God's command	1	0.6
The starting point of one's life	1	0.6
To have own home and family	1	0.6
An institution	1	0.6
No response	12	7
Total	163	100

The question on why Maasai people marry generated 163 responses. Maasai people marry for various reasons, the main one being procreation as indicated by 146/163 (89.5%) respondents. The other 17/163 (10.5%) responses include:

- 1) Maasai marry to extend the name of the family keeping it growing or increasing, hence enlivening the lineage. In this way, respondents confirmed belief in the theme of nominal reincarnation, further emphasizing the importance of procreation within marriage.

- 2) They marry as a way of recognizing a man as an elder.
- 3) A way of enriching culture or community.
- 4) A family need.
- 5) For a lady to be an assistant to manage wealth such as cattle, goats and do other work.

The preparation for marriage is a long process. Respondents indicated that marriage took a period ranging from one month to three years. However, a number of respondents pegged the period on the time taken to propose, negotiate and finally, payment of bridewealth.

Marriage begins to take shape through a marriage proposal from the bridegroom's family. The proposal is officially presented by a visit to the bride's home. An elder reported that:

the parents of the bridegroom visit the home of the proposed bride. Sometimes this is done without the knowledge of both the bride and the bridegroom. The parents discuss the possibility of marriage between the young people from the two families. Sometimes the bride is booked by the bridegroom's parents before any negotiation is done and a bride can also be booked at the time of birth when still an infant or even during pregnancy with the hope that the child would be a female.

When a marriage proposal has been made, no immediate response is given until the elders have had a chance to discuss the proposal. Elders as ritual leaders have to be

consulted to seek the will of the ancestors. Elders deliberate on the matter while having a ritual meal accompanied by beer drinking and sniffing of tobacco. Drinking beer and sniffing of tobacco is a practice only elders are allowed to engage in while deliberating on important community matters. They are the ones who have attained the spiritual maturity to deliberate on important issues of the community such as marriage.

At a FGD, it was noted that before negotiations take place, two young ladies are sent to the bride's home to introduce the family of the bridegroom and to present the marriage proposal. They carry with them some gifts: indigenous beer, tobacco and two walking sticks made from bamboo. After being welcome they identify the girl they want in marriage. They then travel back to their home. After weeks or even months, the girls who took the gifts are called by the family of the bride. At this time, they can be accompanied by other visitors from the bridegroom's family. It is during such meeting that the young man's family is either told "the gate is open", meaning acceptance of the proposal or "wait" or "try somewhere else", which means rejection of the proposal. The period after the first visit allows for secret investigation of the young man and his family background. The investigations will determine whether they will accept the young man and his family or not. The rejection of the proposal for marriage does not necessarily signify the rejection of the young man, it could mean the rejection of his family. This view is in line with the fact that marriage is a community affair and does not depend only on the two individuals getting married but also on the relations created by that marriage in the wider family. If the gate is open, the negotiations will commence. They revolve around the suitability of the marriage

for the two families and the marriage gifts to be given. The gifts include livestock, honey, tobacco and blankets. The bridegroom may attend the initial negotiations but only speaks through a proxy.

All the respondents were in agreement that the first step is normally the booking of the bride at the time of birth or at some point in her youth. The booking is done by the parents, especially the father. The second step involves discussions by the family of the bride and bridegroom and making engagement or courtship. There were three views regarding the third step. Some were of the view that the third step involved engagement of the couple or courtship. Others cited discussions between the parents of the bride and the bridegroom on the possibilities of marriage. There were two views on the fourth step: 1) time for the groom to collect the bride, 2) presentation of traditional gifts.

Included in all these steps to marriage are several activities: payment of bridewealth, several ceremonies of blessing, smearing of the bride with animal fat, singing and dancing. These are accompanied by other ceremonies such as ornamentation of the bride, advising the couple, and presentation of gifts. Payment of bridewealth was singled out as the main activity of a Maasai marriage. It was seen as taking centre stage and as the climax of Maasai marriage. This is because the presentation of bridewealth signifies the consent of both families for the marriage to proceed.

It was emphasized that negotiations for marriage could only take place for those who were considered to be adults. Such would have passed through the required initiation

rites. This is the meaning of ritually mature adult members of the Maasai community (cf. Gilbert 2007, 161).

The communitarian aspect of Maasai culture and religion accords the community a special place in the selection of the bride, proposal for marriage and negotiation of bridewealth. It was indicated by 115/163 (71%) respondents that the community or family members had the major role to investigate the family backgrounds of the partners. Other roles included advising the bride and bridegroom. The advice given to the bride and bridegroom included how to set up successful families and how to relate to each other in marriage. They were also advised how to keep their engagement alive before and during marriage.

The participation of the community in marriage is confirmation of the importance of marriage in the continuity of the community through procreation. This was affirmed by 139/163 (85%) respondents that begetting children was the most important aspect of marriage. This affirmation confirms the definition given earlier by 146/163 (89.5%) respondents to the meaning of marriage which included the component of procreation.

On the other hand, since a bridegroom's brother belongs to a different age-set, he cannot beget children on his brother's behalf if the brother is impotent or dead. This enhances the adherence to age-set ties that are made through circumcision of *morans*. A member of the bridegroom's age-set is the only one who can relate to the bride as the husband would do. The woman ceases to be a member of her father's clan on

marriage and immediately becomes a member of her husband's clan and age-set. This was expressed by 60% of the respondents. Those who think that the woman belongs to her father's clan were represented by 20% of the respondents. Chart 2 below illustrates the responses on change of clan and age-set of a woman among the Maasai upon marriage.

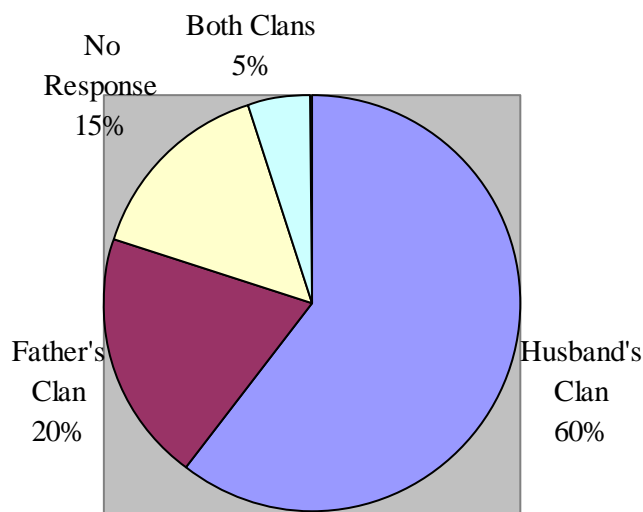


Chart 2: The Clan of a Married Woman

The process of marriage entails several activities, as have been highlighted above. One of the most significant activities is the blessing of the bride and bridegroom. Milk is splashed on the bride and bridegroom as a sign of blessing. Another feature that was prominently mentioned was guidance and counselling for the couple.

Some of the respondents noted that both the bride and the bridegroom undergo ritual shaving before the wedding. The ritual shaving is meant to signify a new beginning as husband and wife. The day of the wedding is marked by feasting, singing and dancing to express happiness for those getting married and the whole community. This is the final day of a Maasai girl in her father's homestead. A series of sessions of

blessing by elders take place. These are blessings to wish her well in her new home by the elders belonging to her father's age-set. And blessings to welcome her in her husband's homestead administered by the age-set members of her father-in-law.

During the first part of the wedding ceremony, the girl remains in her mother's house. The bride comes to the door of her mother's house in the presence of two elders from her father's age-set, one on each side of the door. Fresh grass is put on the feet of the girl as a sign of blessing. This symbolizes the mystical break with her homestead and a sign of wishing her prosperity (Appendix XI: Picture 3 & 4).

The bride is sprinkled with milk, beer or is spat on by the elders or smeared with "milk cream". This is a sign of blessing and prayer for peace, prosperity, fertility and keeping away grudges. Grass put on the feet of the bride and milk poured on it is also part of the blessings. The grass and the ground that produce it are sacred (Appendix XI: Picture 3, 4 & 5). Finke states that:

No Maasai was willing to break the ground, even to bury the dead within it, for soil is sacred on account of its producing grass which feed the cattle which belonged to God...Equally, grass has acquired a semi-sacred aura, and is held in the fist as a sign of peace, and similarly held is used for blessings during rituals, a sheaf of grass being shaken at the people or animals being blessed. (Finke 2007, 1)

Once all the processes are over, the bride is escorted to her new home by girls from her family accompanied by gifts such as cattle.

On arrival at her husband's home, she is received by her mother in law. She is given a new name and remains with her mother-in-law for four days as a sign of the transition from her mother's house to her marital home. The new name endows her, in a sense with a new role (Spencer 1988, 32). On the second day, she is taken to tour the cattle *boma* where she learns about the husband's property. On the fourth day, she bathes for the first time in her husband's home and on the fifth day she spends the day with her husband.

In one FGD, it emerged that many of the processes that were traditionally followed are no longer strictly adhered to or followed today. When a young circumcised man sees a girl that he would like to marry, he would first arrange that both modern and traditional beer made from honey as well as tobacco be taken to the mother of the girl. The mother of the girl would hide these items in her house until an appropriate moment when she would tell her husband. The husband would then invite three or four elders to his home. While they were drinking the beer and sniffing tobacco he would tell them where the beer and tobacco have come from and why. If the other elders thought that the young man who brought the items is a good person, they would accept that the process of marriage should begin.

The young man would then be expected to bring three bulls, sugar and more beer. Two bulls would be slaughtered and eaten by the community of the girl to be married. There would be celebrations that would last for upwards of two months. The third bull would remain in the home as a gift that the father would give to his daughter.

The rest of the bridewealth in the form of livestock would then be brought depending on the agreement at the time of negotiations. The livestock is always accompanied by other gifts but prominent, beer and sugar.

In another FGD, it was reported that another aspect of marriage was when a small girl was identified by a family and gifts brought to the parents until the girl is circumcised. If those who initially started bringing gifts did not follow up at regular intervals, another family who thought that the girl was a good girl to marry would outdo the other family and take the girl before the initial family. In that case, the first family would count their losses and would not reclaim the gifts they had presented. The discussion considered the question of marrying from other ethnic communities. It was noted that it was generally a taboo to marry from ethnic communities that do not circumcise.

In yet another FGD it was noted that it is common in contemporary times as opposed to the past that a young man identifies a girl that he would like to marry. Then he would inform his parents who in turn would initiate marriage negotiations with the parents of the girl. The negotiations begin after both the young man and the young woman has been asked in front of elders if they truly love each other and would like to get married. A celebration of the engagement then takes place at night where food and drinks are served. The celebration is done at night in order to allow participants to complete their daily life chores during the day.

Bridewealth is brought according to the agreement made during negotiations. The number of cattle is set depending on the wealth of the young man's family. These gifts are accompanied by *naisholotoro*, beer made out of sugar and honey. It was noted that bridewealth is paid at once and not in instalments. After the payment of bridewealth, another celebration takes place and the couple is blessed by the elders. The blessing can be either in the form of spitting lightly on the couple or sprinkling of beer or milk on the couple. After bridewealth has been paid a permanent relationship is set up and in-laws can now routinely visit one another to enhance their relationship.

In yet another FGD about marriage in relation to bridewealth and the wedding ceremony, the influence of Christianity on Maasai marriage was discussed. The participants in this FGD identified themselves as Christian members of the Full Gospel Church. They argued that the Maasai have seen the light and have joined Christianity. Therefore, Christian prayers as a form of blessing on the couple have become part and parcel of bridewealth and wedding ceremonies. Another change that was noted in this FGD has been occasioned by intermarriages. A lot of intermarriage has taken place between the Maasai and especially the Agikuyu and Akamba.

When the bridewealth ceremony has been concluded, the bride departs from her father's homestead. At departure from her father's house, the girl is accompanied by either age mates of her husband or the husband's father or the father's age mate. The trick is that with the person the girl respects, she will not drag her feet so much while making more demands, for example, for cows. Whatever additional gifts that are demanded will form part of the bridewealth and will remain in the father's homestead

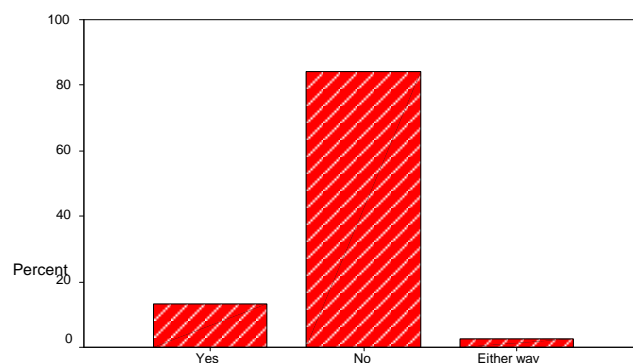
and will be shared among the relatives. Before she leaves her parent's home, she is dressed in her best outfit. Before she leaves, she is smeared with "milk cream" as a sign of peace, prosperity and fertility. On the day of the wedding, the girl will walk for a distance of about fifty metres and for about thirty minutes while the in-laws are soliciting for gifts of new *shukas*. Today, at the end of the fifty metres, the lady will be put in a car and whisked away to the home of the bridegroom where another blessing ceremony will take place (Appendix XI: Picture 7 & 8).

On the day of the wedding, a necklace is given to the bride by the bridegroom signifying that she is now married. The necklace is called *enkarewa*. *Enkarewa* has many strings of beads hanging on it (Appendix XI: Picture 1).

This section explores the significance of marriage among the Maasai as a focal point of cultural education and living and as a basis for creating and sustaining cultural identity. Marriage is an experience encompassing the whole of life and a central aspect of the cultural and religious experience.

4.1.1 Status of a Widow

A woman was not free to remarry after her husband's death according to most of the respondents, 137/163 (84%). This response points to the nature of marriage as indissoluble at least by intention. The results of whether or not a woman is free to remarry after the death of her husband are displayed in Chart 3 below:

Chart 3: Is a Woman Free to Remarry after the Husband's Death?

4.1.2 Changes in Maasai Marriage

Despite the resilience of Maasai cultural and religious worldview changes in marriage have been realised. This is manifested in the findings of this study. Maasai marriage has undergone changes for centuries through contact with people they encountered during their migration and contacts with their neighbours at different stages in their movement to their present location in Kajiado and through the migration of other communities who now live side by side with the Maasai in Kajiado County (Mutie 2003; Tignor 1976).

Some of the changes have come as a result of inter-marriage with other ethnic communities, especially the Agikuyu and the Akamba. The Agikuyu and Akamba are neighbours to the Maasai in Kajiado County. This inter-marriage has resulted in a gradual change among the Maasai regarding their understanding of marriage, especially as regards the role of women in marriage. Among the Akamba and Agikuyu changes in the role of women in society took place much earlier than among the Maasai. When Akamba and Agikuyu women are married among the Maasai, they bring with them ideas of setting up conventional agricultural and business models which are run by women. This creates a new role for women, a role that deviates

from the expected role of staying around the house and homestead tending to homestead and household chores (Mutie 2003; Tignor 1976).

The other change in marriage among the Maasai is brought about by the socio-economic context in Kenya, which has been changing rapidly since colonialism, the beginning of missionary activity in Kenya and political independence coupled with the introduction of formal education (cf. Adhi 2009). This context has had a dramatic change in the socio-cultural and religious life of the Maasai. Many Maasai people have converted to Christianity and are striving to live the Christian life as advocated by the missionaries.

Christianity advocates monogamy as the ideal type of marriage. This is contrary to Maasai view of marriage as polygynous. The findings of this study reveal that the Maasai have not completely changed this view. And even though one may not marry more than one wife because of Christianity, economic hardship or because of the influence of formal education he or she would not see anything wrong with polygyny. However, the influence of Christianity, socio-economic changes and formal education has resulted in a changing view of marriage where more and more Maasai are now monogamous. Coast (2006) observed that “Men with at least some education were significantly more likely to be in monogamous relationships” (p. 410).

The changes mentioned above have marked the rise of fundamental changes in the cultural practices and religion among the Maasai, especially marriage. Some respondents suggested that the removal of some of the cultural practices would help

the Maasai to live better lives in their present situation. The changes some respondents would like to see implemented in relation to marriage are female circumcision (clitoridectomy) as a requirement prior to marriage, marrying girls at an early age, refusal to accept formal education especially for girls and polygyny were mentioned as some of the practices that need to be removed or contextualized.

4.2 Bridewealth

Bridewealth is a terminology used to describe the gifts given in marriage in a patrilineal set up. The gifts are given by the family of the bridegroom to the family of the bride. The Maasai are a patrilineal ethnic group where bridewealth is given to the family of the bride by the family of the bridegroom.

Bridewealth is an important element in Maasai marriage as indicated by 114/163 (70%) of the respondents. They indicated that bridewealth was given as a sign of real marriage. A large number of respondents 126/163 (77%) indicated that bridewealth was a sign of real marriage while 30/163 (18%) viewed bridewealth as a pledge of friendship. However, 7/163 (4%) of the respondents understood bridewealth as a gift. All the respondents indicated that bridewealth was necessary for marriage. These responses underscore the centrality of bridewealth in Maasai marriage.

The role of bridewealth in legalizing marriage was re-emphasized by 117/163 (71.4%) of the respondents who indicated that a man who had not paid bridewealth had no legal claim on the woman. Some, 23/163 (14.3%) respondents, believe that culturally, those in such relationships are practicing prostitution. Another 23/163 (14.3%)

considered such an act as a curse in Maasai culture. It is considered to be an illegal cohabitation and friendship, a total disappointment to their families. If they happened to part ways while in such state, the woman would take back all the children with her. The man would have no right to claim ownership of the children because their stay together was unacceptable, illegal, prostitution, and even a curse to themselves and the society.

Bridewealth is necessary for marriage because it strengthens the covenant between two families. It shows that one has taken the wife completely; it is a sign of taking total control of the family, to show how rich the bridegroom is, to show that the man is responsible and ready to bring up a family and to seal or make the marriage legal.

The responses indicate that there is no specific number of livestock given as bridewealth. The highest number of the respondents 52/163 (31.7%) cited six as the number of cows to be given as bridewealth followed by 28/163 (17.3%) who indicated five as the number of cattle to be given. Those who indicated four as the number of cattle account for 22/163 (13.5%) while those for three cattle were 17/163 (10.6%). The two other choices of one and two cattle respectively account for 26.9% of the respondents. The variation in responses to this item may be interpreted as an indication that there is no specific number of cattle required for bridewealth as a general rule among the Maasai. Each situation is taken care of on its on merit. However, the average and the most commonly cited figure was six cattle.

There were two major reasons given by the respondents as crucial in deciding the number of cows given as bridewealth. The first reason cited by 91% of the respondents cited the negotiated number as a decider. This means that whoever has superior negotiating ability would determine the number of cows given as bridewealth. On the other hand 54.5% were of the view that each Maasai clan has a set number of cows to be given as bridewealth.

The respondents who confirmed that money was also given as part of the bridewealth gave various figures ranging from Kshs 15,000 to Kshs 50,000. However, some indicated that more money could be paid depending on the agreement of the parties involved. It is worth noting that 22.2% indicated that money was not acceptable; 14.3% indicated that goats were not given as bridewealth. This may be due to various reasons, either personal or cultural. However, the reasons were not indicated. Among those who accepted the option of goats as bridewealth, 42.9% mentioned 3 goats while those who indicated either one or two accounted for 28.6%. This is perhaps an influence from the Akamba tradition. The rest of the respondents left the question unattended to.

Other items given as bridewealth are blankets and hides (36.4%), honey (27.3%), sugar and tea leaves (18.2%), *shukas* (sheets), beer, tobacco, livestock such as sheep, goats and camels (9.1%). The case of sheep was unlike that of the goats since more respondents indicated that sheep could be given as bridewealth. This item only received variability in terms of the number of sheep given as bridewealth. The choice

of two sheep received the highest (33.3%) while all the others (1, 3, 4 and 5 sheep) received a representation of 16.7% each.

However, irrespective of the nature of the marriage gifts or bridewealth given during Maasai marriages, the gifts are a mix of both traditional and contemporary items, effects of ongoing acculturation of African culture and religion. All the respondents cited cows as the main traditional gift given at marriage. Thorpe (1994) writes that “payment of cattle has a symbolic religious significance in that cattle represent the continuing prosperity of the community” (p. 63). Finke (2007) adds that “Cattle are a gift of God to man and thus symbolize and substantiate the qualities of God” (p. 1). Cattle, as stated earlier, are the most important marriage gifts. Presentation of marriage gifts is the last step before the wedding can proceed. However, some respondents (55/163) also cited the significance of cattle as a sign of love and happiness, sense of belonging, sign of honour and giving a name to the newly married woman.

There was unanimity concerning traditional items given as marriage gifts. The respondents enumerated milk, traditional beer, sacred trees, including grass, special clothing and ornaments, calabash/gourd with milk, livestock and utensils. Cattle is a key traditional currency and status symbol among the Maasai.

The red ochre smeared on the bridegroom and the bride and the sugar and honey given as gifts signify engagement. Splashing milk on the bride is a sign of blessing and goodbye gesture on the part of her family because, henceforth, she joins the

family of her husband. Among all the items given, the calabash and the gourd have special significance due to their utility as containers for food, milk and water.

The significance and symbolism of items given as marriage gifts was discussed in FGDs. Milk and grass are important items in Maasai ceremonies. Apart from being food items for human beings and cattle respectively, they are used as items of sanctification (cf. Gilbert 2007, 171). On the other hand, the special clothing worn by the newly married woman makes her stand out from other women in order to announce her new and special status in the community. The gourd symbolizes a new beginning for the newly married woman as a custodian of the family food and its preparation. The mandate to prepare food is symbolized by the rope given to her for carrying firewood and water. These two items are crucial in the process of food preparation in the homestead.

In as much as the utensils may be looked upon as items of low cost, they have a powerful significance of a true acceptance and a sign of a warm welcome for the bride into her new family. The utensils are also closely linked to the value of food in African culture. In particular they are a sign of the nurturance role of the woman in marriage as a generous producer and provider of food for the family. Most of those who responded to this item on the significance of the calabash, gourd and belt indicated that it was mainly a sign of fertility, but also love and happiness.

On the other hand, in case the marriage did not work, there were only very few special occasions under which bridewealth could be given back to the family of the

bridegroom. The reasons for the special cases in which bridewealth could be given back to the parents of the man included cases of disagreements between the two parties, failure of the man to take care of the family and unbecoming behaviour of the wife, for instance, neglecting important duties, such as, milking the cows.

Although respondents indicated that divorce was a rare occurrence in Maasai marriage because of the essential element of permanence of marriage, some respondents cited mistreatment of the wife as the leading cause of divorce. The common mistreatment was failure by the husband to provide the basic needs of the family. Infidelity and barrenness were also cited as reasons that could lead to divorce.

The challenge of divorce is also highlighted by Coast (2006, 402), citing strong affinal relationships that mitigate against divorce. However, Coast (2006), by using the term “formal marriage dissolution” (p. 402) suggests that there was divorce. Though uncommon, it was not formally executed. Respondents, however, emphasized that divorce was not common because it disrupted the entire community; in marriage two or more families came together to share their lives.

However, in cases where divorce is recommended, it is only because of grave reasons. One of the gravest reasons is when one of the partners constantly created disharmony in the marriage, a disharmony that would be considered as witchcraft. Bourdillon stated that:

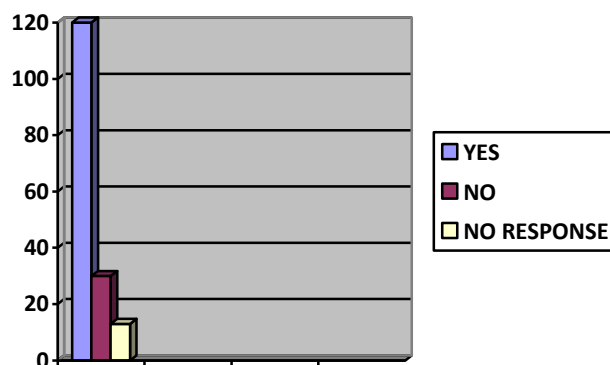
Part of the logic of witchcraft is that there is a symbolic association between doing what others are afraid to do and doing what others cannot do. Witches

work in the dark, normally a time of danger. They are assumed to have special powers to protect themselves from danger of which others are afraid. Witches kill, and are assumed to be able to protect themselves from revenge. Witches commit incest and break other fundamental taboos that protect the coherence of society. Others are afraid to do this for fear of supernatural punishment ...Witches break the rules of society with impunity and are assumed equally to break the rules of nature (Bourdillon 1990, 189-190).

Divorce is rare among the Maasai. But when it has to take place, elders initiate discussions on the process that should be followed according to the nature of each case. It involves returning bridewealth. The elders have to agree on modalities of executing this.

An overwhelming majority of 120/163 (73%) respondents affirmed that bridewealth could be returned while 30/163 (17%) indicated that bridewealth could not be returned following a ruptured marriage. A total of 13/163 (10%) did not respond to the question. The responses are displayed in Chart 4 below:

Chart 4: Can Bridewealth Be Returned?



The question on bridewealth also sought to find out the effect of not paying bridewealth. The respondents recorded that if bridewealth was not given, the children born in such a union did not belong to their biological father, but to their maternal uncles. The reason is that bridewealth acts as a legal tool, a seal and a sign of marriage.

Bridewealth for the first wife is given by the parents of the senior warrior or junior elder who is marrying. It is the obligation of the young man's father to organise all the marriage preparations and demands that come with it.

Married respondents totalling 97/163, (56%), confirmed that what was promised as bridewealth at the time of engagement was actually paid. It was also confirmed by 37.5% that on average, they had promised six cattle at the bridewealth negotiation. The respondents indicated that they had actually given as bridewealth the number of cattle they promised. This can be interpreted as a sign of sincerity and faithfulness to the promises made on bridewealth. Kipury (1983, 5) notes that the minimum number of cattle given as bridewealth ranges between three and six animals. This observation tallies with the findings of this study done twenty eight years later. This manifests the resilience of Maasai culture and religion in this aspect of marriage, despite the many influences that are a challenge to culture and religion.

4.3 God (*Enkai*)

The respondents registered 88% (144/163) positive response to their belief in God. Only 19 respondents, which is 12%, did not respond to the question. The Maasai

have always believed and continue to believe in *Enkai*. One elder emphasised that God is the creator and sustainer of the world. When there is no rain, Maasai elders go under *oletipit* tree and sacrifice a goat for rain.

A *moran* narrated the connection between Maasai marriage and religion, highlighting the sacredness of the rituals that occur in the life of each Maasai individual: circumcision, transition to adulthood and elderhood and various marriage rituals. Many of the respondents acknowledged that in-as-much-as God has human attributes, they might be described as those of extreme age. The attribute of God as of extreme age is played out in Maasai society through respect for the knowledge of the oldest living people and their ritual power to bless or to curse. The knowledge, respect and power of the elders are likened to the profound respect for the all powerful and all knowing God. There are various roles God plays in marriage. Among them is to bless the marriage with children and sustain the marriage.

Enkai, God, as expressed in an FGD is the ruler and creator of everything, supreme and above all. When the environment/nature is peaceful and harmonious, then these are manifestations of *Enkai's* presence. There are specific persons believed to be messengers of *Enkai*, for example, *Oloibon*, a medicine man believed to have mystical powers. In every age group, there is a leader and as the group grows into old age, the members of the group are considered to have power, for example, the power to bless and curse. The group leaders also usher the rest of the group in making sacrifices to *Enkai*. The chief leader of the group is called *Olaiguanani*, believed to have powers donated by his group members. He is slow to anger, but if in anger he

points at somebody among the members of the group with a club, then the person may die.

The respondents 132/163, (81%), further confirmed their belief in God by underlining that during Maasai marriages, prayers are recited, directed to God. There were seventeen (10%), who remarked that the prayers were directed to the ancestors and three (1.5%), who responded that the prayers were directed to the elders. Eleven (7%), did not respond to the question while four (2%), responded that there were no prayers recited at Maasai marriages. These results point to a hierarchy of being among the Maasai where God, ancestors, then elders follow one another in that order. The main beneficiaries of the prayers are mainly the couple who is getting married. But because marriage is seen in a wider context of the family, both families of the bride and bridegroom also benefit from the prayers and by extension the whole community.

In one of the FGDs, it was noted that the Maasai hardly talk about God in relation to human affairs. It is not also easy for the Maasai to articulate the idea of God's revelation through nature. They instead talked about prayer. They intimated that before women start milking the cows in the evening, they would get a little milk from the cow and splash it in the air imploring, "let us get like those who have gone before us" (Swahili: *ipatikane kama wale wamepita*) or "I pray to you, I have thrown milk to you, let us live like our ancestors, let us get the respect they had" (*nimekuomba nimekurushia maziwa. Tukae kama babu zetu. Tupate hiyo heshima yenu*). These prayers are recited facing sunset where they believe God's presence is manifested.

The findings of this study show that the Maasai believe in God who is both creator and sustainer of life. This is a God who communicates to the Maasai through elders and various leaders of Maasai community. Likewise, he can be approached through elders and community leaders for help. God is approached through various prayers and rituals presided over by elders and various community leaders. The community ancestors, elders and leaders are of age hence symbolize the attribute of God of extreme age. They are married people and are the ones who play key roles in organising, setting up and presiding over marriage rituals. In this sense, they act as representatives of God in setting up marriages. They as well bless and guide the married couples.

4.3.0 Role of God in Maasai Marriage

God is the embodiment of wisdom and moral rectitude. This state is expected of all Maasai but is more embodied in certain individuals in the community. Such individuals, especially the elders, are supposed to promote it and serve as examples. Apart from the elders, the age group ritual leaders are also given the mandate to serve as examples to members of their age-set.

The greatest role of God in Maasai marriage is to bless the marriage. This was indicated by 104/214, (49%) responses. The respondents indicated that God blesses marriage with fertility or fecundity and children and with wealth, prosperity and livestock. The second major role of God is to protect marriage. Third is to sustain, support, nurture and seal it. The fourth role of God is to guide the marriage. The fifth

role of God in marriage is provision of unity, love, strength, communion and fostering understanding. Other roles of God in marriage include provision of all needs, ensuring the success of the marriage and punishing wrong doing in marriage.

The prominence given to fertility and children confirms that marriage is the context within which children are supposed to be conceived and born, hence the critical significance of marriage. In this sense, getting married and having children is a spiritual obligation that helps the married to participate in the transmission of life as a gift from God. Table 10 below, a list of responses on the role of God in marriage is displayed. There were 214 responses to this question:

Table 10: The Role of God in Maasai Marriage (R=214)

Bless (with children/fertility, prosperity/wealth/livestock)	104
Protect	34
Sustainer/support/nurture/seal	27
Guide	17
Unity and love/strength/communion//Bring understanding	12
Provider of all needs	2
Ensure successful marriage	1
Punish wrong doing	1
No response	16
TOTAL RESPONSES	214

4.4 Ancestors

In this study, the ancestors, are the dead members of the community who have lived exemplary lives. Through death, they are initiated into a life of sanctity. The living remember them and ask for their intercession to God whenever they have difficulties in life.

In order to affirm Maasai belief in ancestors, one of the respondents stated: “We normally say, “my grandfather, pray for us” and children are named after the

ancestors. In an FGD, a participant narrated how she was named after her aunt who was very generous. She saw herself as resembling that aunt and had taken on the qualities of that aunt especially that of being generous. Her generosity was illustrated by the number of needy children she was paying school fees for in various institutions.

As illustrated in Table 11 below, 125/163 (77%), respondents confirmed belief in ancestors. Only 19/163 (12%), did not believe in ancestors. The influence of Christianity was only expressed by two respondents who sought to clarify that the belief in ancestors was negated by Christians. However, it can be concluded that the two responses were confirming widespread belief in ancestors. This belief will be further confirmed in Section 4.4 on nominal reincarnation when several respondents confirm that naming is about remembering an ancestor and that the child named resembled the ancestor named.

Table 11 below has a list of responses on the belief in ancestors:

Table 11: Belief in Ancestors (N=163)

Affirmation of belief in Ancestors	125	76%
Negation of belief in ancestors	19	12%
Some Christians do not believe in ancestors	2	1.5%
Sometimes	1	1%
Don't know	2	1.5%
No Response	14	8%
Total Respondents	163	100%

Responses to the question on who the ancestors are generated four main categories of ancestors 1) Foreparents 2) Famous founders or leaders of the Maasai community, known by name 3) Age-sets and 4) The living dead. Ancestors were described by respondents as respected elders or old men who had died before the respondents were

born. They were the forefathers or great great grand parents referred to as *loo papa* while the age-sets are referred to as *ilmekuri* or *ng'akwi* according to some of the respondents. The ancestors constitute the cause of the existence of the Maasai. Table 12 below displays the various Maasai age-sets from around 1791 till 1990:

Galaty (1993, 74) lists the age-sets since 1791 as follows:

Table 12: Age Sets Listed by Galaty

Tiyioki	c. 1791-1811
Merishari	c. 1806-1826
Kidotu	c. 1821-1841
Tuati I	c. 1836-1871
Nyangusi I	c. 1851-1871
Laimer	c. 1866-1886
Talala	1881-1905
Tuati II	1896-1917
Tareto	1911-1929
Terito	1926-1948
Nyangusi II	1942-1959
Iseuri	1955-1974
Kitoip	1967-
Kipali/manjeshi	1983-/1990-

Based on John L. Berntsen (1979a). Dates from 1881 are known; dates prior to that are calculated from average durations, as explained therein. While Bertsen employs a range of plus or minus 5 for such reconstructed dates we indicate their tentative nature by 'c.' (eds.)

The ancestors are described as spirits. They cannot be seen by the community. Nevertheless, they play different roles in the community. The ancestors are respected by members of the community who remember them by naming children after them and doing memorials for them.

Maasai belief in the theme of ancestors is further emphasised by the results of the question seeking to establish who the ancestors are. The responses of 68/163 (42%) respondents describe the ancestors as respected old men and elders who have died

before the respondent is born. The respondents further qualify the description by stating that ancestors are the founders of the family or clan.

Table 13 below has a list of responses seeking to explain who the ancestors are:

Table 13: Who are the Ancestors? (R=163)

The forefathers (great great grand parents, <i>loo papa</i>).	
• Respected, old men and elders who died before we were born.	68
The dead who were the leaders: e.g. Oloibon, Laibons, Mbatiany, Senteu, Olonana	
• Famous men who died long ago, Heroes	
• Founders of the family or clan: e.g., <i>enkaiooilerit</i> , Naitero-enkop (founder of Maasai), Diviners	36
<i>Italala</i> and <i>Lkololik</i> (our father's age group and grand fathers age group),	
• <i>NyangusiiiItalala</i> , the great generations and their key leaders, <i>nkakuyia</i> .	25
The living dead	10
People who are consulted though not necessarily known	1
The ones who give wealth and traditional programmes since long ago	1
The dead who are not remembered	1
They don't exist	1
The unborn Maasai	1
When a person dies he-she is forgotten this is because our Maasai community don't believe in ancestors	1
When somebody dies at night he/she is buried the same day	1
No Response	17
TOTAL	163

The respondents affirmed that the ancestors are with us even though we cannot see them. They visit, advice, console and guide. They are present in the day-to-day activities of Maasai community as respected intercessors, role models and consultants on cultural issues.

The findings of this study show, as displayed on Table 14, that the ancestors are living and visit people to advice, console and guide even though they cannot be seen. They are present in day-to-day activities of the Maasai overseeing what is done. However, they are also in communion with the Supreme Being and intercede for family, clan and society, who in turn consult them because they are role models and the cause of their being. Since the ancestors are the cause of being and models of the Maasai, they are respected. The respect is shown through memorials, naming and libation in their honour.

Table 14: What the Ancestors do

They are living and visit people (families/clan) for advice, consolation and guidance
We believe they are with us but we cannot see them
Believed to be significant in day to day activities
Believed to be seeing what we do from afar
Living, enjoying fortune with supreme being and can intercede for the family/clan/society
They are usually consulted on traditional cultural issues
They do <i>makumbusho</i> (memorial) for the ancestors
Respected
They are recognised by naming children after them and pouring libation
These are intercessors and role models
They are the cause of our existence

4.5 Living Dead

The living dead are described in this study as those who have recently died and their memory is still alive among their relatives. Some of these relatives are still living physically and had a chance to relate with those termed the living dead and are able to relate stories about them and the kind of things they liked and disliked.

As displayed in Table 15 below, 105/163 (64%), respondents affirmed their belief in the living dead while 41/163, (25%), indicated that they did not believe in the living dead. Four (2%), indicated that some Christians did not believe in the living dead. Another four (2%) did not know and eleven (7%) did not respond to the question. These results indicate that among those Maasai who responded to the question on beliefs in the living dead, a majority believed in the living dead. Even the four who indicated that some Christians do not believe in the living dead were, in a sense, confirming that there is belief in the living dead even though some Christians do not subscribe to it. Here, we see an indication of the influence of Christianity on Maasai culture.

Table 15: Belief in the Living Dead (N=163)

Affirmation of belief in living dead	105
Negation of belief in living dead	41
Some Christians do not believe in living dead	4
Don't know	2
No Response	11
TOTAL	163

The second part of the question sought to find out who the living dead are according to the Maasai. There were 191 responses to the question. The results generated for this question are similar to those for ancestors as displayed in Table 16 below. The responses can be grouped into three main categories 1) those who died recently believed to be good, respected people who appear in dreams 2) the respected grand parents who died long time ago and appear in spirit and 3) ancestors. Three responses described the living dead as ghosts, two responses as age-set. Three responses described the ancestors as 1) people who left history or legacy, 2) power of darkness and as 3) one of the great Maasai leaders in the past. One did not know the answer and fifteen did not respond to the question. The results are displayed in Table 16 below:

Table 16: Who are the Living Dead? (R=191)

The recently dead believed to be good, respected and remembered people who appear in dreams	85
The respected great grand parents who died long time ago and appear in spirit	71
Ancestors	11
Ghost	3
Age-set	2
People who left history or legacy	1
Koitelel arap Somoe/ Lenana, Makumbu, Senteu, Sendayo, Simele among others	1
Power of darkness	1
Don't know	1
No Response	15
TOTAL	191

The living dead are remembered through naming and in special rituals such as marriage. The rituals accompanying marriage enhance life through procreation.

Procreation is a very special way of remembering the living dead through expanding the lineage. All those belonging to a lineage are reminded of the living dead. They in turn remember the living dead for generations. Among the Maasai, childlessness or barrenness is seen as a curse. And having children is seen as a blessing on a marriage from the living dead. The living dead in turn work in the community and the Maasai can speak to them when they pray though they cannot see them. Some of the living dead seek vengeance while others protect the community.

4.5.0 Role of Ancestors and Living Dead in Marriage

The findings of this study show that the greatest role played by the ancestors and the living dead in a marriage is to bless the marriage as indicated by 66/163, (40%) respondents. The ancestors and the living dead bless marriages with fertility, children, livestock and wealth. Children are named after them and they act as mediators or intercessors between the Maasai and God. They also protect the marriage from forces of destruction such as witchcraft. Other roles include to sustain, support, nurture and seal marriage; they foster consultation, cleansing, complete the cycle of life and divide land among members. The responses are displayed in Table 17 below:

Table 17: The Role of Ancestors and Living Dead in Marriage (N=163)

No response	17
Don't know	3
None	14
Blessings: fertility, children, livestock, wealth	66
Consultation	1
Cleansing	1
Children are named after them to emulate their good examples	24
Complete the cycle of life	1
Act as mediators/intercessors between the Maasai and <i>enkai</i>	10
Protection/security from destructive forces, for example, witchcraft	6
Oversee success of marriage	1
Sustain	5
Divide land among members	1
Created law followed by their children, for example, they have had good marriages which are examples to be emulated	5
They gave advice on marriage e.g. which ethnic groups to marry and which not to marry	4
Foresee the future	1
Seek revenge for those whose death occurred instantly without any good cause/curse/purnish	3
TOTAL	163

4.6 Nominal Reincarnation

The idea of nominal reincarnation is designated as remembrance through naming. It is connected to the belief in the ancestors and the living dead. As has been seen in the section on the ancestors and the living dead, the Maasai respondents have articulated their belief in nominal reincarnation by stating that children are named after both the ancestors and the living dead. However, it was emphasised that they must have been good and respected people and in certain cases, wealthy people. This is the meaning of nominal reincarnation expressed in various ways by respondents.

In relation to naming and the idea that those being named must have been good, respected and wealthy people, Tarayia sees the ceremony of naming as the beginning of schooling for the child. In relation to the girl-child she states that:

Schooling begins with the naming ceremony. Her name will have a feminine connotation in most instances, although Maasai names are unisex from time to

time. During the ceremony, she also learns how to respond when she is called out. Her response is different from that of the male child, the gender distinction. It is followed by the distinction in domestic tasks that each child performs as they grow up. At an early age young boys may herd calves, lambs, and kids close to home, while the girls help with the young children and keep the mother company doing household chores. (Tarayia 2004, 194)

In Table 18 below, additional description of nominal reincarnation is provided by the respondents in relation to the question on the role of naming in marriage among the Maasai. Twenty five respondents did not respond to this question, However, there were more than one response given by several respondents and thus generating 273 responses in total. The responses have been split into two groups. There are 83 responses relating to the naming of a child and 190 responses relating to the naming of the bride during the wedding ceremony. It should be noted that it is the 83 responses that are directly related to the idea of nominal reincarnation as opposed to 190 relating to naming of the bride. Among those who responded on naming in relation to the naming of children, 48/273, (18%), responses cited remembrance of the ancestor and the living dead. The child named resembles the person both physically and in character. The name will also make the child a member of the clan and will bestow identity on the child.

Looking at literature on naming, Hollis (2003) and Dikirr (1994) hold the view that elders and other prominent people who die leaving behind children are named. Dikirr (1994) observes that if an individual has large herds of cattle and uses that wealth to

help the community, that person will be remembered. He observes that such a person is aware that “it is the society that can perpetuate and keep him alive upon death or can once and for all, forget about him” (p. 43).

Ole Sankan (1971, 54-58) writes that in naming ceremonies, a child is given a pet name or a temporary name, *embolet*, meaning opener or an opening at birth and the mother does not shave for the period when the child retains the pet name. At the time when the child is given a proper name, both the mother and the child’s head is clean shaven. The child can also retain the temporary name as the official name if it is so decided by the family.

In a FGD it emerged that an individual may have several names. One of the names is used by the community to identify the individual. On the other hand, parents can give a special sacred name to the child at birth. All the names given to an individual have a meaning and are used for specific purposes.

Naming is seen as recognition, remembrance of the dead and recognition of the status of a married woman. Those who responded also pointed out that the giving of a new name pointed to giving hope for a good future, besides being a sign of newness to the community.

The second group of responses were in relation to the naming of the bride by 190/273, (70%) respondents. The responses sought to link marriage and naming. As has been stated earlier, there were 273 responses coming from 163 respondents. Of the 163

respondents, 140 affirmed that the bride is given a new name at marriage. One elder stated that, “the newly wed lady must have a new name to identify herself as a member of her new family and to mark her transition from being a girl to womanhood. The name is suggested by an age mate of the bridegroom especially, the best man (Appendix XI: Picture 2, 6, 7 & 8). The ultimate name is, however, the one agreeable by the husband”.

It was noted in a FGD that a husband should not call his wife by the name she was given by her parents as a child. She is now an adult and a wife. She must be addressed by that new name given by her husband. It is an honour to the newly wed lady. It is fitting this way. It is even regarded as a taboo when a husband calls his wife by her maiden name. One participant in the FGD added that “It is even said that if a husband does so, he will lose all his teeth very soon.”

There are special names given in marriage in remembrance of the circumstances prevailing at the time of the marriage. Fifty four of the responses, as listed in Table 18 below, cited climatic conditions, the behaviour of the bride at the time of the wedding and the place the bride comes from. The name given also identifies the wife as belonging to the age group of the husband and a sign of acceptance into the age group. In conformity with the assertion at an FGD cited above, 65 of the respondents confirmed that naming of a wife marks a new stage in her life from unmarried to married. The respondents also confirmed that the name is given by members of the age group of the husband. This was confirmed by nine responses. Thirteen responses underlined the the importance of a married woman by stating that the woman is very

special when she gets married because she enjoys respect and love. Three of the responses emphasised the new status of a woman by underlining the transit from a young woman, *esiankiki* to mother, *entomononi*.

The description of the meaning of naming of a new bride by the respondents reveals the importance of marriage among the Maasai. It also reveals how the stage of marriage is an important landmark in the life of a woman. It marks her entry into a new social setting, that is, the age group of the husband, who, in one way or the other, by participating in the naming ceremony, takes responsibility for her presence in the age group.

Table 18: Relation of Marriage to Nominal Reincarnation (R=273)

Responses related to naming a child (R=83/273)	
No response	25
To keep the ancestor whom the child resembles remembered	23
The child's character will rhyme with the character of the person named	1
Examples of ancestral names given to children-Olonana, Senteu	1
Some people are named after successful people/prominent/wealthy/giving hope	15
Discipline	1
Respect/love/blessing/affection	17
SUB-TOTAL	83
Responses related to naming the bride (R=190/273)	
To mark the position in marriage e.g. first wife, second wife, third wife etc	4
Identifies the wife as belonging to the age group of the husband and a sign of acceptance into the age group	42
Mark a new stage: from unmarried to married	65
The age group is responsible for giving the name	9
The name of the bride is determined according to the circumstances of the marriage e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate, rainy etc, season • According to her behaviour during the wedding e.g. if she walked fast or slowly • According to where she comes from e.g. from Rombo named Naromboi 	54
Women are very special when they get married, they enjoy: respect and love	13
New status (a young woman/mother – <i>entomononi</i> as opposed to <i>esiankiki</i>)	3
SUB-TOTAL	190
TOTAL	273

On the significance of names to marriage, fifty-six of the respondents stated that there was no significance while forty-one affirmed the significance. As listed in Table 19 below, the responses did not spell out the significance of naming to marriage except one response that cited unity of the couple and link to important people in the community. The respondents continued to define the meaning of naming as giving identity to the parents, uniting the married couple to other important people and bringing good tidings to the family. A case in point is a name like Lemayian which means, the blessed one.

Table 19: Significance of Names in Marriage (N=163)

No significance	56
Have significance	41
No response	23
Identity: parents are referred to by their children's names	6
Signify unity of the couples and other important people	1
Names after great leaders, great warriors, reputable characters and wealthy people/	16
Names bring good tidings to the family	1
• (prominence, a good name defines who you are and you future (Lemayian – blessed one)	1
Some names renew the love and bond of the husband and wife. It gives hope of the future	1
Connected to parents and relatives and tends to honour them	9
Children are named according to occasion/events	1
Names represent the continuation of the family members even if they are dead	4
To mark the time the child is born	1
Not aware	1
Children possess the spirit of the person they are named after	1
TOTAL	163

4.7 African Lineage

This study adopts the understanding of African lineage as spelt out by Kirwen (2011) arguing that African lineage is “a living, viable community organized in terms of family relationships” (p. 66). The present study, while intending to find out the meaning of lineage among the Maasai, asked the respondents about the link of marriage to the theme of lineage and Maasai family (*olmarei*) structure. The

respondents were also asked to state the role of the family or community members in selecting a bride or bridegroom. In addition, the question was also intended to help to find out the role of the wider family or community in marriage. Thus, this section presents the results of the questions which sought to investigate Maasai community perceptions of marriage and the connection between marriage and the idea of lineage among the Maasai.

Family structures worldwide, consist of various components: how the family is organized, how it is run, who are the members and their individual or collective functions and the hierarchy of family members. Those cited by respondents in this study as members of the family were mother, father, brothers, sisters and elders.

The findings of this study show that the basic unit of Maasai community is the family. It includes the nuclear family and the wider family or what is commonly called the extended family. The nuclear family includes father, mother and children. In this unit the father plays the role of an authority following the patrilineal and patrilocal nature of Maasai family. Some of the key roles assigned to the male members of the lineage are support, encouragement and education of the members of the lineage.

The husband owns, is the head, leads and manages the family and the household together with its property and programmes. It is his responsibility to manage both the wife and the children. When the husband is away for one reason or another, the eldest son takes his place.

However, according to respondents in a focus group discussion, in some instances the father can delegate the care of a son or a daughter to his eldest married son. This practice was observed in a Maasai wedding where a daughter was released from her elder brother's house for marriage with the father in attendance and the elder brother acting as the father of the girl. This elder brother had been delegated to care for the girl since childhood.

This practice can be interpreted as confirmation that among the Maasai people the household family or nuclear family also includes other relatives of the father and mother such as younger unmarried or widowed sisters, aged parents, and children. This dimension of marriage that emphasises the relations of marriage to lineage is often neglected as individualism creeps into society. But it goes a long way to confirm the nature of the extended or wider understanding of family among the Maasai.

According to a Maasai elder, the family or lineage is the context within which education of children begins. The training of young children is called *naisuni enkeraiyo* or *olkuok loi Maasai*. It involves training the young to acquire skills that will accompany them throughout life, including in marriage.

According to a Maasai pastor interviewed in Ngong, "when a son is ready to get married he asks for his father's permission. He has to make a solemn declaration indicating that he is a man capable of sustaining his own family". This is necessary because a failed marriage reflects badly on the lineage. And a father bears a heavy responsibility for such

a failed marriage because it is proof that he did not educate his son well enough to run a family.

4.7.0 Age-Set (*olporo*) as Lineage

The type of lineage described in Section 4.7 is based on blood relations between individuals and is called kinship. It takes into account relationships in both a narrow and a broad sense. We have seen that among the Maasai, parents and their children are a special group in this kind of lineage concept.

However, among the Maasai, there is another social grouping or organization called age-set that could be likened to the operations of a lineage, though it is made up of people who are not necessarily blood relations and only operates among male members of the Maasai community. It has been noted earlier that among the Maasai, a wife automatically becomes a member of the lineage of her husband and likewise a member of his age-set. The age-set has the responsibility of taking care of her in case the husband dies. She is not supposed to remarry but remains under the care of her husband's family.

The age-set is made up of those who are of approximately the same biological age and who were circumcised together. They are seen as a family unit. Elders appointed one of them, a most promising one, to act as a spiritual and ritual leader of the group. He is the one who takes up the role similar to that of a father in a Maasai family. Just as in a family set-up, age-set members have a set of norms that guide their behaviour. For instance, a girl must not marry a man of her father's age group since it suggests

incest, even though they are not genetically related. Such a man is regarded as her father. Similarly, a man must not marry a widow or a divorcee whose husband is of his father's age group, for she would be considered his mother, regardless of age.

Those who belong to the same age-set share identity through rituals they undergo in the Maasai community. They keep close ties most of their life and regard one another as brothers. This relationship is bestowed on the individual by initiation. It is a relationship which, as Magesa (1997, 101) argues, “underlines the realization that within the social organization an individual is required to show special loyalty to certain personal or group-relations as a way of strengthening the whole society” (p. 101; cf. Spencer 2003, 15-35).

4.7.1 The role of Lineage in Marriage

The respondents outlined three important roles of Maasai lineage in marriage. The three roles were, the selection of the partner through investigation of family background, advising the partners on matters of marriage and facilitating the engagement process. Leading among the roles in terms of the number of responses is investigation of the character of a partner and his or her family background, 91/163 responses. This is because the success of a marriage depends on the character of those getting into marriage as well as the support of the respective families they come from. On the other hand, 48/163 (29%), of the respondents stated that the community plays the role of advising the partners while 24/163, (14%), indicated that they facilitate the engagement process.

4.8 Adulthood and Elderhood

The theme of adulthood and elderhood is designated in this study as development in the life of a member of the community. One development marks a period when a child becomes an adult through an intensive period of training within the community which culminates in a final ceremony such as circumcision. On the other hand, an elder refers to an older member of the community who has had a lot of experience in life and is regarded as wise.

The findings of this study show that the Maasai, like other African communities, do not take it for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults and elders. This is the reason why Maasai boys and girls are socialised and initiated into the community. In order to find out the idea of adulthood and elderhood among the Maasai, respondents' views were sought on how marriage is linked to adulthood and elderhood.

This section will present some of the responses to the question, responses that touch on the idea of who is an adult and an elder. The respondents, in describing who is an adult or an elder, resorted to enumerating the qualities, roles and work of an adult or an elder in marriage. This section will also highlight some of the literature that dealt with how the stage of adulthood and elderhood is arrived at among the Maasai. Finally, the section closes by presenting the link between marriage and adulthood/elderhood.

As shown in Table 20, 55/185 responses enumerated the qualities of adulthood. Examples include maturity, responsibility, respect and recognition by the community. These qualities are seen as essential elements for marriage. They are instilled in Maasai boys and girls during the preparation for circumcision. Initiation to adulthood is seen as a step to elderhood. And as an adult, each individual Maasai is expected to perfect these qualities in preparation for joining the status of an elder. Adulthood is seen as a step to elderhood. Thirty responses linked marriage and having children. Elders are respected members of Maasai society and are decision makers. As has been seen in the responses to adulthood, it is evident that the qualities expected of an adult are carried on to elderhood.

Generally, older people among the Maasai are held in high esteem because of their age and experience in the community. This was made evident in the responses for the theme on ancestors treated earlier, where 68/163 (41%), described the ancestors as respected old men and elders who are the founders of the family or clan. They are the decision makers in every sphere of life.

There is a process of transiting to adulthood and elderhood among the Maasai. The process is more elaborate for the male members of the community than for the female members. According to Hughes (2006) “at about four years old, both boys and girls had their two lower front teeth removed” (p. 13; cf. Sharman 1999, 1, 19 and 20). At this stage, an initiate is given an ancestral name. The ancestral name is given at a religious function. And the name unites the initiate with the ancestors.

4.8.0 Female Adulthood

In order for a female member of the Maasai community to be considered as socially adult, she has to undergo *emorata*, clitoridectomy. On the circumcision day, according to Hughes (2006), “her father sacrificed a ram and brought honey-beer, to ensure that she would bear children” (p. 20). Her head is shaved and she wears a special chain of tiny metal discs on her head to show that she is now ready to be a bride. Circumcision is, according to Spencer (1988), the “immediate and most significant step..., which places her in a ritual limbo between girlhood and wifehood. As an initiate, a girl remains largely confined to the village by ritual prohibitions for weeks even months” (p. 29-30). The girl (*en-kerai*), is given instructions on her new role in the community because she is considered to have become an *en-tito*, woman (Ronoh et al. 2010, 2). She can then be married and bear children (Ray 2000, 66-70). According to Coast (2007), “Most ethnographies summarise the three main phases of a woman’s life as *entito* (a young girl up to clitoridectomy), *esiankiki* (married woman with young children) and *entasat* (older woman with circumcised children)” (p. 391). The designation of *entasat* or older woman with circumcised children can be interpreted to be equivalent to the position of elderhood. The female member has six major stages: 1) Birth 2) shaving and naming 3) girlhood 4) circumcision 5) betrothal period and 6) death (cf. Tarayia 2004, 193-195).

4.8.1 Male Adulthood

At about age twelve, boys have to undergo circumcision in order to become junior warriors. When they become warriors, they are charged with the duty of protecting the community. They are also expected to deal with cattle raiders and to be cattle raiders themselves. This is because, as noted earlier, it is believed that all cattle

belong to the Maasai. However, cattle raiding and killing of lions as a group (*olamayio*) or as an individual is illegal in Kenya. The killing of lions has been seen traditionally among the Maasai as an act of bravery and personal achievement. Maasai men who are in the stage of warriors (*murran*) are not allowed to marry because of the nature of their duties to the community. Only those who have attained the stage of elders can marry. However, this practice is changing slowly because in contemporary time, one may find a few married *murran* (cf. Ray 2000, 63-66).

A male Maasai has ten major stages in the way to attaining full personhood: 1) Birth 2) Shaving and naming 3) Boyhood 4) Preparation for circumcision and forming of the age-set 5) Circumcision 6) junior warrior status 7) Senior warrior status 8) Junior elder status 9) Elderhood and 10) Death (cf. Tarayia 2004, 193-195).

4.8.2 Graduation to Elderhood (Eunoto)

Sharman (1979, 19-20) describes the *eunoto* ceremony as the graduation of the male Maasai into a junior elder (cf. Gilbert 2007, 161). This ceremony ultimately prepares the male Maasai by moving him from adulthood into a mystical union with the elders. At this stage, the junior elder is entitled to assist at community ceremonies.

According to Ole Masharen (2009, 21); Galaty (1993, 360); Kirk and Burton (1977, 747) and Ole Sankan (1971, 27-30), the planning or establishing of the *eunoto* ceremony, is performed by members of the age-set, ten years after warriorhood. It is the best known, most colourful and impressive of all the ceremonies in the life of the Maasai. It marks the status of a warrior transitioning to a senior warrior (*ilmorijo*) or a

junior elder. This initiation permits senior warriors to marry. All along, through other ceremonies, they have been prepared to become future fathers. The ceremony takes place in a specially chosen camp that includes a total of forty-nine houses. The preparations for *eunoto* take a long time, including the building of *emanyatta* and in its center *osingira*. Other preparations include *olamal* (delegation) to collect funds for the preparations.

As a sign of a new beginning, every graduating warrior must shave his long ochre-stained hair, which is done by the warrior's mother (cf. Gilbert 2007, 198; Beckwith & Fisher 2002, 85). During the festival, warriors are prohibited to carry weapons such as sticks, spears and knives as a transition to their new role to elderhood.

Tarayia (2004) adds that “they are also absorbed into the decision-making structures of the society, sitting in conflict resolution fora and articulating customary norms in marriage according to traditional legal mechanisms” (p. 187). Gilbert (2007) summarises the role of elders among the Maasai by stating that “elders supervise all Maasai ceremonies and serve as advisors and guides to the community” (p. 190). This, Gilbert (2007) adds, is because “age and wisdom are highly regarded” (p. 190).

4.8.3 Link of Marriage to Adulthood/Elderhood

The question on how marriage is linked to adulthood and elderhood yielded 44/185 (24%) not responding to the question. One responded that they could not tell whether there was a link or not. Two stated that there was no link. The responses are displayed in Table 20 below. The responses linked to adulthood were 105 (57%) and those linked to elderhood 33 (18%).

Majority of responses on the link of adulthood to marriage (55/185) mentioned the qualities of adulthood such as maturity, responsibility, respect and recognition by the community. These were seen as essential elements for marriage. Accompanied by these elements, adulthood was seen as a step to elderhood, where elderhood was linked, in several responses, to having children.

Thirty of the responses saw elderhood as a link to marriage. In a sense, they were implying that in order to marry, one must be an elder. This is in line with Maasai view of marriage where *morans* are not supposed to marry until they attain the stage of junior elders. Elders are respected members of Maasai society and are decision makers. As has been seen in the responses to adulthood above, it is apparent that the qualities expected of an adult are carried on to elderhood.

The respect of age as a religious and sacred undertaking is one of the reasons why the girl and young man who are to get married respect the wishes of the parents for the choice of a partner at the time of marriage. According to Spencer (1988, 26), "As a child, she avoids her father and, for instance, must leave the hut before he can enter. She bows her head submissively to all other elders to palm in greeting." This kind of greeting is a blessing on the girl.

Table 20: How Marriage is Linked to Adulthood/Elderhood (R=185)

No Response	44
Can't tell	1
None	2
Adulthood	
You must be able to protect your family and feed them well	32
A man must be an adult or elder if he wants to marry	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adulthood brings: maturity, responsibility, gaining respect and recognition in the community • A step to elderhood (several linked elderhood to children) 	55
Completes one's life	15
Once you get children and be independent	1
When you marry and have children you will be named by the name of your first born	1
Elderhood	
Elders play important role by naming during celebrations	1
A step to marriage	30
One should have lived a good married life to become an elder	1
Can have more than one wife	1
TOTAL	185

The Maasai hold in high esteem the older members of the community because of their experience and wisdom. Hauff (2003, 23), notes that, the Maasai have junior, senior and ancient elders. Full elderhood is also associated with those who have children who have been circumcised. Hillman (1991a, 10), writing about elders, uses the term, “the venerable elders”, *ilpayiani kituaak* (cf. Hauff 2003, 23). They are those of the most senior age-groups, *ilajjik*. They were the age groups of *Iltareto*, *Ilterito*, *Ilnyangusi*, *Iseuri*. They have the quality of wisdom and holiness because it is believed among the Maasai that to live up to the age of 50 to 90 is a sign of blessing from *Enkai*. The wisdom is believed to come because of experience. The wisdom enables them to come up with wise decisions when in deliberations with other elders. Hillman (1991a) adds that: “As Maasai say, we begin by being foolish and we become wise by experience, *Kinter olemodai pee kintoki olengeno*” (p. 10). The elders are close to the Maasai who went before into the ground and are “no longer around: *mokure etii*, especially those deceased elders who had wisely guided the people of previous generations in their historical sojourn” (p. 10). Although this points to the belief in the living dead and ancestors, according to Hillman, “respect for

their progenitors does not amount to any kind of so-called ‘ancestor worship’ ” (p. 10).

The following five points is a summary of what the respondents wrote on the questionnaires regarding where respect for elders is derived:

1. Their proximity to *Enkai*
2. Their role as those who guide the community in discerning the right order, *aingoru enkitoo*, and truth, balance and integrity.
3. The protectors of traditional culture which has enabled the people not only to survive, but to become what they have been in the best of times.
4. They have collectively a quasi-priestly role of intercession; their formal prayers together are considered to be particularly efficacious.
5. Commonly and most appropriately, but not exclusively, they have the role of blessing, *amayian*.

Coast (2001, 34) writes that the elders constitute the decision-making bodies of the locality. And elders are described by Grandin (1991), as “primarily managers and supervisors” (p. 71), with responsibility for decisions on residence location, herd movement and splitting, grazing and herding, maintenance of watering points, veterinary care, sale and slaughter of cattle. Gilbert (2003, 27) adds that they offer counsel, settle disputes, and oversee the needs of the cattle herds.

The Maasai believe in the role of elders as religious leaders. Every age group has a leader who presides over rituals. According to Osterg (2004), “Maasai religion

focuses greatly on the idea of spiritual leaders. This person can come in the form of a diviner, ritual leader, prophet, or medicine man” (p. 1).

4.9 Leadership

Indigenous African leadership is bestowed on those who are mature and are considered to be wise. African communities invest on leadership because of their belief in the need to have structures that help to maintain law and order and to promote a harmonious co-existence among all members of the community. Leaders are also expected to facilitate the creation and distribution of the wealth of the community.

The respondents in this study cited different categories of leaders as listed in Table 21 below. Those considered as leaders are: the menfolk, *morans*, diviners, herbalists, traditional chiefs, leaders of age groups, council of elders and the married. Another special category of leaders are those chosen to lead age groups such as: *olaiquenani*, *olanguainani lenkashe*, *oloboru enkeene*, *nopolosi*, *olkiteng*, and *olotuno*. The leaders are expected to have qualities such as age, wisdom, wealth, honesty, moral uprightness and to be service oriented people. In addition, they are to be of good character, mature, married, brave and those who have gone through adulthood rituals.

Table 21: Leaders among the Maasai (N=163)

Old people and wise men (elders), capable, honest, morally upright, service oriented, good character,	
• rich, mature, married, gone through adulthood rituals, brave	89
A respectable married person who is wise and has well behaved children	13
Herbalist	2
Diviners	3
Chosen individuals within the age group: olaiguenani, oloiboni, olanguainani lenkashe	
• oloboru enkene, oloboru enkeene, nopolosi (olopolosi), olkiteng, ilangeni, Olotuno	40
Good arbitrators	1
Mostly men (a few responses included elderly women)	1
Morans	7
Traditional chiefs	6
Ancestors	1
TOTAL	163

The leaders play their role in marriage, for example, by advising the married couple on different aspects of marriage. They also participate in negotiating for the marriage and officiating at the marriage. The leaders do guiding and counselling and perform rituals such as blessing as well as assisting in the payment of bridewealth. They preside over resolution of conflicts in a marriage, overseeing the existence of peace and driving cattle to the girl's home. The responses on the role of leaders in marriage are listed on Table 22 below:

Table 22: Role of Leaders in Marriage (R=218)

Encourage	6
Advise	43
Bless	41
Counsel or guidance	40
Preside over marriages	17
Negotiate bridewealth	18
Settle disputes or reconcile	31
Assist in decision making	6
Mediators	1
Witness	12
Assist in the cost of the marriage	1
<i>Esiret</i> (sugar or honey) taken by women and not returned if marriage breaks	1
Protect	1
TOTAL	218

On the other hand, marriage itself is an important factor in determining the status of an individual as “a respected leader in the community”, (Maasai elder). Those who are married are “symbols of maturity and responsibility”. It is apparent from the findings that by the mere fact of marriage, one is considered as a leader in the community, considering the special respect accorded to married people in the Maasai community. And those who are married are among the leaders who sit in order to deliberate on, among others, whether a couple is fit to marry or not. They also sit at conflict resolution sessions, especially conflicts revolving around marriage. They are the ones who are given the mandate to drive the cows given as bridewealth to the home of the parents of the woman. However, to fulfil the requirements for marriage one has to have children.

There are, however, some changes in Maasai marriage that have become evident through the findings of this study. The changes that are evident in considering leaders among the Maasai become manifest when church leaders, government leaders, the educated, chiefs and politicians are recognised as leaders.

Hughes (2006, 14) has described the Maasai as customarily acephalous in terms of leadership structure: and do not have ‘chiefs’ or head men. Chiefs and head men were only introduced by the colonial government. The Government of Kenya (GoK) has perpetuated this system of chiefs and head men since independence. Political authority is vested on councils of elders and age-sets spokesmen (cf. Galaty 1993, 360; Ole Masharen 2009, 33-34; Ole Sankan 1971, 8-10). The spokesmen are elected due to their leadership qualities.

Another category of authority lies with the prophets who are not elected but grow up with spiritual authority recognized by the community. It has been seen that in the research findings, *laibons*, as spiritual leaders have been mentioned by several respondents. The system of government is decentralized in such a way that every age-set of every section ‘*olosh*’ has its own elected political as well as ritual leaders. Gilbert (2003, 27), reports that the Maasai turn to the *laibon* for spiritual guidance on matters of everyday life. The *laibons* are few and live away from the people. They have authority over matters of religion, ritual and medicine (cf. Spencer 2003, 98; Beckwith & Fisher 2002).

Political leaders preside over meetings and secular and ritual leaders officiate at religious rituals. The leaders are elected during warriorhood and they retain these positions throughout their lives.

4.10 Diviner

This study adopts the definition of a diviner, which describes such a person as a spiritual director, priest and counsellor in African spirituality. Diviners preserve harmony and integrity of creation by promoting life. The key role of harmony in African Religion is emphasised by Thomas (2005), stating: “African religious ontology is premised upon the idea of harmony, and any breach in the order among the Creator, divinities, ancestors, and nature must be avoided at all cost” (p. 9-10). It is part of the work of the diviner to ensure that harmony is kept in the society.

Diviners, known as *loiboni*, among the Maasai are seen as spiritual leaders. The role of the diviner in Maasai marriage according to 46/163 (28%) respondents is to foresee whether the marriage will be prosperous or not. Others view the role of the diviner as that of finding out if there are any impediments to the marriage, to find out if the ancestors are happy with the marriage and consulting and calling upon the ancestors' blessings upon the marriage.

According to Spencer (1991), "throughout the Maa-speaking area, certain families are believed to have unusual ritual powers that serve to cope with uncertainty and misfortune. They are literally 'the people of the oracles', *Il-oo-nkidongi*, and above all they are diviners (*il-oibonok*)" (p. 334).

Galaty (1979, 806) states that diviners among the Maasai are set apart because they are held to possess extraordinary mystical powers. There are powers that take on the form of mental clairvoyance and divination and the expertise of making and applying ritual medicines. Spencer (1991) writes about "the *loonkidongi* prophets" whom he describes as those "believed to have unusual ritual powers". The powers "serve to cope with uncertainty and misfortune" (p. 334). Galaty (1983, 360) adds that *moran* and elders visit a diviner to help them make a decision about the right choice for an age-set leader at the *eunoto* ceremony.

4.11 Polygyny

Polygyny is a type of marital relationship where one man has more than one wife. It is still a common practice among the Maasai though the practice is declining due to

several factors such as economic and education levels. Polygyny is tied to economic ability, social status and creating more possibilities for women to get married (cf. Bingham 2011, 32-34).

Asked how many wives a man should marry and given a choice between one, two, three or more or as many as he likes, the majority, 78%, choose the latter. This percentage is of 127/163 respondents. This indicates a high rate of approval for polygyny among the Maasai across the age groups and among male and female respondents. The age distribution ranged from between 15 and 70 as displayed in Table 2. It further indicates that the Maasai are a polygynous community. The upholding of polygynous type of marriage was based on its perception as a sign of wealth and therefore, socio-economic status and the respect associated with it. The results are displayed below (Table 23):

Table 23: How Many Wives Should a Man Marry? N=163

		%
No Response	7	5
One	13	8
Two	5	3
Three or more	6	3.5
As many as he likes	127	78
The number you can feed and afford	3	1.5
The first has priority you must die in the house of the first	2	1
TOTAL	163	100

Marriage is mandatory for all Maasai. An unmarried person in the Maasai society has a low status. An unmarried person was referred to by 6 respondents as an outcast or a person without honour (*orkirikoi* or *olkirigoi*). This kind of person will be despised. He is associated with laziness and as lacking the skills to manage family affairs. The

Maasai also practice a type of social polyandry, though declining due to contemporary social set up. This is where a woman marries not just her husband, but the entire age group. Bingham calls it “shared sex among age sets” stating that:

Another tradition still in practice among some Maasai today is shared sex among age sets. Since the Maasai men are grouped together in age categories, when an older man [sic] buys a new wife, no matter her age, she can be shared by any man in her husband’s age group for sexual relations. (Bingham (2011, 4).

Saitoti (1988) adds that “Age organization provides an ethic of behaviour, ordering relationships between Maasai according to several distinct principles of respect ‘*enkanyit*’, emphasized and reinforced by supernatural sanctions” (p. xx).

Bingham (2011, 4), perhaps, is looking at this issue from the viewpoint of the school of thought of some missionaries whom Falen (2008) states that, “misunderstood African customs of marriage payments, viewing these transactions as the purchase of a bride” (p. 52). At the same time the missionaries “struggled with establishing the notions of romantic love and individualism in the face of what they perceived as the unromantic, duty-oriented style of African marriage” (p. 52). Falen adds that:

the strongest and most enduring point of tension has been the question of polygyny (Barrett 1968c; Hastings 1973, 1994), which speaks not only to the history of Christian missions, but also to perceptions of Africa and the identities of African people. Today it remains one of the most heated issues in African congregations. (Falen 2008, 52)

Apel (1999) records that when some Maasai were asked “what God thought about polygyny” (p. 31), a slight majority of those who answered 16/28 (57%) believed that God approved or at least accepted polygyny. Most of the women 23/33 (67%) attended church services at least once a week. All those who responded indicated that the church did not approve of polygyny. This implies that there is a gap between what the churches teach about polygyny and what Maasai church women believe about God. The findings of the current study reveal that a large number of respondents have no problem with polygyny, regardless of their affiliation to Christianity. Polygyny is closely tied to economy. According to Höschele (2006) “A man with one wife can never acquire the wealth and status associated with hundreds of cows, for it is the wife and children who take care of the cattle” (p. 1). Secondly, it is prestigious and provides an opportunity for women to get married.

Coast (2006) asserts that the Maasai are the best known pastoralists in the world. She reviews the evidence linking pastoralism to polygyny. However, she notes that there are factors that contribute to the reduction of the prevalence of polygyny among the Maasai. She cites increasing levels of formal education, socio-economic factors, infighting between both wives and husband, increasing expenses of education of many children, and increasing expense of brideweath, especially for a more educated wife. However, in contrast, both Tarayia (2004) and Hodgson (2011), though writing about Maasai of Tanzania, cite cases where Maasai wives take care of their co wives’ children when the other wife has to be away for one reason or the other.

Coast (2001, 91) illustrates, in Table 24 below, the mean number of wives per husbands compared to age:

Table 24: Number of Wives Reported by Husband's Age (from Spencer 1988)

Husband's age range	Number of wives						Wives/husband
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
57-70 (n= 128)	48	41	23	12	1	1	2.08
41-55 (n= 111)	68	35	6	1	1	0	1.51
26-40 (n= 84)	60	19	4	0	0	0	1.33
18-25 (n= 14)	14	0	0	0	0	0	1.00

(Coast 2001, 90) There appears to be three marked "jumps" in the mean number of wives per currently married men, at ages 40-44, 50-54 and above age 69. It is not clear whether these jumps are a product of selectivity, are random, or represent a trend.

4.12 Herbalist

Herbalists are skilled practitioners who diagnose and treat different ailments using medicine made out of leaves, roots, fruits, flowers, minerals and dried parts of animals.

This part of the study investigated the use of traditional health remedies by herbalists among the Maasai and the role of the herbalist in marriage. Majority of the respondents, as shown on Table 25 below, saw a positive role of the herbalist in marriage. They specifically pointed out the role of the herbalist in addressing the problem of infertility, a major challenge to marriage. This is especially taking into account that a large number of those interviewed cited procreation as one of the major reasons for marriage. The herbalist is also seen as one who addresses the problem of sickness and other illnesses in the community and keeping at bay any calamity that might threaten marriage. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that herbalists are seen as playing a major role in protecting marriage. The 4 responses that placed the work of blessings on the herbalists and the 7 responses that linked the herbalist's job to oathing seem to acknowledge the link between healing and Maasai spiritual worldview. Maasai herbal medicine can be seen along the streets of major towns in

Kenya. The medicine is hawked and touted as treating all kinds of ailments. However, it has been noted that commercialization of herbal medicine marks the rise of people who are not equipped to administer these herbs, posing as experts and thus compromising the respect accorded to serious herbal practitioners.

Table 25: Role of Herbalist in Marriage (R=170)

No response	32
Very little	3
None	22
Don't know	3
A herbalist can give medicine when a man or a woman is unable to have children	13
Every Maa community recognizes herbalists	1
Able to give herbs of different types for different complications	82
Makes herbs for taking oaths or herbs put in milk	7
To bless using different plants because they know the meaning	4
Mostly are also midwives	1
I don't understand	1
Give love potion	1
TOTAL	170

4.13 Witch and Witchcraft

The witch in this study is a totally evil person who uses witchcraft to harm people. Witchcraft as defined by Kirwen (2011) is “the power, techniques and skills” (p. 218) to cause harm to people.

A witch was defined by respondents as a performer of superstitious activities, a destroyer of life and as someone who uses charms. On the other hand, all the 163 respondents confirmed that they had heard about and encountered witchcraft.

4.14 Death

The discussion in sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 above on the ancestors, living dead and nominal reincarnation give some indication on the reality and nature of death among the Maasai. It gives an indication that, even though death is dreaded, all is not lost in

the face of death. There is the possibility of living on through one's descendants. The possibility of death has a moral encouragement that one should live a holy life. Living a holy life opens the door for the possibility of becoming an ancestor.

Ole Masharen uses the Maasai word *enkeeya* for death. That there is death among the Maasai is not doubted. The following myth, recorded by Hollis, attempts to explain the origin of death:

One day Naiteru-kop told Le-eyo that if a child were to die he was to say when he threw away the body: "Man, die, and come back again; moon, die, and remain away." A child died soon afterwards, but it was not one of the Le-eyo's and when he was told to throw it away, he picked it up and said to himself: "This child is not mine, when I through it away I shall say, 'Man, die, and remain away, moon die and return.'" He threw it away and spoke these words, after which he returned home. One of his own children died next, and when he threw it away he said: "Man, die, and return: moon, die, and remain away. "Naiteru-Rop said to him: "It is of no use now, for you spoilt matters with the other child. "This is how it came about that when a man dies he does not return, whilst when the moon is finished, it comes back again and is always visible to us. (Hollis 1905, 271-272)

Given such beliefs, Maasai funeral practices are pragmatic, returning to *Eng'ai*, through nature, what she herself had created. Traditionally, the burial details varied. What has been seen as common is the removal of ornaments from the body and the smearing of the body with animal fat. According to Hodgson (2005a), the following

prayer was said; “*Totona, Siddai, etung’aigi tanger’a* – ‘sleep well, may the children you left behind fare well.’ ” The corpse (*olmeneng’ani*, pl. *ilmneng’a*) was left to be eaten by vultures, hyenas, and other wild animals” (p. 47). Another common factor is that when somebody was at the brink of death, they were removed from the house and taken away from the homestead. If someone happened to die in the house, that house was abandoned and eventually the homestead.

However, Hollis (2003, 78) notes that children, warriors and women were not buried. Their corpses were thrown away without any ceremony and their names forgotten. On the other hand, old men, old women, medicine persons and rich people were not mourned, but a ceremony was done for their funeral where an animal was slaughtered and the meat eaten. The corpse is smeared with animal fat and dressed in new sandals in the case of old men and women and the body left in a shady place.

In the case of a medicine person and a rich person, the corpse is also smeared with animal fat before being buried in a shallow grave in a shady place and stones put on the grave. This is also confirmed by Dikirr (1994, 96-99 & Dikirr 1997).

Hodgson notes that:

The rituals that seemed to have changed the most dramatically under the influence of the Catholic Church were those associated with death and treatment of dead bodies. In contrast to the customary practice of leaving dead or dying people (except for respected elder men and occasionally women) in the bush for hyenas and other wild animals to dispose of, most Maasai

Christians now chose to bury their dead in a formal funeral ceremony. But, despite the Christian promises of heavenly redemption and glory in the afterlife, the lurking fear of death, dying, and especially corpses remained. (Hodgson 2005a, 239)

4.15 Effect of Witches, Witchcraft and Death on Marriage

This section deals with three themes: witches, witchcraft and death and their relation and effect on marriage. These themes are viewed here as the themes that deal with the problem of evil in African Religion and culture. Therefore, in order to investigate the effect of evil on marriage, the respondents were asked to enumerate taboos related to marriage, sources of evil among the Maasai, and how they affect marriage. They were also asked if they had heard about witchcraft and who a witch was and finally, how witches, witchcraft and death affected marriage. These questions were meant to capture respondent's view about evil as the result of human perversion and on the other hand, the idea of witchcraft as manipulation of forces in the world for evil purposes. The first area that was looked at in the responses was that of taboos related to marriage among the Maasai.

As shown in Table 26 below, 46/163 (28%) did not respond to the question on taboos related to marriage. However, 45/163 (27.6%) mentioned marriage from one's clan as a taboo and 20/163 (12%) stated that a bride should not look back when being escorted to the bridegroom's home. Adultery as a taboo was recorded 10 times. The 45 respondents on marriage outside the clan expressed the nature of Maasai marriage as exogamous. The 20 responses can be seen as expressing the view of marriage

which relocates the woman to her new family in the husband's home and requires that she transfers loyalty from her father's family to the new family set-up at the husband's home. This view expresses the patrilocal nature of Maasai family. On the other hand, the 10 responses on adultery can be seen as emphasizing fidelity in marriage.

Table 26: Some Taboos Related to Marriage Among the Maasai

No response	46
Marriage from your clan	45
Conceiving before circumcision – <i>olater (entaapai)</i>	2
A bride should not look back when being escorted to the bridegroom's home	20
Marital rape	3
To stay unmarried	1
A wife cannot be remarried in the same family in case of death	2
You cannot marry from a witch's family	2
You can't marry from any family your ancestors had rejected	1
Adultery	10
Barrenness or impotence	4
Abortion	5
The birth of physically challenged children	1
A married man should not enter his mother's house	1
A husband should not be rude to an expectant wife	1
Sex during pregnancy - might cause premature birth	1
Bridegroom not to sleep in the house of mother in law and vice versa	1
Having sex with a breastfeeding wife	1
Having sex with a woman who has just delivered or is about to deliver	3
Anal sex is a taboo	1
Having sex with your husband's brother or sister in law	3
No marriage should take place when people are mourning	1
<i>Irikoreta</i>	1
Sexual intercourse with uncircumcised boys/men	1
When a boy marries ahead of his older brother his wife must be out of the compound when his older brother marries	2
A girl should not be married in her father's age group	1
To marry a girl who gave birth before circumcision	1
A wife cannot go with a boy child to her parents if she quarrels with the husband	1
TOTAL	163

After dealing with taboos related to marriage, sources of evil among the Maasai were investigated. The findings of the study show that the highest source of evil among the Maasai community (56/163) was lack of respect or disobedience to elders, leaders, ancestors, God, parents, age set and husband.

Witchcraft was ranked as the second source of evil according 43/163 (26%) respondents. The respondents who did not respond to this item were 36/163. However, there were other sources of evil cited, such as murder, adultery and spirits among others as listed on Table 27 below.

Table 27: Sources of Evil (N=163)

No response	36
Witchcraft and Sorcery	43
Deliberate murder	7
No respect for elders or disobedience to:	
• Leaders, ancestors, god, parents, age set, husband	56
Sleeping with a woman of your father's age group	1
Adultery	3
Doing things which are out of the marriage rules	1
Refusing to give food to age sets	1
Lack of children and cattle	3
Stealing	1
Breaking of taboos	2
Ancestors	2
Spirits	5
Lack of proper burial to close family member	1
Violation of a will of a dead person	1
TOTAL	163

The sources of evil listed in Table 27 above, affect marriage by creating misunderstanding in a marriage, causing miscarriage, deformity in children, death and barrenness. Witches and witchcraft affect marriage by bringing infertility, breaking families and causing miscarriages and deformities. Thus, witchcraft, attacks the core of marriage among the Maasai, which is fertility. Marriage without children is not complete. One of the taboos mentioned when respondents were asked to enumerate taboos related to marriage was barrenness and impotence. Therefore, witchcraft, by causing impotence and barrenness, attacks the core of marriage. At the same time, witchcraft can destroy the institution of marriage by causing separation or even divorce. These effects are unwelcome due to their critical role as anti-life forces on marriage. Marriage is viewed as a life-force in continuing the generation and lineage. This can be interpreted as one of the major reasons why the blessings of God,

ancestors and even the living dead were invoked on the newly married couples for protection against anti-life forces.

On the other hand, death affects marriage by leaving one partner in a state of confusion, bringing loneliness to the children and parents. However, death affects marriage in a more negative way. This is in particular, if it is the wife who has died; the house remains empty since the man cannot take care of the house chores, including milking of cows.

Death also brings forth orphans in the community and creates a shift in the responsibility of taking care of children. While it is desirable that children enjoy the care they need from their biological father and mother, death shifts this responsibility to other members of the family.

The sources of evil mentioned above, especially breaking of taboos, witches and witchcraft can be put in check by sources of safety in the Maasai community. The safety is provided through leadership and performance of rituals that are meant to protect members of the community from evil.

Respondents mentioned sources of safety. Such included the male members of the community, wealth, courage, the young men or *moran*, the family and the community, the husband, blessings through parents, council of elders, the ancestors and the living dead. The Maasai enjoy a great sense of security, especially from their warriors who are the young *morans* as shown by 57.1% of the respondents.

4.16 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter show that Maasai religio-culture situates the Maasai as an African community that holds in consciousness a cultural knowledge that is African in orientation. This knowledge, as manifested in Maasai marriage is part of this religio-cultural worldview. According to Hodgson:

Nature and its elements have been and remain central to Maasai religion, even as Maasai lives and livelihoods have changed in response to colonialism, nationalism, development interventions, Christian evangelization, education and other processes. These processes have also exacerbated regional, social, cultural and thus religious variations among and within Maasai sections (large territorial groupings). (Hodgson 2005b, 1017)

This chapter has discussed fifteen themes from the viewpoint of field research data and literature review that help to explain cultural themes as experienced by the Maasai. These fifteen themes put together reveal that the Maasai believe in harmonious relationships in the community. These harmonious relationships are believed to be a reflection of the will of God. In the Maasai community, the elders are believed to manifest this. Hence, preserving harmonious relationships with the elders and the ancestors who are considered sacred is a religious obligation that ought to be observed. This is because these members of the community who, by virtue of their having attained elderhood and ancestorhood, are believed to be at peace with themselves and the rest of creation.

The attainment of sacredness is the desire of each member of the community. One only attains this by being in harmony with the elders and the ancestors. The relationships that create harmony can be summarised in three areas God, clan and environment. When these three relationships are healthy, then there is wholeness in life. Broken relationships create problems in the world.

When the themes are put together, they form a coherent whole that is called in this study, Maasai cultural knowledge. The Maasai use these ideas to order their lives. Among the Maasai, marriage is regarded as one of the stages in the process of becoming a ritually mature adult Maasai. A person who does not pass through this stage is considered to be immature and an outcast. One of the reasons is that through marriage a person learns to relate to a wide variety of individuals and communities, both within the wider family and among the in-laws. Another reason is that the individual learns to become a responsible partner to care for the spouse, children and other members of the community. This further justifies parenthood as an essential component of the institution of marriage among the Maasai. Through marriage, an individual is publicly released to manage a household and own property. Marriage is a religious obligation and the starting point for personal and communal immortality through procreation.

Maasai marriage is a community affair whereby the whole community is involved in discussing, planning and arranging the marriage. This manifests the nature of Maasai marriage as a process with different stages from engagement, courtship, negotiation and presentation of bridewealth and the wedding ceremony.

The findings of this study show that marriage transcends death. This is perhaps why a Maasai widow does not remarry; she stays in the homestead with the family of the husband being taken care of as a widow by the community. Marriage is, therefore, viewed as a permanent covenant that cannot be dissolved. In the rare cases of divorce, a painful process of negotiating the divorce takes place, involving elders.

The findings confirm that marriage is not only a social occurrence, but a religious occurrence uniting two families with bridewealth as the binding covenant between the families. Marriage and its preparation rituals lead to the “humanization” of the individual. According to Magesa (1997) “... what truly completes the humanization of a person in this world is the mystical union with the ancestors, which is achieved only through the generation of children” (p. 121). The proper place sanctioned by Maasai culture and religion for the generation of children is within marriage. However, culturally sanctioned sexual relations between uncircumcised Maasai girls (*intoyie*) and Maasai *morans* can complicate the lives of young girls if they accidentally become pregnant. Children conceived from such unions would not be allowed to live; the girls would be quickly circumcised and hurriedly married off.

Marriage among the Maasai is a spiritual bond tied in with the norms of the Maasai community. It is within marriage, as one of the sacred realities, where human beings attempt to foster a relationship between the human and the extra-ordinary forces, ancestors and God, believed to control personal life and community life.

As pastoralists, the Maasai have a close relationship to and dependence on the environment for sustenance and social reproduction. Nature and its elements manifest *Eng'ai* and are central to Maasai religious beliefs and practices.

The community members of the bride and bridegroom play a key role throughout the process of marriage. They play the role of vetting the couple and the family into which they are getting involved in marriage by investigating and helping in identifying the character and strong and weak points of the marriage and whatever would act as an impediment to the marriage. This is done by holding several meetings with the in-laws.

It is clear from the foregoing that in recognition of the significance of the process of marriage as a spiritual and religious reality, preparation for marriage begins very early, even as early as before the bride is born. This is in cases where a bride is booked while still in the womb of the mother.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of values, attitudes, beliefs and ideas present in Maasai Religion and culture which converge and flow forth from marriage. It is within marriage that new life comes forth as a participation in life giving experience through procreation. Being able to procreate is seen as a sign of God's blessing on the couple. The findings of this study show that barrenness was seen as a taboo and a curse while having children was seen as a blessing from the ancestors, living dead and God in a marriage.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The main aim of this work has been to provide an analysis of the centrality of marriage in African religio-culture with reference to the Maasai of Kenya by looking at the deep-seated religio-cultural values as related to and manifested in marriage among the Maasai. These deep-seated religio-cultural values determine a person's outlook and thereby give that person an identity within a specific community as well as giving that community a very specific religio-cultural worldview or religio-cultural knowledge. This identity is first and foremost expressed and lived within a marriage context through cultural and religious manifestations that prepare people for marriage and guide them through marriage.

The entire study has focused on the central role of marriage in African Religio-culture. It has highlighted the verification of deep seated religio-cultural values as manifested in marriage. These deep seated religio-cultural values have been presented by Kirwen (2011) as beliefs of African religion. The religious beliefs or fifteen cultural themes articulate in a systematic manner the religio-cultural beliefs of Africa South of the Sahara. They are entwined and embedded in African cultural knowledge, giving that knowledge a special sacral and personal dimension.

This religio-cultural study has viewed marriage among the Maasai as a basic, important and religious institution that reflects and shapes Maasai values in its forms, implications and persistence.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The foregoing chapters have addressed the broad objectives of this study. They have specifically investigated, a) Maasai religio-cultural worldview, b) the place of marriage in Maasai culture and religion, c) the extent cultural themes are related to or manifested in Maasai marriage and if there are any changes to Maasai marriage with regard to Maasai religio-cultural worldview and responses to the changes.

The findings of this study show that the ultimate reality of Maasai religio-cultural worldview is the belief in God. The elders, as religious leaders have the role of enhancing and perpetuating this belief. For this reason, every age group has a leader who presides over rituals. The rituals such as marriage are supposed to enhance harmonious relationships in the community. These harmonious relationships are believed to be a reflection of the will of God. In order to preside over rituals that create this harmony, initiation is a necessary religious step that bestows on the initiate, a communal identity and thus bestows on the individual the authority to preside.

The study has established that, in the indigenous Maasai religio-cultural and socio-cultural life, marriage plays an important role. This role can be seen in the areas of belief in God, the view of the afterlife (living dead and ancestors) and the way Maasai

life is generally organized through various life rituals that bestow identity of each Maasai individual, whether male or female.

On the basis of field and bibliographic data, it has been found that, indeed among the Maasai, marriage is a religious and social institution. Marriage is strongly associated with culture and religion. For this reason, marriage is expected of every Maasai. It is normal and natural to marry after initiation into adulthood. And marriage is situated within the ultimate reality of the Maasai religio-cultural worldview.

Marriage among the Maasai is one of the key stages each person has to pass through both culturally and religiously. Upon maturity, each male or female is expected to get married and start a family of their own and eventually establish their own line of life or ancestry through procreation. Everyone is expected to marry, as this is how the society ensures continuity through procreation.

Among the Maasai, marriage is understood as an important social, cultural and religious obligation that promotes the survival of the lineage. In Maasai worldview, the most precious aspiration for young men and women is that sometime in the future they will marry or be married.

Religio-cultural themes on God, Ancestors, Living Dead, Nominal reincarnation, Lineage, Leadership, Adulthood and Elderhood, Brideweath, Polygyny, Herbalist, Diviner, Witch, Witchcraft and Death are themes related to and manifested in Maasai marriage. It has been found out that the themes on Ancestors, Living Dead, Nominal

Reincarnation and Death are not easy subjects to discuss among the Maasai. To study them more effectively, would require a more specific study that focuses only on the religious view of the Maasai on life after death. However, the findings of this study confirm that the Maasai believe in life after death even though it is a subject that they are not freely willing to discuss.

The fourth objective dealing with change in Maasai marriage can be summarised partly using the words of FitzGerald (2008) that “the significance of cultural identity in a global climate of rapid change” has been evaluated “by looking at the positive and negative aspects of how change modifies cultural customs and how new identities emerge” (p. 1). It has been established that there is clear resilience of Maasai cultural and religious worldview manifested in marriage. An example of this resilience is in the area of polygyny.

However, it has been established that the changes that have affected Maasai marriage and socio-cultural and religious worldview did not begin in the recent past. The changes have been taking place for a long time through contacts the Maasai have had with their neighbours. Other changes have been occasioned by colonialism, rapidly changing socio-economic context in Kenya, formal education and Christian activity among the Maasai.

The money economy or a system in which money is the main way of exchanging goods and services has facilitated a changing lifestyle manifest in the style of dressing and living conditions of many Maasai living in rural and urban centres. These

changes have also facilitated a more sedentary life for many Maasai due partly to diminishing grazing land. Many Maasai now participate in the Kenyan tourism industry as entertainers or providers of beadwork in exchange for money.

5.2 Conclusion

In line with the objectives of the study, some concluding remarks can be drawn from the study's results. The Maasai have a rich and persistent cultural and religious worldview anchored on the belief in God. The activities and belief system are guided by this belief and it is within this cultural and religious matrix that the Maasai exist, interact with each other and God. Chapter IV of this study illustrates this by presenting elements of Maasai religio-cultural knowledge.

Data generated from field research and literature reveal that the Maasai have a worldview that encompasses the religio-cultural themes, albeit with varied emphases. Marriage is a prominent theme among the religio-cultural themes within the Maasai worldview and is the ground within which other themes are played out.

The Maasai have a rich and persistent marriage heritage with many of the historical, cultural and religious practices still largely intact and influential. The African religio-cultural themes are manifested in the institution of marriage among the Maasai. The principle findings of this study corroborated in a large way Kirwen's conceptual framework of the fifteen themes of African Cultural Knowledge.

The Maasai, like any other human community, face various challenges that force them to adopt new mechanisms of existence within their own cultural milieu. Some of the challenges are inter-marriage, new socio-economic environment, demands of Christianity, formal education and simply the dynamics of cultural dynamism. The changes mentioned above and the evident resilience of Maasai culture and religion clearly indicate that Maasai religion and culture will retain many of its values. There are many other challenges to Maasai religion and culture that have been left out due to the limitations of this study. However, what has been included together with Maasai cultural resilience can lead to the conclusion that there “will be a ‘redefinition’ rather than a ‘disappearance’ of the Maasai” (FitzGerald 2008, iii).

In terms of the influence of formal education, it is worth noting that the Maasai who have undergone formal education will seek other socio-economic means to sustain their families. They will diversify their channels of income in order to be more aligned to the changing economic environment. Those who have participated in formal education will most likely find ways of taking their children to school. When Maasai children attend formal school, their lifestyle will change from being either those who graze livestock or those who spend most of the time doing household chores.

5.3 Recommendations

A number of recommendations for further study have been observed based on the implications of this study.

This study has outlined some of the underlying values of Maasai marriage such as: lasting union that goes beyond the grave, propagation of life and an integrated view of marriage. It is recommended that a formal dialogue with contemporary marriage ideals and Maasai values of marriage be initiated with a view of recognising and respecting Maasai marriage. Secondly, finding out how best to cope with the challenges posed to Maasai marriage by contemporary marriage ideals while remaining true to Maasai marriage values. Thirdly, there is need to open formal channels of dialogue with government and Christianity. The formal channel of dialogue will address areas of marriage that are seen to be in conflict with government legislation and Christian tenets. The need of this dialogue with Christianity is necessitated by the fact the many Maasai have formally registered with the Christian faith.

In order to realize the potential positive impact of Maa values on the whole society, it is recommended that decision-makers in Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs) and the Government of Kenya (GoK), establish an environment that enables the participation of the Maasai peoples themselves in a search for sustainable solutions to challenges facing the Maasai. This can be done by providing relevant personnel with the capacity to deal with indigenous values. It will be difficult to choose which areas to concentrate on but many of the modern and indigenous Maasai practices can be combined to create a Maasai community that is culturally strong while also participating in the contemporary Kenyan situation.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

1. The research limited itself to the Maasai of Kajiado County. However, a number of similarities among the Maasai were noted, especially through literature, it would be useful to extend this study to other Maasai areas such as Narok and Tanzania. In that way it can be determined to what extent our findings are applicable to Maasai living in other areas.

2. It has emerged from this study that many Maasai people operate out of a Maasai marriage value system and religio-cultural worldview which is many times at odds with the intruding socio-cultural, socio-economic, Christian religious worldview and formal education. And as was seen in the study, Maasai indigenous understanding of marriage values are challenged by this new situation. There is need to for a study that will explore ways of integrating Maasai marriage values in this new situation. This should facilitate integration of Maasai marriage values with contemporary religio-cultural worldview, Christianity, formal education and the ever changing socio-economic and socio-cultural situation.

3. The rapidly changing concept of marriage and its role in the transmission of religio-cultural values needs to be given attention. This calls for a study on the importance of marriage as an institution for the preservation and propagation of religio-cultural values.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Glossary of Maa Terms

Emodai – stupid, foolish

Enkai – God, sky

Enkang - is a Maasai homestead within a thorn bush enclosure encompassing the houses of a man and his wives, children, and other dependents, and their animals at night. The Kiswahili word is Boma, which also seems to be used frequently by Maasai people in the city.

Enkarewa - necklace

En-keeya – death

Enkiama – marriage

Enkipaata – the first of the many rituals performed on young boys of the Maasai.

En-kishu/inkishu – cattle

Esetan – witchcraft

Entasat – older woman

Entito – young girl

Ilpaasheta – sub-clan

Injomiei – clan

Iloibonok (laibon) - diviner

Isurutia – coled brass ornament

Intoyie – uncircumcised girl

Ol-akui – ancestors

Olamal – is a deputation or commission that goes around in the locality to mobilise people and resources.

Ol-asakutani – witch

Olmeneng`ani – corpse

Olosho – divisions

Ol-aiguenani (Olaiguanani, Olaigunani)– age-set spokesperson, customary leader

Ol-aji – age-set

Ol-murrani/il-murran – warrior

Ol-payian - elder

Appendix II: Research Instruments

A. Questionnaire

Preamble

I am Denis Odinga Okiya. A Ph.D. student at Kenyatta University. I am carrying out a research on the topic “An Analysis of the Centrality of Marriage in African Religio-Culture with Reference to the Maasai of Kajiado, Kenya”. You are being requested to be part of this research by filling as objectively as possible the questionnaire provided below. On my part, I promise you absolute confidentiality on whatever information you may provide. The information you provide here, shall be used strictly for this research.

Research Instrument for the following categories of informants:

- A: Male and Female Adults in ouseholds
- B: Community Elders
- C: Teachers
- D: Christian Leaders
- E: Community Leaders

INSTRUCTIONS: *Fill in the blank spaces or simply tick your choice*

1. Sex: Male _____ Female _____ Age _____
2. What position do you hold in the community _____
3. Marital status:

Single		Divorced	
Married		Widowed	
Separated		Other	

4. Religious affiliation _____
5. Clan: _____
6. Sub clan:
7. Highest level of education attained _____
8. Which one of the following is your Maasai group (*Tick as appropriate*)

Dalalekutuk (Ildalalekutuk)	
Damat (Ildamat)	
Ilbaraguyu (Iloikop)	
Kaputiei (Ilkaputiei)	
Keekonyukie (Ilkeekonyokie)	
Koitokitok (Iloitokitok)	
Laitayok	
Loodokilani (Iloodokilani)	

Matapato (Ilmatopato)	
Moitanik (Ilmoitanik)	
Purko (Ilpurko)	
Salei (Isalei)	
Iserinket	
Tiamus (Iltiamus)	
Uashinkishu (Iluashinkishu)	
Loita (Iloita)	

Others (Specify) _____

Section One

1. What is marriage? _____
2. What are the main steps in a Maasai marriage? _____
3. Why do Maasai people marry? _____
4. Describe the main activities that take place during a Maasai marriage _____
5. What is the significance of each activity? _____
6. Generally, how long does it take to prepare for marriage? _____
7. What items are used to conduct marriage/wedding? _____
8. What is the significance of each item? _____

9. What (traditional) items are given as presents in a (traditional) marriage? _____
10. What does each item given as a gift mean? _____
11. What is the symbolism of each of the gifts? _____
12. a. What traditional foods and drinks are consumed during marriage occasions? _____
 b. What is the meaning of these foods and drinks in a marriage? _____

Section Two

13. What is the role of the family/community members in selecting a bride/bridegroom? _____
14. Do you agree that begetting children is the most important aspect of marriage? _____
15. If a man is impotent or sterile can his brothers beget children with his wife on his behalf? _____
16. According to the Maasai, when a woman gets married, is she still a member of her father's clan or does she become a member of her husband's clan? _____
17. If a husband dies, is a woman free to re-marry? _____

Section Three

18. What are the sources of safety and protection among the Maasai? _____
19. What is the role of a diviner in marriage among the Maasai?

To find out whether the ancestors are happy about the marriage	
To find out if there are any impediments against the marriage	
To foresee that the marriage will be a prosperous one	
To see to it that the girl will not bring bad omen to the boy's family and vice versa	
To find out which ancestors to appease before marriage takes place	
Other (Specify)	

Section Four

14. a) What is the meaning of bridewealth?

Buying	
Gift	
Pledge of friendship	
Sign of real marriage	
Other (Specify)	

- b) Is bridewealth necessary for a marriage? i. Yes. ii. No.
- c) (i) If Yes, why is it necessary? _____
 (ii) If No, why not? _____

For Men

16. If married, how many cows did you promise in bridewealth? _____
17. How many cows have you actually given? _____

For Women

18. If married, how many cows did your husband promise to give? _____
19. How many cows did he actually give? _____
20. What else is given as bridewealth? _____
21. a) How many cows are usually paid for bridewealth?

One	
Two	
Three	
Four	
Five	
Six	

Seven	
Eight	
Nine	
Ten	
Over Ten	
Other (Specify)	

- b) Why that particular number? _____
- c) How many shillings _____
- d) How many goats _____
- e) How many sheep _____
- f) What else is usually given as bridewealth? _____
22. a) It is believed that in marriage, if bridewealth is not given, children born of such marriage do not belong to their biological father but rather to their maternal uncles. Is this true? Yes _____ No _____
- b) Explain _____
23. a) Can bridewealth be given back to the parents of the man?
- i. Yes
- ii. No.
- b. Explain _____
24. What are the major causes of divorce? _____
25. If a man cohabits with a girl without paying bridewealth, what is their status? _____
26. a) If they separate, who takes the children _____
- b) Why? _____

Section Five

27. a) Are there prayers recited at a marriage ceremony? Yes _____ No _____
28. To whom are the prayers directed? _____
29. a) Do the Maasai believe in God? Yes ___ No __
- b) If yes, what is the role of God in marriage? _____
30. Do the Maasai believe in ancestors? _____
31. Who are the ancestors among the Maasai? _____
32. Do the Maasai believe in the living dead? Yes _____ No _____
33. Who are the living dead among the Maasai? _____
34. What is the role of the ancestors and the living dead in marriage among the Maasai? _

Section Six

35. Who are considered as leaders among the Maasai? _____
36. What role do they play in marriage? _____
37. What role does marriage play in determining the status of leaders in the Maasai community?

Section Seven

38. How many wives should a man marry?

One	
Two	
Three or more	
As many as he likes	

Section Eight

39. Which are the taboos related to marriage? _____
40. What are the sources of evil among the Maasai? _____
41. How do these sources affect marriage? _____
42. Have you ever heard of witchcraft? Yes _____ No _____
43. If yes, who is a witch? _____
44. How do witches and witchcraft affect marriage? _____
45. In what way does death affect marriage? _____

Section Nine

46. What is the role of naming in a marriage? _____
47. Are there special names given at marriage? Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
48. Do the names given to children have any significance for marriage? _____

Section Ten

49. How is marriage linked to adulthood/elderhood? _____

Section Eleven

50. What is the role of the herbalist in a marriage? _____

B. Interview Guide**General**

1. What is marriage?
2. What makes a Maasai marriage valid?
3. Where is marriage held?
4. What is likely to happen if parties to a marriage do not keep the principles of the marriage?
3. What responsibilities are expected of a married person?
10. How are these roles different for someone who is not married?

Objective 1

1. Why is marriage an important institution/practice in your community?
2. Is marriage purely a human affair?
3. Are Maasai marriages seen to be completed in a definite period of time?
 - a. What are the main steps involved in a marriage?
 - b. Why are these steps important?
4. a. Do you agree that giving birth to children is the most important thing in a marriage and if there are no children there is no real marriage?
 - b. Why?
5. Are there any taboos related to marriage among the Maasai?
6. Who are the marriage ritual leaders?

Objective 2

1. What is the role of a go-between in a marriage?
2. a. Who takes part in a marriage?
 - b. What are their roles?
3. Between what ages is a Maasai boy expected to marry?
4. Between what ages is a Maasai girl expected to marry?
5. Why is that age considered important?
6. How is a married person regarded in your community?
7. What privileges does an unmarried person enjoy?
8. What privileges come to a man who is married?
9. What privileges come to a woman who is married?
10. a. Does divorce occur in a Maasai marriage?
 - b. Under what circumstances?
 - c. What are the implications?

Objective 3

1. Does God have anything to do with marriage?
2. How many wives is it best for a man to marry?
3. What items are given for bridewealth in Maasai marriage?
4. Do you believe in the living dead?
5. Is there any relationship between marriage and the living dead?
6. Do you believe in the ancestors?
7. What is the relationship between the ancestors and marriage?
8. How does witchcraft and witches affect marriage?
9. Is there any relationship between marriage and witchcraft?
10. Are there special names given during a marriage?

Objective 4

1. To the best of your knowledge, in what ways is Maasai marriage different from other communities?
2. In what way has Maasai marriage been influenced by external factors?
3. What kind of changes can you identify that have taken place in Maasai marriage?

C. Observation Checklist

Name of Research Area	
Name of the locality	
Observation date	

1. Observation of Manyattas (This was done during the day)

- How are houses in the *manyatta* constructed and their layout?

Who are the people present within the *manyatta* and what are they engaged in?

- Are there houses within the *manyatta* that are empty because the occupants are all away for activities?
- Are there modern materials used for constructing houses within the *manyatta*? If so, what materials? (style, size, etc)
- Are there commercial activities going on around the *manyatta* run by Maasai people?

Notes: _____

2. Observation of Grazing

- The grazing locality and those involved in the grazing and what type of animals.
- Other activities done while grazing.

Notes: _____

3. Observation of a burial

- The kind of rituals taking place and the main actors.
- The various activities of the actors.
- Emotions accompanying activities during the rituals.
- The kind of instruments used for the rituals.

Notes: _____

4. Observation of weddings

- The kind of rituals taking place and the main actors.
- The various activities of the actors.
- Emotions accompanying activities during the rituals.
- The kind of instruments used for the rituals.

5. Other relevant observations not covered by 1, 2, 3 AND 4

Notes: _____

6. Information acquired through conversations with people during the observation

Notes: _____

7. Personal comments

Subjective comments of the researcher including inferences and personal observations, reflections and emotional reactions.

Notes: _____

Appendix III: Maasai *Enkang*



Source: Don McDougall

(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/donshappysnaps/3436919449/sizes/m/in/photostream/>)

Appendix IV: Why Maasais Prefer Killing Lions to Compensation

August 18, 2013/Standard on Sunday

Why Maasais prefer killing lions to compensation

By GATONYE GATHURA

Money or the cow?

The [Maasai](#) prefer their cows and tell conservationists to keep their [livestock compensation](#) money and let their morans kill beef-loving lions.

They say theirs are not butcheries where lions can walk in, grab a meal and then bill the Kenya Wildlife Service or some other donor groups.

“We cannot accept compensation because we do not have cattle to be killed every day. We must go and kill that lion because our payment is to kill it today,” says a senior [Maasai](#) elder in Amboseli.

The elder says a lion that has developed a taste for beef must be put down because it will keep coming back for more. “And then we will have no more livestock. So what are we going to do with the money?”

“My son’s boma had two cows killed and one moran hurt by a lion. I cried, so the lion must cry. We cannot stop the morans because we already lost our cattle and this loss hurts deep in our soul,” says another elder in Kisonga area of Amboseli.

These revelations come at a time when the government has substantially increased the amount of money paid out for loss of humans or property occasioned by wild animals.

In an extensive survey covering the [Maasai](#) of Amboseli and parts of Tanzania, researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder in the US concluded that [livestock compensation](#) programmes do not work and could be fuelling the killing of more big cats.

Cow’s worth

Released on Monday, the report by Joana Roque de Pinho says efforts to protect the animals have so far not been successful mainly because they have been “wrong and simplistic” and do not understand the real worth of a cow to a [Maasai](#).

Research ethics do not allow one to identify participants interviewed for the study by their names in case of backlash from the government and regulatory authorities.

The survey tells of an American tour operator who approached villagers at Oltukai in Amboseli with a proposal of a project to compensate families that lose their cattle to lions and who were in turn expected to spare the cat’s life.

“The people refused,” explained a junior elder. “They complained that the lions would learn that it is all right to eat cattle. And so for now, you will pay, but what happens when you and your organisation leave? Who will pay then? The lions will have learned to eat cattle. No. We refused.”

The issue of killing lions came to a head last year when angry [Maasai](#) residents in Kitengela killed six lions in a single swoop for feasting on their livestock.

The community then dared the government to arrest them.

With the unprecedented act, the [Maasai](#) had made a major statement to the government and conservationists.

“Killing a beef-loving lion is not the solution,” says Dr Paula Kahumbu, the Executive Director at Wildlife Direct. “I agree with the [Maasai](#) and the study that such a lion must be punished for its wayward ways, but killing it is not the answer, just like a delinquent child should be punished but not killed.”

Dr Kahumbu says a lion that has tasted livestock will also teach others how to hunt, especially its cubs.

“That was why those killed in Kitengela included cubs who were on a learning mission,” she told The Standard on Sunday in an interview on Friday.

One method that has worked to dissuade elephants from destroying crops and other

property, Dr Kahumbu says, are electric fences. “Once an elephant has been hit by the shock they learn not to go near the fence. I think we should experiment the same with lions.”

The lions, she says, must be taught to respect the humans because they are quite intelligent and will learn. Her sentiments are shared by the [Maasai](#) elders who were interviewed in the study area.

Cultural heroes

By not punishing the lions when they kill livestock as required by law, the elders say the animal is losing respect for the moran, ‘seeing’ him as an impotent coward. This, they say, will encourage the big cats to attack more livestock and people.

“Because they are not being killed any more, the problem of wildlife attacking people and livestock has increased. We are not used to each other anymore. So, the moment we meet, we are enemies,” an elderly woman at Imbirikani Group Ranch told the researchers.

The [Maasai](#) say they will not let this happen to their warriors who are supposed to protect the community. During the interviews, 96 per cent of respondents in the Kenya side said hunting down and killing a lion is an important part of their culture and should be respected.

“Part of the duties of young morans is to know how to hunt lions. The offending lion must be speared to death. Killing lions by other means, such as with poison or a gun, is considered cowardly and thus does not create heroes as it should do,” says a junior elder at Kisongo village at the Imbirikani Group Ranch.

“Even if the lion is going to injure you, you don’t mind! This is why we go after the animal. It’s like an interview to show who is the bravest, or the strongest or the fastest moran and who isn’t.”

Appendix V: Taro Yamane's Table of Sample Sizes by Glenn D. Israel

Source: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd006>

Table 1. Sample size for $\pm 3\%$, $\pm 5\%$, $\pm 7\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and $P=.5$.				
Size of Population	Sample Size (n) for Precision (e) of:			
	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 5\%$	$\pm 7\%$	$\pm 10\%$
500	a	222	145	83
600	a	240	152	86
700	a	255	158	88
800	a	267	163	89
900	a	277	166	90
1,000	a	286	169	91
2,000	714	333	185	95
3,000	811	353	191	97
4,000	870	364	194	98
5,000	909	370	196	98
6,000	938	375	197	98
7,000	959	378	198	99
8,000	976	381	199	99
9,000	989	383	200	99
10,000	1,000	385	200	99
15,000	1,034	390	201	99
20,000	1,053	392	204	100
25,000	1,064	394	204	100
50,000	1,087	397	204	100
100,000	1,099	398	204	100
>100,000	1,111	400	204	100

a = Assumption of normal population is poor (Yamane, 1967). The entire population should be sampled.

Appendix VI: Maasai Clans Tussle over Projects

Daily Nation Wednesday January 8, 2014

Maasai Clans Tussle over Projects

By George Sayagie

A supremacy battle has erupted between two Maasai clans over the implementation of development projects in Narok County.

At the centre of the conflict is Governor Samuel Tunai's plan to set aside 600 acres at Limanet for expansion of the town to ease congestion.

In the plan, funded by the World Bank, the county government offices will be transferred to Limanet market, livestock trade will be carried out in Ewaso Nyiro, and farm produce market will be at Rotian.

However, a section of Purko clan leaders led by Narok North MP Moitalel ole Kenta and his predecessor William ole Ntimama are opposed to Mr Tunai's plan.

Mr Tunai is from the Siria clan and has been accused of sidelining the Purko, who are the majority, in development and appointments.

On Tuesday, Mr Kenta said their opposition was due to the failure by the governor to consult the Purko clan leaders on the planned acquisition of land and other development initiatives.

"The land the governor is plotting to acquire is community land and we will not cede an inch of it," he said. "We will fight against this plan because there is no way community property can just be taken away without consultations."


He also dismissed Narok County Commissioner Kasim Farah's warning against holding demos to protest the planned land acquisition, saying it was the community's constitutional right to protest.

He accused Mr Farah of taking sides in the dispute and told him to keep off the row.

"We want to tell the provincial administration that we will hold demonstrations because it is our right to do so, and we will not be intimidated by the warnings they are issuing. We shall use every means available to protect the interests of our people," he said.

Appendix VII: Research Authorization

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: "SCIENCE TECH", Nairobi
 Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102
 254-020-310571, 2213123
 Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249
 When replying please quote

P. O. Box 30623-00100
 NAIROBI-KENYA
 Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/5/002/R/794/5** Date: **10th SEPT 2009**

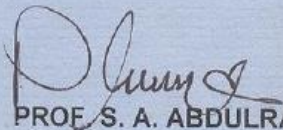
Denis Odinga Okiya
 Kenyatta University
 P.O.Box 43844
 NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
 Following your application for authority to carry out research on *The Centrality of Marriage in African Agriculture and Region with Reference to the Maasai of Kenya*

I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out research in *Kajiado District* for a period ending 30th March 2010.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer *Kajiado District* before embarking on your research.

On completion of your research, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report to this office.


 PROF. S. A. ABDULRAZAK Ph.D, MBS
 SECRETARY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
Kajiado District

The District Education Officer
Kajiado District

Appendix VIII: Research Clearance Permit

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

GPK 6055—3m—10/2009

(CONDITIONS—see back page)

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
 ProL/Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss. DELLS
ODLINGA OKIYA
 of (Address) KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
PO BOX 43844 NAIROBI
 has been permitted to conduct research in _____ Location,
KAJIADO District,
RIFT VALLEY Province,
 on the topic THE CENTRALITY OF
MARRIAGE IN AFRICAN CULTURE
AND RELIGION WITH REFERENCE
TO THE MAASAI OF KENYA.
 for a period ending 30TH MARCH, 2010

Research Permit No. HCST/5/002/R/794
 Date of issue 24.08.2009
 Fee received SHS 1000



DeLLS
Applicant's
Signature

DeLLS
Secretary
National Council for
Science and Technology

Appendix IX: Cultural Resilience

Thursday, February 12, 2015 / The Standard

RIFT VALLEY NEWS / Page 17

Woman rep tells the Maasai to shun FGM

KAJIADO COUNTY

By PETERSON GITHAIGA

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the biggest challenge to girls in Kajiado Central despite campaigns by various stakeholders, according to area Woman Representative Mary Seneta.

Speaking in Imarba village during a women's forum, Ms Seneta said limited education and lack of economic empowerment forces women to cling to retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriages and FGM.

She cited last year's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exams where the first girl in the area attained only 220 marks out of the possible 500, while the lowest got 134.

"Most girls are still forced to drop out of school in Class Cix and Seven due to early pregnancies.

"Early marriages are among the myriad challenges that contribute to

low self-esteem among Maasai women," said the MP.

She urged the Maasai to empower girls through education.

"We must avoid this bad culture of circumcising our girls and marrying them off when they are still young. Otherwise, we shall stay behind forever," said Seneta.

She said all the girls will be admitted in sub-county and private schools in the county, and promised to continue advocating for the rights of girls.

NYUMBA KUMI

Recently, police arrested a woman suspected to have aided two girls to undergo FGM in the area.

The girls' mother, who is in her early 30s, was arrested amid heightened anti-FGM campaigns during the school holidays and arraigned in court.

County Commissioner Harsama Kello says the incident has only intensified campaigns against FGM and

appealed to locals to shun the culture.

"What happened to the two girls is shameful and should be condemned by the modern society.

"We have started working with Nyumba Kumi Initiative and elders with a view of getting vital information that will help save girls," said Kello.

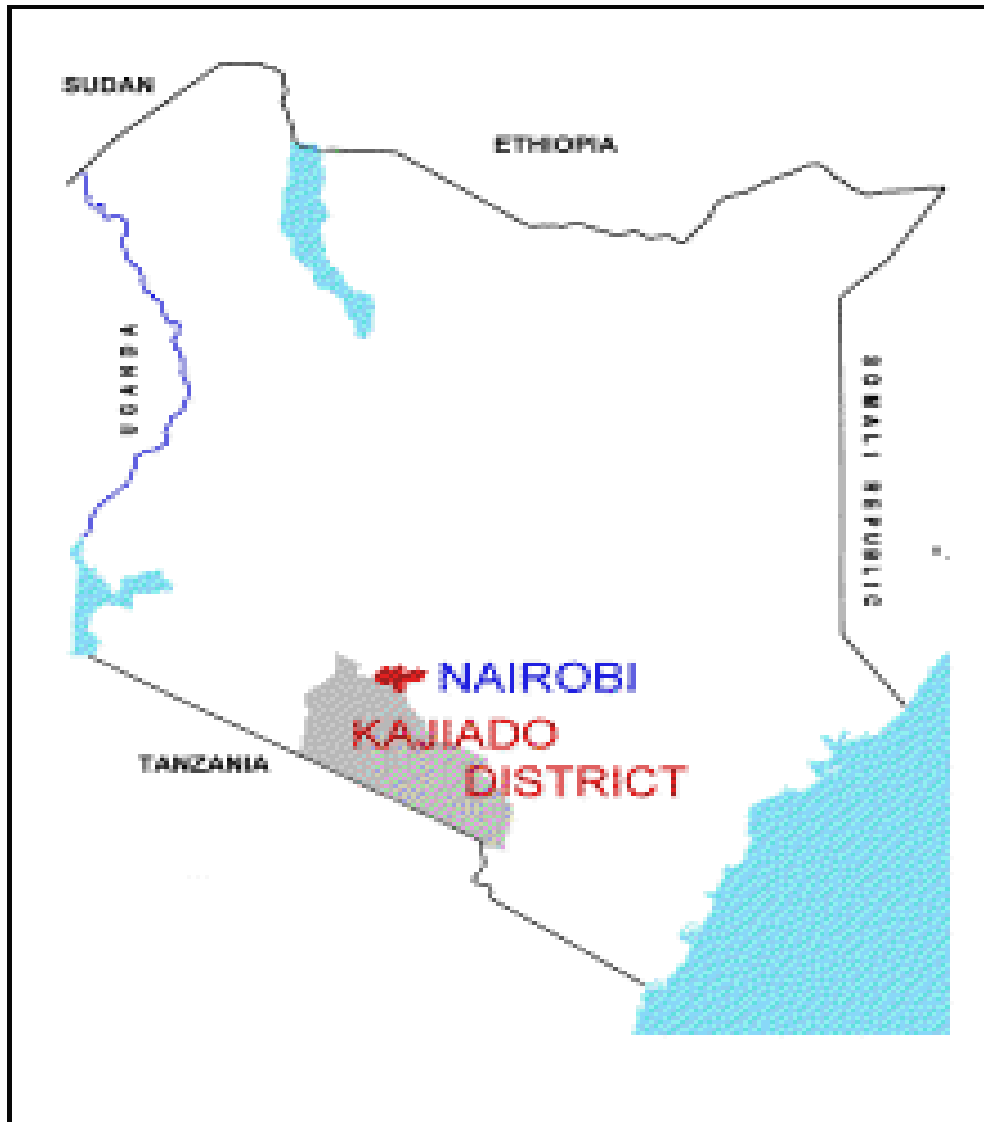
Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Nkaissery recently warned residents carrying out the cut that they must prepare to face the full force of the law.

He said those who break such laws and rush to leaders for protection in the name of traditions and culture will not be spared.

Nkaissery also told chiefs not to fear taking action against FGM perpetrators adding that nobody will be protected or spared if found going against the law.

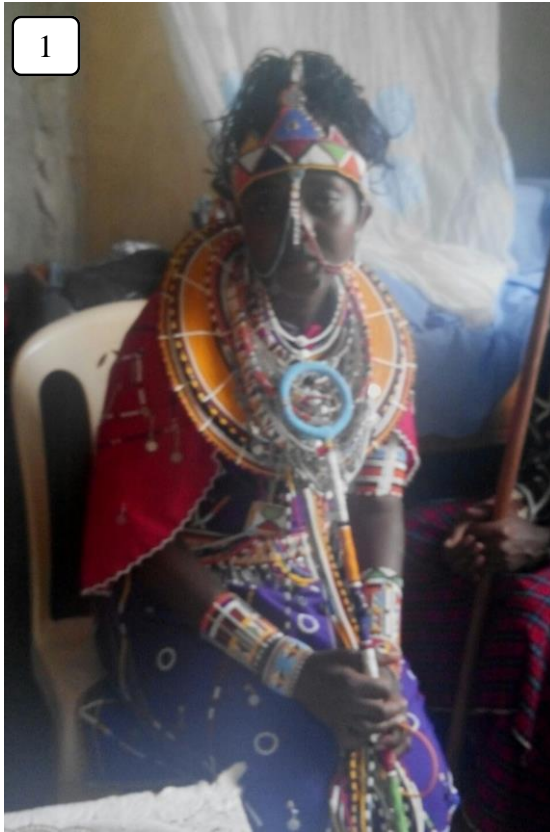
A section of leaders have called for an alternative rite of passage for Maasai girls.

Appendix X: The Position of Kajiado County in Kenya



Source: www.enable.nu/publication/Kenya_health.pdf

Appendix XI: Photos



Picture 1: The Bride holding a beaded walking stick, clad in necklace and bracelets.

Note: The beaded walking stick is only for aesthetic purposes and cannot be blessed. She will be given another stick that will be blessed (Picture 6).

Picture 2: The Bride with the Bridegroom (centre) and the Best man.



Pictures 3: & 4: Elders waiting for the bride to pass over cow dung, grass and milk which signify prosperity

Pictute 5: The bride walking away after passing over cow dung, grass and milk.

Note: The elders must be from the father's age group and must be respected married men.



Picture 6: The bride, bridegroom and best man pose for a photo. The bride is holding a special walking stick that has been blessed by the elders.

Picture 7 & 8: Bride is led towards a waiting car by the best man.

Note: A blessed walking stick is a very significant present given to the bride. When she arrives in her new family, she will symbolically have to touch the animals with the stick..



Picture 9: Women dance as they await Olamal

Picture 10: Welcoming Olamal

Picture 11: Gathering ready to receive Olamal



Picture 12 & 13: Celebrating the appointment of an age group advisor

Picture 14: Maasai youngsters in a dance



Picture 15: Young boys undergoing enkipaata

Picture 16: Women lining up to get Olamal



Picture 17: Maasai grazing in a residential area